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SOLIDARITY

& WORKERS' LIBERTY



Fight for working-class and socialist policies



Burnham: squeeze him, not cajole!

As Andy Burnham becomes Labour leader, we need a fight by union and Labour activists to open up Labour and democracy. And union democracy too, since many unions' voice within Labour is heavily controlled by top officials.

We need to use the existing channels, and newly opened-up channels, not to cajole or implore Burnham, but to squeeze him. We need to put him under the pressure that made Starmer retreat on Winter Fuel Allowance and PIP cuts — and a lot more than that, since that pressure only stalled the worse rather than imposing the better.

It won't be easy. Most of the left Labour MPs are among the 349 who have nominated Andy Burnham for Labour leader.

Nadia Whittome, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Apsana Begum, John McDonnell, Jon Trickett, and Steve Witherden have had enough prudence and dignity not to do that, and so has the maverick Labour MP Stella Creasy, but Richard Burgon, Rebecca Long-Bailey, and most of the rest have gone for Burnham.

Sharon Graham, general secretary of Unite, who has long hinted at disaffiliation from Labour rather than any plan to use the union's still-large clout within Labour to make gains, has also backed Burnham. "It is clear that Andy has been in listening mode... This is the start of a discussion about a better path for workers and communities... Of course, we will need to see the detail but this is a good start."

The thought seems to be that backing Burnham now gives you a better chance of a word in his ear once he is leader.

That is probably foolish even for the MPs and union leaders. It is obvious nonsense for rank-and-file union and Labour members, not in the inner circles.

But actual mobilisation within the labour movement could make a difference.

Burnham's "philosophy" — "business-friendly socialism" — is the same

as Starmer's ("pro-business" as well as "being the party of working people"). Burnham may well use his "coronation" to push through some right-wing policies which Starmer would not have had the authority to manage.

But Burnham is not so stupid as to think that he can just do more of the same. The Labour right which clustered round Starmer is not cohesive enough, or even possessed of clear enough common ideas, to play Burnham like a puppet. Morgan McSweeney is gone, and Labour general secretary Hollie Ridley will be gone soon. (Former Unison general secretary Christina McAnea is cited as one of many possible successors). There is something to play for.

Union leaders

Burnham met union leaders on 2 July. The only report we have is via the BBC.

"Union sources described the meeting as 'positive'... GMB union raised... ownership of water, as well as union access to workplaces.

"Unison raised the issue of migrant care workers.. Unite pressed for a wealth tax, more action on the cost of living and what Burnham's plans for reindustrialisation would involve".

Sounds like the unions got warm words and cold commitments.

Burnham has spoken of a less control-freaky regime for Labour MPs, but not, at least recently, about opening up Labour democracy for unions or CLPs, or reviving CLP active membership, now less than half what it was when Keir Starmer was elected leader in 2020.

Some Labour right-wingers in the late 1950s argued that the party did not need active members, but could win votes instead by TV. Blair and Brown were unconcerned when Labour membership dwindled after 1997, and Rachel Reeves publicly rejoiced at the decline after 2020.

But Burnham probably does think Labour needs activists. He just doesn't

think they need the warm words given to MPs and union leaders.

Labour democracy has been shrunk under Starmer, more by procedural and operational changes (such as ruling motions out of order) than by written-out rule changes (though there have been some of those).

Burnham himself suffered from that when barred from standing in Gorton and Denton. He has yet to say anything about improvement.

Opinion polls have shown

some uptick for Labour since it started looking like Starmer would go, but it's slight and probably unstable.

To defeat Reform, and, more of the essence, to repair public services and real-terms pay, to defend and win migrant rights, to restore civil liberties, we need something quite other than "hoping Andy will deliver". □



Pic: @gibography2001

Labour Party conference 2026

Labour Party conference 2026 is in Liverpool from 27 to 30 September, with women's conference on 26 September.

The 2025 conference was the least lively for many years, though even that yielded votes against the leadership on stopping all arms sales to Israel, on wealth tax, and on migrant visas.

Maybe, this year, heightened hopes with Starmer gone will produce a more insistent mood in conference. Or maybe "hope for the best from Burnham" sentiment, coupled with despondency about Reform's successes, will dominate. We don't know.

The delegates have already been elected, in June or earlier. Constituency Labour Parties and unions will generally finalise motions in September (the deadline is 17 September).

Last year "references back" of the National Policy Forum report — a useful way to challenge the leadership, won in the Miliband years, with each CLP allowed four challenges — were shuffled off the agenda, with no CLP delegate up for making a fuss about it. Labour leftists plan an effort to reopen that channel this year.

Much depends on whether the unions choose to insist or defer. In any case, Workers' Liberty will be there around the conference, both to sell our paper (officially banned by the Labour Party) and our books, and to help the efforts of friends still within Labour. □

More than "tax the rich"

Tax Justice UK has a worked-out package of tax changes — mostly wealth tax and leveling up capital gains tax — to raise £50 billion a year for public services.

That would make a difference. It would stop the cuts still going on in the NHS, and start a national social-care service. It would help councils start restoring some of the services lost since 2010. It would enable SEND provision in schools. It would start some council house building.

But we need also to look fur-

ther, for two reasons. £50 billion is less than 2% of all economic output. It is a small fraction of the loot extracted to go to luxury-class living and the business investments the ultra-rich choose solely on prospects of profit.

Solidarity argues that the working class and its allies, the huge majority, should instead have social ownership and control of the productive wealth we create, and of directions of investment.

Also, world economic conditions will probably get worse,

and may tip into outright slump, in the coming year.

The closing of the Strait of Hormuz generates price inflation, working its way through the system. Any one of the economic bubbles in AI, cryptocurrency, "private credit", and private buying of US Treasury bonds, could burst.

Only radical measures will serve then. Number one should be public ownership and democratic control of the whole of high finance. □

SOCIALIST SUMMER CAMP 2026

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Solidarity 772 is 12 August

After this issue we go onto a summer schedule. #772 will be 12 August; #773, 26 August; #774, 23 September; #775, 7 October, and then we are back on the usual schedule. □

Can Ukraine defeat Russia?

By Dan Katz

The spectacular results from Ukraine's mid- and long-range drone campaign are visible daily on grainy feeds posted by Ukraine's drone forces, and video footage on Western news platforms.

