



For social ownership of the banks and industry

ISRAEL-GAZA: PEACE!

- **Ceasefire** • **End siege** • **Free hostages**
- **Two states** • **Equal rights**
- **Workers' unity**

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Israel-Gaza: the horror deepens



Editorial

The Israeli assault on Gaza has intensified. As of 31 October, available reports of Palestinians killed were over 8,500. Round-the-clock air strikes have now been accompanied by incursions by Israeli troops and tanks. Gaza also suffered a communications blackout on 27-28 October.

The UN has reported raids on aid stores, as the humanitarian crisis worsens. Supplies of basic necessities such as fuel and food are scarce. Aid allowed into Gaza from Egypt, and provided by other countries and international institutions including the US, UK, and EU, has barely made a dent in the problem.

Pressed by the big powers, Israel says it has established a "humanitarian

zone" near Khan Younis in the south of Gaza, but has given few precise details. Its insistence that civilians should flee to the south presents Gazans with a practical impossibility; the movement of that many people in such a densely-populated area is simply not feasible, especially given damage to roads.

Many Palestinians fear that mass displacement to the south will presage an Israeli attempt to permanently expel the Gazan population into Egypt. Israel says not, and Egypt says it would resist; but as of now the Israeli government seems to have no workable endgame, even a reactionary one, to its revenge-war.

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have continued their reactionary agenda by firing barrages of rockets at civilian targets in Israel. Those have caused some injuries and damage to property, though no casualties so far.

There have also been clashes between Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based Islamist paramilitary party (like Hamas, backed by Iran) and Israel on the Lebanese border. The risk of outright war breaking out on the Israel-Lebanon border, in the West Bank, or between Israel and Iran, remains.

Humanitarian pause

Many Western governments have now shifted to advocating, if not a straightforward ceasefire, then at least "humanitarian pauses" in the bombing to allow increased provision of aid. The US, whilst remaining Israel's staunchest western ally, has also sent signals distancing itself from Israel's actions. Lt. General James Glynn, a three-star general with the US Marine Corps, visited Israel to discuss its plans. Following his visit, fellow USMC general Eric Smith told the press, "What is, has, or

will unfold in Gaza is purely an Israeli decision."

Violent attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, from both armed settlers and Israeli security forces, continue to increase. Far-right Israelis have also carried out attacks on Palestinian citizens of Israel, including at Netanya Academic College, where a far-right mob attacked Arab students in their dorms. The Israeli government has also proposed a [bill](#) that would give police greater powers to break up demonstrations, including via the use of live rounds where protests are blocking roads.

Stop the war! Israel has the right to defend itself, but not to raze Gaza. Cease-fire; end the siege; free the hostages. For peace, two states, equal rights. For workers' unity on a programme of mutual recognition of rights. □

Support Arab-Jewish movement for equal rights!



Editorial

Despite the challenges, anti-war and anti-occupation groups in Israel have continued to organise. On 24 October, leaders from Standing Together, the grassroots Arab-Jewish social movement, spoke on an online panel organised by activists in the US, along with Yael Berda, an Israeli activist in the "A Land for All" initiative, and Palestinian activist Kefah Abukhdeir.

Equal rights

All speakers emphasised the need for common organisation between Jews and Palestinians against the agenda of the Israeli government as a necessary basis for forging a shared future based on equal rights.

Sally Abed, a Palestinian citizen of Israel and a leader of Standing Together, said: "As a Palestinian, as a social justice activist, I have to look to the people in my society who are currently not convinced, who don't have the political will to even acknowledge the fact that I'm Palestinian, to acknowledge my history and my narrative, and bring them to my side. It's a different kind of work than Palestinians abroad, and especially than in the occupied territories and in Gaza, because I have the 'privilege'

of experiencing a semi-democracy of some sort, and I have some tools I can use [...]"

"This is very difficult in these very polarised moments [...] whilst my people are being slaughtered, whilst we're being fired from our jobs, and expelled from universities [...] At this very moment, there are organised groups that are being heavily armed by our national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, an openly Kahanist Jewish supremacist.

"It's very hard to navigate all this in this moment, and to express our trauma as Palestinians, and also to express the trauma of Israeli society. My very close friends, my neighbours, my colleagues, have been deeply impacted by the 7 October attacks. So it's one of the most complex experiences to have, but in my opinion it's one of the most critical spaces to maintain and stay put in."

Solidarity

Uri Weltmann, the National Field Organiser for Standing Together, explained Standing Together's work on the ground, especially its establishment of "Jewish-Arab Solidarity Guards" in mixed cities. These initiatives aim to organise community self-defence against incitement to racist violence:

"Ben-Gvir, the most hawkish, extremist-nationalist minister ever to preside in an Israeli

government [...] has handed out guns, and is motivating people to form local militias in mixed cities like Yaffa, Haifa, and Lod. So rather than sitting on the sidelines and letting the right-wing have the initiative [...] we have set up these solidarity networks to bring together Jewish and Arab neighbours, from different neighbourhoods of the same cities or from adjacent towns, to do mutual aid work and anti-racist work [...]"

Peace

"One of our groups, in Hadera, went out and changed racist graffiti. We do bilingual posterings, bringing a message of solidarity and equality [...] The message, in Hebrew and Arabic, 'only peace will bring security', which is entirely different from the message we hear from our leadership, is now visible in the streets thanks to volunteers from our groups.

"Some of our groups have faced state repression. Some of our activists in Jerusalem were detained by the police for the 'crime' of hanging posters that said, in Hebrew and Arabic, 'Jews and Arabs will

get through this together.' This is indicative of the atmosphere inside Israel at the moment."

Kefah Abukhdeir, a Palestinian-American educator and activist living in occupied East Jerusalem, gave her view on the future: "People need to know how intimately we are bound together as Israelis and Palestinians. We look into their eyes every day, we see them in uniform, we see them occupying us. Right now we need Palestinians to be protected.

"But we need justice and equity. We need to be able to speak to the Israelis and hammer out some type of justice [...] We have two failed national projects that are now siamese twins. We have to come out with something all of us can be proud of. I want everyone to abandon their pride and try to move forward, because we are speaking about massacres, about children being killed. This is what needs to end."

Two states

Yael Berda, from A Land for All, struck a similar note. She said: "We are intertwined. There are Israelis, and there are Palestinians, and nobody is going anywhere. And unless we want to live in perpetual war, that also creates war elsewhere, feeding the worst kinds of violence, feeding racism [...] what we need is to be able to see that we share this place [...] As difficult as it is to hear, yes, this is a settler colony... of refugees."

A Land for All advocates for a confederal two-state model, with sovereign and independent states of Israel and Palestine linked by confederal structures. Its activists say they look to the EU as a potential model. They argue that the idea that European powers, that had been involved in brutal and bloody wars with each other for hundreds of years, might one day confederate in an international body with rights of free movement would at one point have seemed similarly impossible.

Ceasefire

Socialists in Britain must do what we can to pressure our own government to change its policy – to support calls for a ceasefire and apply diplomatic pressure to that end, and to increase humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. We can attend marches and protests.

But progressive social change in Israel/Palestine can only come about as the result of movements on the ground organising for it. The most powerful single thing we can do at this moment is, therefore, to provide direct support and solidarity to voices such as those represented on the 24 October panel, Jewish and Palestinian activists advocating for equal rights and a shared future. □

• Listen to the 24 Oct panel on YouTube: bit.ly/24oct-i

UK Friends of Standing Together

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Ukraine, Palestine: similarities, differences

By Ira Berkovic

Two national peoples, one historically colonially subjugated by the state of the other. An ongoing war of attempted conquest and occupation. Devastating air strikes, bombardment of civilian targets, cutting off access to utilities and humanitarian aid. An authoritarian leader who continually denies the legitimacy of the subjugated people's national identity and right to self-determination.

Israel/Palestine, Russia/Ukraine, Putin/Netanyahu. There are many clear similarities between these two situations.

As Ukrainian activist and writer Daria Saburova [put it](#), "How can we look at images of Gaza and not see Mariupol or Bakhmut?" Those who oppose Russia's war and support Ukraine's right to self-determination should oppose Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its blockade and current siege of Gaza, and support the Palestinian people's right to their own state.

Workers' Liberty has been the most vocal and explicit of any current on the UK far left in backing Ukraine's war of national self-defence against attempted Russian conquest. We back that war not because we politically support the Ukrainian government or state in a more general sense, but because we support what would be the immediate outcome of a Ukrainian victory: the protection of Ukraine's national self-determination.

When Hamas launched its attacks against Israel on 7 October, several commentators on the UK and international left immediately drew comparisons with Ukraine, arguing that those who supported Ukraine's military resistance to Russian occupation should support (what they saw as) Hamas's military resistance to Israeli occupation.

Socialists should support Palestinians' right to resist. That includes the right to take up arms against the occupying military, and to defend themselves against military attack. But that general principle does not imply endorsement for all actions undertaken in the name of "resistance", by no-matter-what political force.

Young people at a music festival, elderly men and women, and tiny children are not an occupying military. And Hamas is not fighting to win Palestinian self-determination on an equal basis to Israeli Jews (i.e., two states with equal rights). Its aim is for a theocratic state

in all of pre-1948 Palestine, purged of Jews.

An analogy would arise if a far-right Ukrainian militia was conducting incursions into Russia itself, slaughtering Russian civilians, taking Russian civilian hostages, all on the basis of a political programme explicitly advocating the destruction of Russia. There is no such situation in Ukraine, nor any prospect of one – but if there was, there is no socialist or anti-imperialist principle that could possibly justify support for it.

These views are often met with the retort that non-Palestinians have no right to "tell Palestinians how to resist". But by refusing to oppose Hamas, socialists are not somehow "remaining neutral" on the question of "how Palestinians should resist", but endorsing the efforts of one current – one of the most reac-

tionary in Palestinian society – to make its "resistance" the dominant one. What about the many Palestinians who oppose Hamas, who advocate a different kind of "resistance", on a different political basis?

Ultimately this approach represents an abstention from politics. What "right" does anyone really have to "tell" anyone anything? Opposing Hamas, and instead supporting the political approaches advocated by Palestinian socialists such as Ayman Odeh, is not about "telling Palestinians what to do", but about applying our politics in a consistent, rather than relativistic and conditional, way.

There is surely a political opportunity to make links between the Ukrainian and Palestinian struggles – and not just these, but also the struggles of other



peoples fighting for the win or retain their right to self-determination: Kurds, Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, West Papuans, Saharawis, Chechens, and others. But those linkages, if they are to help advance socialist politics, have to be made on the basis of consistent democracy, the advocacy of equal democratic rights for all peoples. Misleading comparisons, based on a fetishisation of any military resistance, even for reactionary aims, serve no-one's struggles. □

Does the BBC hate Palestine?

By Keith Road

Why does the BBC hate Palestine? Yuri Prasad asks rhetorically in [Socialist Worker](#). Prasad asserts that the BBC's interest in the Hamas tunnel networks and use of civilians as human shields is minimising the bombing of Gaza.

In fact most people horrified by the Israeli onslaught in Gaza know about the horrors from the BBC and similar media. The BBC interviews lots of Israeli journalists, government and IDF spokespeople, retired diplomats, ex-prime ministers and similar; but it reports the figures provided by Hamas for casualties. It has reporters in Gaza, and they have reported on the ground what has happened. The BBC first reported the Al-Ahli hospital bombing as "an Israeli strike", and has sifted evidence carefully since.

Palestinian officials and members of pro-Palestine campaigns have often been interviewed on Newsnight and other news and current affairs programmes.

There is a British bias in the BBC's coverage, of course. It has interviewed more families of people with relatives being held hostage than it has British Palestinians. It continues to give prominent coverage to SNP leader Humza Yousaf's family trapped in Gaza, which also highlights the desperate situation for many people trapped in Gaza who

don't have ties with a significant political leader.

According to Prasad, a core problem with coverage by the BBC (and the *Guardian* and Channel 4) is that they "accept that Israel has a right to exist, they also accept it has the right to use military force against those that disagree. So, liberal news may report with compassion the pain of a Palestinian as they lie dying in the rubble. But watch how that sympathy vanishes if they are found to be part of the resistance."

Hamas

Hamas themselves have not been interviewed regularly in the UK media. Their spokespeople have given interviews, but given their programme and the fact they hold a large number of hostages, they don't get long interviews in the Western bourgeois press. Does that prove the media "hate Palestine"?

A specific criticism of the BBC shared by the government and the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD) is about the BBC's refusal to label Hamas or its fighters as "terrorists". The BBC has said it reports the attribute "terrorist" whenever the government or others use it, but says who the description comes from. The BBC's coverage has not minimised what Hamas did on 7 October.

