

Solidarity

& Workers' Liberty



For social ownership of the banks and industry



FULL CEASEFIRE, TWO STATES, WORKERS' UNITY

See inside

More on Israel-Palestine

Friends of Standing Together; Palestinians in Israel; more debate...

Pages 2,3,5,6,10,12,13

Junior doctors strike again

On 20-23 Dec and 3-9 Jan, after being offered only 3% more

Page 15

Stratospheric aerosol injection

A case for serious research despite all the problems with it

Pages 8-9

Myths about migration

A new book busts some of the myths the Tories trade on

Page 7

Ceasefire, peace, two states



Following the 24-30 November truce and hostage exchange, Israel has returned to intense bombardment and a ground offensive in southern Gaza, and talks for a new truce look distant.

The *Times of Israel* quotes Israeli military sources as accepting the Hamas figure of over 15,000 killed so far in Gaza. The Israeli military sources claim only 5,000 of those as Hamas fighters. *World Health Organisation* figures show even larger thousands at risk of death from disease caused by the living conditions of displaced people, or now untreated because of the destruction of healthcare.

Senior US government figures are now publicly pressing Israel to do more to minimise civilian casualties. French President Emmanuel Macron has cast doubt on Israel's stated war aim of "destroying Hamas", suggesting that achieving this aim would take "10 years of war." UK foreign secretary David Cameron has said that civilian casualties have been too high, and condemned settler violence in the West Bank as "completely unacceptable."

Effect

The shift means little if it remains at the level of pleading, and so far appears to be having little effect. Reporting by Israeli magazine *+972* and the *Guardian* has shown the knowingly indiscriminate nature of Israel's bombardment campaign: using AI tools to identify hundreds of potential targets, Israel has been bombing even where it knows in advance that strikes will kill dozens of civilians and destroy civilian infrastructure for an off-chance of killing a Hamas fighter.

Israel's instructions to Gazan civilians to evacuate to safer areas remain near-impossible to carry out, especially given sporadic communication blackouts which cut off access to the internet. Meanwhile the war has only dented Hamas – it is still firing rockets at Israeli cities, though ineffectually – and will raise generations of new recruits for it. Israel and the US plan moves against the international *financial-commercial assets* which yield income for Hamas, but those won't be quick.

Attacks by armed settlers and Israeli security forces on Palestinian villages in the West Bank continue. Both the ultra-right in Netanyahu's government, and Hamas, seem to want full-scale war in the West Bank, and that remains a risk. On 1 December, three Israelis were killed, and more injured, in a shooting in Jerusalem for which Hamas



Protestors in Tel Aviv call for a ceasefire

later claimed responsibility. A far-right march in Jerusalem on 7 December further raises the risk of a widening of war.

Israel has continued to strike targets inside Lebanon and Syria and to face rocket and drone attacks from Hezbollah and Houthi forces. Those exchanges have remained at a low level, with Hezbollah currently indicating it does not want to be drawn into a wider, full-scale war, but the risk of that remains acute.

Hamas's section in Lebanon has issued an appeal to Palestinians in Lebanon to join its militia. Its stated aim in the 7 October attack and since has been to unleash a "permanent state of war on all borders" that it hopes will end with the overthrow of Israel. Achieving that aim would require intervention from Hezbollah and other allies linked to Iranian regional-imperialism, including the Houthis and Assad's Syria, as well as the Iranian state itself.

Widening

Such a widening of the conflict would inevitably draw in other forces on Israel's side, and lead to a regional, or even global, conflagration in which self-determination, Palestinian Arab or Israeli Jewish, would be drowned in blood.

Both Hamas and Netanyahu offer the Palestinian and Israeli people a future of endless war – that is, no future at all.

In international circles, there is renewed discussion about pushing for a long-term settlement to the conflict, based on an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. That remains the policy of all major powers, including the USA and China. But the current Israeli government is resolutely opposed to conceding Palestinian independence. In recent days Netanyahu has restated his absolute opposition to the Palestinian Authority being involved in the future governance of Gaza, and is lobbying disaffected politicians within his party to continue backing him on the basis that he is "the only one who

can prevent a Palestinian state."

The war in Gaza, and the intensification of violence in the West Bank, must be seen in that wider context – the conscious policy of the Netanyahu government to extirpate any possible basis for the emergence of a viable Palestinian national state. The wilder ambitions of the ultra-right in the Israeli government, to displace the Palestinians of Gaza into Egypt and the Palestinians of the West Bank into Jordan, are unlikely to be immediately viable, in the first place because Egypt and Jordan have the strength to block them. But the fact that many on the Israeli right will openly advocate ethnic-cleansing schemes rather than accept the need for a peace settlement with the Palestinians illustrates the degree of political entrenchment.

Speaking via Zoom at a Workers' Liberty forum prior to the truce, Israeli socialist Itamar Avneri from Standing Together remarked on how discussion about a political settlement to the conflict had revived in Israel since the war. Netanyahu's perspective of indefinitely "managing the conflict", until the Palestinians give up their national ambitions, is now widely seen as unviable. But, Itamar said, such discussion has posed progress towards a settlement as something for the indeterminate future, "after the war".

Netanyahu's popularity is plunging. Even many Likud voters blame him for the 7 October attacks. Netanyahu thought he had "contained" Hamas successfully – a deal to admit more workers to commute into Israel from Gaza was done only just before 7 October – and Israeli soldiers had been moved from the Gaza border to back up the aggressive settlers in the West Bank. Opinion polls show widespread distrust in Netanyahu's handling of the war. Having given the families of hostages some hope of their safe return, he may find it more difficult to corral public opinion behind a renewed bom-

bardment that risks the lives of remaining hostages, as well as the residents of Gaza.

Although anti-war opinion remains a small minority in Israel, left-wing, anti-occupation forces are doing what they can to relate to the distrust in and opposition to Netanyahu and seek to politicise it in a conscious way. Progress towards a peace settlement requires, as a first step, a full ceasefire and a comprehensive reconstruction plan for Gaza.

- Ceasefire! End the siege. Free the hostages.
- Peace. Equal rights. Two states: a real independent Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.
- Workers' unity. □

UK Friends of Standing Together

Standing Together, Israel's fastest-growing grassroots movement over recent years, unites Jews and Palestinians within Israel to fight for an equal and just society, for peace, and against the occupation.

UKFoST promotes their work in the UK: for peace, justice, and equality for Israelis and Palestinians – Jews and Arabs – including an equal right to self-determination, and for the full equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

UKFoST promotes the benefits of joint struggle by Jews and Palestinians to this end. UKFoST's website includes info about an upcoming meeting in London on 11 December, and more. □

- ukfost.co.uk
- [@omdimbeyachaduk](https://twitter.com/omdimbeyachaduk)

Rape and terror on 7 October

By Gerry Bates

On 4 December, the United Nations hosted a special session to [hear](#) about rape and sexual violence during the 7 October massacre in Israel by Hamas.

Meni Binyamin of the Israel police Crime Investigations Unit has told the [New York Times](#), from testimony from survivors of the massacre and from soldiers and emergency medical workers coming in after, that: "There were violent rape incidents, the most extreme sexual abuses we have seen, of both women and men... dozens".

Cochav Elkayam-Levy, who leads a Civil Commission of investigation, [says](#) that thanks to widespread video technology, this will turn out as "about the most documented set of horrors humanity has known", starting with "Hamas Telegram channels".

Running against the now-standard rule that we start by taking charges of sexual violence as good coin (and then

investigate), some have [claimed](#) no such violence happened.

By now, few would go along with *Socialist Worker*, which uncritically printed Hamas claims that there were [no attacks on civilians](#) and [no hostages](#), only "prisoners of war". But scattershot claims in the confusion after 7 October, often soon [refuted](#) by the Israeli military and other authorities, are still [used to minimise](#) the massacre.

Most of those raped (sometimes repeatedly) were, it seems, then killed. No survivors of rape or assault have yet spoken publicly; families are reluctant to have horrific video footage of their relatives' last minutes circulated publicly; after the immediate Israeli military operation to recover the massacre area, police [proceedings](#) against captured Hamas fighters are following only with delay.

The rape evidence is being gathered only with delay. But Zulat, a liberal Israeli NGO explicitly opposed to the occupation of the Palestinian territories,

already [finds](#) evidence that Hamas's "plan was not to 'liberate' territory from Israel and let civilians get away. What they did instead was to go from house to house in every community they seized, killing or attempting to kill all its residents. They set houses on fire... They massacred youngsters at a music party near Kibbutz Re'im...

"According to the testimonies of survivors, as well as horrific video footage Hamas posted on social media, Hamas troops physically, mentally, and sexually abused (and in some cases raped) people they captured at the music party and in the communities they occupied. Wounded people and children were also tortured before they were abducted or murdered."

Rape, abuse, and torture at such speed and in such a short military operation are not common even in war. We now know the Hamas assault was long-planned. Evidently it was informed by a view that Jews (and other Israeli residents too) have no human rights; that

Jewish women have no women's rights.

Its aim and design was to terrify Israelis; to bring on the predictable Israeli response now killing thousands of civilians in Gaza; and, Hamas hoped, to trigger a wider and long-lasting war of revenge and destruction against Israel on many fronts, drawing in larger forces. □



Buy "Two Nations Two States" and "Arabs, Jews & Socialism" discounted together for £ 6.50. Individual prices online. □ workersliberty.org/2-i-p

"The conditions were catastrophic"

From Ghadah Abu Tabikh via B'tselem

My husband and I lived with two of our six children in an apartment on the seventh floor of the al-Karamah Towers, in the northwestern part of Gaza City. On 7 October 2023, at 10pm, our area was heavily bombed... we decided to leave...

We left home and went to stay with our extended family nearby, in a-Shati Refugee Camp. My husband and

I and our six children stayed with them for a week... It was very dangerous in the camp, too, with non-stop bombing... After a lot of discussion among us... we... decided... to head to Khan Yunis, which was considered safer at the time.

On 15 October 2023, my husband, my children and I left a-Shati Refugee Camp at 9am... At 4pm, we got to a displaced persons' camp near an UNRWA school in Khan Yunis. Thousands of people were

crowded into a small space there... We found a bit of concrete floor near a flight of stairs, and someone brought us a few blankets from the UNRWA offices at the school. But then one of the people who were in charge came and told my husband and our sons that the area was for women and children only, and directed them to another area designated for men...

Then friends of ours came to the camp and gave us some materials to use to build a tent for our family. It was a very light tent, and it shook with every gust of wind. After we set it up, we managed to get blankets for my husband and the boys.

The conditions in the camp were catastrophic, without clean drinking water and basic public or personal hygiene... To go to the toilet, you had to line up for an hour or two...

My children keep getting sick. They're catching colds and suffering from severe digestive diseases because of the bad sanitation here. There was no medication at the clinic, only pain relievers. The pharmacies had no medication, either...

We could barely contact my mother and brother, who stayed behind in a-Shati, because the communication networks weren't functioning...

On 4 November 2023... my husband called 'Aishah to check on my mother and brother. While he was on the phone, I saw his eyes go red. He choked up and couldn't speak... He said, "Your mother

and brother were killed"... While they were driving south along the road between al-Zahraa and a-Nuseirat Refugee Camp, the road was shelled... My mother and brother were killed on the spot... □

• Testimony on 23 November, abridged from B'tselem "Voices from Gaza", btselem.org/voices_from_gaza



Our audio

Listen, download or subscribe to Workers' Liberty audio recordings of our paper, other publications, and many meetings. **Playlists include:**

- Public meetings – recordings of introductory speeches on topics from Ukraine to "Geoengineering" to trans rights and beyond. Campaigns, history, theory, current affairs, and more.
- Fighting racism: pamphlets, meetings, and more
- Environmental pamphlets and meetings
- *Solidarity* Newspaper and *Women's Fightback*
- Effective Trade Unionism, Sylvia, Corbynism, and many other pamphlets and short books

See workersliberty.org/audio for episodes, and for information on subscribing and using podcasts. All recent episodes can be found through most podcast providers: search "Workers' Liberty" or "Solidarity & More". □



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](#).

Thursday 7 December, 4.30pm: The war in Ukraine and student solidarity, The George Birkbeck Bar, 4th Floor, Birkbeck, UoL, Malet St, WC1E 7HZ

Sunday 10 December, 11am: Growth and limits – ecosocialist study group

Monday 11 December, 7.15pm: Solidarity with Ukraine's labour movement (online)

Wednesday 13 December, 7pm: Solidarity with Ukraine's labour movement, Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1N 1AB

Thursday 14 December, 4.30pm: Change the world, organise at work! What should left-wing students do after uni?, The George Birkbeck Bar, 4th Floor, Birkbeck, UoL, Malet St, WC1E 7HZ

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



Kissinger: war criminal but wise?



By Jim Denham

Senior Colonel Wu Qian, top spokesman of China's defence ministry warned the United States to stop interfering in Taiwan and the South China Sea, saying (according to the *Morning Star* of 1 December): "We request that the US side acts in accordance with its words and takes concrete steps to honour its commitment not to support Taiwan independence".