This year Ukraine has carried out strikes as far as 2,500km into Russia against fuel plants, munition factories and communication centres. Refineries in supposedly well-defended cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg have been seriously damaged by Ukrainian drones. Russian refineries have been hit 194 times in 2026. The immediate effect on the civilian population has been shortages of petrol in Russia alongside a price spike.

Super 95 petrol is now selling at the equivalent of €0.83 per litre and diesel at €0.94. A year ago the prices were €0.15 and €0.16, respectively. Reuters reports that some independent filling stations in Russia have now broken the hundred rouble barrier (€1.11) per litre.

Fights have broken out at Russian petrol stations.

The Ukrainian Air Force states that Russia has lost 43% of refining capacity in the last year and suffered \$13bn of damage to oil infrastructure.

Fuel restrictions are in place across the country, Russia has banned the export of petrol, diesel and jet fuel and is importing petrol from Belarus and India.

Ukraine refers to the damage of Russian oil facilities as a "sanctions campaign". And, as with all sanctions, it is necessary to distinguish between actions that will damage Russia's economy and actions that will stop Putin's war.

Putin has little interest in Russian suffering but he is concerned about political stability and so will have to make a response to the refinery fires.

More important than hitting oil facilities, a so-called "mid-range" Ukrainian drone campaign, striking targets up to 150km from the front lines, has been ongoing since January. The first phase, using improved drone systems, was to destroy Russian air defences in occupied areas. By the end of April Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces (USF) estimated they had destroyed 25 anti-aircraft missile sites and thirteen radar stations, costing Russia \$1.1bn.

Ukraine benefited from Putin's attempts to restrict Telegram use, often also used by military units as well as civilians, the prevention of Russia's access to Starlink, and a deal with the US company Vantor which provides Ukrainian forces with near real-time

satellite intelligence.

In the occupied areas of Crimea, southern and eastern Ukraine drones have been used to cut Russia's supply lines. The road system that links Rostov-on-Don in Russia to Mariupol, Melitopol and Crimea, along the M-14 and M-18 roads, has been mostly closed to civilian traffic since late May and has become dominated by drones hunting Russian military vehicles and petrol tankers.

Surrendering

There are now reports of Russian troops in the occupied south surrendering because they have no water. The occupied town of Oleshky, facing Kherson city on the left bank of the Dnipro, appears to have been cut off.

Ukraine has now turned its attention to hitting Russian ships in the Sea of Azov. USF commander, Robert Brovdi, claims 19 tankers, a cargo ship and a ferry were hit between 6 and 8 July. Ukraine adds that some of the tankers were carrying fuel to Crimea. Petrol sales to civilians in Crimea have now been banned.

The airspace is allegedly extremely well-defended, so Ukraine's ability, currently, to attack at will is impressive.

Ukraine has also hit electricity substations, causing repeated and widespread blackouts across Crimea. This type of action is questionable: the rules of war rightly state that attacks on civilian infrastructure are crimes, and while military bases in Crimea will have alternative or back-up power sources available, civilians will not.

Ukraine has attempted to isolate Crimea by destroying bridges and roads into the area. It is not clear what Ukraine intends next. They could simply attempt to throttle Crimea. But Ukraine also appears to be concentrating some of its best units south of Zaporizhzhia, and although a massed armoured assault south towards Crimea is unlikely, it may be that Ukraine has something less conventional in mind.

So, will Ukraine win? In an article in the *Telegraph*, former head of Ukraine's armed force, now Ukraine's ambassador to the UK, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, issues a useful corrective (8 July): "A growing number of Western analysts now argue that Russia has effectively lost the war... This is a dangerous misreading of the war... This is [now] a war of attrition... Ukraine remains dependent on Western financial assistance and military support... Moscow understands this and [aims to] exhaust Ukraine.

Russia has reserves of manpower and industrial capacity."

Meanwhile, like an emperor obsessed with signalling status and power US President Donald Trump rolled up to the Ankara NATO summit on 7 July with an entourage of 1,400 people. One person, apparently, even had the job of collecting Trump's pee and shit so no one else could gather it up and run an analysis on it.

It seems Putin has a man with a suitcase who follows him round with exactly the same job.

Putin had hoped that Trump would press Ukraine to stop the drone offensive. In fact, in Ankara, Trump said he thought Ukraine's recent successes could bring about a peace agreement as Putin was now under significant domestic pressure.

Yes, an agreement may be possible. But much more likely is a major escalation by Putin.

At the NATO summit Trump promised Ukraine a licence to produce Patriot missiles. Even if Trump doesn't change his mind this is no solution to the crisis facing Ukraine. Such production will take years to organise.

Battered

On the nights of 2, 6, 8, 11 July Kyiv was battered by massive Russian drone and missile attacks killing at least 27 people. In the latest of those barrages Russia fired six ballistic missiles, four cruise missiles and 121 drones.

None of the missiles fired on 6 July were intercepted underlining the lack of Ukrainian anti-missile defences. Some of the Russian missiles knocked down whole streets, and Ukraine, currently starved of Patriot missiles, has no answer.

According to military analyst Mick Ryan, Russia is able to produce 7-800 ballistic missiles each year. Given, on average, each incoming missile requires 2-3 interceptors to guarantee ballistic missile destruction, pro-Ukraine states would have to provide over 2,000 missiles, a figure which is probably impossible, even given a will which does not currently exist.

The Russian spring offensive which had the objective of overrunning the entire Donbas region (it currently occupies 80% of Donetsk) has failed and Russian forces have gained only 97 sq km in the first six months of 2026, at enormous human cost. Russian casualties now stand at 1.4mn since February 2022, including 450,000 killed. Russia is losing soldiers at a rate of over 30,000 per month which is more than the 27,000 it recruits.

On 3 July Putin appeared on Russian television with his key generals who lyingly stated that Russia had taken 3000 sq km of territory in 2026, claiming to

now control the Ukrainian Fortress Belt towns of Kupiansk and Kostiantynivka. The US Institute for the Study of War assesses Russian forces have infiltrated only 2 percent of Kupiansk and 37 of Kostiantynivka.