There are real issues with all bour-

geois media coverage. These are media owned and run by capitalists seeking to make a profit. The BBC has rightly been criticised for having a chair chosen by the Prime Minister. But the serious bourgeois media try to tell the bourgeoisie what is really going on. They check facts. Their news coverage, if read with due critical care, is better than unverified social media snippets, picked up from tweets or Telegram chats.

A lot of the outrage as to whether or not Hamas beheaded babies was all played out on social media. Serious bourgeois news sources reported what was being discussed but did not rush to the conclusions that much of the Twitter commentariat was desperate for. Where allegations were reported, sometimes they were rolled back on and clarified.

Since we can't see the whole world – or even, in fact, more than slivers of it – first-hand, the serious bourgeois media, particularly serious newspapers, if we read them carefully, are an important source for us, as they were for Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and others in their day.

That information allows the left, including *Solidarity*, to write better-informed and more persuasive critiques. The BBC does not hate Palestine. Rather, *Socialist Worker* dislikes serious journalism. □

Enthusiasm for red-brown Wagenknecht



Antidoto

By Jim Denham

The German politician Sahra Wagenknecht has surprised no-one by announcing new party. For the time being she has modestly given it the name "Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht – for Reason and Justice".

Wagenknecht has tried this before: in 2018 she formed Stand Up, an outfit based upon vague anti-globalism, denunciations of finance capital and nostalgia for both East German Stalinism and West Germany's 1950s social market economy, with support for small and medium businesses.

Wagenknecht and her partner the former SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine were by then well known for their hostility to immigration, with Lafontaine calling for "illegal" immigrants to be deported and Wagenknecht blaming Angela Merkel's "uncontrolled opening of borders" for low pay and terrorism.

"Stand Up" didn't last long, but it gives us a pretty good idea of what the political basis of Wagenknecht's new party (a split from Die Linke, the

"Left Party") will be. Not that Wagenknecht has made any secret of her views: in 2021 she published a book (*The Self-Righteous*) which amounted to a diatribe against what she called "identity politics" and "left liberalism", summed up in this quote:

"Left-liberals claim to stand for diversity, cosmopolitanism, modernity, climate action, liberalism, and tolerance. On the other hand, they declare war on everything that left-liberal thinking considers right-wing: nationalism, looking backwards, provincialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia. For left-liberals, faith, nation and homeland are signs of backwardness."

Wagenknecht claims her aim is to win voters away from the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and of course, that's an admirable objective. But she is going about it by aping the politics of the AfD. No wonder that last year the AfD-associated magazine Compact featured her on its cover and speculated about the possibility of a future coalition (or at least some kind of deal) between the AfD and a Wagenknecht party.

The other main point of agreement between Wagenknecht and the AfD is opposition to any form of support for Ukraine and thinly-disguised sympathy

towards Putin's invasion. This would also explain the enthusiasm that the *Morning Star* has been showing towards her and her faction within the Die Linke.

Ukraine

The paper's editor, Ben Chacko interviewed Wagenknecht's close ally Savim Dagdelen for the paper's 20 January edition and followed this up by republishing a lengthy article by Dagdelen herself, translated from the *Berliner Zeitung*, calling for conciliation with Russia, blaming the US (alone) for the war and opposing arming Ukraine.

But the paper's most enthusiastic Wagenknecht supporter has been prominent Communist Party of Britain member Nick Wright, who (unlike Chacko) has no qualms about mentioning (and defending) her stance on immigration.

In the MS of 18 November 2021, he wrote – with obvious approval – that she "has challenged liberal responses to the rise of the far right to make the point that in challenging racism it is necessary to name those responsible for the flight of refugees and migrant workers..."

Wright then went on to claim that "she had calumny heaped upon her for sug-

gesting that in a factual and democratic debate about migration that there are many people who oppose racism and xenophobia and at the same time consider the regulation of migration to be essential."

Now that the new Wagenknecht party has been announced, Wright can scarcely contain his delight, proclaiming: "It is true that it takes a detailed class position on the main economic and social questions and is highly critical of what it describes as Die Linke's focus on identity over class, but its position on immigration is more nuanced than its opponents claim" (MS 26 October).

The same edition of the paper publishes the statement released by Wagenknecht and her supporters announcing their departure from Die Linke and the intention to form a new party. It complains that by "focusing on young, urban activism-oriented milieus" Die Linke was "driving away our traditional voters" (presumably meaning older white people) and of "a lack of concentration on social justice and peace" ("peace" in this context presumably meaning appeasing Putin). The word "socialism" does not appear anywhere. □

A tale of two SWPs



Eric Lee

By Eric Lee

The massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972 caused genuine shock and horror around the world. There was considerable sympathy for Israel in the wake of the tragedy. But not so for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States. Their response to the terrorist attack was to claim that the "real victims" were Palestinians. For supporters of the Socialist Party, the SWP had crossed a red line. A national campaign was launched to spread the word that the SWP was now openly taking an antisemitic position.

The SWP's reaction was an interesting one. In their weekly newspaper, *The Militant*, they ran a series of articles about how the organisation had fought against antisemitism since its founding in the 1930s. They were horrified that any-

one would consider them to be antisemites. But their line on Israel and Palestine did not change. And the organisation, which was the largest and most important non-Stalinist group on the American left, remained outspoken in its support for Palestine and against Israel.

The British SWP does not share a common tradition with the American group, except that they both come out of an anti-Stalinist, far Left tradition with somewhat differing views about Trotsky and the Soviet Union. But what they shared in common other than a name until fairly recently was their extreme hostility to Israel and their support for Palestine.

Here's what the British SWP had to say immediately after the 7 October Hamas attacks on Israeli kibbutzim and towns near Gaza: "Palestinians have struck a huge blow against Israeli settler colonialism". Note that they use the term "settler" to describe villages set up long before the Israeli occupation of the West Bank or Gaza. By "settler" they mean all Israelis. They continue: "In the face

of escalating violence from the Israeli state, Palestinian fighters launched an unprecedented attack from the Gaza Strip on Saturday 7 October." They found a Palestinian living near Jerusalem who told them: "All of us are proud" of the Hamas attack on Israeli civilians.

They are rightly concerned about the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, which will certainly get worse as the fighting continues. But there has not been a single word of criticism of Hamas coming from the SWP.

Turn-around

But meanwhile, in the US, the SWP has made a complete turn-around in its views. *The Militant* continues to appear each week and in its coverage of Gaza it takes a strong anti-Hamas view. The top headline on their website today is "Fight Jew-hatred! Support the right of Israel to exist!" Another article in the newspaper is entitled "Hamas was built to kill Jews, with disdain for Palestinians". Unlike the British SWP, their coverage of the 7

October massacre and mass kidnapping begins with these words: "The cold-blooded massacre ... by Tehran-backed Hamas was consistent with the Islamist group's reactionary course since it was established decades ago."

A more complete change in position could not be imagined. What caused the change? I honestly don't know. Some of the top leaders of the American SWP are the same ones who led it back in 1972, most notably Jack Barnes, who has been the party's National Secretary for more than 50 years. Whatever caused the change, it is certainly a welcome development.

It certainly wasn't the campaign that we carried out back in 1972. The only response of the SWP to that was denial and a highlighting of their record in the fight against antisemitism decades earlier. Arguably, the fact that they felt an obligation to defend themselves against the charge of antisemitism meant something.

Nothing of the sort is happening here to the British SWP.

They, like most groups on the far Left in Britain and across Europe, are uncritical supporters of Hamas, cheerleaders for the worst terrorist attacks experienced by the Jewish people since the Second World War. They cheer on Hamas, an organisation which has done nothing to make Palestinian lives better or advance a two-state solution.

Can anything be done to persuade the majority of far Left groups in Britain and elsewhere to change course and adopt a position similar to that taken by the American SWP? It seems unlikely. But what we can do – and what a new generation must do – is to fearlessly challenge left-wing groups that refuse to condemn Hamas and refuse to recognise the Jewish people's right to their homeland. Until they do abandon their support for murderous terrorism, they are not my comrades – and they should not be yours either. □

• Eric Lee is the founder editor of LabourStart, writing here in a personal opinion column.



Israel-Palestine: a timeline

1791: French revolution grants equal rights to Jews, ending thousands of years of discrimination and sometimes murderous persecution against Jews in Christian Europe. In the first half of the 19th century it looks as if this bourgeois equality will spread. Jews finally gain full legal equality in England in 1890.

1881: Wave of pogroms in the Tsarist Empire, followed by a series of laws discriminating against Jews. Antisemitism starts rising again in Europe.

1897: First congress of the Zionist movement. Settlements in sparsely-populated and less economically developed lands – the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, etc. – are widely regarded at the time as brave pioneering, even by those who give consideration to the rights of the people already there. The Zionists propose Jews can build a new collective life and ensure mutual defence in Palestine, where there is a longstanding minority of Jews and the main city, Jerusalem, has a Jewish majority. They are a small minority among Jews in Europe.

1903-6: New wave of pogroms in the Tsarist Empire. Start of systematic building of Zionist settlements in Palestine (then an ill-defined area long ruled by the Ottoman Empire, centred in what is now Istanbul) on the basis of “Jewish labour only” (aiming to build up a working nation, not a settler caste exploiting others). In the Ottoman Empire Jews have long been disadvantaged, but less than in Europe.

1908: “Young Turk” revolution in Ottoman Empire. This sets off a rise of Arab national consciousness.

1914: Ottoman Empire joins World War 1 on the side of Germany.

1917: Seeking Jewish support in the war, both France and Britain promise to back a “Jewish national home” in Palestine. Simultaneously, seeking Arab support, Britain promises to back Arab national claims.

1917-18: France “gets” Syria and Lebanon from the collapsed Ottoman Empire; Britain “gets” Iraq and Jordan and Palestine (it already has semi-colonial control of Egypt).

1920-1: Palestinian Arab riots against Jewish immigration. Jews are now 10% of population (were 14% in 1914). The Jewish colonists establish a militia, the Haganah. The British limit Jewish immigration and sponsor a Supreme Muslim Council. They will spend the rest of its time in Palestine “balancing” between Jewish and Arab communities, alternating concessions and suppression on both sides.

1929: Renewed anti-Jewish riots after many Jews arrive from persecution in Poland. The British at first propose banning almost all Jewish immigration, but back down.

1933: Hitler comes to power in Germany. Flood of Jewish migrants. By

1936 Jews will be 28% of population, although Arabs are also migrating into Palestine.

1936-9: Mass Arab revolt in Palestine. British bloodily repress the revolt.

1937: A British Royal Commission proposes to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Jewish leaders accept this. Arab leaders reject. Britain drops the proposal.

1938: USA convenes an international conference, supposedly to help Jewish refugees from Nazism: only the Dominican Republic offers an open door.

1939-40: Britain limits Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 over five years, and bans almost all land sales to Jews.

1944: Radical Zionist groups start armed struggle against British in Palestine; the mainstream Haganah joins in from late 1945. In 1946 Jordan becomes independent, though its army is still commanded by British officers.

1947: Seeking to rid itself of Palestine, Britain refers the question to the United Nations.

29 November: The UN decides to partition Palestine, but no agency to implement the plan. Jewish leaders accept the plan, Arab leaders reject it. The British withdraw over the months to May 1948. Fighting between the Jewish community and Arab militias, mostly coming from Syria, but supported by Arabs in Palestine.

1948: 14 May: Jewish community proclaims the state of Israel as per UN plan. Arab armies enter Palestine with talk from some leaders of “driving the Jews into the sea”. Although US and UK put on an arms embargo, and the UK is passively on the side of the Arab states (the main ones are British semi-colonies), Israel wins the war thanks to arms supplies from Czechoslovakia organised by Stalin in the hope of disrupting the British Empire. Israel rounds out its UN-plan borders; Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza) annex most of the land allocated for a Palestinian state. 700,000 Arabs flee or are driven out of what will become Israel in the course of war, in three waves between December 1947 to October 1948. An Arab minority of about 20% remains in Israel.

From 1947 (in many stages): About 600,000 Jews flee or are driven out from Arab and other Middle East countries, to Israel.

Early 1950s: Sporadic and ineffectual peace talks between Israel and the Arab states fail. Israel refuses to readmit refugees, Arab states other than Jordan refuse to integrate them, and the UN relief operation set up for them (UNRWA) becomes indefinite.

1956: October-November: Israel, France and Britain attack Egypt, in response to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal on 26 July. They withdraw

under US pressure. Israel seizes the Sinai peninsula, but withdraws in 1957 under US pressure.