What was remarkable about Col Wu's statement was not what he said but what (if the *Morning Star's* report on 1st December is complete and accurate) he didn't say. As he was speaking on the day after Henry Kissinger's death was announced, Col Wu must have been the only Chinese government spokesman not to heap praise upon the old war criminal and to call him (in the words of President Xi Jinping and other top officials of the Chinese Foreign Ministry) "an old and dear friend of the Chinese people" and a "trailblazer".

"Both China and the US should inherit and carry forward Dr. Kissinger's strategic vision, political courage and

diplomatic wisdom," the ministry said.

The apparent failure of Col Wu to mention Kissinger was particularly remiss because the commitment that the Col was invoking was the "one China" policy that Kissinger largely created, following his own clandestine visit to Beijing in 1971 and his boss Richard Nixon's famous meeting with Mao Zedong the next year.

Of course, it is possible that the Col did indeed praise Kissinger, but the *Morning Star* chose not to report it – as the paper also failed to report the warm words of President Xi and the Chinese state media.

Elsewhere in the same edition, the paper carried a lengthy obituary by Andrew Murray entitled "Kissinger: a war criminal who served US imperialism" that detailed the litany of Kissinger's crimes between 1969 and 1975: prolonging the Vietnam war and extending it to Cambodia, supporting Pakistan's genocidal war to prevent Bangladeshi independence, supporting the coup against the Allende government in Chile, backing the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus and the even more murderous Indonesian invasion of East Timor, leading to the deaths of a quarter of the population.

Having noted (accurately) that "there was no regime so obnoxious, no tyrant too murderous, for Kissinger's bless-

ings to be withheld, provided only it upheld US strategic interests and stood firm against the USSR", Murray notes at the very end of his denunciation that "Kissinger remained a feted figure in China as one of the architects of US-Chinese reconciliation and met President Xi Jinping in Beijing this year, marking his centenary."

In fact, the *Morning Star* has not always been so critical of Kissinger and has even cited his views with approval: on December 28 an article by Marc Vandeputte praised his call "for a quick end to the fighting in Ukraine" and a ceasefire under which Russia "would disgorge its conquests [since February 2022] but not the territory it occupied nearly a decade ago, including Crimea."

Vandeputte also quoted, with obvious approval, a *Wall Street Journal* article in which Kissinger wrote: "We are on the edge of war with Russia and China on issues we partly created".

In another piece for the paper (29 May 2023) Vandeputte recommended Kissinger's interview with the *Economist* magazine: "His rich experience tells him that determined diplomacy is the only way to avoid ruinous conflict."

On 22 July 2023, following Kissinger's meeting with President Xi, a *Morning Star* article that seemed to present Kissinger in a positive light had to be

followed by an addendum reminding readers that he was a "war criminal [who] cannot be rehabilitated given his association with some of the worst US crimes of the 20th century."

But the same addendum then went on to praise his "tacit acknowledgement that we live in a multipolar world and that Washington cannot simply dictate to other countries ... That would be a useful lesson for today's US – and British – politicians to heed."

So it seems that even though this war criminal was beyond rehabilitation, he somehow had pearls of wisdom to dispense. □

Correction

The printed version of *Solidarity* 692 quoted lyrics from Lowkey wrongly. The quote should read, as in the online versions: "the Zionist lobby... nothing is more anti-semitic than Zionism... Israel is a terror state, they're terrorists that terrorise... It's about time we globalised the intifada... Israel equals misplacement and ethnic cleansing... curse every Zionist... Shame on Rothschild/ Between them the monster they created has gone wild..." □

The name of the new world we aim for



By Martin Thomas

The newspaper of the Owenites, the biggest socialist trend in Britain in the early 19th century, was titled *The New Moral World*.

The weekly journal of the German Social Democratic Party in its great days was called *New Times*; Antonio Gramsci's paper in Turin after World War One, *The New Order*, after a one-off special, *The Future City*.

Karl Marx was sceptical of blueprints. "The working class... have no ready-made utopias to introduce by decree... They have no ideals to realise, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant".

Elsewhere he conceded some limited blueprint-sketching was in order; but it had

already been done. While criticising the "utopian socialists" in the *Communist Manifesto*, he saw their writings as "full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class" and praised "the practical measures proposed in them".

The lively Marxist movement of the late 19th and early 20th century – before Stalinism – focused on understanding class struggle and its potentialities, but also spent time discussing (as William Morris put it) "how we live and how we might live" in the future co-operative commonwealth.

That thread of thought was thrown radically off course by Stalinism. For decades, anti-capitalists had their cause linked to an "actually existing" model (the USSR, or Mao's China, or Castro's Cuba). Radicals were tied to blueprint-mongering, but of a demoralisingly "realistic" rather than imaginative sort, as when a Stalinist apologist replied to Trotsky that shortage of milk didn't disqualify the USSR as

a model, because milk was a product of agriculture not socialism.

Both "socialism" and "communism" became gradually discredited as names for a new world, because so long identified with societies even further than ordinary capitalism from the old ideals of liberty, solidarity, and equality.

In order to minimise verbal taint from Stalinism, we call our paper *Solidarity*, and our political grouping Workers' Liberty, rather than recycling the much-abused terms "socialism" and "communism".

The word "socialism" has the minimal advantage that almost everyone knows that it covers a million variants, so readers can easily understand that our working-class socialism differs radically from old-USSR "socialism". Better to find a fresh word for the cooperative commonwealth we aim for, but there's no point us having some new coinage comprehensible only to us.

We stress, as we did in our book *The Left In Disarray*, that

"the left needs to emerge from defining itself primarily in a negative and reactive way" – with slogans only to stop this, end that, reverse the other – "and rediscover what, positively, the real left must be for".

Anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism are not enough, because there can be reactionary anti-capitalism (Marx already described that in the *Communist Manifesto*) and reactionary anti-imperialism (the Taliban and others).

The new world we aim for is one of human solidarity, beginning as a system of working-class bonding in resistance to capitalist exploiters, and raised up, projected, to being the guiding principle of all society. We will make productive wealth collective social property, under democratic and workers' control, rather than, as now, private property controlled by the drive for private profit. The working week will be cut to a level allowing free time to devote to social and political affairs and to self-development as individuals. It

means liberty from crushing toil, and liberty for positive self-development, as well as civil rights. □



Ceasefire and "two states" motions, also mentioning the Standing Together movement in Israel, have been passed by Islington South, Edinburgh Central, and Nottingham East Labour Parties. Sheffield Heeley has adopted a ceasefire and "two states" statement. Penistone and Stocksbridge Labour Party will discuss a motion on 15 December. London Transport Regional Committee RMT, RMT Bakerloo, and Bath TUC have passed similar motions. Texts at bit.ly/mo-pe. □

• Other campaign info and links at workersliberty.org/agenda

The Palestinians in Israel

By Martin Thomas

About 2.3 million Palestinians live in Gaza, about 3 million in the West Bank, and about 2.1 million in Israel or East Jerusalem.

More than 3 million live in Jordan, and the other four million or so are scattered, with the biggest numbers in Syria, Chile, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the USA.

Of those segments, now, the 21% (and increasing) Arab population in Israel and East Jerusalem probably has the greatest leverage in securing a democratic outcome for the much-defeated Palestinian people.

It was not always so. But now the population of Gaza has been politically expropriated by Hamas and is being crushed by Israeli military assault; in the West Bank, the stranded outcome from diplomacy is that people are cooped up with Palestinian semi-autonomy in 165 separate patches of land, cities, towns, or villages from which they can organise little resistance.

The Palestinian population in Israel, now:

- Has openly-functioning political parties, and political freedom, limited but real.
- Has a larger working-class component. Much of the population of the West Bank and Gaza is pauperised. Palestinian workers in Israel are concentrated in construction, healthcare, education, retail and wholesale trade, and hospitality. But they have jobs, if often low-paid. A good few are in unions. The Histadrut union federation, founded as a Jewish-community organisation, has organised Palestinian workers in Israel since 1959. A smaller and more militant union [organisation](#), [Ma'an](#), also organises Palestinian with Jewish workers.
- Has a big student component. 18% of undergraduate students at Israeli universities are Arab, 41% at Haifa university, 25% at the Technion, Israel's premier university.
- Has more political cohesion for a workable democratic settlement than any other demographic segment in Israel-Palestine. All the parties with a base among Palestinian citizens in Israel advocate "two states".
- Is represented in today's most hopeful social movement in Israel, Standing Together, which is configured as a joint Arab-Jewish movement seeking both peace and independence for Israelis and Palestinians and social justice.

Palestinians in Israel suffer disadvantage. 45% of Palestinian families there are in poverty, as against 13% of Jews. It is difficult in practice for Palestinians to get building permits, so hundreds of Palestinian houses are demolished

each year for lack of permits. But among the British left, Israel is often painted so vile as to indicate that no social and political action is possible there, and so it must be suppressed by external force.

Even half-assent to that demonisation, and even if motivated by thinking it best to use the strongest words to denounce ill-use even if they are inaccurate, is counterproductive because it cuts off possible sources of progress.

After the 1947-9 wars, some 150,000 Arabs remained in what had become Israel, mostly peasants living in villages: the biggest Arab-majority town, Nazareth, was then 9,000 people (now, 80,000). Their areas were under military government until 1966. Schools were scanty.

They had a high voter turnout in national elections, but mostly they voted for the mainstream Jewish parties or their "front" operations.

The Palestine Communist Party (PCP) had been formed in 1922-3, primarily by a splinter from left-Zionism. At first almost all its members were Jewish.

From 1929 Stalin imposed a "turn" towards Arab nationalism.

In May 1943 most of the Arab members split to form a National Liberation League, opposing Jewish immigration, USSR-loyal, but with no social programme. The rump PCP opposed partition and advocated a binational state in Palestine. So did some left Zionists, and so, from a different angle, did an official Anglo-American Commission on Palestine in 1946.

Takers

But there were almost no takers for this binational state, which by definition required wide agreement. The United Nations went for partition in November 1947. Stalin, seeing a chance to disrupt the British Empire, backed it.

First the PCP, then the NLL, went along with Stalin, and they reunited in October 1948 in an Israeli Communist Party, Maki. The NLL had worked with the left Zionists of Mapam to distribute leaflets calling on Egyptian and Jordanian soldiers to rebel against their states' 1948 war on Israel and to turn their fire instead against their own rulers.

Many NLL members were now in the West Bank or Jordan. They set up a Jordanian Communist Party, from which came a new Palestine Communist Party, renamed Palestine People's Party, which has been a junior (now tiny) ally of Fatah.

Maki, the Israeli Communist Party, peaked at 4.5% of the vote in 1955, after some people from Mapam defected to it. In 1965 it split. By now the USSR was courting Arab nationalist



Standing Together with banner reading "we are here to stay" in Hebrew and Arabic

governments and, though still on paper for "two states", hostile to Israel. The USSR-critical "Eurocommunist" side of the 1965 split took most of Maki's Jewish membership. It eventually dissolved into Meretz.

The USSR-loyal side built and retained sizeable support among Israel's Arabs, more as standing up for Arab rights than as "communist". In 1977 it launched a "front", Hadash, which won 4.6% in that year's election. Since then its score has settled down to 3% or sometimes more.

In 2015 and 2020 it ran in a Joint List with other Arab-based parties, getting 10.6% and 12.7%. In 2015 election, without result, Hadash mooted ideas of cooperation with the mainstream-Jewish-left Meretz. Allowing for lower Arab turnout, East Jerusalem residents mostly not registering as citizens, and much of the Arab population being below voting age, Hadash holds about a third of the Arab vote.

Some Arabs still vote for mainstream Jewish-dominated parties, and the other Arab parties are Ra'am, Balad, and Ta'al. Ra'am is soft-Islamist, but was in Israel's 2021-2 coalition government. Its chief support is in the south and the Negev, while Hadash's is in the north. Raed Salah, leader of another wing of the Islamists, based in Umm al-Fahm in the north, campaigns against Arabs voting in Israel's elections. Arab turnout has decreased since the 1970s: higher self-confidence and greater impatience with successive Israeli governments must also play a part. Arab turnout in local government elections is still high.

Ta'al is led by a former top adviser to Yasser Arafat. Balad is more sharply nationalist.

Ra'am, Balad, Ta'al, and Hadash all support "two states" and equality for Arabs living in Israel. Even Ra'am condemns Hamas's 7 October atrocity convincingly.

Hadash leader Assaf Talgam [says](#) Hadash and Maki support the "right of return" (i.e. en masse resettlement in Israel of descendants of the 1948 refugees) and repeal of the "Law of Return" (right for Jews to settle in Israel). But those do not figure in Hadash's or

Maki's public platforms. Talgam [calls](#) for "negotiations towards a permanent peace situation between Israel and the Palestinians" as an immediate step, but "can't imagine any political scenario for" the "right of return". Ra'am, Balad, and Ta'al also in practice present those issues as distant-future.

Some such distancing is necessary to make "two states" a meaningful policy. As socialists we want open borders, free movement. We do not say nations can have self-determination only if they establish open borders. If we did, then we would oppose self-determination for every nation in the world today...