The Russian : Ukrainian casualty rates now stand at 8 : 1, with the important caveat that Russia finds it much easier to recruit additional troops than Ukraine which remains much smaller by population, resources and GDP per capita.

Ukraine seems to be looking to negotiate with Russia in the summer when it will be strongest, having caused maximum disruption by then. Russia prefers September, before the US mid-terms and after Russia's scheduled Duma elections, for its own political advantage; even more likely is that Putin rides out discomfort now in the hope that Russia can inflict vast damage to Ukrainian cities and, over the next winter, destroy what remains of Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

What would an escalation by Putin look like?

- Vast destruction of Ukrainian cities.
- Russia continues to try to drag a reluctant Belarus into the war. Belarus is building military infrastructure along its southern border with Ukraine.
- US intelligence has warned Poland that it should expect some sort of Russian attack. A direct, conventional military attack is unlikely. But there are plenty of other possible routes: destruction of infrastructure, cyber attacks, assassinations.

• After the September elections Putin could announce a new mobilisation into the army.

So, Russia has not yet lost in any sense. What is particularly important is continued European and Canadian funding for Ukraine. A large €90bn loan from the EU is being rolled out beginning in late June.

Most importantly Europe must arm Ukraine to be able to effectively defend itself.

Our role, on the internationalist Marxist left, is to advocate for the Ukrainian workers and to help, whenever we can, the fight for an independent, working-class, socialist movement in Ukraine.

Solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian working class! □

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Workers' voice missing on Irish unity

By Micheál MacEoin

Pat Leahy, the political editor of the *Irish Times*, has commented on the “flurry of statements and events pushing the issue of a possible future united Ireland closer to the centre of political debate in recent weeks.”

There was a keynote speech from Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald who stated that the priority for the EU, under the new Irish presidency, should be a united Ireland. The party is also tabling a private member's bill in the Dáil to compel the Government to publish a Green Paper on unity and establish a citizens' assembly.

In the North, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) held a conference, almost exactly on the 10th anniversary of Brexit, inviting discussion on the future of the island. Party leader Claire Hanna called for the Irish Government “to take the lead in planning for what this future might look like, as they did for the Brexit referendum outcome they didn't even want.”

Promises

The two main parties in Ireland, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, too are entering the fray. Fine Gael has promised a paper on unification by November and Fianna Fáil has given its support to the Shared Island Fund, providing hundreds of millions of Euros of ring-fenced funding for North-South initiatives.

There have also been a number of academic and popular books on the subject of a united Ireland in recent years. Particularly comprehensive was Brendan O'Leary's 2022 book *Making Sense of a United Ireland*.

In it, O'Leary argues for the need for the Irish Government to prepare for unity, and speculates in painstaking detail of

the various processes for the referendum north-south and potential institutional forms a united Ireland could take.

Fianna Fáil leader and Taoiseach Micheál Martin recently speculated that the three strands of the Good Friday Agreement (internal Northern Ireland relations; North-south relations; and East-West relations between Britain and Ireland) “will always be part of whatever happens in the future. There will always be a British dimension, there will always be a North-South dimension.” This heavily implies the existence of Northern Ireland as a devolved entity, with sovereignty transferring from London to Dublin by means of a unity referendum.

O'Leary discusses this as his “model 1”, noting that it would be “constitutionally and institutionally conservative with a small ‘c’, though it may gain greater Unionist consent. He ultimately sides with “model 2”, a more unitary state, asking pointedly: “If the power-sharing institutions cannot function within the Union, why should they work better within a united Ireland?”

Last year, too, saw a book by journalists Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride, *For and against a united Ireland*.

Across four essays, both authors argued each side of the debate. The book is intended to promote dialogue and discussion and was accompanied by an extensive tour. It is also particularly useful as an assemblage of facts and statistics about the comparative merits of the respective health and education systems on the island and other more practical details which any scheme for unity would be forced to consider.

What lies behind this flurry? Crudely, there are elections in the North and the South in 2027 and it is, of course, an historic staple of Irish electioneering to

invoke Irish unity.

Less cynically, though, the 10-year shadow of Brexit and the complications of the North's position in both the single market and the UK internal market continues to cause stresses and strains.

Even without this, it is unlikely that the highly dysfunctional devolved Northern Ireland would lead to anything more than deadlock and division. That is the rational core of O'Leary's ultimate rejection of simply transferring sovereignty from Britain to Ireland without tackling the issues underlying the current impasses at Stormont.

The issue with all of these discussions is that they essentially operate at the level of institutional debates about bourgeois governance schemes.

Working-class voice

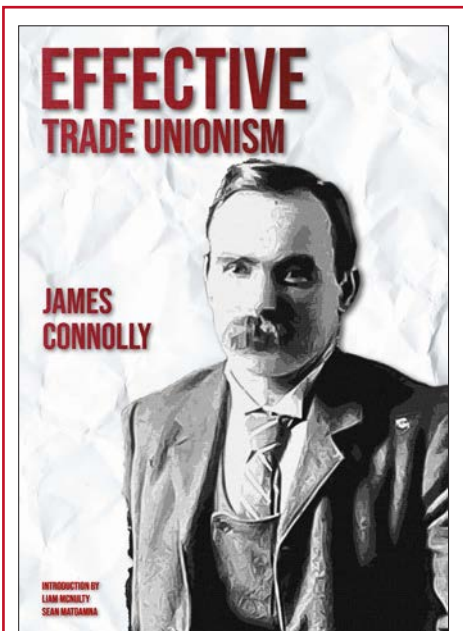
What is largely absent from the debate is a working-class and labour movement voice, articulating how ending partition, unifying the island and, in the case of the North, rejoining the EU, could form part of a programme for uniting the working class across communities in the fight for a socialist Ireland.

The workers' movement could transcend the polarisation between a federal state involving the current Six Counties and a unified bourgeois Ireland by discussing seriously how Unionist-minded workers could be accommodated in the context of unity.

Democratic demands around issues of national identity, however, must be married to a transformative social programme, involving the creation of an all-island national health service, mass council house building, increased workers' rights, and ultimately the social ownership and democratic control of the economy.

The unions have shied away from this debate, semi-understandably worrying about its potential to divide the membership. Closing one's eyes, however, will not make this question recede.