1964: May: Creation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), at first a figment of the Egyptian government, from late 1960s more autonomous. High tide of Arab nationalism and renewed talk by Arab leaders of defeating Israel.

1967: June: Israel defeats the Arab states in the “six day war”, occupies Sinai, the Golan, the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. It then offers “land for peace”. The Arab states refuse. The US allies more closely with Israel after 1967.

1969: PLO adopts programme of “secular democratic state”.

1970: September: Jordanian army attacks PLO guerrillas and the refugee camps they are based on, driving Palestinian militias out of Jordan.

1973: October: Egypt and Syria launch war to recover territories occupied by Israel in 1967, but fail.

1974: June: PLO makes its first move towards “two states”. (The pressure comes from leftist Palestinian groups).

1978: September: Egypt and Israel sign a peace deal; Israel withdraws from Sinai (1979-82).

Early 1980s: Number of Israeli settlers in West Bank starts growing fast.

1982: June: Start of Israeli invasion of Lebanon, followed by siege of Beirut, aimed at defeating the Palestinian militias then strong in Lebanon and installing an Israel-friendly (Christian Arab) government in Lebanon. The main political-military effect is to stimulate the rise of Hezbollah. Israel occupies areas of southern Lebanon until 2000, but then withdraws.

1987: December: Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories (“first intifada”) begins.

1988: PLO moves to “two states” policy.

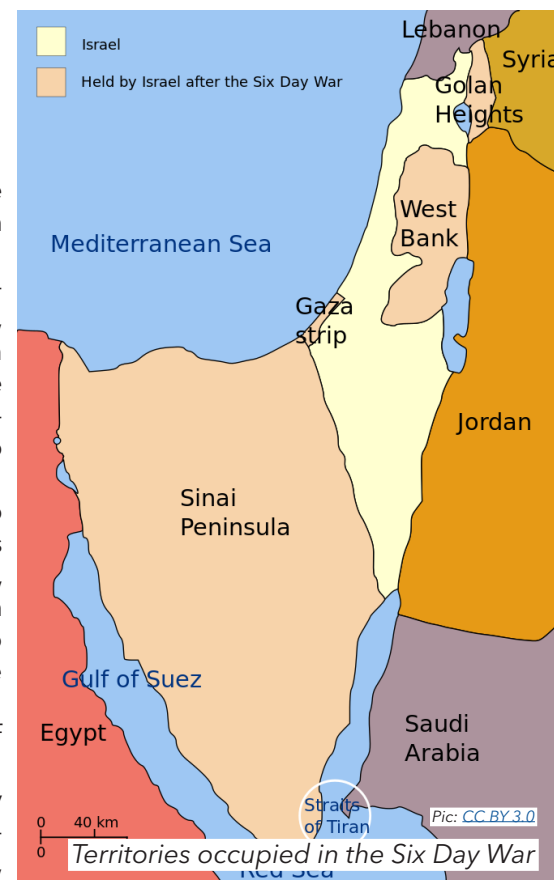
1993: September: The PLO and Israel sign a peace document for Israel to concede Palestinian control of increasing areas of the West Bank and Gaza. That process continues slowly and falteringly over the next eight years, but simultaneously Israel builds more settlements.

1994: October: Peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

1995: September: “Oslo II” agreement signed in Washington.

November-December: Israel completes its withdrawal from West Bank towns, except Hebron. The West Bank takes roughly its current shape: islands of Palestinian quasi-autonomy (currently 165 of them) each surrounded by Israeli military control and increasing Israeli settlements.

2000: September: Breakdown of Israeli-PLO talks, and provocative visit by



right-wing Israeli leader Ariel Sharon to the Al-Aqsa precinct in Jerusalem, spark “second intifada”.

2001: January: Last-gasp US-sponsored talks between PLO and Israeli government break down, though they have come close to a flawed version of “two states”. Then George W Bush becomes US president, and right-winger Ariel Sharon wins Israeli elections. Since then Israeli governments have settled into “containing” the Palestinians rather than seeking a settlement. Israel imposes complete blockade on the Occupied Territories, and in March-May temporarily reoccupies all West Bank cities except Jericho.

October: In run-up to 2003 invasion of Iraq, USA makes its first official statement backing an independent Palestinian state; but puts little pressure on Sharon.

From March 2001, and through 2002: Suicide bombings of Israeli civilians by Palestinian Islamists.

2002: March. The Arab League adopts a peace plan – “two states” with the 1967 borders, Arab recognition of Israel. (They also make a blurred and ambiguous call for the “right of return”). No progress in talks, not even after US sponsors a “roadmap” in 2003.

2005: Aug-Sep. Israel carries out withdrawal from Gaza proposed by Ariel Sharon in 2003 (retaining large controls over Gaza’s supplies and borders).

2006: July-August: War between Israel and Hezbollah.

2007: June. Hamas makes a coup to take over Gaza from the Palestinian Authority. Israel and Egypt impose a blockade on Gaza, which remains. Israel and Hamas have fought sizeable wars in 2008-9, 2014, and 2021.

2013-4: New US effort to get negotiations. No result.

2020: September: Abraham Accords. Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and UAE recognise Israel.

Why gender pay gaps survive



Women's Fightback

By Katy Dollar

Tens of thousands of women and non-binary people in Iceland took part in the "kvinnafri", a 24 hour women's strike over the gender pay gap and gender-based violence on 24 October. The day was the first full-day women's strike since 1975.

Strike organiser called for protection for migrant workers. Around 22% of the female workforce is foreign-born, according to Statistics Iceland, and they work disproportionately more hours for lower pay.

Iceland has been ranked the best country in the world for gender equality by the World Economic Forum (WEF) for 14 years. Gender inequality still exists, with the WEF assigning it an overall score of 91.2%.

"We're seeking to bring attention

to the fact that we're called an equal-paradise, but there are still gender disparities and urgent need for action," said Freyja Steingrimsdottir, one of the strike organisers, cited by Reuters news agency.

In the 1990s Icelandic trade unions ran campaigns to improve parents' leave. In 2000 paternity leave changed from two weeks to three months, which could not be transferred and has since been lengthened. In 2021 Iceland's parliament passed a new law on parents' leave giving each parent at least six months off. Longer non-transferable leave significantly improved take up of paternity leave.

The gender pay gap has several interconnected causes. There are unequal opportunities for women throughout their education, training, and careers.

In April 2022, the UK's gender pay gap for full-time employees was 8.3%, meaning that average pay for full-time female employees was 8.3% lower than for full-time male employees, or for every £1 a full-time male employee

earned, a full-time female worker earned 91.7 pence. Among all employees, the gender pay gap was 14.9%.

Women are more likely to take part-time work as there is greater expectation on them to do unpaid domestic work. Part-time work is lower-paid on average.

Harvard economist Claudia Goldin has written about how high-wage firms have adopted pay-setting practices that disproportionately reward individuals who work very long and particular hours. This means that even if men and women are equally productive per hour, those, disproportionately men, who are more likely to work excessive hours and be available at evenings and weekends are paid more highly. A reduction in the working week across the board would benefit pay equality. Extended career breaks for caring, like maternity leave and taking time off to care for elderly relatives, also limit women's earnings. In a heterosexual couple sharing a family wage it may be economically rational to prioritise one

career path for advancement.

The sorting of genders into different occupations can itself be driven by sexism. By the time a woman enters the workplace, her occupational choice is the culmination of years of education, societal expectations, hiring practices, and cultures within industries. Forces beyond personal preference put women disproportionately into lower-paid occupations. Wage levels in certain types of work such as care, cleaning and hospitality are influenced by sexist assumptions about skill level required for work associated with women's unpaid domestic labour.

The simplest way to reduce gender pay inequality is to reduce pay inequality in general. Raising minimum wages and setting maximum wages would shrink the gap. Our unions need to organise in low-paid industries. Unions must organise those workers to fight collectively for higher wages. □

Building wealth on cuts?

By Sacha Ismail

Discussion at The World Transformed (TWT) festival that took place alongside Labour Party conference (7-10 October) reinforced how disoriented much of the left is on local government.

The TWT session on "ecosocialism" – really more about local community organising – featured a speaker from "Cooperation Hull", a group of activists who have organised meetings they call "People's Assemblies" in the town and are now planning to stand in local elections there.

Some of the organising Cooperation Hull has done sounded interesting and even impressive, but what their speaker said begged many questions.

One crucial one: they advocated "participatory budgeting", but said nothing at all about the radical defunding of local government by the Tories or the need to fight for more, desperately needed resources.

It's not radical to passively accept of the gutting of local government but dress it up with talk about "participatory".

The chair of the session

hailed the Cooperation Hull speaker using a different buzz-phrase, one beloved of Labour left organisation Momentum: "community wealth-building".

Again, this seems to amount to giving left colouration to councils fiddling around within the framework of accepting huge funding cuts, doing nothing to try to reverse them.

On 28 September the *Guardian* reported that "councils are facing a record cash shortfall of more than

£3.5 billion in the coming year with jobs and services facing cuts... the situation [is] likely to worsen as the cumulative funding gap is predicted to rise even further to more than £7bn in 2025-6. [Public sector] union [Unison] said many local authorities were already considering job cuts as well as scaling back community services" – this after thirteen years of brutal cuts.

That the left cannot bring itself even to argue – let alone campaign – for re-

funding of local government is surreal.

Those who suggest radical policies are possible without winning more resources are making the Tories' job easier.

As the barest of minimums, local government trade union and Labour Party activists need to create an organised voice indicting the Tories' defunding of local government, and demanding more money and a commitment from Labour. □

Tom O'Lincoln, 1947-2023

By Riki Lane

Tom O'Lincoln has sadly passed away. He had had a great influence in revolutionary left politics in Australia since he arrived from the US in 1971.

He had in the late 1960s joined the US International Socialists, then strongly influenced by Hal Draper's politics, including a bureaucratic collectivist analysis of the Stalinist states, rather than Tony Cliff's state-capitalist one. Tom played a leadership role in a number of organisations of the "International Socialist" tradition (which has fractured a few times in Australia), and there are many tributes to him from current and former members of the current organisations, [Socialist Alternative](#) and [Solidarity](#). He published seven books and numerous articles, and established many

international connections. I met Tom first in the late 1970s, when our tendency still had a "degenerated workers' state" position on the USSR.

What always impressed me was his lack of sectarianism, his ability and willingness to have serious, respectful discussions with other leftists on topics where we disagreed. I remember discussing Israel-Palestine with him in the 1990s – he would have been initiated, in the USA, in something like a "Two States" position, but had moved with his political current to something much more anti-Israel, while Workers Liberty had moved to our current position.

We had a frank and respectful exchange of views – I wish that we could do so again now. Tom will be greatly missed, and will continue to be an inspiration. □

NUS shrinks election democracy

By Sam Myerson

Nominations open on 14 November for National Union of Students (NUS) full-time officer roles, earlier than usual. They close on 30 Jan, and voting will be 8-11 April, so the whole election process takes place outside NUS conference (17-18 April).

There will be no hustings at conference, no other NUS-organised in-person hustings. The changes are said to be broadly in line with the antidemocratic measures introduced in [2019](#).

The longer process of nomination is claimed to be necessary for in-depth background checks to be carried out on candidates.

All this will mean that candidates can do less, or even no, in-person campaigning, unless they are able to travel to local in-person hustings. NUS conference is already a hollow body stripped of almost all power, and such changes are being cascaded throughout the democratic structures of the organisation.

Another reason cited for the changes to elections cited is that conference needs all its time for "important business". We say make conference longer, not shorter, with more time for debate and discussion and with real democratic votes. Scrap this system of online elections.

Higher education and further education are in crisis. NUS needs to take up a serious fight for students, but lack of participation is a real and serious problem. These changes will further disenfranchise students. □



Go to the Israel-Gaza protests!

By Martin Thomas

Solidarity calls on readers to go to the protests for a ceasefire in Israel-Gaza this coming weekend, 4-5 November, and probably many weekends for months now.

We recognise Israel's right to defend itself, but oppose the massacre in Gaza. And we are socialists: people who get active, out on the streets, rather than "getting on with our lives" and protesting only privately or by social media.

Secondly, we go to the protests not

to blend in and just swell the totals, but to create a profile for a clear and sharp position opposing both Hamas and the Israeli military onslaught.

Conversations tell us that most people on the big protests do oppose both. But at present, without us doing enough to give a profile for that stance, that majority has little way of expressing it clearly.