The Jewish community in Palestine established Israel more *in order to* be able to have the Law of Return, so survivors from the Holocaust could find a Jewish majority for collective self-defence, than for independence in general. With the large flights to Israel of Jews from Asian and African states (from late 1940s), from the former USSR (from 1989), and from Argentina (1970s to 2002 or so), that desire for a refuge-homeland remains in-built.

"Right of return" is, as its advocates stress, about organised resettlement of millions, not about individual movement; after all the wars and after 7 October, inevitably Israeli Jews fear it.

We can hope for immediate relief for the refugees (resettlement in an independent Palestinian state or in Israel, compensation, aid, as sketched by [negotiators](#) over the years), and rapid progress to free movement. In practice that is what the Palestinian movements in Israel push for: not "no two states, unless..."

Standing Together includes members from Hadash and from Meretz, and many from no party. Distinctive about Standing Together is that it is a joint Arab-Jewish movement (Hadash is, too, but mostly an Arab movement with some Jewish members), and that is a social movement with an activist and campaigning approach, striving to connect equal rights, national rights, and social issues in a single effort. □

The populist path to authoritarian rule

By Tom Harrison

A Presidential candidate who went around brandishing a chainsaw, claims he got hints on strategy from his cloned mastiff hounds, and relishes in the nickname El Loco? The warning signs were not enough to deter the majority of voters in Argentina from electing anarcho-capitalist Javier Milei their president.

Milei's policies comprise a far-right fantasy wish list for the country. Abolish its currency and central bank. Give the rich massive tax cuts at the expense of social security programmes. Legalise the sale of human organs. Criminalise abortion. Remove controls on gun ownership. Cut ties with the Argentina's biggest trading partners – Brazil and China. Eulogise and whitewash the crimes of the 1976-83 military dictatorship under Videla and Galtieri which "disappeared" thousands of socialists and trade unionists. And that's just for starters!

Should Milei achieve even a fraction of his programme there will be blood on the streets, and a lot of it. The economic regime envisioned is an extreme form of neo-liberalism which will drastically increase the proportion in poverty, currently put at 40%. Rehabilitating the reputation of the military may be a necessity, because they'll be needed pretty soon to crush inevitable social

dissent.

A return to authoritarian rule once more is definitely on the cards.

Many countries in Europe and the Americas are being plagued by far right or fascistic forces masquerading under the label "populist". The majority of Argentines won't remember what life was like under dictatorship four decades ago, although they should have taken the trouble to find out. In Spain and Portugal Vox and Chega are climbing up the polls as the fascist regimes that ended in those countries fifty years ago become a distant memory.

Yet Trump, quite obviously an inspiration to Milei, was in office only three years ago and there's a strong chance he will be re-elected at the end of next year. The wretched Liz Truss seems to think so, as she has now endorsed his bid for a second term.

Does the possibility of a Trump comeback reflect the low attention span of American voters? The polarisation of the media in the US allows his MAGA base to avoid uncomfortable truths as they turn to fact-free channels such as Fox News. Some commentators might even say that Trump's Presidential term wasn't as bad as might have been expected so there's no need to over worry about the second coming of Orange Jesus, as Republicans in Congress have taken to calling him.

Yet indications couldn't be stronger

in signifying that a Trump return to the White House will be qualitatively different from his first term. The stakes for him personally couldn't be higher. Losing would result in his financial ruin and very probable incarceration. Winning would allow him to stride the state as American Caesar. Trump has frequently proclaimed at his rallies and online that he is out for retribution and clearly signposted his path to authoritarian rule.

Those bearing the main brunt of his ire are previous members of his administration such as Bill Barr, John Kelly and General Mark Milley, who were respectively his former attorney general, chief of staff and military head. They are in line for investigation and possible prosecution.

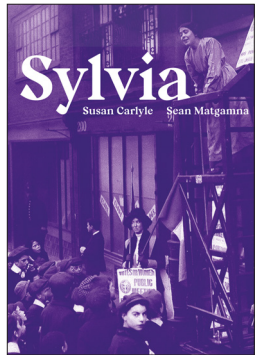
Why? Because they reined him in. Nobody in a future Trump regime is going to be allowed to do that. Trump plans to purge thousands of civil servants and replace them with Trump loyalists, or "conservative warriors", as his acolytes like to call them.

The most worrying aspect of Trump Term Two, however, is the use of the US military. He plans to invoke the Insurrection Act and send the military into New York, Chicago and anywhere else to put down the inevitable protests that his return to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will spark. The reprobate crew of previously convicted felons – Michael Flynn, Steve Bannon and Roger Stone – are

adding their dubious efforts to Project 2025 to achieve that end.

Additionally we can kiss goodbye to reversing global warming. Trump will save the Whale by ditching wind turbines. Ukraine will be served up on a platter à la John the Baptist to his pal Putin. Given Trump's close relationship to Netanyahu, we shouldn't expect peace to break out in the Middle East either, since Trump opposes a two state settlement.

So we have Trump at one end of the Americas and Milei at the other. Both present a clear and present danger to the working class, all oppressed peoples and the entire planet. A world in which resources are shared and social equality the goal has to be the answer to these hucksters, charlatans and would be Mussolinis. The need for a socialist society is more relevant today than it ever was! □



The story of Sylvia Pankhurst including her working-class organising in the East End of London. £4 (inc. post) □ bit.ly/shop-wl

Behind the prisoner-hostage deal

By Simon Nelson

Standing Together has criticised the choice of prisoners exchanged with hostages by the Israeli government on the grounds that many exchanged are Palestinians, mostly under 18 and many of them citizens of Israel, held with no conviction. By including these prisoners in the exchange, Standing Together argues that this "deepens efforts to criminalise Palestinian citizens, gives Hamas more power over the lives of Palestinians in Israel, and sets a dangerous precedent". It reports that detainees' lawyers were against the deal.

With prisoners who have not faced trial, there is no guarantee the courts would have prosecuted them, and many would have been released anyway. Released under a deal brokered with Hamas, they are likely to suffer further legal harassment and also face a push to thank Hamas for their release.

Earlier

Standing Together, in a post on Instagram, said that "this specific plan purposefully positions these people as enemies, criminalises them for crimes they have not been convicted with, causes damage to their futures and is yet another re-

flection of the discrimination of Palestinian citizens in Israel and the difference in rights granted to Palestinian citizens and Jewish citizens."

Left-wingers in Israel had advocated a hostage-prisoner exchange much earlier. +972 magazine asks: "Was it worth letting Israeli hostages, women, and children, languish in Gaza for a few more weeks for the sake of continuing to imprison a young man who dared to cry 'God is great?'"

+972 magazine reports: "Of the indictments listed, only a few are related to the use of weapons and opening fire on Israeli forces (and even in

these cases, there were no fatalities). The vast majority of incidents involve throwing stones or Molotov cocktails, shooting fireworks, and causing 'public disorder'."

Ten women have been released who had been held since 2015-17 for attempted stabbing attacks against Israeli security forces. Most of the women released were held for social media posts ("incitement to terrorism" or "supporting terrorist organisations"). Standing Together says many of the social media posts were just reports on what is happening in Gaza or expressing outrage at the collective pun-

ishment of the civilian population. Over 2,000 Palestinians are held in "administrative detention". The figure has doubled since 2013, with a sharp rise in the last 18 months. Israeli human rights group HaMoked, report that Israel holds 6,809 defined as "security prisoners." +972 adds: "2,313 are serving a prison sentence; 2,321 have not yet been convicted in court; 2,070 are being held under administrative detention (indefinitely imprisoned without trial or due process); and 105 are 'illegal combatants' who were arrested during Hamas's October 7 attacks." □

Busting myths about migration



Book review

By Dan Katz

Speaking at the Tory Party conference in October, Suella Braverman claimed that a “surge” of migrants is heading for the UK which “could bring millions more migrants to these shores.” Braverman stated that migration was backed by the UK elite with their “luxury beliefs”, claiming that their wealth protected them, and that “migrants won’t be taking their jobs... [migrants] will be mowing their lawns or cleaning their homes... [the out-of-touch rich] have no use for their British passports unless it is taking them to their second homes in Tuscany.”

Braverman is a dull-witted, far-right politician. She is a self-serving demagogue attempting to portray herself as a defender of the poor against a cosmopolitan elite that she herself is a part of. After all, she was speaking as a Tory Home Secretary to the Conservative conference.

Is there any truth at all in her claims?

Hein de Haas, a sociology professor at the University of Amsterdam, thinks not.

De Haas has written an interesting evidence-based book, *How Migration Really Works*, to bust the lies, misunderstandings, popular fables and unpleasant gibberish that make discussing the question of immigration difficult.

The structure of the book – 22 sections, each devoted to what he sees as a myth about migration and immigration, with each myth argued for and then disposed of – makes the book a useful handbook for left activists who wish to challenge prejudice.

Since most of the falsehoods come from mainstream and right-wing politicians, most of de Haas’s rhetoric is directed at them.

Although there are also sections that might make some of us think: for example, de Haas argues that climate change will not lead to mass migrations.

Take Braverman’s claim that millions are heading to Britain’s shores. De Haas’s Myths 1 to 3 deal with such claims. He argues, “Current levels of international migration are neither exceptionally high nor increasing.” If the number of international migrants is expressed as a percentage of the world’s population the levels of migration have remained stable at about 3% for decades.

He suggests that global migration was, in fact, higher in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A difference, however, is that then Europeans were moving to the “New World” and now migrants are heading towards Western Europe (as well as the US, Canada, rich Gulf states, Australia and New Zealand). Patterns of migration – into Europe, not out of Europe – have changed but proportions of people on the move have not.

De Haas states that migration figures are not substantially altered by adding refugee numbers to economic migrants. He states that refugees represent only 7-12 per cent of all migrants, or 0.3 per cent of the world’s population. The “migrant crisis” is massively exaggerated by the media and the political right.

In fact, de Haas states, most migrants move over only short distances, partly explained by the expense of international travel, but also by the preference of migrants to stay close to home. Refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war mostly went to Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, for example.

Internal migrants represent almost 80 per cent of all migrants. Internal migration of young people seeking better prospects is a particular feature of large states such as China and India.

The argument that improvements in transport and communications automatically make migration more likely is turned around by de Haas, who states that technological innovations actually make staying at home easier, and that the idea is based on “sloppy assumptions about the causes of migration.” Factories and service centres now provide jobs in previously un-industrialised areas of the world, so why move?

De Haas quotes Braverman as saying, “[the UK] faces an invasion on our southern coast” in order to note that the vast majority of migration takes place legally, backing his argument with relevant data. He suggests the size of the undocumented population in the UK is between 674,000 and 800,000, or one percent of the population and states that these numbers are “relatively stable”.

De Haas plausibly argues that the “vast majority” of South to North migration takes place not because “immigration has been happening to us, or an external force threatening our society, but rather something that stems from deliberate efforts by governments and businesses to recruit migrant workers” to fill job vacancies.

Moreover, most illegal migrants are also wanted workers, too. Despite anti-immigrant rhetoric many governments have ignored illegal migration as the migrants have filled urgently needed vacancies in the labour market. “It is not borders that are beyond control, but immigration systems that are partly dysfunctional or ‘broken’.”

De Haas’s Myth 8 is “Immigrants steal jobs and drive down wages”. De Haas points out that two things have happened in Europe in the past few decades: immigration has increased, and secure jobs and well-paid work has become harder to find. In the 40 years prior to 2020 Western economies substantially increased productivity and wealth, but many workers failed to benefit, or lost out.

Politicians have made a link, however, where no direct causal link exists.

De Haas suggests that although there is a correlation between unemployment and immigration levels, the correlation is negative. Immigration increases when there is a boom and low unemployment and goes down when unemployment goes up.

Immigration is mainly a reaction to a shortage of labour.

Even large political events which cause big population shifts may have no impact on wages.

De Haas cites a great deal of evidence, including the inflow of one million Russian Jews to Israel after the collapse of Eastern European Stalinism. That increased the population of Israel by 12% in the early 1990s but had almost no impact on the wages and the employment of other workers in Israel.

Following the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989, 2.8mn people moved from East to West Germany over the next 15 years. That mass migration had, de Haas argues, almost no impact on wages and only a temporary negative effect on employment.

Research, de Haas states, shows similar effects of the impact of Syrian refugees, fleeing the civil war and Assad’s regime, and moving to Turkey. 3.6mn Syrians were living in Turkey by 2021, or 4.4 percent of the population. Studies showed almost no impact on wages, with small increases in unemployment amongst the native, informally-employed working class, but also increased employment amongst formally-employed workers.

This is a useful book, well-organised, and something that socialist activists might usefully use and quote from. Hein de Haas is a serious, competent academic who takes ideas seriously and argues his case systematically and in great detail. □

The persistent weight wage gap for women



Women's Fightback

By Katy Dollar

There is a persistent wage penalty for working-age women living with obesity.

The size or weight of women is one of many categories under which their bodies are subjected to relentless scrutiny.