More likely, the bourgeoisie will continue to frame the debate and any practical preparations for a future referendum on their own terms. Workers need to prepare. □



Aiming to replace capitalism with socialism, James Connolly's organising and ideas evolved considerably. One idea he clung to from the turn of the century to his death was industrial unionism, workers' solidarity across grades and trades, and sympathetic strikes. That is how he saw his work in the Irish Transport Union. 64 pages £5 □

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Global and Catholic dimensions to anti-migrant far right

By Cathy Nugent

Analysing the Belfast riots which started on 10 June, in *Solidarity* 770, Micheál MacEoin concludes that although migrants had been targetted on social media before these events. It is inconceivable that Loyalist paramilitaries were not involved.

That makes sense. And the turn to anti-immigration protest in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, is bound to be linked up with far right social media networks which now have a global reach. That global context is also shaping what has happened in Belfast and in Northern

Ireland, through the protests of 2024 after the Southport killings, the 2025 ethnic cleansing in Ballymena of Roma residents after an alleged sexual assault, up to the present day.

Encouraging

Observers of the US white nationalist scene noted that its social media channels were encouraging and then approving Belfast's latest political violence before and after it took place. They noted the social media of Active Clubs, a global network, originating in the US, of younger, fascistic groups who engage in combat sports training in order to commit

political violence. Speculation followed (on Wired magazine's website) about the significant role of a possible Active Club in Northern Ireland, calling itself the Ulster Youth Club.

We have no way of verifying this. The Accountability Project, a group which monitors Northern Irish far-right anti-immigrant activity, has said paramilitary figures are active in the networks, but the masked rioters in Belfast in June 2026 were of a younger generation. They most likely they had their own covert communication channels (on Signal or Telegram). The Project did not know if the

youth were connected to the paramilitaries.

Networks

In August 2024 the BBC reported that both Loyalists and Nationalists had been brought together in Belfast by and in far right networks. There were elements of the UDA but also people carrying the Irish flag who link to far right networks in the South. The *Belfast Telegraph* has reported Catholics at anti-immigration protests and supporters in the city for Clann Éireann (a 2023 split from the far-right National Party, founded 2016; no relation to the 1960s-80s Clann na hÉireann).

A narrative that these protests brings Catholics and Protestants together, in for example opposition to Islam, has sometimes been broadcast.

Tentatively we can say: there is a growing anti-immigrant “movement”. It does have the involvement of former Loyalist paramilitaries. It may have the marginal involvement of some far right Nationalists. This movement also seems to be at least inspired by and integrated into the global far right — its most extreme and violent elements — though social media. □

Resisting moves to “bury” any Palestinian state

By Ira Berkovic

This autumn, a coalition of Israeli-Palestinian and international human rights and anti-occupation organisations will mobilise activists to participate in “protective presence” activity to defend the olive harvest in the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian olive farmers often face attack from armed settlers. “Protect The Harvest”, whose participants include Standing Together, Combatants for Peace, and Breaking the Silence, will mobilise from 17 October to 13 November. Participants will help farmers take in the harvest, as well as standing alongside farming communities to resist violence.

Settler violence, aided and abetted by the Israeli military, continues across the West Bank. Rabbi for Human Rights wrote: “Together with Standing Together, our volunteers helped farmers in Beit Furik put up fencing to protect their crops. When we finished, the settlers from the nearby outpost didn’t like it. He called the soldiers. They came. They ordered the farmers to tear the fence down by hand, and when the farmers refused, the soldiers tore it down”.

According to UNRWA, the UN agency responsible for aid distribution and some social services in the occupied Palestinian territories, 63 people have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem so far in 2026. There are over 900 “movement obstacles”, ranging from roadblocks to checkpoints, restricting movement across the West Bank.

Protest

On 24 June, Standing Together activists participated in a protest in Silwan, East Jerusalem, against displacement. The movement wrote: “Students from our Hebrew University chapter joined other organisations in Silwan to stand with the Shlodi family against their expulsion from their home in East Jerusalem.

“Silwan is facing an escalating campaign of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing. Palestinian families who have lived there for generations are being pushed from their homes. The Shlodi family’s struggle is one example of the systematic effort to displace Palestinians from East Jerusalem and replace them with Israeli settlers.

“Our student chapters are a vital part of building the movement for justice and equality. We are organising alongside the residents of Silwan because no one should be forced from the home where they built their life, and no family should have to wake up wondering if today is the day they lose everything.”

Standing Together has also been mobilising in solidarity with residents of Khan al-Ahmar and Tel Arad, Bedouin-Palestinian villages in the West Bank and



Negev/Naqab desert respectively also facing displacement. Bedouin villages in the Naqab are often “unrecognised” by the Israeli government, meaning they lack basic social provision. Standing Together said: “Tel Arad is one of dozens of Bedouin-Palestinian villages in the Negev/Naqab desert in southern Israel that have been under threat of demolition for decades. Although its residents are citizens, the village remains unrecognized by the Israeli government, meaning it is denied basic planning rights, electricity, roads, and water. Many of the families living there are Palestinians who were displaced during the Nakba of 1948 and later resettled in the area, only to find themselves once again facing attempts to uproot them. This is why residents describe the current threat as a ‘second Nakba.’”

Displacements, expulsions, and build-up projects have all accelerated recently,

as Israel’s current coalition government, the most vigorously pro-settler in Israel’s history, accelerates efforts to “bury” prospects for a Palestinian state. Knowing it faces possible ousting from office in Knesset elections due on 27 October, it wants to create facts on the ground to make it much harder for any subsequent administration to roll back settlement expansion.

A 9 July poll commissioned by *Israel Hayom*, the country’s most widely distributed daily newspaper, showed coalition parties winning 53 seats, below the 61 required to form a government. The largest single party after Netanyahu’s Likud would be Yashar, a centrist party led by former IDF general Gadi Eisenkot. Whether an “anti-Netanyahu” coalition government can be formed depends in part whether opposition Zionist parties are prepared to work with Palestinian parties, which are projected to win 10-12 seats.