At the big London protest on 28 October, among the best-resourced groups with placards and chants was the Socialist Workers Party – who [do not actually support](#) the slogan of the demonstration (ceasefire)! (They are against a ceasefire by Hamas).

We want a good profile for "two states" (the right of the Palestinians to a real independent state of their own alongside a secure Israel), workers' unity, peace. One with no taint of the revenge-for-revenge idea that Israel should be wiped out.

We want that because it is right. Having the anti-war demonstrations swung by [ambiguous and slippery](#) placards and chants towards a pro (Hamas) war tone is wrong, and will also undermine their ability to press the government.

Pressing the government to back a ceasefire may have effect. We don't know the relative weight of factors in the Israeli government's slight drawing-back from its early talk of a huge and almost immediate ground invasion.

Voices for peace on Israel have become louder, while the initial wave for bloodthirsty revenge has receded. Israeli military chiefs will have told Netanyahu to think through operations carefully.

The US and European powers have sought to "hug" Israel by promising support and then counselling restraint. They are worried about Netanyahu's lack of a workable "endgame", and

about the risk of wider war. Yet the war looks set to run many months, grinding more and more civilian lives as it goes. Every pressure for restraint will be valuable.

Thirdly, even the best demonstrations in Britain can help only in a limited way. The action that most matters is on the ground in Israel-Palestine.

We go to the demonstrations not just to protest, but to help build support for a real movement in Israel-Palestine, the joint Jewish-Arab social movement Standing Together (see pages 2 and 8-9).

We want our readers on the protest in large numbers, and making themselves visible with banners, placards, newspapers, pamphlets, and leaflets, so a positive message of solidarity can make itself heard over the dead-end negative anti-Israel background noise. Join us! □



Activist Agenda

As of 31 October, 13 Labour front-benchers have called for a ceasefire in Gaza, plus about a quarter of all Labour MPs, Labour mayors Sadiq Khan and Andy Burnham, and Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar.

Keir Starmer remains stubbornly in lockstep with the Tory government, calling only for "humanitarian pauses" (short ceasefires). The EU has called for a humanitarian pause, and US president Biden has called for Israel to "consider" pauses.

Despite some motions in local Labour Parties being ruled out of order, several local parties have passed motions for a ceasefire, by big majorities. *Solidarity* calls on readers to spread such motions.

Starmer's public approval rating has [gone down](#) 12 percentage points, maybe over his stance.

However, the Labour leadership has suspended Andy McDonald from the Labour parliamentary whip "pending investigation" on spurious grounds of some vapid words in his speech at the 28 October London demonstration. "We will not rest until we have justice. Until all people, Israelis and Palestinians, between the river and the sea, can live in peaceful liberty." Other Labour MPs who spoke at that demonstration, John McDonnell and Apsana Begum, have not been penalised.

Maybe by suspending McDonald the leadership hope to try to stop him standing again as an MP.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman continues to threaten pro-ceasefire demonstrators, but so far police action on demonstrations has been marginal. The best way to defend the right to protest is to continue to assert it.

Save the date: the afternoon of Sunday 26 November, for a protest in support of the Hong Kong 47. □

- Links for campaigns, template motions, etc. at workersliberty.org/agenda

Antisemitic outburst in Dagestan

By Michael Baker

Russia has now seen what may be the starkest outburst of antisemitism worldwide since the beginning of the war in Israel-Gaza. Ten people (largely police and protestors) were taken to hospital, with two left in a critical condition, on Sunday 29 October, after a crowd stormed Makhachkala International Airport in Dagestan, looking for passengers from an inbound Israeli flight.

Hundreds of protestors gathered outside the airport after rumours spread through local Telegram

channels that a Tel Aviv-Makhachkala flight would be bringing refugees to be relocated in Dagestan. Some in the crowd carried Palestinian flags, others antisemitic signs. One prominent placard read "[there is] no place in Dagestan for child killers".

The crowd then burst into the airport and onto the runway, questioning individual passengers and searching their pockets for passports, trying to identify Israeli citizens. Around 60 were arrested at the scene, and police report that over a hundred have since been identified from footage.

The previous night, 28 October, a smaller protest gathered outside a hotel in Khasavyurt, also in Dagestan, after rumours that Israeli refugees were staying there. The hotel staff reportedly let some protestors in to "confirm" that there were no Jewish people there. On the morning of the 29th, a planned Jewish community centre under construction in the neighbouring Kabardino-Balkaria region was set on fire. Leading figures from the Jewish community in Dagestan have discussed the feasibility of evacuating the region's 800 or so Jewish families.

A spokesperson from the Kremlin has called the protests the result of "outside interference", surprising nobody. The Israel-Gaza war is likely to put increasing pressure on an already internally fractious Russia – Putin has recently been vocally pro-Palestinian, but there have been enormous familial and cultural connections between Russia and Israel since nearly a million Jews fled Russian antisemitism when the borders were opened in the 1990s. Over a million Israelis have Russian heritage, and Russian is the third most common first language in the country. □

Why we have "peace" in the headline

By Colin Foster

The front page headline on *Solidarity* this week says "Peace". It is a way of saying in one word what we said in three ("stop the massacre", "stop the war") in previous issues.

It is also a slogan rarely used by Marxists in recent decades. Why, and what is different now?

From the early 1950s, and the reverberations persist, the Communist Parties in the stronger capitalist countries made "peace" a big slogan and busied themselves heavily with building "peace movements" designed essentially as adjuncts to the USSR's diplomacy.

For Algeria's independence war, the French Communist Party's slogan was mainly "Peace in Algeria". For the Viet-

nam war, "Peace in Vietnam". Marxists criticised because this meant pleas to the French and US governments for restraint, and evaded siding with the insurgents in the colonial and semi-colonial world against imperialism.

Most of us were insufficiently critical of the insurgent movements (FLN in Algeria, NLF in Vietnam), but we were right to side with them against France and the US.

Hamas is [not](#) of the same sort as the FLN or the NLF. It is not a national liberation movement, not even one with bad politics. It aims to drive out the Israeli Jews, not to win an independent Palestinian state. With Hezbollah, it is part of a loose network centred round Iran, a large state which also proclaims "death to Israel".

Doubt also attaches to the peace slogan because Lenin early in World War One criticised it as weak. Basing himself on the pre-1914 socialist movement's (correct) predictions that world war would in time trigger great uprisings against the war-making governments, he said: turn the imperialist war into a civil war.

Trotsky, sharing the same basic attitude to the war as Lenin, nevertheless advocated also using the peace slogan. In [hindsight](#), we think Trotsky was right. In fact, later in the war, Lenin tacitly came round. For example, in the run-up to the workers' revolution in Russia in October 1917, he [proclaimed](#) his slogans as: "Power to the Soviets, Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Nations, Bread to the Starving!" □

What left Palestine

On 24 October, Standing Together leaders Sally Abed and Uri Weltmann, alongside Palestinian educator and activist Kefah Abukhdeir and Israeli activist Yael Berda, a supporter of the "A Land for All" initiative, spoke at an online webinar organised by activists in the USA. These are lightly edited excerpts from their comments, some of which were made in response to questions from the moderator and therefore do not necessarily reflect "prepared" remarks. The webinar can be viewed on YouTube: bit.ly/24oct-i

Sally Abed

I identify as a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Especially these days, unfortunately, the political ethos of what is "Israeli" definitely doesn't see me as part of it [...] I see a very great responsibility in my existence here as part of 20%, 17%, of citizens; and you have Eastern Jerusalemites such as Kefah who are not citizens, but are residents. [...]

I see my role here as a social justice activist [...] How can I look at the people who are currently not convinced, the people who currently don't have the political will to even acknowledge the fact that I'm Palestinian and acknowledge my history and narrative, and actually bring them to our side, to my side, to acknowledge that? It's a very different kind of work than Palestinians abroad, or even in the occupied territories or in Gaza. I feel that responsibility because I have a privilege of experiencing a semi-democracy of some sort. [...]

And right now, in these very polarised moments, staying put in the middle [is difficult], while my people are being slaughtered very brutally, while we are being silenced here in Israel, while we're being persecuted and



Sally Abed

we're being arrested and fired from our jobs and expelled from universities, not even for talking about the occupation or about apartheid or about the brutal attacks on Gaza... just mere expressions of solidarity with people and with children are being criminalised at this moment. [...]

I live in Haifa. There are organised civil groups that are being heavily armed by our National Security Minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, who is an openly Kahanist Jewish-supremacist. It's extremely hard to navigate the persecutions that we are facing while also not being able to express our collective trauma as Palestinians, but also enduring the trauma of Israeli society. My very close friends, Jewish friends and neighbours and colleagues, have been deeply impacted by the 7 October attack. So it's probably one of the most complex experiences to have, but in many ways it is, in my opinion, one of the most critical spaces to maintain and stay put in. [...]

[On 24 October] we woke up to the bloodiest night yet in Gaza. [...] It's just heart-wrenching to see that and to feel so hopeless and helpless to actually do something about it, especially here

from Israel as a Palestinian. [...] I think a message for me as a Palestinian that is very important to portray to everyone in the world, is that there are Palestinians in Israel who are going through the experience and the humanitarian loss and the catastrophe that the Israeli public has gone through.

Our cause for Palestinian liberation is a very just cause. However, we cannot justify the extreme measures that Hamas took to advance this cause. And I think one of the most important things that we need to hold right now, as a Palestinian liberation movement and as Palestinians, is our rights, all of us, as civilians, to life, and to live securely. And I really want to hold that very, very tight. I want to say: listen to us. Listen to the people on the ground here in Israel. We are often overlooked. We are seeing amazing cases of radical empathy, of victims, Israeli victims, who have lost dear ones, who have people in captivity right now, and who are still calling for a ceasefire, who are still calling for ending the occupation, who are still calling for peace. [...]

The conversation abroad around Palestinian liberation is quite academic, talking about decolonisation and resistance in a very theorised way, not that I'm taking away from its merits and what it has done for the Palestinian liberation movement abroad. However, I do think it's critical, especially now, after 7 October and after a lot of these movements have failed to hold the humanity of the Jewish Israelis that live in this land... I think it's more critical than ever to really connect between our efforts here on the ground in Palestine and in Israel and what is happening abroad. These theorised ideas of liberation need to have some kind of translation into how we build the political capital within our societies to do those things, to decolonise. Reach out to us and let's work together to create a much better and more constructive conversation.

Uri Weltmann

Standing Together has been setting up local groups throughout the country called the Jewish Arab Solidarity Networks, or the Jewish Arab Solidarity Guard, as a way to prepare for the fact that the political leadership in the Israeli state is pushing towards a clash between Jewish and Palestinian citizens inside Israel. Itamar Ben-Gvir, the most extremist, hawkish nationalist minister ever to preside in the Israeli government, is openly talking about preparing for a scenario similar to May 2021. He has handed out guns and motivated people to form local militias in big mixed cities like Yafa and Haifa and



Standing Together

Akko and Lyd. This is a very dangerous development.

So, rather than sitting on the sidelines and letting the right wing take the initiative and push in this dangerous direction, we in Standing Together, along with other partners, have been working on the ground to set up these solidarity networks, to bring together Jewish and Arab neighbours from different neighbourhoods of the same city or living in adjacent towns, to do solidarity work, to do mutual aid work, to promote equality and anti-racism in the public sphere. [...]

Some of our groups also faced state repression. Standing Together activists in West Jerusalem, both Jews and Palestinians, were detained by the police. Their crime? They were hanging posters that said, "Jews and Arabs, we will get through this together." This shows the extent of the public atmosphere inside Israel right now [...]

Since the escalation began, we've been swamped with hundreds of people turning to us, Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, college students who had faced disciplinary procedures because they, for example, changed their Facebook profile to a picture that said, "Stop the war" in Hebrew, Arabic,



Uri Weltmann



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ns and Israelis say



Other activists protesting violence and racism and calling for co-existence

and English. Suddenly they received an email from their college saying that they were suspended, and faced disciplinary charges because they "supported Hamas". Or Arab workers in mixed workplaces where Jewish and Palestinian workers work together, hospitals, municipalities, and elsewhere that are facing repression, that are facing disciplinary procedures for liking an Instagram page that highlighted the suffering of children and innocent civilians in Gaza. [...]

There has been an ongoing project of right-extremist forces for years to try to Judaize the mixed cities. We have organised groups that try to create an atmosphere that is intolerant towards the Arab residents. And in May 2021, in places such as Yaffa and Lyd, some of these groups took up arms and were instigators of violence towards their Arab neighbours, sometimes even causing hurt and loss of life. And while in 2021, Itamar Ben-Gvir was an isolated member of parliament from the opposition, now he is the Minister of National Security, in charge of the police. So he has a lot more power in his hands to push for his dangerous agenda. [...]