A major review carried out

for the UK government by Carol Black in 2016 found that women living with obesity experience a 9 per cent wage penalty compared with working age women of “normal” weight – and that no such gap exists for men. This gap in earnings appears to be down to stigma and discrimination, with differences (though smaller) even when educational attainment, health inequalities and occupational segregation are controlled for.

One study shows wage gaps for obese men in higher-wage

jobs, but smaller ones, and none in lower wage employment. I could not locate any studies looking at wage gaps for non-binary workers.

Many studies over many years have found a link between obesity and earnings for women. One calculated that a standard deviation increase in body mass index (BMI) resulted in a 16 per cent decrease in hourly wages for women living with obesity. The obesity wage gap costs women thousands of pounds a year.

Weight-based stigma and discrimination in employment, for women at least, transcends international borders, and can persist over the life-course. That bias against people seen as overweight has worsened over time.

A Harvard University study on data from over four million tests of attitudes between 2007 and 2016 found that biases around sexual orientation, race and skin tone decreased in that period, but weight bias (pro-thin/anti-fat) increased by 40%, particularly

in the early years of the study. Some US states ban discrimination on basis of weight or looks but there is no evidence those bans have reduced the weight wage gap. Workers’ legal rights mean little where employers think they can get away with ignoring the law.

Where workers are not organised in trade unions, or those trade unions do not fight, it is difficult to claim rights. Self-organisation and struggle are the only effective enforcers of workers’, and women’s, rights. □

For researching a “bru



Environment

By Paul Vernadsky

As if inexorably, the Keeling curve measuring carbon dioxide emissions continues to ratchet up. At the same time, annual global average temperatures continue to increase. This year looks set to become the warmest for millennia.

Paltry efforts to curb fossil fuel use, to prevent the problem of climate change at source, have stalled or are swallowed by ever-growing energy demand. Net zero resembles a distant mirage. Activists have to redouble our efforts to impose mitigation measures on profiteering capitalists and their unwilling bourgeois states.

While emissions abatement must remain the main fulcrum, humanity is so far off course that more drastic measures have to be considered. Solar radiation modification (SRM), sometimes called solar geoengineering, refers to the intentional modification of the Earth's shortwave radiative budget, with the aim of reducing warming. The most significant form of SRM is stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI), which involves adding reflective particles such as sulphur dioxide to the stratosphere to reflect sunlight back into space and cool the planet.

Speculation about climate modification has a long history. The French philosopher Count de Buffon, wrote in 1778 that humanity will be able to “alter the influence of its own climate, thus setting the temperature that suits it best”. Early in the 19th century, the socialist forerunner Charles Fourier advocated the utopian project of “the regulation of the seasons, the moderation of temperatures, and the control of climates, in such a way as to have them always the most favourable”.

The first use of the term geoengineering in the context of climate change was by Cesare Marchetti in 1977. Another climate scientist, Mikhail Budyko, considered using sulphur dioxide to counter climate change driven by humanity's carbon emissions, and dubbed the idea “artificial volcanoes”.

In 1992, David Keith argued that geoengineering was a “fallback strategy” that may be needed if climate change is worse than we expect. At the turn of the century, Ken Caldeira and colleagues carried out the first climate model experiment to test the effectiveness of geoengineering.

These early efforts were perhaps understandably regarded as a distraction

from the priority of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen broke that taboo, in a 2006 paper, *Albedo Enhancement by Stratospheric Sulfur Injections: A Contribution to Resolve a Policy Dilemma?*, in *Climatic Change* journal, where he argued for geoengineering research. Since then, scientists at Harvard and other universities have begun to investigate the costs and benefits of stratospheric aerosol injection.

There is already significant UK-based activity. In 2009, the Royal Society published *Geoengineering the climate: science, governance and uncertainty*. The report is a good primer on geoengineering, including stratospheric aerosol injection. In 2010, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee published *The Regulation of Geoengineering*, after its own inquiry. Steve Rayner and other researchers submitted the “Oxford principles”, a set of guidelines for such research. They included “a presumption against exclusive control of geoengineering technology by private individuals or corporations”.

Keith

David Keith, now based at Harvard University, is the best-known and highest profile scientist advocating stratospheric aerosol injection. His book, *A Case for Climate Engineering* (2013), set out a route map for it:

“Suppose the goal was to cut the rate of global warming in half starting in 2020 by putting sulphuric acid into the stratosphere... It is do-able in the narrow technocratic sense that a well-managed programme could likely be ready to start by 2020 if given a provisional go-ahead today and a total budget of roughly a billion dollars...”

“To be effective, the sulphuric acid needs to be in tiny watery droplets – about a thousand times smaller than the width of a human hair – and it needs to be put into the stratosphere about 20 kilometres above the earth's surface...”

“After the first year of operation, the project would need to inject about 25 thousand tons per year of sulphur in order to offset half of that year's growth in warming due to that year's accumulation of greenhouse gases. The next year one would need to use 50 thousand tons to provide enough cooling to offset the half the warming from two years growth in the atmospheres stock of greenhouse gases. In 2030, after a decade of operation the injection rate would need to be 250 thousand tons per year...”

“Injection of sulphates might be accomplished using Gulfstream business

jets retrofitted with off-the-shelf low-bypass jet engines to allow them to fly at altitudes over sixty thousand feet along with the hardware required to generate and disperse the sulphuric acid. Only one or two aircraft would be needed to start the programme, and after a decade it would take about ten aircraft to lift the required 250 thousand tons each year at an annual cost of about 700 million dollars...”

“In 2070, after a half century of operation, the programme would need to be injecting a bit more than a million tons per year using a fleet of a hundred aircraft, though by that time it might make sense to have switched from sulphuric acid to an engineered particle with fewer environmental impacts.”

Keith set out four phases:

1. Theory and laboratory work
2. Experiments in the atmosphere
3. Minimal deployment
4. Gradual deployment.

Stratospheric aerosol injection research is currently mired at phase 1. Keith and his collaborators are contemplating phase 2 experiments using less than a hundred kilograms of aerosol material – less than one ten-millionth of what would be needed to add every year to make a readily measurable impact on climate.

If results from the first two phases warrant it, the next step would be deployment at the smallest scale. The goal would be to find unexpected problems before they become large enough to cause damage. After the first three phases, if geoengineering still looks beneficial, gradual deployment is the next step. Using sulphate aerosols to counter radiative forcing would require increasing to about 250,000 tons of sulphur a year over a decade. Keith accepts that deployment crosses a threshold which demands some form of legitimate governance.

Keith registered the risks of this intervention, but put them in perspective. To offset half of the current increase in radiative forcing of climate change for the next half century, the annual input of sulphur into the stratosphere in 50 years would be about 1.3 million tons a year. That's less than one-fifth the quantity of sulphur spewed into the stratosphere by the Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption in 1991.

At present, stratospheric aerosol injection research has barely migrated out of the laboratory. The only SAI field test to date was a 2009 experiment, led by Russian researcher Yuri Izrael, which tested how solar radiation passes through aerosol layers. The UK-based Stratospheric Particle Injection for Climate Engineering (SPICE) project

planned an outdoor test of a delivery system that would spray seawater into the air at one kilometre altitude via a lofted hose. However, it was cancelled after concerns were raised regarding potential conflicts of interest and inadequate public engagement (see Jack Stilgoe, *Experiment Earth*, 2015).

In 2021, Harvard's Stratospheric Controlled Perturbation Experiment (SCoPEX) project had to cancel a balloon flight in Sweden. The flight, designed to test equipment that could be used in future experiments involving the release of particles, faced opposition from environmentalists and indigenous Sami communities, who argued that geoengineering research is a distraction from tackling climate change. Yale's Wake Smith has worked with aerospace engineers on prototype aircraft designs.

Keith is clear that deliberately adding one pollutant to temporarily counter another is “a brutally ugly technical fix”. He regards as healthy the “visceral sense of repugnance” and “intuitive revulsion” many climate activists and scientists feel towards geoengineering. He argues that “exposure to debate about geoengineering brings with it an appreciation of the hard choices at its roots and an understanding that there are credible arguments for and against”.

Hulme

Mike Hulme's book, *Can Science Fix Climate Change?* (2014) argues against solar radiation modification in general and stratospheric aerosol injection in particular. Hulme argues that:

“Creating a thermostat for the planet through aerosols injected into the stratosphere is undesirable, ungovernable and unreliable. It is undesirable because regulating global temperature is not the same thing as controlling local weather and climate. It is ungovernable because there is no plausible and legitimate process for deciding who sets the world's temperature. And it is unreliable because of the law of unintended consequences: deliberate intervention in the atmosphere on a global scale will lead to unpredictable, dangerous and contentious outcomes.”

Hulme is right that stratospheric aerosol injection is not the magic solution to climate change. Advocates like David Keith admit that. It will not tackle sea level rise, ocean acidification, biodiversity loss or a range of other problems arising from climate change. It is a temporal fix, a stop-gap measure that buys time to implement long-term mitigation. But we need to consider it. To consider it, we need to know whether

“intally ugly” climate fix

and how it can work. We need research.

The most important criticism is that solar geoengineering would undermine efforts to reduce global emissions. Keith dubbed this the “moral hazard” argument, while Jesse Reynolds in *The Governance of Solar Geoengineering* (2019) called it the “emissions abatement displacement concern”. Advocates argue that if stratospheric aerosol injection were deployed, it would only be designed to reduce but not eliminate the overall temperature rise. This approach would also help reduce the potential side effects of deploying SAI.

The most important ecological objection to stratospheric aerosol injection deployment is the uneven impact on regional and local climates. In 2008, volcanologist Alan Robock argued in the *Journal of Geophysical Research* that SAI “would disrupt the Asian and African summer monsoons, reducing precipitation to the food supply for billions of people”.

Keith accepts that there is much still not known. However most models of climate change show harmful precipitation increases in the Asian monsoon region (such as floods and mudslides). If geoengineering slows or stops this increase in precipitation, then it is delivering a benefit, not a harm. Second, a reduction in precipitation need not lead to drought, once soil moisture and runoff are managed. Models suggest that geoengineering could substantially increase food supply by reducing heat-stress during the early growing season in Asia and Africa.

Another significant risk of sulphate geoengineering is ozone loss. When aerosols reduce nitrogen oxides, they increase the fraction of chlorine that actively destroys ozone. However chlorine loading is decreasing following the Montréal Protocol that phased out use of CFCs. The risk of ozone loss therefore depends on when geoengineering is deployed. If it is later this century when CFC levels are low, there will be little effect. But used sooner, the effect could be significant.

At present, 50 million tons a year of sulphur pollution dumped into the lower atmosphere kills about a million

people a year through asthma, heart disease and lung cancer. Air pollution deaths from geoengineering would be substantially less, since particles would be distributed worldwide (rather than concentrated near population centres). More air pollution deaths a year would be offset by far fewer deaths from rising temperatures.

A further risk from SAI deployment is acid rain. Keith argues that “the risks studied to date appear relatively small when compared to the risks of rapid climate change”. Risks might be reduced by the use of other substances, although these could generate new risks. The “unknown-unknowns” can only be drawn out with further research.

Another widely-raised objection to stratospheric aerosol injection is the risk of “termination shock”, an abrupt cessation of large-scale deployment that would engender dangerous warming snap-back – from global frost to global furnace. Of course such a nightmare scenario could be ecologically catastrophic. The extent of the damage would depend on the rate SAI is ramped up, the scale of deployment and the possibilities of reinstating it. These are really matters of politics, or “governance” as it is referred to in the literature.

Objections

Many of the most significant objections to stratospheric aerosol injection rest the risks of its deployment by existing states, corporations or billionaires. Marxists argue that capitalism is a system based on the exploitation of waged labour and where competition between private (and state) capitals dominates. Marxists are acutely conscious that global capitalism is governed by a system of bourgeois states, which are sometimes in conflict and frequently fail to cooperate.

Marxists fight for a new world order based on solidarity between peoples across the planet, common ownership and democratic workers’ control. However working class power is not on the immediate horizon and therefore to support SAI research in current circumstances means making demands on capitalists and their states.

However the cost and scale of planetary-wide climate interventions like stratospheric aerosol injection mean that only a handful of states, namely the USA, China, possibly India or a group of European states are in a position to unilaterally deploy it on a scale and for a duration long enough to impact global temperatures. Although clearly military power is a factor in big power rivalry, SAI is not primarily a project of

the armed forces, nor particularly useful as a weapon.

The objection that a Bond-type wealthy villain – dubbed “Greenfinger” – might covertly deploy stratospheric aerosol injection is also overblown. Apart from the prohibitive cost even for most billionaires, SAI is not profitable nor a means of opening profitable opportunities. Musk, Branson and those developing space technologies have a different agenda, not SAI.

Similarly, while billionaires like Bill Gates have paid Keith and others to advise them, and some corporations have contributed to stratospheric aerosol injection research, the technology is not intrinsically “right-wing” nor especially congruent with neoliberalism. Of course fossil fuel capitalists might dabble with technologies that allow them to pollute for longer, but the scientists most active with SAI accept that emissions reductions are the top priority.