Hadash, the electoral front of the Israeli Communist Party, and A Land for Us All, a new binational left-wing party launched by activists including leaders of Standing Together, will be the most radical options in the election, and the only binational parties to consistently oppose the occupation of the West Bank and advocate equality between Jews and Palestinians. □

Palestinian families displaced in East Jerusalem

By Standing Together

Hundreds of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem are being displaced from their homes to make way for Israeli settlers.

The Absentees’ Property Law, which was passed by the Knesset in March 1950, was created to address property “left behind” during the 1948 war. Years later, the government and settler groups began using it to move Palestinian families out of their homes in East Jerusalem, and to move Israeli settlers in.

The law defined an “absentee” so broadly that many Palestinians lost ownership of their homes even though they had never left the territory that became Israel. Some had simply fled to another town during the war. Others were displaced only a few kilometres away. Many became known as “present absentees”, because they were physically present in the country but legally treated as if they had disappeared.

Once a home is declared “absentee property”, it falls to a

government official, called the Custodian, who is put in charge of such property. The law is framed in such a way as to appear [as if the Custodian is] looking after abandoned property, but in reality, it is used to transfer ownership of homes for good. Palestinian owners can’t get them back.

Annexed

Israel first annexed East Jerusalem in 1967 and made it part of the city. At first, the government decided not to apply the Absentees’ Property Law there. After 1977, the government started to enforce the law more and more. In the 1980s, it was used in areas like Silwan and the Old City. Settler organisations would identify property whose Palestinian owners were believed to be “absent” from East Jerusalem on the date Israel annexed the city, and the Custodian would then transfer them to Israeli settlers.

A newer law, from 1970, lets Jewish families take back property they owned in East Jerusalem before 1948. Palestinians do not get the same right –

they cannot take back homes they lost in West Jerusalem.

How a home is taken, step by step:

1. A settler group signs a paper that says the owner of a home is “absent”.
2. The Custodian agrees the home is “absentee property”. Often, no-one checks if this is really true.
3. The home is given to a government body, the Development Authority.
4. It is passed to the Jewish National Fund, or its company Himnuta. Their goal is to keep land for Jews only.
5. The home is given to a settler group. The Palestinian family is told to leave.

The Jewish National Fund (JNF), often through its subsidiary company Himnuta, has played a central role in acquiring Palestinian property in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and running campaigns to evict Palestinians to make way for settlers.

The Development Authority and Israel Land Administration are legally required to manage assets without ethnic discrimination, but the JNF and Himnuta operate under a JNF policy that their assets be leased or transferred to Jews only. This is their loophole.

In 1987, the government defined the Sumarin family home [in Silwan] as “absentee property”. The reason given was that the registered owner was absent, but the owner had lived in Silwan until his death in 1983. No basic check of the residents’ registry was ever made. The home was passed to Himnuta in 1991. The written goal was to put it into “Jewish ownership”. It was then linked to a settler group called Elad. The family went to court for 32 years. In 2023, the Supreme Court blocked the eviction and ordered Himnuta to pay their legal costs. The court found that the property had been declared absentee without any legal basis. This kind of win is incredibly rare.

A settler group, Ateret Cohanim, currently has cases against more than 90 families, over 450 people, including about 200 children, in Silwan and Batn al-Hawa. Another

settler group, Nahalat Shimon, is trying to remove families in Sheikh Jarrah. In 2021 and 2024, the Supreme Court stopped some evictions while the land question was being “checked”. In June 2025, 150 people in Umm Tuba were told the land had been transferred to the JNF.

More than 240 Palestinian families across East Jerusalem are facing eviction, putting more than 1,000 people, including over 460 children, at risk of losing their homes. In neighbourhoods such as Silwan, Batn al-Hawa, and Sheikh Jarrah, hundreds of people remain at risk through legal claims brought by settler organisations.

These cases are often presented as isolated property disputes. But together they reveal a broader policy. Over decades, governments, public institutions, and settler organisations have created a mechanism to put Israeli Jews into homes Palestinians had been living in for generations, displacing thousands of families in the process. □

A tale of two anniversaries

By Jim Denham

The 250th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence took place on 4 July, and Trump's tawdry, corrupt and self-serving "celebrations" were widely covered in the mainstream media.

The 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China on 1 July was scarcely noticed outside of China itself. The regime claims continuity with the worker-based Communist Party of 1921, whose leader Chen Duxiu, would become a Trotskyist. In fact, the CPC later became something very different, a militarised and peasant-based Stalinist party. After it took power in 1949 it would jail all the Trotskyists it could find.

But in the *Morning Star*, up jumped the perennial CPC propagandist Carlos Martinez (MS 4-5 July) to examine "two very different versions of the international order."

As ever with Mr Martinez, his piece could have been simply dictated by the CPC — and indeed, it may have been, given his ties to Chinese government mouthpieces like *CGTN*, *Global Times* and *China Daily*.

But credit where it's due: Martinez is correct when, in contrasting the US and China, he writes that "the US has been at war for over 90 per cent of its history [whereas] China has not fought a war in close to five decades" (since its 1979

war against Vietnam).

This, however, ignores what amount to long-running internal "wars" against the peoples of Tibet, Xinjiang and (more recently) Hong Kong. It also ignores President Xi's repeated threats of using military force to invade and "reunify" Taiwan and the campaign of military, legal and economic coercion aimed at it.

Racist

Although not an act of war, the recent "Promotion of Ethnic Unity" law codifying Taiwanese identity (and other minorities who "undermine ethnic unity") as criminal, is undoubtedly a belligerent and racist measure. Any person who publicly rejects a Chinese national identity (as defined by the CPC) or asserts a distinct ethnic identity can be prosecuted.

Martinez's piece mentions none of this. But he proudly proclaims that China's foreign policy "still rests on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence — mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit — first articulated in 1954." How China's stance on Ukraine (de facto support for Russia's invasion) fits in with this is not explained.

Our propagandist then goes on to contrast the US's "order of dollar dominance, financial sanctions, military alliances and the assumed right to intervene anywhere" with China's oh-so-benign "multipolar trajectory" of which the Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS alliance are supposedly shining exemplars.

What is not described is how the Belt and Road initiative often involves massive, unsustainable loans to developing nations for infrastructure projects they cannot afford. When countries default, China recoups by demanding long-term leases on strategic assets, such as Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port or Uganda's sole international airport.