Since 2005, there have been 16 major military operations carried out by Israeli



Kefah Abukhdeir

governments against the population of Gaza. None of these actions brought safety and security to Israelis. They only wreaked havoc on the population in Gaza, costing many innocent lives, including children, and each one of them merely planted the seed for the next major military operation. I fear we are going in the same direction. I fear our government is pushing us into yet another round of violent bloodletting, yet another round of taking a terrible toll of human life in Gaza, and yet another round of undermining the safety and security of the people who live in Israel.

We need to go in an entirely different direction. We need to go for an Israeli-Palestinian peace based on UN resolutions. We need to go in the direction of ending the siege and ending the occupation and securing the independence, freedom, and justice of both peoples. This is what Standing Together is doing, and we are doing this not on the West Coast or the East Coast or in Europe. We are doing this inside Israeli society, organising Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel, which we think is the only way for us as an Israeli peace movement to go about.

Kefah Abukhdeir

People need to know how intimately we are bound together as Israelis and Palestinians. Israel needs to know that Palestinians see them every day. We look into their eyes and we know them the best. We've seen them in uniform. We've seen them occupy us. We've seen them every day, in the fleeting moments where we're passing each other. I see every day when Israelis send their children to my neighbourhood and I wake up to their children every day in their uniforms, occupying us. I see them at the checkpoints, I see them in university, I see them in different places.

What do we need right now? We need for Palestinians to be protected, to be given agency, equality, and equity, and to be able to speak to the Israelis and hammer out some type of justice. What I'm asking for is to not let blood [have] blood, even as both of us, as both societies are [...] trying not to go crazy with all that they've seen [...] [There are] two failed national projects that are now basically Siamese twins. [We need] to come out with something that all of us can be proud of, and come out with sanity. I want everybody to abandon their pride, abandon the pomp and circumstance, and to try to move forward. Because anytime that children are being killed, anytime we're speaking of massacres as if it's some kind of sport... enough is enough. I

think this is where it needs to end. [...]

Israel is [a] nationalist movement created out of victims. These are people who have been rejected and were hated, and they came to Palestine seeking refuge, and it turned into a disaster. And our movement was sabotaged by this influx of people, and we've never been able to deal with it. We're the "victims of victims". This is a famous quote by Edward Said. [...] I want to have the opportunity to explore that, to address it. I don't know where. Connecting social justice issues to peace-building and anti-occupation efforts... that's the organiser's answer.

Yael Berda

We need to be able to see on the ground how we are intertwined. We are intertwined on this territory, from the river to the sea. There are Israelis and Palestinians. Nobody's going anywhere, and their diasporas aren't going anywhere, and unless we want to live in perpetual war [...] we need to be able to see that we share this place. I know how difficult it is to hear. Yes, this is a settler colony... of refugees. [...] There's no military solution. We need to talk about political solutions, but first of all we need to stop the killing. [...] On the one hand, there's an understanding that as the right wing pushed to destroy the possibility for Palestinian unity and for an agreement with Palestinians, one of the ways they did that was by upholding Hamas and giving [Hamas] various ways to become stronger. One of the things you see on social media very strongly is Netanyahu and people from the Religious Zionist movement saying that Hamas is a gift to the right wing because it prevents a peace agreement. People continue to make that connection. The rift in Israel is massive, and this is part of it.

But I have to say, on the other hand, that one of the things you also hear is people saying they cannot remain complacent in front of a continuation of the Hamas government in Gaza. And this is a very complex issue. Because we come back to the issue of, who's going to tell the Palestinians how to run themselves? But I think that [...] one has to be open and not just move forward with ideological constructs [...] but, because of the sense of vulnerability and because of the utter need for security, to be able to look at both sides of this issue, both at the internal strife and what people are saying.

If you have right-wing, theocratic movements that are being upheld by other right-wing, theocratic movements, then as someone who opposes right-wing, theocratic movements, I



Yael Berda

stand in direct opposition to that [...] in my society, for sure, but many of my Palestinian allies [also] stand in front of Hamas. [...] I think it's very important to listen to Palestinian voices explaining the different connections [...] [As] Sally said, listen to people on the ground, listen to what they're telling you.

We're also having this conversation as the Gaza medical system collapsed a few hours ago. God knows what's going on. [People] want life. They want their children back. They want their children safe [...] They want to have another day or they want to have another night. That's where we need to be as we think of the future, as we think of the possibilities. I know that isn't a programme, [but] this is a hard conversation. □

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Choosing life over revenge

By Ayman Odeh

This week, I called Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a physician from Gaza who now lives in Canada, to check in on him. During Israel's 2008-9 war on Gaza, three of his daughters were killed when an Israeli tank struck their home. This time, I had to offer my condolences again, when he told me about the recent deaths of more than 25 members of his extended family in Gaza. Among them, he said, were five babies.

In his declaration of war on Gaza on Oct. 7, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel quoted a line from a poem by the Jewish writer Chaim Nachman Bialik. "Revenge for the blood of a little child has yet been devised by Satan," Mr. Netanyahu posted on social media.

Perhaps the prime minister forgot what Bialik wrote just one line before that: "And cursed be he who cries out: Revenge." Or the next lines: "Let the blood fill the abyss!/let it pierce the blackest depths."

These days I find myself asking what the poet meant by this. Bialik wrote it after learning of the horrors of the 1903 Kishinev pogrom.

But in his words I see the many little ones from the various communities in Israel and Gaza whose names appear in news reports as having been killed in the past 11 days – 10 months old; 1 week old; 2, 4, 5 years old. On and on. The blood of our very young has pierced the blackest depths and we have been brought down along with it.

Nation

A nation is defined as a group of people with a common language, a common past and common dreams. By this definition, any parent will tell you that all the world's babies are children of a single nation. They have a common language, a common past, common dreams. They speak the same, get angry and cry at the same things, laugh the same way. When my three children were young, I marveled at how they communicated effortlessly with other babies, no matter the language of the lullabies their parents sang them at night.

The whole of this nation of infants – Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, Israeli – wants just one thing: to grow up to a good life. It's a simple dream. Our role as leaders is simple too: to make that possible.

As adults, we all become expatriates of that nation, and we take the dream of a good life with us: To put food on the table for our families. To know we are free to go where we want. To speak, pray and celebrate as we like. To come home safely at the end of the day. To know our loved ones will too.



Ayman Odeh supporting the democracy protests in Israel July 2023

There is nothing in this world – not even the cruel occupation – that can justify harming innocent people. Nothing. I have always categorically opposed harming civilians, and I will continue opposing it with every fibre of my being. It is a violation of our collective humanity.

I have friends who were killed and who lost children in Hamas's murderous attack on Oct. 7. I have friends who were injured and killed in Gaza in the days that followed. My heart has broken, along with the people of this country and people around the world, for each and every family searching for loved ones, grieving them or trying to bring them home.

Yet despite all this, I have also witnessed glimmers of the future we could have, made real by ordinary people – Jewish and Arab, Palestinian and Israeli – who have stepped up in the face of unspeakable tragedy. In Israel, much of the military had been apparently stationed in the West Bank to protect settlers. As terrified families in the south hid from armed Hamas attackers and prayed for rescue, Arab Palestinian and Jewish doctors, nurses, paramedics, ambulance drivers and emergency medical workers stood side by side and worked together to treat everyone in need of care, no matter who they were. In Gaza, doctors and health care workers have been trying to treat patients under near-constant bombardment with nowhere safe to go – not even to the hospitals themselves – and with no water, electricity or food, not to mention medical supplies.

These are ordinary people acting from the core of their humanity, despite inhumane circumstances. In this life-or-death moment, they choose life. By contrast, Mr. Netanyahu has used every day in the prime minister's office and every ounce of his power to

try to convince the world that safety for Israelis must come at the expense of safety for Palestinians and to block all pathways to peace. He has sold a fairy tale about the unbeatable might of the Israeli military and his own ability to manage a violent system in which Palestinians have gone to sleep under occupation and siege and Israelis have woken up with an uncertain future. Now he is adding to the civilian death toll.

Those of us who are Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel are uniquely positioned to see through his bluster and warmongering to the failure he really is – truths that the past several days have laid bare. We see the extent to which he is willing to burn our shared homeland to the ground rather than bring about long-term solutions that will deliver safety and a good life to all of us, Palestinians and Israelis alike.

And we are also the ones who know, deep in our bones, which are made of the soil of this land, that the answer is peace. The only way we can fulfill our responsibility to the nation of our youngest ones – and to ourselves – is to recognise the nation of Palestine and the nation of Israel and to establish a State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel.

It is time for the international community to take its lead from us, step up in the face of unspeakable tragedy and choose life. This means taking immediate steps, including calling for a cease-fire to stop all civilian deaths and preventing Mr. Netanyahu's govern-

ment from any attempt at pursuing the long-term forced displacement of Palestinians; a humanitarian exchange of prisoners to bring home all civilians held hostage, especially infants, children and older adults; and restoring the flow of basic human necessities to all the people of Gaza.

Next, it means carrying out long-term solutions for people of the whole region, Palestinian and Israeli, including ending international support and approval for the Israeli military occupation and siege of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

I asked Dr. Abuelaish, after all the deaths and horrors he has endured, whether he is still a man of peace.

"The only real revenge for murder," he said, "is achieving peace."

Cursed be they who cry out: Revenge. We choose life. □

• Ayman Odeh is a member of the Knesset in Israel and a leader of the Hadash-Ta'al alliance. We have taken this statement by him from the *New York Times*.



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Think outside the box of capitalism!



Interview

By Colin Chalmers

Colin Chalmers, author of the newly published *Capital Condensed*, spoke to Solidarity.

The idea of the book was just to condense what Marx said in *Capital* into something that was more easily readable and much, much shorter.

Capital is divided into 18 parts and I've always been surprised that no one has actually written a guide to *Capital* that just went through those 18 parts. There's quite a few guides to the first volume, some of which are very good, and one or two go a bit further, but they don't take all 18 parts, from all three volumes, and just go through the arguments. There is a very clear, concise, logical argument through *Capital* and that's what I wanted to get across, in a way that people can understand, because a lot of people give up.

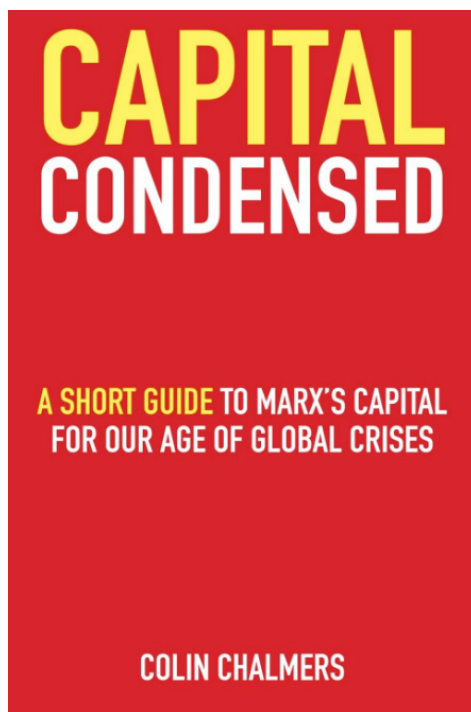
Massive

It's a massive work, *Capital*, and the first volume is much better known than the other two, which Engels edited after Marx died, and I think that stops people seeing it as a whole. And Marx did see it as a whole.

Taken one by one the arguments can seem difficult and unclear. The first part can be quite tricky and that puts a lot of people off going further. I've tried to make it as simple as possible. I think you need to get the basics to be able to build up. So that's what I've tried to do – take the basics and build on them, so that you can see how the argument progresses. I've tried to do that rather than be overly descriptive. I've tried to just strip it down to the clear argument that runs throughout. And I've listed all the meanings for the terms Marx uses at the back. Which takes up about half the book!

Capital is normally considered as just an economics book, and it's not just economics – it's a critique of economics. Economics is a very narrow way of viewing the world, that assumes that money is always going to be around; profits are normal; classes are just natural; rent (an absurd idea, as Marx says) is, along with the rest of these things, absolutely normal and the starting point for any understanding.

Marx doesn't take that as a starting point, he explains it within an examination of the relationship of humans and the rest of nature, and how capital organises that relationship. Ecology is about how human beings and nature interact. Capital certainly explains the ecological problems we face now bet-



ter than any other book. So I think it is fair to call it an ecological book.