The question of legitimacy – who decides whether, when and how to deploy SAI – remains vexed. There is no authoritative global democracy. But there are global institutions like the IPCC, treaties, assemblies and gatherings of governments. There is also a global labour movement and climate campaigns. Building an international working-class-based climate movement is the best guarantor that bourgeois states stick to their promises and get consent for planetary interventions.

Opposition to stratospheric aerosol injection research is distilled in an open letter by Frank Biermann and his co-thinkers, published as *Solar geoengineering: The case for an international non-use agreement*, in *WIREs Climate Change* journal (2022). They advocate five core measures against these technologies:

1. Prohibit national funding agencies from supporting them
2. Ban outdoor experiments
3. Refuse to grant patent rights
4. Not deploy technologies developed by third parties
5. Object to future institutionalisation as a policy option by the IPCC and other bodies.

I think this is mistaken on every count. A more rational approach is the editorial, *Give Research into Solar Geoengineering a Chance*, published in *Nature* journal in May 2021. It stated:

“Solar-geoengineering research brings risks, and there are other, more promising ways to address global warming. But the world remains on a path to dangerous climate change. Governments need to step up climate efforts and evaluate all possible options for action. If solar geoengineering is

harmful, leaders will need evidence so that they can rule out the technology.”

David Keith made the point crisply:

“Until recently, controversy around geoengineering has largely suppressed research. Lack of research in turn sustains controversy because it allows exaggerated claims about benefits and risks to go unchallenged... I contend that the potential upsides of geoengineering are large enough to justify an immediate commitment to a serious international research programme that includes small-scale outdoor experiments...”

“Our choice is between the status quo – with almost no organised research on the subject – and commitment to a serious research programme that will develop the capability to geoengineer, improve understanding of the technology’s risks and benefits, and open up the research community to dilute the geo-clique. Given this choice, I choose research; and if the research supports geoengineering’s early promises, I would then choose gradual deployment.”

Solar engineering might seem like Promethean human hubris. But modern class societies have already fundamentally altered planet earth and modified the climate. Marxists should support research into stratospheric aerosol injection, demanding that it is publicly funded, open-source and with democratic safeguards. We should take the debate into the labour movement and climate struggles. It is part of forging a working class-based ecological programme for the century ahead. □

Our pamphlets

Browse, download, buy, or listen to [our pamphlets](#) including:

- China and Trotskyism
- Women’s Fightback
- The German Revolution: selected writings of Rosa Luxemburg
- For Workers’ Climate Action
- Two Nations, Two States
- Workers Against Slavery
- How to Beat the Racists
- Stalinism in the International Brigades
- The story of Sylvia Pankhurst
- Left Antisemitism: What it is and How to Fight it
- Arabs, Jews, and Socialism: Socialist Debates on Israel/Palestine
- When workers beat the fascists
- Automation and the working class □

workersliberty.org/publications/



For socialists to understand and confront left antisemitism from primitive or Stalinist roots to the “anti-imperialism of fools”. 265 pages, £9.99 □ bit.ly/shop-wl

For analysis, not wordplay!



Debate

By Zack Muddle

We are right to [criticise “slippery slogans”](#) around Israel/Palestine as elsewhere. Se must push back against another problem too: a sole and superficial focus on individual words, on their emotional and rhetoric force over substance, and using these for virtue-signalling or “gotcha!” politics.

One recent protest chant is “Not a war! Not a conflict!”

The assertion is false. “Conflict” and “war” do not imply symmetry in military might or indeed culpability. The might of the Israeli military far outweighs that of Hamas, though Hamas and Hezbollah are armed to the teeth by Iran, a dictatorship sworn to Israel’s destruction. Hamas used these weapons in their 7 October massacre, and continues to fight. The war of an Israeli government led by Netanyahu and the far right against the clerical-fascist Hamas has massacred thousands upon thousands of Palestinian civilians, many children, at best as “collateral”.

At a recent PSC rally, one speaker compared Israel’s actions in Gaza to the Holocaust. That’s false and deeply [offensive](#). Another said that “isn’t a conflict, it’s a... one-sided battle”. Another speaker was the only one to (half-)mention Hamas’s pogrom, but euphemistically as “the escalation of violence on 7 October”. If Israel is the only side, who escalated the violence?

It is “disrespectful to call it a war” (another PSC-demo speaker) not so much, it seems, because consideration of the definition of war and the facts on the ground disproves the claim, but through fear that doing so minimises the moral case against Israel’s slaughter of civilians. Fairytale division of the world into “good” and “bad” peoples precludes facing up to the facts of Hamas’s role.

“Not a war” claims reflect an obsessive quibbling over the emotional implications of particular words, rather than a serious analysis of either the situation or the way forward.

Those protesting [the BBC](#) often fixate on the vibes of particular words used in this or that tweet, rather than the substantive coverage or analysis.

On social media and beyond, mandatory hot takes and pontification on the titles of, images with, and individual words in articles displaces reading, reflecting on, and rationally discussing their substance.

We’re left with much chattering about chattering, without analysis or pro-

gramme to ground it or cut through the dross.

As Sean Matgamna has [written](#):

“In that culture, discussion of permissible and ‘impermissible’ language has a built-in tendency to displace and block off substantive discussion of politics.

“Anyone can play. Anyone who knows not much, or anything, of the substance, can scrutinise the language, and doesn’t have to find out about the substance. People who like to sound off can sound off. The self-righteous nincompoop can be a self-righteous nincompoop.

“This is a characteristic of a would-be left that is too scared of the world around it, and of itself, to think. It is a major trait – both consequence and ongoing cause – in the decadence of the ostensible left.”

In general and most harmfully this culture pushes in a conformist direction, suppressing those who think differently; or express their ideas differently. I’ve been guilty of the latter [myself](#). But encouraging individuals to be scared of their shadows can push in all sorts of directions.

Fear

The letter “Israel, Hamas, and us” ([Solidarity 691](#)) has a feel of such fear. Its “hook” is its condemnation of the previous week’s headline, which could allegedly be read as saying something that it very clearly doesn’t say, and indeed [explicitly distances itself](#) from: in both its formulation and in the subtitle. “Neither Netanyahu, nor Hamas, but peace and equal rights: Ceasefire now! Two states! See *inside*” is not honestly readable as “Destroy Israel!/Destroy Palestine!” [nor](#) “Hamas should assassinate Netanyahu!/The IDF should destroy Hamas!” Nor does it imply that our critiques of Netanyahu and Hamas are equivalent and interchangeable.

The front page was clear-cut against the dominant politics of the left we find ourselves in, and crucially directed readers to “see inside”. Any hypothetical person uncertain as to what was meant by it, instead of being caught up in the minutiae of possibilities of more perfect and unadulterable front pages, should be redirected to engage with the substance.

Beyond the bizarre framing, the article has some valuable insights and perspectives. Perhaps they were the real motivation, and the fragile “hook” was contrived to that end. But the latter muddies more than clarifies, and leaves a sense of performative, unconvicted, and concocted self-flagellation; unhelpfully [flattening current protests](#).

I’m not advocating a sloppiness or a softening of precision in words’ meanings. A recognition that words have



definite meanings and that slogans should be as clear as possible, goes hand in hand with a recognition that individual words and slogans can only carry so much weight, that we must fight for a culture that goes beyond them.

An oft-repeated declaration about Israel/Palestine on the ostensible left is “it’s not complicated.” This radical sounding statement serves as a celebration of ignorance and a call to arms for lazy and arrogant oversimplification. Some axiomatic principle will cut through the complexity and deliver instant principled answers? But what? It is unstated, or a vague, and fails to deliver.

Israel/Palestine is described as “apartheid”. The evidence? Israel’s racist policies. The evocation? Moral condemnation of an exceptionally evil state. The remedy? Delegitimise and destroy Israel: any Israel, not just current policies. Israel should be forcibly dissolved into a greater Palestine.

Not all states practicing systemic racism are comparable to apartheid South Africa. Nor is the answer to all systemic racism the complete destruction, delegitimation, dissolution of the state in question. But sloganeering around “apartheid” presents dissent from the orthodoxy of that label as either denying or justifying the (undeniable) racism, rather than dissent from the purported evidence, evocation, remedy.

Or take denunciations of “Zionism”. It is defined simultaneously as the simple recognition of the right to self-determination for Israeli Jews, maybe combined with much criticism of Israeli policies; and as celebrating the policies

of far-right Israeli governments or endorsing greater Israel chauvinism and Jewish supremacy. Or as many other meanings between and beyond those. All are conflated to present “smash Zionism” as both an inescapable necessity and as requiring “smashing Israel”.

“Genocide” used interchangeably with “ethnic cleansing” or “massacre”, albeit with more rhetorical power, is unhelpful. As is conflating all proposals, policies, or situations labelled “two state”.

Reality in such a culture is deduced from the rhetorically painted picture, not the other way around. A different protest speaker indicted Israel for bombing Al-Ahli Arab Hospital (the balance of evidence says that particular explosion was not an Israeli bomb), and implied that Hamas’s tunnels under hospitals are an IDF fiction. No evidence was needed for the dubious claims. Emotionally, they can be deduced a priori from the lack of “war” or “conflict”!

No word or slogan is immune to co-option, to being made “slippery”. Daniel Randall’s [Solidarity 690 response](#) to [Barry Finger’s 689 article](#) covers the important programmatic points. But Barry also raised questions about specific words.

Our call is for a ceasefire in both directions: we oppose Israel’s bombing and blockade of Gaza, and we opposed Hamas’s 7 October massacre and their continued firing of rockets into Israel. A two-sided ceasefire is also what is meant by it by those demanding “ceasefire” in Israel, by [many left-wing Palestinians](#), and [others](#). It is what

continued on page 11 →

→ from page 10

the SNP motion to UK's parliament demanded, and many bourgeois commentators. The SWP understand this two-sided meaning of ceasefire, which is why [they oppose it](#).

Ceasefire

Barry understands ceasefire here as one-sided: by Israel but not Hamas. Unfortunately, he is not alone in that. Many within or leading protests feel pressure to call for a ceasefire. Actually they seek the destruction of Israel, so imbue "ceasefire" with an alien meaning.

Ceasefire means temporarily stopping a war. If the Israel-Hamas conflict is "not a war, not a conflict", if Hamas's 7 October massacre is an "un-fact", rarely mentioned and then mostly dismissively or euphemistically, if Hamas's continued firing of rockets is ignored, then "ceasefire" is a misplaced demand.

But some covertly redefine "ceasefire" to mean a one-sided ceasefire, with Hamas free to continue its "not war" for a greater Palestine to displace all of Israel proper. And respect for the victims in Gaza is supposed to oblige us to look away from that implication.

We should not abandon the demand for a ceasefire, but insist on its true meaning and on genuinely internationalist perspectives which delve beyond the word.

Is Israel's war on Hamas "collective punishment" of the civilians of Gaza? Well yes, and no, but also yes again. Yes, in the rhetoric of many on the far right in Israel, including within Netanyahu's government. This rhetoric [unofficially influences](#) the details of military decisions by some in the IDF. No, in the sense that the immediate war aims as stated, and to a significant extent in reality, are the destruction of Hamas, an armed far-right organisation which keeps Gazan civilians in a stranglehold and terrorises Israeli civilians. The war goes after Hamas military infrastructure and military personnel. There are warnings, calls for evacuation

But also yes again, in that high "collateral" harm is treated as acceptable towards those aims. The large majority of those killed are civilians, thousands of them children. The blockade impacts civilians most of all.

Hamas carries out its war against Israel with ubiquitous use of human shields. That's a war crime, but that doesn't make Israel's culpability in the thousands massacred less of a war crime. Israel's war against Hamas, unlike Hamas's pogrom, is not, as Barry points out, completely "indiscriminate".

But its collateral starving and slaughtering of civilians, dwarfing the number of Hamas operatives successfully killed, makes it not far off. □

Making "non-compliance" a reality

By a Free Our Unions supporter

The Trades Union Congress meets for a special congress on Saturday 9 December, to discuss the new "minimum service levels" anti-strike laws and resistance to them.

The congress is scheduled only for a few hours, and it seems likely most unions' delegations will be just senior national officials. There has been no opportunity for wider democratic scrutiny of whatever proposal the TUC general council plans to put to the congress, and therefore no opportunity for rank-and-file bodies within unions to propose amendments or additions. A lobby is planned outside the congress, but there is no transparency and scrutiny over what the congress will debate.

The resolution from the TUC's regular congress which mandated the organisation of a special congress also included commitments to build a campaign of "non-compliance", as well as a national demonstration.

It is scandalous that, despite the plans for MSL laws being first announced in the Tories' 2019 manifesto, the only on-the-streets mobilisations against them have been a few midweek-evening rallies outside Parliament, coinciding with votes on the bill, and one protest organised by Free Our Unions in alliance with Earth Strike UK.

A national demonstration would never have stopped the laws by itself, and now the Bill has become an Act, certainly won't lead to its repeal. But it could have been, and could still be, a focal point for mobilising opposition and an element in a wider campaign.

The TUC could organise a national demonstration more or less at will. Several unions have also had longstanding policies to call a demo. If the special congress fails to set a date for one, a "coalition of the willing" of individual unions should take the initiative.