The end result is a network to expand China's military footprint and global economic clout.

Martinez would, no doubt be horrified if anyone called this a form of imperialism.

As for the BRICS: despite Martinez's claim that this "works towards a global community... in which all nations participate on equal terms", in reality it is an economic marriage of convenience between governments with little in common. Russia and China are highly re-

pressive, India is a bourgeois democracy with an authoritarian government, Brazil and South Africa are relatively open bourgeois democracies, while the UAE and Saudi Arabia are absolute monarchies. The idea this motley crew of capitalist and state-capitalist rulers can be considered even the start of a "global community" is laughable.

Martinez gets something right. It is true that "over four decades China has lifted millions of people out of poverty". Just as the North American and Western European countries did during their periods of rapid capitalist development.

He ignores the huge inequality in China — greater than in Western Europe or Taiwan or South Korea — and claims that China's welfare system covers "essentially its entire population [providing] extended pension coverage to all its elderly, and [has] largely solved the problem of homelessness."

This rose-tinted picture ignores the injustices of the hukou system (see pages 11-14) and the fact that the old-age pension for rural people in China is the equivalent of just £17 per month.

The words "trade unions", "democracy" and "human rights" are absent from Martinez's crude propaganda piece. More surprisingly, so is "socialism", but perhaps we should thank him for not insulting us by misusing that word. □



Pic: @gibography2001

Housing

Will Andy Burnham walk the walk?

By Robert Bau

Housing was a central theme of Andy Burnham's policy speech in Manchester on 29 June, where he set out a vision for a "rewired Britain" and a decade-long plan to raise living standards. At the heart of that vision is a commitment to deliver the largest council house building programme since the post-war period and to make decent, affordable housing a national priority.

Burnham highlighted the scale of the housing crisis. Britain has lost almost 1.5 million council homes since the 1980s, while around 1.5 million people remain on housing waiting lists. He argued that this has created a "housing trap", with governments spending billions subsidising ever-increasing private

rents through the benefits system rather than investing in public housing.

He also pointed to the wider social and economic costs. Freezes to Local Housing Allowance can push more families into homelessness, while councils face rising bills for temporary accommodation which is having a "ruinous impact" on the public finances.

For Burnham, the solution starts with rebuilding council housing. He argued that a renewed focus on public housing would create a more preventative and productive state. "If you don't give people a good home, what chance have they got of having a good life?" he asked. He linked decent housing to better health, improved educational outcomes and

more sustainable public services, arguing that everything starts with a good home.

His plans include making greater use of vacant public land to reduce development costs, devolving more housing powers to regional and local leaders, and supporting higher-density residential development in towns and urban centres. Through a new "No. 10 North", he hopes to help regenerate high streets and town centres while protecting more green spaces from development.

A key element of Burnham's approach is support for a national Housing First model, based on Finland's successful programme. Housing First provides people in temporary accommodation with a perma-

nent home before addressing issues such as health, employment, or addiction. Since adopting the policy in 2008, Finland has significantly reduced long-term homelessness and cut the number of people living in hostels and boarding houses by 76%.

Substantial

Burnham's ambitions are very substantial. During the post-war decades, councils built more than three million social homes, with annual construction peaking at around 200,000 homes a year. In contrast, over the last decade, local councils have averaged just 1,400 new homes a year.

That decline is closely linked to the impact of the Right to Buy policy. Burnham has repeatedly argued that councils

cannot solve the housing crisis if newly built homes are quickly lost through Right to Buy sales. Following his re-election as Mayor of Greater Manchester in 2024, he compared the position to "trying to fill a bath with the plug out".

He has called for Right to Buy to be suspended for newly built council homes and has repeatedly highlighted that more social homes are being sold than replaced. Now in a position to shape national housing policy, Burnham faces a major test: he has to go beyond suspension and scrap the right to buy to ensure that a new generation of council housing is protected for the future.

In the next article, I will write more fully about Finland's Housing First programme. □

SWP regrouping at its “Marxism” festival

By Harold Storey

The SWP held their annual Marxism festival on 2-5 July in London, with talks on politics, history, theory, etc. Members of Workers' Liberty sold literature outside and talked with attendees.

Socialist Worker had predicted 3,000 attendees, and, over the course of the four days, it is entirely possible they reached this number.

It was a success for the SWP in this regard. However, it was difficult to get taken to speak from the floor in most sessions. Attendance was high and many hands were raised in some, but it was apparent that regardless of how fast one raised their hand to speak, most of the time members of the SWP would be taken out of order and almost exclusively.

Rarely were sessions close to being debates or even really discussions on the headline topics. They were more a series of speeches reinforcing the SWP's line.

The session on popular fronts for instance was on the virtues of Stand Up To Racism and the Together Alliance, with unqualified claims that those are in fact united fronts rather than miniature popular fronts. There was no opportunity to give a dissenting opinion or argue the importance of independent working-class anti-fascist action.

In sessions on Israel Palestine, SWP members spoke about their “critical but unconditional support” for Hamas and their celebratory view of the 7 October 2023 atrocity as a great “prison break”. Rob Ferguson in his session did acknowledge antisemitism as a real issue in responses to Israel's wars, but nonetheless the event was marred by (maybe wilful) ignorance towards binational peace movements in Israel so that emphasis could be placed on Palestinian or non-Israeli regional resistance, and a “one state” solution, as the only way

forward. There was of course no room for dissent from the floor for any of this.

Jeremy Corbyn spoke, although he and his faction are responsible for kicking the SWP and other left groups out of “Your Party”.

It isn't bad in itself that Corbyn was invited to Marxism. However, having him come to be paraded in advertising and to speak on Palestine (without mentioning that he supports some form of “two states” and opposes blanket BDS) as he did, rather than to debate the SWP and the expelled left, or try to hold him accountable in some way, shows the SWP's lack of a backbone, their lack of care.

Perhaps Corbyn would never appear if he knew he would be scrutinised. Mostly, I think, the SWP is afraid that any effort at debate would burn bridges too useful to their front building activities.

Let's also remember that Corbyn's people in YP are currently trying to expel YP committee members who spoke at a conference of the Socialist Federation, a group of dissident YP members and ex-members. Will Corbyn himself be punished for attending an event by a proscribed external party? As if!