I wanted to draw out *Capital's* relevance to society today. One criticism thrown at Marx is that *Capital* is a book about nineteenth century capitalism. But it wasn't. It was about capitalism as such. And it explains that capital, once it gets going, just has to keep growing. It is self-expanding. It is something that is created by human beings – it is about how we relate to each other – but the way we relate to each other means that capital has to constantly grow. And that means more commodities, more expansion of needs and so on.

Progressive

Capital has played a progressive role in history by developing the productive forces, but throughout the book you can see this dual nature of things, so alongside this it has also created crises, horrible exploitation and so on.

Capital is relevant today because what a lot of people are saying in response to the crises we face is, "we need to change government policies". But what Marx is saying is that actually it goes a bit deeper than that. The reason that we have the problems we have today is largely because of capital and capital's need to constantly grow and expand.

Some of the figures I give show that, since Marx's time, the tendencies that he saw have played out. Productivity has grown enormously. Centralisation, the concentration of capital into fewer and fewer hands, has grown immeasurably. An obvious one is the effect on nature, which Marx deals with in Part Four, about productivity. What he shows is that the "circulation of matter" as he calls it, or ecology, is ruined by capital. It has no interest in retaining nature in the way that previous modes of production did. The need is for growing capital, it's not for looking after nature.

So we end up in a situation where we are doing things which we know are going to cause enormous problems for humanity but we just keep doing it.

Something I didn't know when I first read Marx, but it is there all through *Capital*, is that colonialism and the exploitation of the rest of the world by the early capitalist countries was essential to the development of capitalism. Capitalism didn't come about independently of other things. The development of wage slavery here was dependent on actual slavery in America.

What capitalism was able to do is increase productivity, the amount that a unit of human labour can produce, and do so quite incredibly. And this is the big contradiction, that capitalism on the one hand increases productivity and on the other hand wants to expand its own value – capital is self-expanding value.

In the early days of commodity production, people made things so that they could exchange these things for other things – so you make shoes and exchange them for a table or you exchange food for clothing and so on. But with capital, with money in circulation (because for commodities to circulate money has to circulate), money begins to develop a life of its own and the point of production stops being to make a commodity that is useful to you and starts being about money and wanting to make more money. That's what capitalism is. Once money starts expanding, productivity has to expand.

And there we reach a contradiction because the more productive things become, the more you can produce, but each thing you produce holds less surplus value, it becomes less profitable. There is a fall in the rate of profit at the same time as the mass of profit grows. And that is the contradiction that capitalism has built into it, and that leads to its crises.

There is a dominant idea in the labour movement that we can improve capitalism, that we can adjust demand and interest rates and so on and somehow avoid crises, but Marx pointed out that it is not simply about that, it's not about how the policies play out, but it is in the nature of capitalism to have crises and it always will be until capital is taken away from the capitalists.

Capital is no different from exploitation. The value that capitalists get from workers is exploitation, is capital. The basic relationship in capitalism is the relationship between a wage worker and a capitalist. Very few people own absolutely everything and most people own practically nothing, and those people have to work in order to live.

So that class relationship is at the heart of capitalism. *Capital* itself doesn't go into all the different classes that exist but the fundamental difference is be-

tween a few capitalists and the majority of people – people who have to work for a living – the working class.

I wrote this in order to help people understand the basic argument in *Capital* and I hope that happens. I think that sometimes – and I have some sympathy for people who say, "look we have to just do something, never mind all those books". It is important to struggle against what capitalism is doing, it's damaging the planet, it's increasing exploitation, it's causing misery to a lot of people, and it's important to struggle against that. A lot of people don't think that it is possible to do anything about that, that it is possible to think outside the box of capitalism. And that's what Marx argues against. It's worth understanding that.

Dull compulsion

Commodity fetishism is important. There's a line he uses, he calls it "dull compulsion", so this continues; it just becomes how things are. What Marx and Engels said was: things can be better, and not just in an idealistic way, because we have the means now to feed and clothe everyone quite easily. But we don't do it. And *Capital* looks at why that is.

Marx says here that we can go beyond capitalism.

Of course all socialists would support increasing taxes on the rich and increasing public expenditure. If that was to happen it would mean real gains for working class people. Just as if you strike for better wages – far from increasing prices you take your pay rise out of profits, and you win real gains – based on the balance of forces. These are all good things, but if capitalism remains the capitalists can take those gains back. So working class people need to take the means of making stuff off the capitalists who currently own them and into their own hands.

I hope that this book can make *Capital* reading groups easier and people can go through the basic arguments from *Capital* in just a few weeks and increase their understanding. □

• Colin Chalmers is a socialist activist and was active with the Simon Jones Campaign and the anti-capitalist newsletter *Schnews*.



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Kent protest not as “practical” as it seems



There has been wide publicity for 150 people, many union activists, blockading a military-component factory in Kent on Thursday 26 October, with implications or statements that the factory is “providing weapons to the Israeli military”. Many people surely took part out of horror at the Israeli government’s collective punishment of Palestinians, and good for them.

Only the image of doing something immediate and practical against Israel’s misdeeds in Gaza is not quite right.

Elbit Systems UK Ltd, the main target for some years for similar protests by the [Palestine Action](#) group, including brave ones for which activists will soon come up [in court](#), manufacture stuff to be sold, overwhelmingly, to the *British* military. Elbit Systems UK Ltd. is a subsidiary of an international arms company, Elbit Systems, which is

headquartered in Israel. Much more Israel arming Britain than Britain arming Israel.

Instro Precision Ltd., the factory in Sandwich, Kent, is a British-based company, selling mostly to the British military, that has been bought up and made a subsidiary of Elbit Systems UK Ltd.

Of arms exported by the UK, most by far go to [Saudi Arabia](#), which has been committing atrocities in Yemen. Turkey, Oman, USA and Qatar are other major importers of UK arms. Israel isn’t a significant importer of UK arms.

Instro Precision Ltd., on top of supplying the British army, does manufacture components which end up in bits of weapons sold internationally, including *perhaps* some to Israel.

It is not for us to defend an arms factory against protest, except perhaps one delivering to an oppressed people fighting conquest. But the strand into which the action fits is maybe closer to a general “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions” policy on Israel than to spe-

cifically blocking arms to Israel.

BDS is [harmful](#), seen by many supporters and detractors alike as pushing for the delegitimisation and destruction of [Israel](#).

We [explained](#) further before the Kent blockade: “Workers’ Liberty believes Israel has a right to defend its civilian population. However... it surely already has the equipment it needs to carry out legitimately self-defensive activities...”

“The call to block arms shipments has most publicly been taken up by political currents who oppose not only Israel’s policies but its very existence, and their perspective on that must be challenged. Political narratives arguing that Israel is an artificial creation or implantation of specifically British imperialism must also be challenged.”

“Nevertheless, the general call itself, to block arms shipments to Israel, should be supported. The four largest exporters of arms to Israel are the USA (70.2%), Germany (23.9%), Italy (5.9%), and Canada (0.05%)...”

“But the most effective political step

socialists and trade unionists who want to advance struggles for democracy and equality can take is to make direct links with activists and organisations engaged in those struggles on the ground [like Standing Together]”.

We should support efforts by workers internationally to block the shipment of arms to Israel, as to Saudi Arabia with its atrocities in Yemen, Turkey with its atrocities against the Kurds, etc., plus more holistic and politically better campaigning off the “arms off campus”, “campaign against the arms trade” variety. Efforts on “Israel’s arms trade in Britain”, as Palestine Action put it, should instead be done as part of such a wider call. The disproportionate or sole focus on Israel in this context may seem to make sense because of Gaza now, but in fact is not new.

More widely, we advocate worker-led repurposing of arms and components factories to more ecological and socially useful ends, on the model of the Lucas plan and similar. □

Zack Muddle, Bristol



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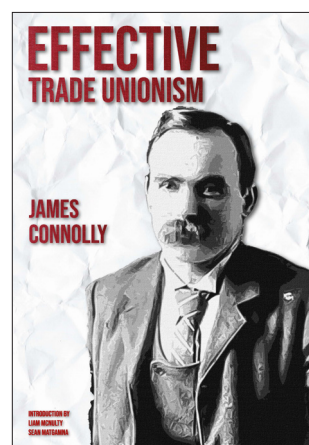
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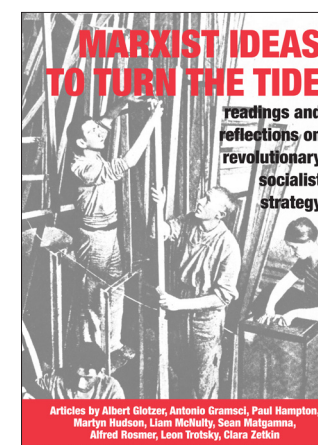
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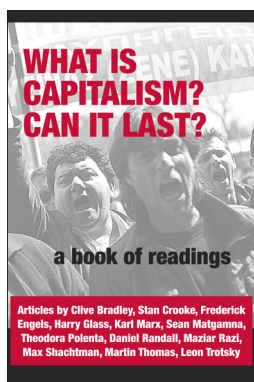
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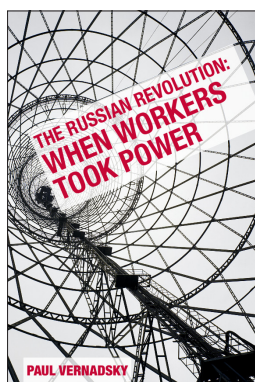
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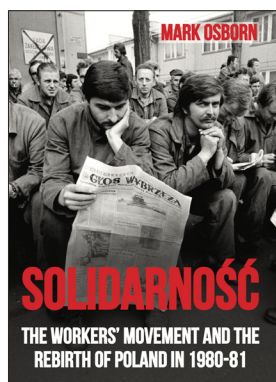
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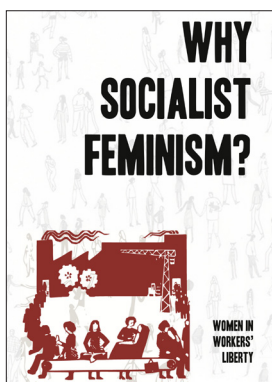
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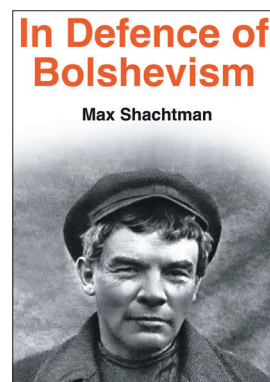
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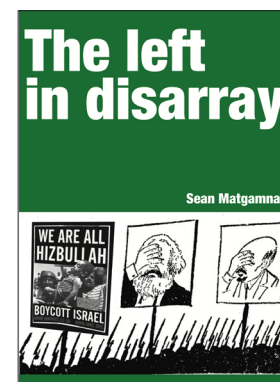
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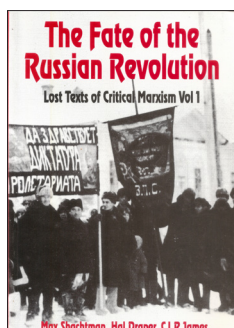
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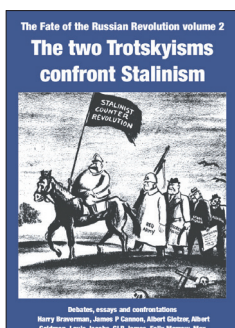
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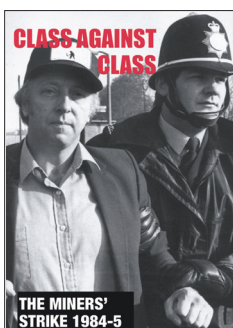
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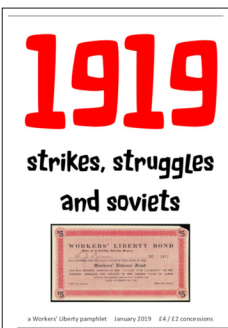
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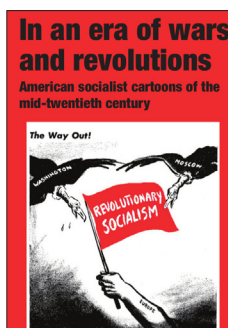
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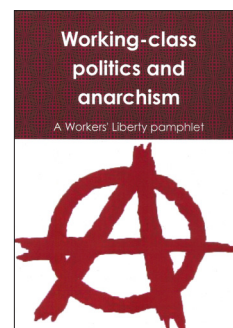
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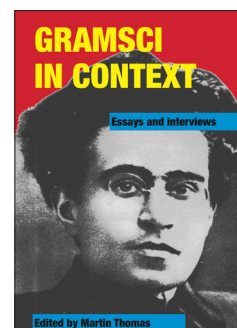
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100 years of the Turkish Republic

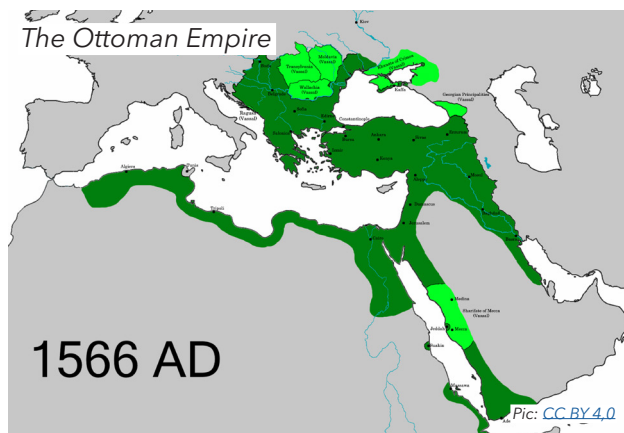
By Pete Boggs

On Sunday 29 October, the Republic of Turkey turned one hundred years old. This was the culmination of a process that began in the nineteenth century, and marked the victory of Turkish nationalism over not only the European imperialist powers, but also the vast array of minority peoples that had inhabited the Ottoman Empire.