It is an affront to their internal democracy that they have failed to act on the decisions of their own annual general meetings.

The question of "non-compliance" is more complex. So far, there has been some stirring but less-than-specific talk from union leaders about, variously, "non-compliance", "defiance", and "resistance" to the laws. Some have talked about the need for mass strikes to protest the sackings of any workers dismissed for defying work notices.

But that proposal frames resistance as something devolved to individual workers, with the unions as such presumably having at least formally advised the workers to comply with the work notices, then taking action to defend them when disciplined. And then strikes to defend workers disciplined on those grounds would break the 1992 law. It makes little sense to defer the question of defiance in this way.

There is potential for political cam-



paigning focused around demands on employers to refuse to issue work notices. The legislation says only that employers "may" issue work notices, not that they must. Individual employers are free to decide not to, thereby enabling "all-out" strikes, or strikes with worker-organised emergency cover, to take place.

The Scottish Government has already said it will not issue work notices, and the Welsh Government and Islington Council have indicated likewise. Other employers, especially transport authorities administered by Labour administrations such as Transport for London, could easily follow suit.

Given that Labour has committed to repeal the law within its first 100 days in government, it would be ludicrous for Labour administrations enforce the law now, when there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

Employers

It is certain that some employers – especially the Westminster government itself – will issue work notices. The point at which unions, as collective organisations, are expected to "comply" with the law is by "taking reasonable steps to ensure" that members named in work notices do in fact attend work during strikes.

The only possible form of "non-compliance" is for unions to refuse to take such steps, and to then persist with strikes in the face of a probable court injunction against the whole strike (not just work-notice non-compliance) triggered by failure to instruct their own members to scab. Defying injunctions will trigger fines.

Defying injunctions will be a level of direct confrontation with the state that the British labour movement has not undertaken in a generation. It is not something to be advocated lightly.

But, unless we are to accept a continual narrowing of our horizons and a slow grinding down of unions from potential instruments of class struggle into glorified insurance brokers and personal-injury lawyers, it is necessary.

Senior trade union officials, with an "institutional" relationship to unions and tasked with protecting their finances, will be extremely reluctant to commit to a course of action that risks those finances. There is no immediate easy fix for this problem; bigger, wealthier unions could commit to underwrite fines faced by smaller unions, giving them more confidence to defy

the laws without risking total financial collapse. But that would require a significant increase in a culture of practical solidarity from a status quo where different unions within the same industry invariably instruct their members to cross the picket lines of other unions.

And anyway it is not an answer. Australian unions have frequently defied anti-strike laws there and paid the fines, but that defiance has steadily eroded as the cost of fines rises.

Unions may attempt to fulfil their legal obligations in a bare-minimum way – for example sending members a pro forma email saying words to the effect of, "You have been named in a work notice and it is our legal obligation to encourage you to attend work". That might not save the union from an injunction, and anyway would make the question of defiance an individual, rather than collective, matter.

If it happens, though, workers named in work notices should aim to refuse "en masse" rather than in ones and twos. But workers will unquestionably be in a stronger position if our unions, as organisations, defy the law, rather than hoping to finesse it by formal compliance and a nod-and-wink for non-compliance.

Despite the 2022-3 strike wave, the labour movement is not in good health. Union membership is declining, and shop-floor organisation in many workplaces is threadbare. It is a marker that the largest and most forceful strikes in the NHS, for example, have been organised by craftist professional associations like the RCN and BMA, rather than the largest union, Unison.

Organising mass defiance of the law from this low base, shaped by years of defeats and an entrenched culture of compliance with the already heavily-restrictive legislative regime, is difficult. But the very least we can do is talk specifically about what defiance must mean in the current context, and seek a serious discussion in the movement about what will be necessary to achieve it.

The 9 December TUC special congress seems likely to be only a truncated and stage-managed forum for such discussion. Rank-and-file activists must seek to organise others, within the structures of their own unions, through Trades Councils, and via campaigning bodies like Free Our Unions. □

• freeourunions.org

Another look at Gaza demonstration slogans



Eye on the Left

By Martin Thomas

It is good that so many people turn out for Gaza ceasefire protests. It is bad, and odd, that placards and megaphones on those protests are dominated by slogans devised by groups who want not so much a ceasefire as Hamas to war and win; and that most protesters follow the placards and chants without signalling dissent.

Best if we, Workers' Liberty, and other groups who want peace, two states, workers' unity, can be numerous enough to have our placards and banners dominate. Pending that, let's analyse some of the slogans.

"Free Palestine" was first brought onto marches in a big way by *Socialist Worker* in 2002. It was made an official second slogan of the big 2002-3 Iraq protests so as to have the Muslim Asso-

ciation of Britain (linked to the Muslim Brotherhood) sponsor those protests.

"From the river to the sea" was brought onto marches around the same time. The wipe-out-Israel intent of the formula is clear on [the SWP](#) or [Muslim Brotherhood](#) websites, and from the frequent display of maps showing Palestine in 1918-48 borders, with Israel erased.

"Smash the Israeli terror state" is a *Socialist Worker* slogan, linked to the chant "1-2-3-4. Occupation no more. 5-6-7-8. Israel is a terror state".

The term "terror state" comes from the language of George W Bush's "War on Terror" from 2001. It was muddy in the original and doesn't become clear by "appropriating" it. The gist is: smash Israel, i.e. wipe out the country. Not have the workers within it "smash" capitalist rule within it.

The slogan "End the Occupation" comes from the Israeli left, where it is unambiguous: out of the occupied territories. We have used it ourselves. The chant with "occupation no more" sug-

gests, however, defining the very existence of Israel as "occupation".

The Socialist Party agrees with two states in the form "socialist Israel and socialist Palestine", which is desirable but begs the question of whether we recognise rights now, short of socialism.

Why then does it have the placard slogan "End Israeli state terror"? No-one had "End US state terror" over Iraq. Or Vietnam. I fear that the SP's formula is designed to tune in with SW's very similar "Israeli terror state" wording, while keeping "deniability" for those who read the small print.

Until what?

Likewise the SP's "socialist intifada" slogan, which in the absence for now of large socialist activity in Israel or Palestine suggests: let's have more of that "intifada" (rebellion) begun on 7 October, but (how?) make it more left-wing.

The same goes for Socialist Appeal's "Intifada until victory. Revolution until victory". That one even seems to credit

the 7 October atrocity with being a start of desired "revolution". And what else can it mean? Everyone should carry on being rebellious, in one way or another, until we win, except we don't say what winning means?

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Muslim Association of Britain have placards saying "Exist! Resist! Return!" (originally from 2019 protests hailing Hamas's "Great March of Return" stunt of 2018-9). Given that Hamas declares itself "the resistance", and is the Palestinian force in military battle with Israel now, this suggests endorsement of that "resistance" plus a definition of victory as reversal of the 1948 war and resettlement of 1918-48 Palestine so it becomes uniformly "Arab and Islamic".

We should neither assume that most on the big Gaza protests are hardened Israel-haters (they're not), nor that two months on they can be oblivious to implications of the slogans (there must at least be some degree of passive going-along-regardless). As Lenin put it, "patiently explain". □



Buy our books

Order from workersliberty.org/publications

Browse, basket, and buy books, pamphlets, and publication bundles – and find more info, related resources, study guides, reviews and so on, from the same place. Some books are free to download or as audiobooks.

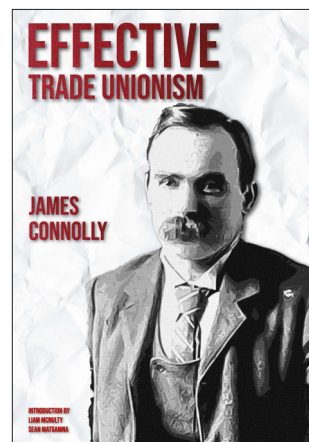
Prices listed exclude postage and packaging: £1 for small items, £3 for larger items, free over £30. Every third publication is half-price and 15% off over £50. □



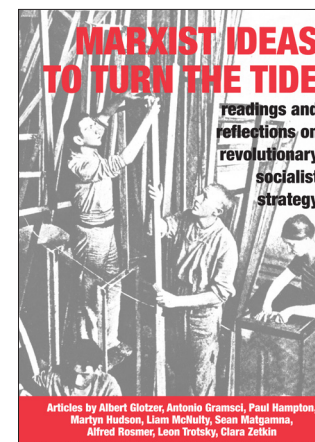
Lessons for socialist and left activists 60 pages **£4**



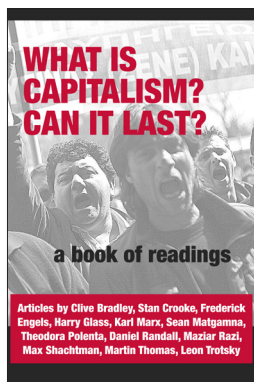
Rühle's abridgement is a good intro 131 pages **£6**



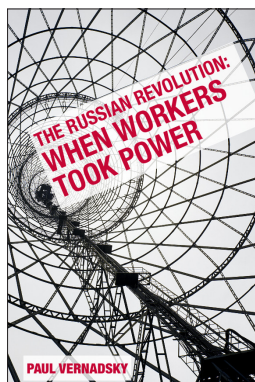
Writings by James Connolly 64 pages **£5**



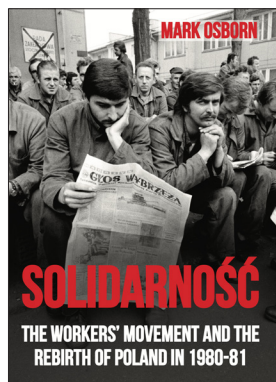
Revolutionary socialist strategy 138 pages **£5**



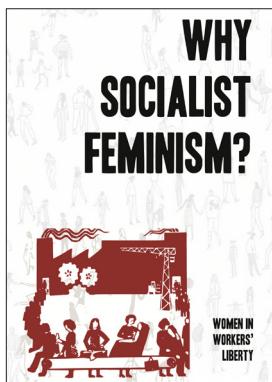
Socialist readings to understand and fight capitalism 128 pages **£5**



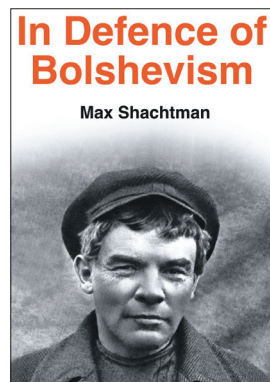
The 1917's revolution's real history, and lessons 374 pages **£12**



The history of Solidarność, from its dawn until the coup 116 pages **£5**



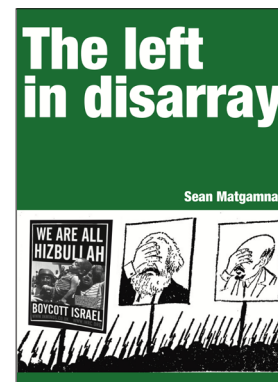
A socialist approach within recent "waves" of feminism 102 pages **£5**



Defending the Bolsheviks and their relevance today 312 pages **£10**



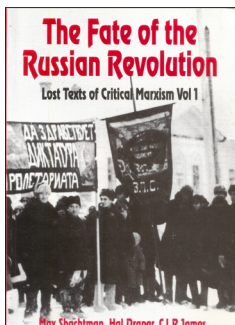
A debate on reform, revolution, Labour, democracy, more 107 pages **£5**



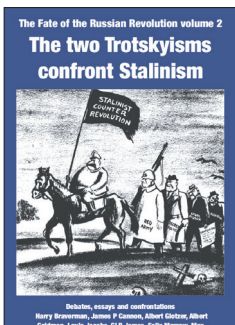
Critical history of the disoriented left, and the way forward 408 pages **£12**



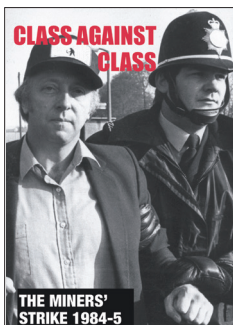
Can Socialism Make Sense? **£8**



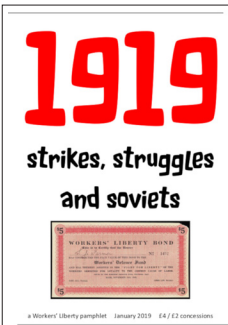
Fate of the Russian Revolution vol.1 **£8**



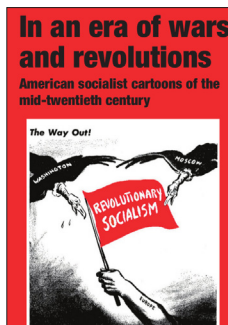
FRR vol. 2: The Two Trotskyisms **£20**



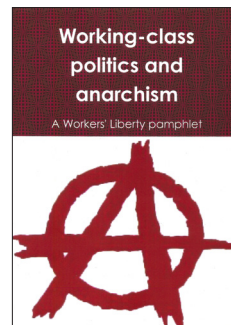
The Miners' Strike 1984-5 **£9**



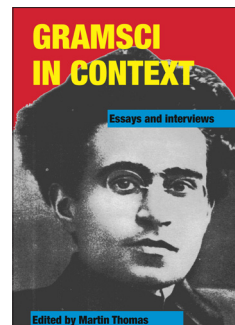
1919: Strikes, struggles, soviets **£4**



In an Era of Wars and Revolutions **£9**



Class Politics and Anarchism **£5**



Gramsci in Context **£6**

A book about contradictions



Book review

By Caroline Jefferies

Imagine your loved one is facing public accusations of misconduct from an anonymous Twitter account. This is the scenario explored in Yomi Adegoke's *The List*, where Ola, a feminist writer, discovers that her fiancé, Michael, has been put on a list by an anonymous Twitter account detailing abusers in the media industry. And it's only weeks away from their wedding.