Resurrection

A session on permanent revolution highlighted the SWP's resurrection of “deflected permanent revolution”, a 1963 idea from SWP founder Tony Cliff. There has also been an article on it in a recent *Socialist Worker*, signalling this to not be a one off spectacle.

The idea was that states still lumbered by “feudalism and imperialism”, but where the working class was unable to become revolutionary, would see the intelligentsia lead the masses to revolution instead. That would end in not a workers' state or to market capitalism, but state capitalism modelled on the USSR. Mao's China and Castro's Cuba were the prime examples. They were



the “opposite”, Cliff wrote, of a workers' revolution; but, “dialectically”, as he put it in his 1948 text on the USSR, also a “transition to socialism”, outrightly more progressive than market capitalism.

Pragmatically, in the 1960s, the theory allowed Cliff to take distance from those who saw China and Cuba as models of socialism, but also to accept those states as great advances. In 1967, Cliff was critical of Egypt's leader Gamel Abdul Nasser, but also applauded him for seeing “bourgeois parliamentary democracy as a fraud”.

This concept therefore became relevant in a session on Cuba where, to their credit, the SWP's line was one that the Cuban state was no ally of the working class. However, it was also that the Cuban revolution, in acting as an example of this “deflected permanent revolution” and instituting state capitalism, was a progressive event with gains worth defending. A move back to market capitalism from the current state capitalist system may very well be bad, as the SWP argues, but it would also present a positive opportunity to replace the oppressive one-party state with a more liberal one under which workers' organising may be allowed.

The Cuba session was also the one with most dissent. Members of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) were, maybe accidentally, taken to speak, and launched into tirades against

the SWP as “betraying the Cuban revolution” and “apologists of imperialism and the USA”. SWP speakers from the floor mostly gave soft replies that didn't really rebuke the RCG for the Stalinist apologia it was, rather stating that the SWP also regards the USA as the big bad. An unimpressive display on all fronts.

Crisis

Maybe, with the SWP's “crisis of leadership” outlined by Matt Cooper in *Solidarity* 770, the SWP is anxious to restate its “old” ideas as the older leaders are being replaced with younger and less experienced ones.

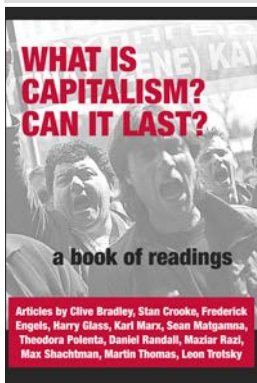
On display throughout the event were forms one could use to give the SWP your details, set up a subscription, and join them, along with a members' handbook. However, at no point was it clear what you would do as a member of the SWP beyond supporting a lot of causes seemingly external to, or on the periphery of, the workers' movement.

There was talk of workers' control and revolution, but I can't say that I have any clearer an idea of how the SWP's current methods will make anything of the sort happen.

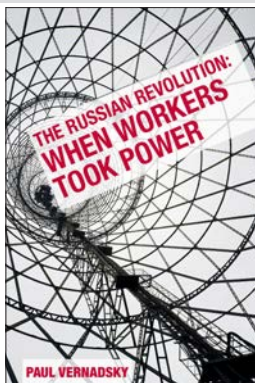
As Matt Cooper puts it, “the SWP now seems to be thrashing around for a clear political direction: clinging to its key front, *Stand Up to Racism*, and looking to the milieu around Palestine solidarity, but without a clear perspective beyond ‘build the SWP’.” □



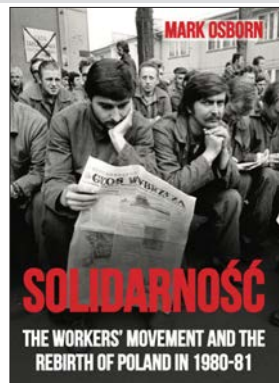
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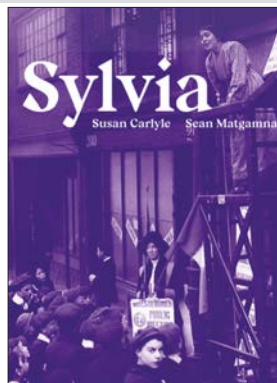
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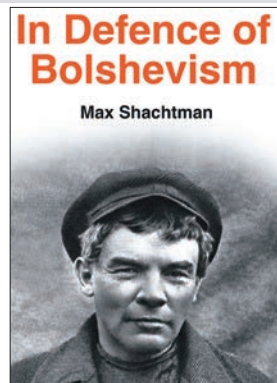
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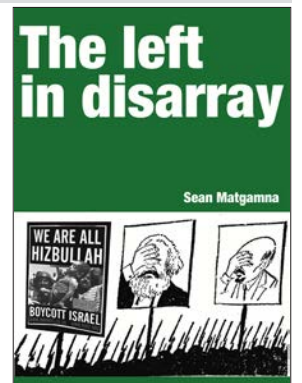
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Net zero not to blame on jobs

By Owen Flood

Net-zero policies are blamed for job losses in the offshore oil industry (as they are in the oil refinery industry). Is this fair?

Between 2015 and 2025 around 260,000 jobs related to offshore oil and gas were lost in the UK.

Direct employment in offshore oil and gas is in the tens of thousands. There is also related employment in supply chains and hospitality, for a total at the peak in 2014 of 453,000 jobs. The industry continues declining with exhaustion of reserves, or easy-to-extract reserves. Some companies look to diversify (e.g. to hydrogen production, renewables, carbon capture), but only seven out of 87 companies are investing in renewables.

The North Sea Transition Deal commits the upstream sector (exploration and production) to halving its production emissions and eliminating routine flaring by 2030. A recent judgement in the Supreme Court requires oil and gas companies to assess and mitigate downstream emissions as part of their Environmental Impact Assessments. The Labour government has largely remained committed to no new oil or gas exploration licenses. Industry bosses also blame the Energy Profits Levy (initially introduced as a windfall tax in 2022), which now taxes upstream profits by 78%, for driving away further invest-

ment in oil and gas. But the evidence is that jobs in and around North Sea oil and gas would decline regardless.