The period of Tanzimat in the then over-500-years-old Ottoman Empire (meaning reorganisation or restructuring, as with perestroika) began in 1839, and was an attempt to “modernise” the empire to bring it line with the other imperialist powers within the Concert of Europe. It created a professionalised bureaucracy, and attempted to draw Muslim and non-Muslim subjects under a single rule of law. (Before then, there were separate court systems for Muslims and for Jews and Christians, and special taxes for non-Muslims).

The period came to an end in 1876 with a palace coup and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, with a constitution and a semi-elected parliament which included representation for non-Muslim communities. This constitutional period lasted for less than two years, as in 1878 Sultan Abdul Hamid II restored himself to the position of absolute monarch, and ruled as such until 1908.

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 was led by Turkish officers and intellec-



tuals, but was crucially supported by the non-Muslim bourgeoisie (the Muslim bourgeoisie was a relatively weak force). Elif Çağlı's book *From Bonapartism to Fascism* compares 1908 to the 1848 revolutions in Italy, Austria, and Germany. They “came late” and failed to sweep out the old feudal order, instead coming to a compromise with it. Just as 1848 in Germany was followed by the authoritarian and top-down revolution led by Bismarck in the 1870s, 1908 in turn followed by Mustafa Kemal's establishment of the Turkish Republic. The Ottoman state apparatus was **not smashed** to pieces, but co-opted and then pruned of its offending elements (the Sultanate, the Caliphate, etc.).

Despite the multicultural nature of the 1908 revolution, the dominant ideology within the leading party (the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)) was increasingly an exclusionary Turkish nationalism. The Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars in 1913 meant that the empire lost the vast majority of its majority-Christian lands in Europe, and its leaders sought to “strengthen” the Turkish nation within Anatolia. This meant the assimilation, expulsion, or destruction of any non-Turkish populations (see *Solidarity* 589).

The War of Independence

Turkey entered World War One on the side of the Germany and Austria, under the leadership of the CUP's Three Pashas: Talaat, Enver, and Djemal. After their defeat the UK-French Allies occupied Constantinople and drew up a plan of partition for the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sèvres signed in 1920 but never implemented left the Ottoman Empire as a rump state in Anatolia, with territory ceded to Greece in the west and Armenia in the east, the Middle Eastern holdings passed over to Britain and France as mandates, and large areas (including Istanbul) under “zones of influence” with British, French, and Italian rule.

Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) came to the leadership of the resistance against the new Allied order. He had been a senior commander at the Battle of Gallipoli in World War One: one of the Ottoman Empire's few successes among a

litany of embarrassing defeats, and crucially a place without a large population of Armenians to be robbed, deported, and slaughtered. (In 1915-16, the long-established Armenian community in what is now Turkey was wiped out, one million of them killed). Perry Anderson described this as his “moral luck”: Atatürk escaped any responsibility for the Armenian genocide due to an accident of appointment; as an

additional benefit was not forced into exile to escape Allied prosecution for war crimes at the end of the war, unlike many other Ottoman generals.

The nationalist rebels fought against the Greek invasion force which landed at Smyrna (largely known today by the Turkish name, İzmir) and pushed out further into western Anatolia. They fought against French forces in south-eastern Anatolia, and alongside local uprisings in French-occupied Syria. They also fought against local Allied-backed revolts and sections of the Ottoman Army, such as the “Army of the Caliphate”. Nationalist victory was declared in July 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne, and the Republic was proclaimed in October.

However, the War of Independence was not just a war against the invading Greek and French armies. Like the Russian Civil War saw shifting alliances between different paramilitary forces, and minority groups attempted (unsuccessfully) to realise their national aspirations.

The overlapping series of genocides against national and religious minorities in Anatolia did not end with the fall of the CUP government. The process was in fact continued by the nationalist movement and later the Republican state. The Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, and Assyrians were the targets of these genocides. In this article, I will give detail only on the ethnic cleansing of the Pontic Greeks.

The Pontic Greeks are a population of Greeks indigenous to northeastern Anatolia, largely near the Black Sea coast. During World War One they were targeted for extermination and expulsion into the Syrian desert. The opening line of the Nutuk, Atatürk's “authoritative” speech to the Turkish parliament on the history of the independence movement was: “On the 19th of May 1919, I landed at Samsun.”

What he did not say is this: his act, which marks the beginning of the national struggle as far as the official historiography is concerned, was immediately followed by the ethnic cleansing of the Pontic Greeks of Samsun. That was followed by the show trials and executions of the surviving

Pontic Greek elite in the Amasya trials of 1921, and was finalised by the population exchange of 1923 when the entire remaining Greek population of Turkey was deported en masse, as was the Muslim population of Greece.

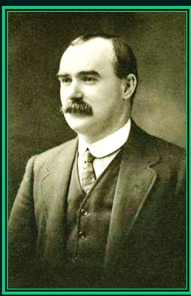
Turkey: a sub-imperialist power

In the late Ottoman period and the early Republican period, Turkey was both a victim of imperialism and had imperialist ambitions of its own, many of which it was able to achieve. The Ottoman Empire was subject to capitulations granting favourable treatment of European merchants, and various European powers were designated as “protectors” for Christian and Jewish populations within the empire, a status which in reality served as a pretext for external control. However, the Ottomans also ruled over a vast land empire in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, and responded brutally to any murmurs of independence.

The Bolsheviks, the Communist International, and its constituent parties tried to grapple with this tension, but for the most part erred on the side of support for the nationalist movement. They gave military and financial support to the Turkish nationalists, and the Greek communists (at that time organised as the Socialist Labour Party of Greece) played a heroic role agitating against the invasion and supporting the Turkish nationalist movement from within the rank-and-file of the Greek army. This history is complex, but there are certainly many legitimate criticisms of the actions of the Turkish and Russian communists in this period which deserve serious consideration. The Bolsheviks were motivated by ideological reasons, but also by immediate geopolitical concerns and the immediate survival of the Soviet government during the existential threats of the Russian Civil War.

The Turkish War of Independence was all of these different things at the same time: a struggle for self-determination against imperialist occupation; a civil war between competing material and ideological interests within Anatolia; an exclusionary and murderous struggle for supremacy by ethnic nationalists. The Republic of Turkey founded at the conclusion of the conflict bears the pockmarks of this legacy to this day. □

Liam McNulty



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It goes nee-naw



Diary of a firefighter

By Adrian Noble

A firefighter prides themselves on an instinctive ability to distinguish the different emergency service sirens. More than once, my self-esteem has crumbled after a rich vein of form with that ability has come to a shuddering halt.

Each emergency service has a particular tone that it is identified with historically and in the popular consciousness, still colloquially known as two-tone or the blues and twos. But they all now have a variety of sirens – a nee-naw; a faster-paced yelp; a long, stretched-out wail. Consequently, the distinctions between them are subtle and I have gone from an unshakable faith in my ability to guess to a place of indecision and insecurity. I'm rebuilding my confidence by

guessing but keeping it to myself.

The variations give you options. One driver on the green watch relentlessly jumps from tone to tone in a catchy but irritating way, like Skrillex on a pinger. One can be heard from further away, some work better at high speed, others are easier for drivers to pick out directionally.

People also tend to tune out a single siren, which is mitigated by changing it up – a short sudden change also functions like a horn. Drivers are taught to approach a junction with one tone, and switch to another, usually a faster one, before crossing, to refocus other drivers' attention on them.

Similarly, if more than one fire appliance is on the blues in convoy, the second must have a different siren to the first, as people have a tendency to assume there's only one and to pull out after it's passed.

There are two shouts we will go to not on the bell. The most common is "shut in lift – non-emergency", where the persons are stuck but perfectly calm

and there's no medical emergency. A non-emergency emergency response is a paradox to many firefighters, and often we are mobilised because we're free to the council whereas paying a lift engineer is not. But I quite enjoy them, each lift a little puzzle – although not so much at 4am.

The other is when a home fire safety visit where the risk is sufficient to require an immediate response, such as a bedbound person living largely alone with no smoke alarms. This isn't technically an incident but we are mobilised via the bells and teleprinter as if it is.

(Slightly confusingly, the mobilising noise is referred to as the bells plural, as in "when the bells go down", whereas the siren – "on the bell" – is singular.)

We also won't always use the bell when relieving crews on a job, depending on the circumstances. It's always a bit of shame when you don't. The view of London from the back of a fire engine on the blues and twos is one of the best views in the world. □

Climate day in the south-west

By Owen Flood

On 28 October 1,000 climate activists from across the South West came together for a day of action and a march in Bath.

The day of action was called by Extinction Rebellion South West and had over 40 sponsors including local XR groups, climate groups, local trade unions and trades councils. It was pitched as a "family friendly" day in a park to unite for the climate, nature and social justice, with stalls, panels, workshops, music and a protest.

Speeches before and after the march covered topics such as Shell's safety re-

cord, local ecology, the environmental impact on the military, horticulturalism, the Stop Rosebank campaign, and the campaign against Bristol Airport expansion.

On the march through the city there was no union presence, but XR Health Workers and XR Scientists, Bath Labour Party, and Bath Green Party were there.

The politics circulating on the day was eclectic but generally liberal. The focus was primarily on pushing the fossil fuel industry to "do the right thing" and stop investing in and expanding fossil infrastructure. When one speaker, a former safety consultant from Shell, celebrated

the action taken by businesses and investors, arguing that least sections of them should be more included in our activism, that was met with general celebration and agreement. Many I talked to on the march were sympathetic to more socialist politics and more engagement with workers in polluting industries, but there wasn't really an organised presence (stalls, or block on the march) pointing in that direction.

I encourage socialists to continue engaging with XR protests and meetings. Despite limitations, it is nonetheless the most active current, and where most people gravitate for climate politics. □

Horace Ové, 1936-2023



Kino Eye

By John Cunningham

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, Horace Ové grew up loving film after frequenting the cinema on a nearby US military base. Later, he became deeply influenced by Italian Realism.

He was one of the first black filmmakers to make his mark after he moved to England in 1960, directing his first film, a short documentary, in 1966. He went

on to make a number of documentaries, one of which featured the Black American writer James Baldwin.

After numerous difficulties finding funds he directed his best known film, *Pressure*, in 1975. Co-written with Samuel Selvon, it centres on the life of a 16 year old black youth, Tony (played by Herbert Norville), and was shot mainly in Ladbroke Grove, West London. It was in many ways a ground-breaking film and influential on a future generation of black filmmakers, such as Isaac Julien and John Akomfrah.

Among his other fiction films was *Playing Away* (1986) a comedy de-



picting a black cricket team matched against a village team from deep in the English countryside. He was also an accomplished writer, photographer and painter whose work has been exhibited in many parts of the world. □

Tories back down on ticket offices

By Simon Nelson

On 31 October the government announced it would scrap plans to close every rail ticket office in England. This is a significant victory for the rail unions, passengers, and disabled and accessibility campaigners. Despite the government and the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) arguing that modernisation and reform of the railway meant complete closure, a popular

and large-scale campaign with over 750,000 responding to the consultation has defeated the plan.

Transport Focus and London Travelwatch reported they were against the plan, and the government said that the alternative plans drawn up by the TOCs do not meet the "high thresholds of serving passengers". They have asked the TOCs to withdraw the proposals.