Adegoke has risen to fame as a Black feminist journalist having previously co-authored *Slay In Your Lane*, a book and then podcast that interviewed successful Black British women and was envisioned as "*Lean In*, but for Black women". These politics come across in *The List*.

Ola is a career-driven mainstream feminist writer working for *Womxxxn*, a feminist magazine ran by an out-of-touch middle class white woman who is so unlikeable at times that her character becomes slightly unbelievable. Neither Ola nor Michael is a radical. They are typical people wanting individual professional success in the media industry as Black professionals. The characters also don't significantly challenge gender roles; to the contrary, the book is revolving around an expensive and big wedding, rife with all the surrounding gendered activities.

The story is told with alternating narratives of both Michael and Ola's perspectives, making the reader sympathise with both characters. Like many Black feminists before her, Adegoke does not paint men as the enemy and handles even extremely flawed male characters with care exploring men's mental health and the historical racism of false accusations levied upon black men. In this way a Black perspective

on the #MeToo era mantra "believe women" is given complexity, as sexual crimes cannot be divorced from wider racism in society.

Adegoke says that the internet is like a character in the book. Both Ola and Michael have had their media careers aided by social media where they have become icons of #blacklove. The internet is also the place of their downfall. Adegoke uses Ola's perspective as a feminist to sensitively navigate the flaws of anonymous internet accusations, while confronting why survivors turn to alternative means when other systems fail. Ola and Michael experience the toxic effects of internet pile-on culture. In one part Ola reflects: "There was no difference between the people calling for the harshest punishments and those insisting that more grace was needed on the internet. They were one in the same. Considering themselves righteous".

The List touches on the long discussed feminist contradictions of lov-

ing men in a sexist society, as radical 1970s feminists said "sleeping with the enemy". Ola finds herself feeling guilty for continuing to care for Michael, even when the internet says he's a monster.

As one feminist put it (quoted by Lynne Segal in *Straight Sex*): "I'd learnt that I could hold my own intellectually and politically and sexually... My personal life might have been smoother if I had not been emboldened by feminism, but it would probably not have been happier."

Ola reflects on how her feminist credentials make her feel like a hypocrite. This theme will feel especially potent for feminist readers whose personal relationships with men don't always match their political values.

The List is a funny and sensitive book that delves into important questions for feminists in the age of social media and balances the importance of justice for both the victims and the accused and the messy contradictions of love. □

Building Nottingham Friends of Standing Together

By Ralph Peters

In Nottingham, a Friends of Standing Together (FOST group) started only days after the 7 October massacre. It was the initiative of AWL members along with others including a recent Palestinian refugee and left-wing members of the Jewish community.

It includes many Jewish activists who have been active in the community around the Liberal synagogue in the

town, with initiatives like Salaam-Shalom kitchens offering free meals to Jewish and Muslim students. We had worked with them over issues dating back to the fatwa against Salman Rushdie.

They and other activists, despite their feelings of solidarity with Palestinians, found great difficulties about supporting the main "pro-Palestine" campaigns in the town. There are two, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and a group called

People for Palestine (PFP) supported by the Revolutionary Communist Group and Socialist Appeal. Both had marches of many hundreds. But both used the slogan "Free Palestine, from the River to the Sea", widely understood to mean the elimination of Israel.

Speakers at the PFP marches had been vehemently anti-Israel. Some joined with a local "Muslim Lives Matter" campaign, demanding that the many Muslim councillors on

Nottingham city council, leave the Labour Party, not for lack of a call for a ceasefire – the council has been demanding a ceasefire for over a month – but over Labour's acceptance of Israel's right to exist.

As we have developed our FOST group, we have pulled in many, non-Jews or irreligious Jews, who have for a long time felt uneasy about antisemitism.

Quite a few who have joined FOST were active in the Labour Party during the 2015-9 Corbyn surge, and had seen antisemitic elements, a small but loud minority, exploit the Corbyn movement.

They had seen campaigns against Jewish candidates in party selections for being "Zionists" despite long-standing opposition to the West Bank occupation. They had seen activists attach themselves to Chris Williamson, once the MP in the neighbouring city of Derby. One very high profile activist has explicitly called for Jews to be kicked out of Palestine when it becomes "free", other than Jewish families resident there before 1948!

Some of those who have joined FOST have detailed knowledge of Israel and a history of involvement in work against the occupation.

Notts FOST has held a vigil of over a hundred people for peace in Israel-Palestine, call-

ing for both an immediate ceasefire and the release of hostages. Local Labour MP Nadia Whittome spoke at the vigil, as well as four Labour councillors and one Lib-Dem. Another vigil is planned for Sunday 10 December.

Notts FOST has also agreed to adopt one of the "Arab-Jewish Solidarity Guard" groups set up in Israel by Standing Together. Online meetings are already planned to discuss how aid may best be given.

The activists in FOST are well aware that action should not end whenever the bombing and shooting subsides. We cannot again just protest for a few months and then walk away. We have to continue aid to both Israeli and Palestinians, building for peace through working-class and socialist solidarity. □

Union pushes plan for steel

By Matt Dunn

Tata Steel and the unions – Community, Unite and GMB – have all chipped in and commissioned Syndex, a French based cooperative of researchers, to produce a [report](#) on steel industry jobs.

At Port Talbot, Tata Steel, part of the huge (and very rich) Tata Group announced plans to close their two blast furnaces and cut up to 3,000 jobs.

Syndex's report recommended building a small 1.5 Megaton Electric Arc Furnace to replace the first blast furnace and another comparatively small replacement of

the second blast furnace in 2032. Community and GMB have accepted the report.

Unite has broken ranks, pointing out that these proposals amount to a 37% decrease in capacity and significant job cuts, though most of these are put off for nine years, by when many reps and officials will have retired.

Unite had already begun a project to research the steel industry and produce a "workers' plan for steel", in consultation with its shop stewards. In part this is inspired by the Lucas Plan in the 1970s. The [Plan](#) was formally adopted by a meeting of reps in Port Talbot on 17 November.

The UK is likely to keep using steel. It is just a question of where it comes from.

Unite argues for a huge investment in the industry of around £1bn a year over 12 years to invest in a range of new production facilities, of much larger scale than being proposed by Syndex and including large EAFs and other more sustainable fuels and technologies than currently used.

It calls for nationalising the energy companies and using the investment to take a public stake in the steel industry. □

• Abridged. More: bit.ly/un-steel

More online

Xenophobia in France

A new rise of Islamophobia and antisemitism: bit.ly/is-as

Israel and apartheid South Africa

Not at all comparable: bit.ly/isr-ap

“What we stand for

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

Capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, blighting of lives by overwork; imperialism, environmental destruction and much else.

The working class must unite to struggle against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, in the workplace and wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses, to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement
- A workers' charter of trade union rights – to organise, strike, picket effectively, and take solidarity action
- Taxing the rich to fund good public services, homes, education and jobs for all
- Workers' control of major industries and finance for a rapid transition to a green society
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression
- Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. Reproductive freedoms and free abortion on demand.
- Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people
- Black and white workers' unity against racism
- Open borders
- Global solidarity against global capital – workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small
- Maximum left unity in action, and full openness in debate

If you agree with us, take copies of *Solidarity* to sell – and join us! □

• workersliberty.org/join-awl

A day's work and nothing happening



Diary of a railworker

By Steve Allan

In my new job on the Elizabeth Line, it's a good day's work when nothing happens. Such is the life of working in the control room at a train station.

My job is essentially to ensure the station is operating safely. When the

trains are on-time and equipment is functional, I'm usually left to my own devices.

Once the delays start and stuff starts breaking, of course, it's all hands to the pump. On top of that I'm expected to book in all visitors, complete paperwork and keep an eye on the CCTV. It can be too much sometimes.

If a duty manager is on-site, they can deal with some of the public-facing stuff. Otherwise they're in the office and can be more hindrance than help.

Sometimes I want to be back outside

on the gate, as I was in my previous job as a customer service assistant, and I'm sure that in the winter my workmates would appreciate a chance to warm up in the control room.

It wouldn't take much to train everybody up on the relevant equipment.

A rotation system would be a more equitable division of labour and make the day a bit more interesting. There would still be a need for a night-shift, but having more capable staff would reduce the burden. □

Free the JSO prisoners!

By Simon Nelson

Pressure is mounting over the sentences of Just Stop Oil (JSO) protestors Marcus Decker and Morgan Trowland. Both scaled the Queen Elizabeth II Suspension Bridge, stopping traffic for almost 40 hours in October 2022.

Decker was imprisoned for two years and seven months, for "public nuisance", and Trowland for three years. These are the longest sentences ever given to non-violent protestors in the UK.

Ian Fry, the UN's rapporteur for climate change, has said the sentences were

"significantly more severe than previous sentences imposed for this type of offending in the past... I am gravely concerned about the potential flow-on effect that the severity of the sentences could have on civil society and the work of activists expressing concerns about the triple planetary crisis and, in particular, the impacts of climate change on human rights and on future generations."

Two more JSO activists are now in jail, beside [Phoebe Plummer](#), now held in remand for six months for breaking bail conditions after charges from throwing

tomato soup at a painting (and causing no damage).

Ruby Hammill was remanded to HMP Bronzefield after saying she would breach her bail conditions and continue to protest. She was arrested in November over a previous action. She will now remain in prison until her court date, 14 December. She faces jail of up to one year for the crime of "interference with key national infrastructure", a new offence introduced with the Public Order Act.

Ella Ward has been jailed on remand (until a trial likely to start Jan 2024) for slow marching and charged with

"wilful obstruction of the highway", which can carry up to six months in prison. She was in breach of previous court and bail conditions preventing her from slow marching. The CPS did not recommend remanding her, saying she had no previous convictions and it was unlikely she would be jailed.

Four other JSO protestors charged with wilful obstruction of the highway in October 2022 following a sit-down protest have been acquitted following a judge declaring a not guilty verdict and no evidence of "significant disruption". □

Flame and Citron



Kino Eye

By John Cunningham

There are many films about the anti-fascist resistance to the Nazis in occupied Europe. This, I think, is one of the best. Released in Denmark in 2008, *Flame and Citron* tells the story of two resistance fighters, based on real life figures, in Nazi-occupied Denmark.

Flame (real name Bent Fuarschou Hviid) and Citron (Jorgem Hogen Schmith) are part of the famous Holger

Danske resistance group. They operate as a kind of "hit squad", assassinating collaborators. Initially they are reluctant to kill any Nazis, fearful that this may mean retaliatory killings meted out to the Danish population. They also carry out sabotage operations.

The killings, being on the run constantly, and the threat of betrayal by an informer take their toll on the two men. A general strike in 1944 seems to achieve more than they have done and questions and doubts arise. However they carry on. Neither of them is portrayed in a classical "heroic" mode.

The director, Ole Christian Madsen challenged the idea of war as "black and white [...] it has many more nu-



ances, it is greyer, less defined". The real-life Flame and Citron were killed during an operation towards the end of the war. □



Reinstate the GEWA 5

By Dale Street

"Women's Rights, Human Rights, Workers' Rights", "Say No to Workplace Bullying", "Reinstate the GEWA 5" read the placards outside Glasgow East Women's Aid (GEWA) on 1 and 4 Dec, the first two strike days by members of Unite the Union.

The dispute began when thirteen members of staff were suspended for having lodged a collective grievance against workplace bullying. When GEWA was given notice of a ballot on strike action, five of the thirteen were immediately sacked.

They won their applications for interim relief (meaning that the employer has to continue to pay them their salary pending the outcome of their claims for unfair dismissal) on 29 Nov.

GEWA did not bring to the Tribunal a copy of the policy which the five had supposedly breached. They produce no minutes of the meeting which agreed to sack the five, and then it turned out that there had been no meeting: the decision had been taken over WhatsApp, and the conversation had been deleted.

The three people who constituted the GEWA Board and who had taken the decision to dismiss the five, on the recommendation of the GEWA manager, then resigned their positions.

So GEWA has: no Board; no working staff (eight suspended on full pay, and five on "interim relief" full pay); and no services (other than the GEWA manager and a secondment from another Women's Aid office taking phone calls).

Scottish Women's Aid, which acts as an umbrella body for the Women's Aid organisations, has since drafted in five people as new members of the GEWA Board. They should reinstate the sacked workers, lift the suspensions, investigate the collective grievance, and – if appropriate, as seems likely – initiate disciplinary proceedings against the GEWA manager.

Until then, the strikes will continue every Friday and Monday until Christmas at least, with pickets at the GEWA offices from 8:30 onwards. □

Junior doctors to strike again

By Alan Gilbert

"Three per cent is pathetic", a junior doctor told *Solidarity* on 5 December, "and it's a massive shame the government has chosen to force more strike action instead of offering something reasonable. We are ready for strikes".

After five weeks of talks, the BMA's junior doctors' committee has unanimously voted to [strike](#) again from 7am 20 December to 7am 23 Dec, and from 7am on 3 January to 7am 9 Jan.

The junior doctors were offered an additional 3%, unevenly spread across grades, on top of the "final" 6% the government proposed in July. That is much less than the offer which consultants (senior doctors) will soon ballot on.

It would not start to mend the real-terms pay cut doctors have experienced since 2008; in fact it would be a real-pay cut for many doctors this year.

The junior doctors' current ballot mandate runs to 29 February. Other junior doctors have told *Solidarity* that although the BMA has paused strikes



since early October, and although the consultants and other health workers have stepped out of the pay battle-line, they remain confident and ready to strike.

Background issues angering junior doctors, though not directly covered by the pay dispute, are around Physician Associates (PAs) and International Medical Graduates. PAs, less qualified than junior doctors but paid 35% more,

are often used to cover their work because the terms of reimbursement to employers are more favourable.

Despite all the NHS staff shortages, junior doctors often find they can't get the training posts they want, and sadly often blame that on medical graduates from outside Britain getting the posts more than on the shortage of training posts. □

Railworkers accept deal



Off The Rails

Members of the RMT union in mainline Train Operating Companies (TOCs) have accepted the latest offer from employers, a 5% pay increase for 2022-3 for their non-driver grades.

Since June 2022, those RMT members have struck multiple times since then, but always for only 24 or 48 hours and with large gaps between strikes, a "marathon, not sprint" strategy. In the end, members were worn out by the sporadic strikes, losing enough pay to feel the financial impact, but never hitting the bosses hard enough to force meaningful concessions.

Several RMT branches put forward proposals for escalation at various points throughout the dispute, but that never cohered into an organised network capable of exerting sustained pressure on the union leadership to change course.

The dispute, along with widespread public campaigning, has won one victory, staving off ticket office closures. Apart from this, it is hard to see the outcome as a success on any level.

Although the deal decouples the pay settlement from proposed changes to terms and conditions, it simply devolves negotiation over those changes to individual TOC bargaining for 2023-4, meaning workers who want to fight them will now have to re-ballot and resist them on a company-by-company basis, rather than as part of an industry-wide national dispute.

Meanwhile, TOC drivers in Aslef continue to strike on pay, and have convincingly renewed their strike mandates across all companies. But Aslef too, plans no more than keeping the dispute on a low boil via sporadic strikes.

Reps and activists in RMT need to start developing a strategy for the looming TOC-by-TOC fights against attacks on terms and conditions now, and developing discussion on sustained action. □

• Abridged. More: bit.ly/tocs-d

Get Solidarity every week

Trial sub (6 issues) £7; Six months (22 issues) £22 waged, £11 unwaged, €30 European rate.

Visit workersliberty.org/sub

Or, email awl@workersliberty.org with your name and address, or phone [020 7394 8923](tel:02073948923). Standing order £5 a month: more to support our work. Forms online. □

Contact us



[020 7394 8923](tel:02073948923)

solidarity@workersliberty.org

Write to: 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG

Production team: Martin Thomas (editor), Dan Katz, Simon Nelson, Zack Muddle □

Fight council cuts, not just section 114

By Rhodri Evans

On 29 November Nottingham's [Labour council](#) issued a "section 114" notice, meaning that it is legally barred from any spending beyond the already-contracted-for and work the council has to do by law.

The council's (unelected) chief finance officer issued the notice, as he is obliged to do by law if he assesses that the council cannot balance its budget. The council is now legally obliged to come up with budget-balancing moves within 14 days.

That makes 12 councils since 2018 to do section 114. There were only two in the previous 18 years. [There is talk](#) of many more soon.

Council leaders (including Tories) are sounding the alarm in the hope of influencing the Tories' decision on central government funding for councils, due later in December.

The labour movement needs to fight back. Local initiative for the fight back may however be more likely in councils which have *not* done section 114 yet.

Councils do section 114 after they have done all the cuts they can see, after the local labour movement has failed to fight those cuts or been defeated, and often after some commercial gimmick of theirs has failed, as with [Nottingham and Robin Hood Energy](#).

Nottingham councillors now seem to worry more about *not* having commissioners appointed

by central government to supervise them than about having commissioners. The commissioners may be better able to induce bits and pieces of extra government funding in order to regain balance.

So far central government says about Nottingham only: "We are assessing the situation and will consider whether further action is necessary".

[Nottingham City Unison](#), although left-minded, has made no comment.

It is still possible to fight cuts in Nottingham. Those will come de facto (by unfilled vacancies and so on) as well as in budget plans, though the council stresses that it is not bankrupt and will pay staff, already-agreed grants, etc. More confident councils and stronger local labour movements may be able to give a lead, by fighting "pre-section-114" cuts mooted in 2024-5 budgets.

A Labour Campaign for Council Housing (LCCH) meeting on 2 December started work on an open letter from Labour councils to Labour leaders and affiliated unions demanding a Labour government fund local councils properly.

The public services union Unison [has published](#) the funding shortfalls for many councils and created a facility through which 2,000 members have sent emails to MPs.

Those 2,000 emails and the LCCH plans are the only concerted efforts so far. Labour Parties and local government unions must strive for more: a concerted campaign of publicity and demonstrations, leading to industrial action and non-cooperation by councillors, demanding restoration. □

To curb emissions, curb the rich



Environment

By Stuart Jordan

The super-rich 1% are responsible for 16% of global carbon emissions, equal to the emissions of the poorest 66% of humanity (five billion people). The richest 10% (incomes over \$91,000) are responsible for half the emissions.

Limiting long-term global warming to 1.5°C requires a 48% cut in total global emissions by 2030 (compared to 2019 levels). There is no way of achieving this without radical cuts to the oversized emissions of the rich. Progress on poverty alleviation and longer term climate goals also necessitates social control of investment decisions.

As the super-rich gather for the COP28 talks, Oxfam has [produced a report](#) that highlights how class inequalities are fuelling climate breakdown.

On average a UK worker emits about 5 tonnes CO2e a year. The top 10% emit 24 tonnes a year and the very richest emit over 8,000 tonnes CO2e. A super yacht on permanent standby produces 7,000 tonnes, and the very rich generate emissions by excess flying. 50% of flights are taken by just 1% of the population.

The middle 40% (which includes the majority of UK workers) need to halve our emissions if we are to meet climate goals by 2030. But unlike the rich who could easily consume less, or shift investment from fossil fuels to green technology, working-class people usually little choice over the emissions from stuff we consume. As individuals we are largely powerless about how our electricity is produced or whether there is a decent public transport system to get us to work. A lot of "our" emissions are the result of investment decisions made by the super-rich.

The unrestrained consumption of the rich is mirrored by the wanton recklessness of their investment decisions. As well as stopping their overconsumption, we need social control over economic life to redirect the wealth they are funnelling into fossil fuel expansion into renewables and essential services.

The Oxfam report demonstrates how relatively mild tax measures could significantly reduce

emissions and make resources available for a transition away for fossil fuels. A 60% income tax on the super-rich would cut the global emissions by 700 million tonnes CO2e and raise \$6.4 trillion to be invested in a green energy transition.

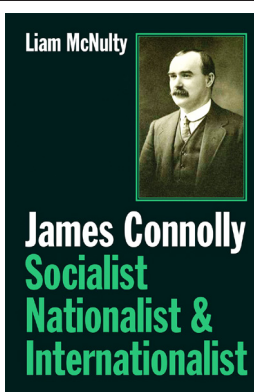
There is a case for simply banning some excess consumption. Most of the emissions of the rich are from private transport. 90% of the global population flies only once a year or not at all, whereas around 6% fly more than twice a year, and just 1% fly more than five times a year. Limiting flights to say, two return flights a year, would have no impact on the huge majority, but would substantially reduce emissions.

Beyond this, the labour movement should agitate for a ban on the production of private jets and yachts, with workers in these luxury industries offered alternative employment in socially useful work. In a world of climate breakdown no individual should be able to own machinery that can emit 7,000 tonnes of CO2e a year. Large scale machinery and the Earth's natural resources need to be used with utmost care, not exploited for the profit and pleasure of the rich.

Those who have done least to cause the crisis are those who are least protected. An estimated 675 million people do not have access to electricity, and up to 2.3 billion people still use polluting fuels and technologies for cooking, causing 3.2 million deaths a year. Ensuring all humanity has access to clean energy, water, food and health-care and climate-adapted shelter is not compatible with achieving climate goals, and in fact is the only way of avoiding catastrophic loss of life.

The severity of the climate crisis leads Oxfam to radical conclusions: "The current economic system, geared towards amassing ever-greater wealth for the already rich, is driving us over the precipice. It is a racist, sexist economic system, built on exploitation of people and natural resources. The focus on... endless extraction and overconsumption at any cost must end.

"People should be put back in charge of their destiny, and democratically elected governments, not corporates, should shape our economy. Our economies should be purposively redesigned and reimagined with a primary focus on the twin goals of human and planetary flourishing." □



Liam McNulty

James Connolly
Socialist Nationalist & Internationalist

ists. 412 pages £25 □

workersliberty.org/publications

This book discusses Connolly not just as an Irish hero, but traces how he was shaped by and responded to the international socialist and labour movement of his time.

It traces his influences and influence through a transnational network of working-class activists, socialist agitators, and revolutionary national-

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 □



Solidarity

For a workers' government

PCS VOTE CLOSES ON 14 DECEMBER

By a PCS activist

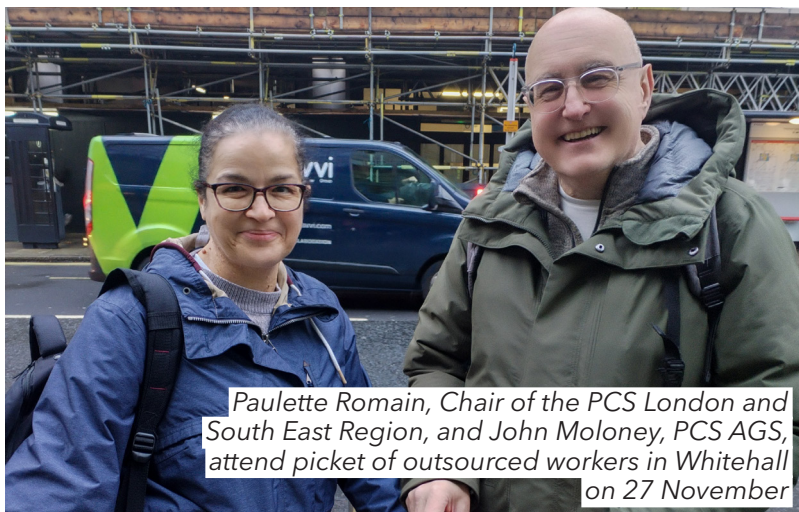
The elections for General Secretary (GS) and Assistant General Secretary (AGS) of the PCS civil service union end on 14 December

During the ballot period it has become increasingly clear that there are two different visions of trade unionism on offer.

Left Unity (LU), the dominant grouping in PCS, is offering a top down, TUC-mainstream-style, union with a smattering of left sounding verbiage but now without the presence and political direction, such as it is, of outgoing GS Mark Serwotka.

Without Serwotka, around whom a mythologising cult has been built, the only thing that holds LU together is hatred of the opposition and as a pathway for advancement to senior lay positions and to full time officialdom, with lifestyles beyond what most members could ever hope for. LU has no common political project beyond office and we predict that they will move ever rightward.

Marion Lloyd and John Moloney, who are running for GS and AGS on a joint ticket and an agreed principled platform, are offering something different. For example, John Moloney has renewed his pledge not to take



the full AGS wage and take only the salary of an Executive Officer (the most common grade in the UK civil service). He has returned over £120,000 to the PCS Fighting Fund since 2019. Marion Lloyd will remain on her current salary of £30,000.

They want a trade union where being a senior full time officer is a privilege and a commitment, not the most prosperous career move an activist can make. Left Unity believe that the GS and AGS should command salaries of over £103,000pa.

Then there is Marion and John's pledge to rebuild union membership and power in the workplace. Both realise that, with membership at a historically low density, PCS's ability

to win is less than it would be with 70% or 80% membership.

Of course that rebuilding cannot be done without empowering activists and linking growth to key membership and workplace issues. Therefore they want to dismantle the apparatus of central control where regions, for example, must obtain permission to run events rather than just proceeding. John and Marion want to build a culture where activists take the initiative and are self activating and where PCS recruits by campaigning and winning on the things that staff want.

If you are in PCS and have not voted as yet, vote Marion and John for real change – for the union you deserve. □