Campaigners and the rail unions should be prepared to ensure that

there are no closures implemented by stealth. Mick Lynch, the General Secretary of rail union RMT, which has led the campaign, says that a "stitch up behind closed doors which still paves the way for ticket office closures and the axing of railway station staff jobs would be a betrayal of the hundreds of thousands of passengers who have objected to these savage cuts".

Lynch is correct that this is not the end of the campaign. With the renewal



of the RMT's strike mandate across all the 14 TOCs still in dispute, a revived campaign of industrial action is needed for no job losses, no detrimental changes to terms and conditions, and an above-inflation pay rise. RMT should use the victory on ticket office closures as a signal to escalate the strikes. □

UAW strike wins gains

By Lewis Joyes

The United Auto Workers (UAW) strikes in the US look close to ending, with major concessions won by the union. Strikes were suspended on Monday 30 Oct.

The UAW had taken six weeks of action (starting 15 September), which was spread to include, eventually, around 35,000 of the UAW's estimated 146,000 membership in the three affected companies, Ford, General Motors (GM) and Stellantis (Fiat-Chrysler-PSA).

Major steps came in late October towards contract agreements, with union president Shawn Fain announcing tentative deals at Stellantis, Ford and, finally, on 30 Oct, GM.

These are set to include circa 25% wage increases (over 4-5 years), plus commitments to EV production with union labour, faster routes to permanent contracts for temporary employees, the reinstatement of cost of living increases, and more. In contrast to many of the UK strikes over the past year, these concessions rank highly and represent significant gains for the workforce, and in particular lower-paid staff.

They were won by indefinite and (gradually) escalating strikes, not by "marathon, not sprint" tactics meaning scattered strike days over months.

It seems likely these deals will be accepted given the suspension of action, though the deals are yet to be ratified by local chapters and then require voting on by members.

The UAW are widely being touted as the victors here, having won far more than many expected through targeted action (the "Stand Up Strike"). In either case – if the union goes for more, or accepts the current deals – the UAW have achieved a major step forward and should go into any future actions confident. □



Protesters rallied on 21 October in the Isle of Wight for freedom for Sarah Jane Baker, still jailed indefinitely (the "licence" on which she was released in 2019 from a long sentence having been revoked) despite being acquitted on public order charges in August. Instagram: [@freesarahjanebaker](https://www.instagram.com/freesarahjanebaker)

Strikes



From 28 October: Go North East bus drivers (Unite) on indefinite strike

1 November to 15 December: Outsourced ISS workers at the Department for Business and Trade, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

(PCS) strike

7-9 and 24 November: Workers at Amazon's BHX4 facility in Coventry (GMB) strike

Ballots

Until 3 November: University workers (UCU) re-ballot

Until 8 November: London Underground workers (RMT) re-ballot to renew mandate for action over jobs, pensions and conditions

More at: bit.ly/ro-up



Upcoming meetings

Workers' Liberty meetings are open to all, and unless otherwise stated those below are online over zoom. We have many local (in-person) meetings, [see online](https://workersliberty.org/events).

Thursday 2 November, 5pm: Workers' Liberty Students: The Fight for Free Education, Leon, Unit 2 Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1AY

Saturday 4 November, 10am: All the Rage! Socialist Feminist dayschool. Pelican House, 144 Cambridge Heath Road, London E1 5QJ

Monday 6 November, 7.30pm: What is Third Camp Socialism? Menard Hall, 14 Galway Street, London EC1V 3SW

Thursday 9 November, 5pm: Workers' Liberty Students: What is Trotskyism? Leon, Unit 2 Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1AY

Sunday 12 November, 11am: Ecosocialist study group: Solar geoengineering in the capitalocene

For our calendars of events, updated details, zoom links, more meetings and resources, see workersliberty.org/events or scan QR code □



Join Workers' Liberty!

Want to be part of an organised long-haul collective effort to spread the socialist ideas you read in *Solidarity*, and to link together activities in diverse campaigns and conflicts around that consistent socialist thread? Then take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell each week, and contact us to discuss joining Workers' Liberty, the group that produces and sustains this paper. Check it out and contact us via workersliberty.org/join-awl □

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Iran: another woman killed by hijab police

By Dan Katz

On 1 October a 16 year-old school student, Armita Garavand, was attacked by officers from Iran's notorious "morality police" as she entered a Tehran metro station with two friends.

Armita was accused of not wearing the mandatory hijab. She was badly injured during the assault and fell into a coma. It now appears that Armita will not recover and has been declared "brain dead" by medics at Tehran's Fars Hospital.

The Iranian state, recognising the similarity between this attack and the murder by the morality police, in September 2022, of Mahsa Jina Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian-Kurdish woman, has done everything possible to restrict access to information about the attack on Armita Garavand.

Mass, widespread protests against Iranian-state misogyny took place following the killing of Jina Amini, leading to the deaths of over 550 protesters, the arrest of 22,000 people and the execution of seven young men alleged to have taken part in the protest movement.

Armita's two friends who witnessed the attack have been bullied into making statements on camera saying there was "no incident".

Garavand's mother, Shahin Amadi, was detained by security forces on 5 October. Armita's parents have been forced to sign a document saying they will not file a complaint against "any individual [or] organisation."

Video footage from the metro train has been seized. According to the teachers' trade union, CCITTA, a senior security official from the Directorate of Education has visited Armita's school and told teachers that they will be sacked if they speak to the media. School friends have been threatened that even posing photos of Armita on internet pages will result in heavy fines.

The "Woman, Life, Freedom" street protest movement that rose up after Jina Amini's killing has been very heavily repressed, and the theocratic, fascist Iranian state is attempting to reassert control over the population and enforce mandatory "modest" dress codes for women. Since 1981 it has been compulsory in Iran for women and girls over the age of nine to wear a hijab. Currently the penalty for not wearing a hijab is up to 10 days in jail or a fine of up to the equivalent of \$10.

A new law, the Hijab and Chastity Bill, was

agreed by Iran's pseudo-Parliament, 152 votes to 34, on 20 September. The Bill increases penalties for not wearing a hijab to a maximum fine of \$7,300 and a jail term of up to 10 years. Last week the Guardian Council, which vets legislation for adherence to the state's religious dogma, rejected the bill, demanding that the text be reviewed to make the law watertight and less ambiguous.

Press freedom

On 24 October the "reformist" *Shargh* daily newspaper reported that 84% of over 12,000 respondents to its poll on the hijab are opposed to the mandatory dress code and headscarves. The newspaper's editor has been summoned by a court for printing its findings and the story has been removed from the paper's website.

Journalists have often been victims of Iranian state persecution. On 22 October two journalists who were the first to closely investigate the killing of Jina Amini, Niloofar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi, received long jail sentences from a "revolutionary" court. The women were accused of collaborating with America and "propaganda activity against the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Mohammadi was sentenced to six years in jail, and Hamed to seven years.

Workers in Iran are also suffering from an acute economic crisis. Despite repression workers continue to protest and strike. Throughout October workers in the important oil and petrochemical industries in south east Iran have staged demonstrations and taken industrial action against non-payment of wages, ending of bonus payments, for the return of large tax deductions and against low pay.

It is probable that these strikes are still spreading. □



To win social foresight, end capitalism



**Socialism vs
Capitalism**

By Martin Thomas

In the Inaugural Address he wrote for the First International, the first big international workers' movement, Karl Marx hailed the ten-hour legal limit to the working day won in Britain as a first victory in "the great contest between the blind rule of the supply and demand laws which form the political economy of the middle class, and social production controlled by social foresight, which forms the political economy of the working class".

Social foresight! A string of government and corporate decisions to promote and develop more and more "carbon bombs", fossil-fuel-based developments set to worsen climate change and a cascade of environmental destruction, show us how far from that we still are. The rule of private profit makes society, not exactly stupid in general, but short-sighted.

Advances

Scientific and technical advances developed under capitalism enable us to estimate future results of choices today more than under previous modes of production.

In many modes of production, in fact, each generation's prediction of conditions for the next generation would be dim. Children grew up into the same social category, doing the same work, with the same technology, under the same conditions, as their parents and grandparents, until wars or natural disasters supervened.

Capitalism opens out technical improvements and a widening of options for children.

Yet many [surveys](#) show that in the richest countries, countries which also have for decades been involved in wars only far away, people are more likely to expect a worse life for their children than for themselves. They have a feeling of helplessness about that.

Why? One reason will be that in those countries living standards have improved in some material dimensions – people have smartphones, flatscreen TVs, overseas holidays – but many underpinnings have worsened.

Working hours are more irregular and insecure.

Housing tenancies are more insecure. Schooling has broadened, but the penalty for "failure" – for not getting through the exam mill – has sharpened.

Some medical treatments have improved, but the queues for more everyday care have worsened. More people face the prospect of many years in old age when they will live lonely, poor, disabled, and with only perfunctory care.

"Public goods", which do not yield private profit to private individuals, have been systematically downgraded. And the flagrant preference for immediate profit over "social foresight" threatens the great "public good", the Earth.

Marx [wrote](#): "Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructuaries, and, like good heads of households, they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition".

That need for social foresight, he argued, showed "private ownership of the globe by single individuals", where each patch of land or what lies beneath is exploited according to what is most profitable for its owner, to be "absurd".

Socialism – common ownership of productive wealth, democratic control – is the precondition for making possible any comprehensive social foresight, or any comprehensive planning to make our children's lives freer, happier, and richer.

"Social foresight" will never be 100%. There will always be unintended consequences we failed to foresee. We can't know what new scientific advances will give us. But we can do much, much better than capitalism.

It has to be built on the current generation of adults knowing that we have enough for immediate consumption, and can afford to give priority to improving collective conditions for our children. We also have the basis for that.

Today in Britain, on the whole, people do not have children at all unless they have decided that they are willing to forego something themselves today for the children's tomorrow. Socialism can make that "foresight" systematic and social. □





Solidarity

For a workers' government

PCS ELECTION IS WIDE OPEN

By a PCS member

Elections for the posts of General Secretary (GS) and Assistant General Secretary (AGS) of the civil service union PCS will commence on 9 November (and close 14 Dec).

The ruling Left Unity (LU) group's candidates will be Fran Heathcote and Paul O'Connor. The historic critics and opponents of Left Unity, the PCS Independent Left (IL), will be standing John Moloney, the incumbent, for AGS and supporting Marion Lloyd of the [Broad Left Network](#) for GS.

John Moloney has secured 87 branch nominations to Paul O'Connor's 84 and Marion Lloyd 80 to Heathcote's 90. Despite all their (ongoing) advantages, the elections are now more open than the LU leadership were expecting and that has been a shock to their bureaucratic complacency.

Advantage

They knew – plotted – before everyone else in PCS that there would be GS and AGS elections this year. The current General Secretary, part of the narrow leadership team, is resigning part way through office; they brought forward the AGS election (John Moloney first learned of these planned moves the same day as the National Executive Committee (NEC)); and they established an election timetable that they thought would be advantageous to them.



John Moloney

In a transparent attempt to boost the AGS election prospects of unelected long-term full-time officer Paul O'Connor, he was paraded around departmental conferences in May; he was chosen, without precedent, to reply on behalf of the NEC to a motion at the Annual Delegate Conference despite not being an elected or ex-officio member of the NEC; and he has been plastered over PCS media.

With their promotion of O'Connor, with Heathcote easily the best known lay official as national President, with their control of the union machine, the LU leadership cabal was expecting a big lead in branch nominations and a shoo-in victory. They are now significantly less confident.

They have responded in diversionary fashion, risibly claiming that "a highly sectarian campaign of mudslinging" has resulted in Moloney and Lloyd

being "nominated by more branches than expected."

The "mud-slinging" consists of pointing out, for example, that:

- They called off our pay campaign for a fully consolidated, backdated, 10% for 2022 in exchange for a very restricted £1,500 unconsolidated lump sum that was paid pro rata to our overwhelmingly female part time members, despite the payment supposedly being compensation for high inflation.

- The LU leadership explicitly endorsed lower compensation to part time members.

- PCS received the worst public sector pay settlement in 2023.

It is evident that the ruling cabal's misleadership, mismanagement, and abuse of the union, and the Independent Left's relentless exposure of their behaviour over many months, has seen significant support drain from LU and move to John Moloney and Marion Lloyd.

Heathcote and O'Connor lack a programme for addressing the fundamental problems gripping PCS and its members, problems which have grown on their watch. Thoughtful and principled members of LU should cease to provide support to the career project of its leaders.

For IL members, now is the time to turn out the vote for Moloney and Lloyd. □