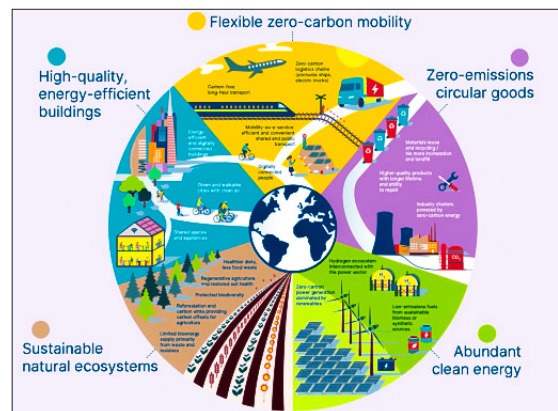
In 2014 oil prices fell to \$50 a barrel. Between the start of the oil price drop and the end of 2016, over 120,000 jobs were lost; between 2016-2017, a further 40,000. The job losses resulted in increased workloads, to the extent that bosses boasted of productivity increasing by 42% per worker compared to 2014.

Between 2017 and the start of 2020 jobs in offshore oil remained relatively stable. Direct employment on oil rigs remained at 50,000. Then in the first year of the Covid pandemic roughly 35,000 jobs were lost, due to a fall in oil prices as demand fell.

Rebound

Following the pandemic there was a rebound for the industry which was helped along by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, though blunted by another fall in prices. By 2023 related employment totalled 200,000 jobs.

Despite the oil-price increases due to the US-Israeli war on Iran and Iran closing the Strait of Hormuz in retaliation, the industry in the UK has continued to decline. On balance most job losses are down to bosses' reactions to trends in the global oil and gas market. Net zero and windfall taxes hardly even register.



There has been little serious state intervention to develop good alternative jobs, for example in and around renewables, but that indicates too little push for "net zero", not too much.

You could argue the counter-factual that had governments cared more about ensuring the continuation of North Sea fossil-fuels and focussed less on net-zero, then fewer jobs would have been lost. But then also fewer people would be employed in the growing renewable energy sector and fewer people retrained and redeployed in renewables or in oil and gas decommissioning.

The Tory government handed out hundreds of oil and gas licenses in the months before losing office in July 2024. That did very little to counteract the decline in the industry: most of the licenses have been left inactive for commercial

reasons.

Even if the government planned to undo its net-zero commitments, hand out yet more hundreds of new oil and gas licenses, and commit to more investment in the sector, the wider global trends in oil and gas would reduce jobs.

Transition

A transition in the UK is under way, but it is wrong to say, as the Unite union officialdom does, that net-zero targets and the current transition plans by the government are the main reason for job losses. Unite is effectively saying to workers: run into the arms of the same bosses that have cut hundreds of thousands of jobs and ask them to save you.

Instead of calling for "no ban without a plan", Unite should seriously campaign for nationalisation of North Sea Oil and the wider energy industry in the UK, come up with its own serious plan for transition, and level its criticisms at a global fossil fuel industry that treats workers and the whole of humanity with contempt. This is the only reasonable and responsible way to mitigate job losses.

As heatwaves continue to smash records, the stakes are only getting higher. □

• 2023 worker-environmentalist transition plan: [Our Power](#).

Far right

Farage squirms on money scandals

By Cathy Nugent

On 7 July Nigel Farage resigned as MP for Clacton-on-Sea, thus forcing a by-election, which he says he will contest. The leader of Reform claimed he was the victim of an establishment stitch-up and an unfair press campaign. In fact Farage was trying to dodge a Parliamentary Standards Commissioner investigation into money and gifts-in-kind he took from convicted fraudster aristocrat George Cottrell and £5 million gifted to him shortly before the general election by crypto-billionaire Christopher Harborne. All of that should probably have been declared under Parliamentary rules after he was elected in 2024.

All the major parties have said they will not contest the

by-election on the grounds that it is a farce. They want Farage to be re-elected with a low turnout, to come back to Parliament, and face the investigation which has now been suspended. Cross-party agreements are not our sort of thing, but, in this case, for this reason, all of them are right: it is a farce, and the more clearly it is seen so, the better.

Nonsense

Farage's resignation statement, broadcast on social media, was, of course, so much "sand-in-your-eyes" nonsense, aimed at capturing public attention. The idea that he is a victim of the Establishment is ridiculous. Rules on political donations are not there to protect the "Establishment". They are not perfect but they do put pressure on MPs to be reasonably trans-

parent.

If Farage doesn't follow the rules and keeps back information on who's financing him, how can voters make up their minds on, for example, whether or not he had been unduly influenced by his crypto-business pals, when he argued that this business (which, let's just say, has a high volume of "bad actors") should be less regulated.

But Farage, like his good friend Donald Trump, doesn't think the rules apply to him.

In the broadcast, Farage claimed the donations were for his own personal security, but he has said many other things about how the money was used. The *Guardian* revealed Farage had bought a £1.4 million property in cash shortly after receiving the Harborne money. Farage claimed he was not in politics at the time he re-

ceived Harborne's money. However the *Guardian* has reported at least some of the money was received after Farage became "a person of significant control" for the Reform corporate entity. The *Guardian* has also reported that George Cottrell and his mother Fiona have been interviewed by police as part of ongoing investigation into donations to Reform UK before the July 2024 general election.

On resigning, Farage also said that becoming an MEP, and then an MP, had deprived him of lots of opportunities to earn loads of cash. Yet, since being elected to Parliament, according to his own register of interests, Farage has "earned" or received income and gifts worth £2,336,966 (source [desmog.com](#)), including a lot from gold traders Direct Bullion. This is on top of his £94,000 a year

MP's salary. He's doing very well out of being an MP.

Maybe the fault is in our eyes and, as Farage claims, we just hate "entrepreneurial MPs". Or maybe we think like any reasonable person that second, third.... tenth jobs (or "jobs") for MPs stop them focusing on the job they have been elected to carry out.

It is good that even when he wins the farcical by-election Farage won't escape answering to the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner. On the other hand further right organisations such as Restore Britain, who are also boycotting the by-election, will exploit the underlying divisive propaganda of this populist sideshow. But for now, let's take some pleasure from the cracks appearing in Reform's success story. □

Fix the system, tax the rich!

By Cathy Nugent

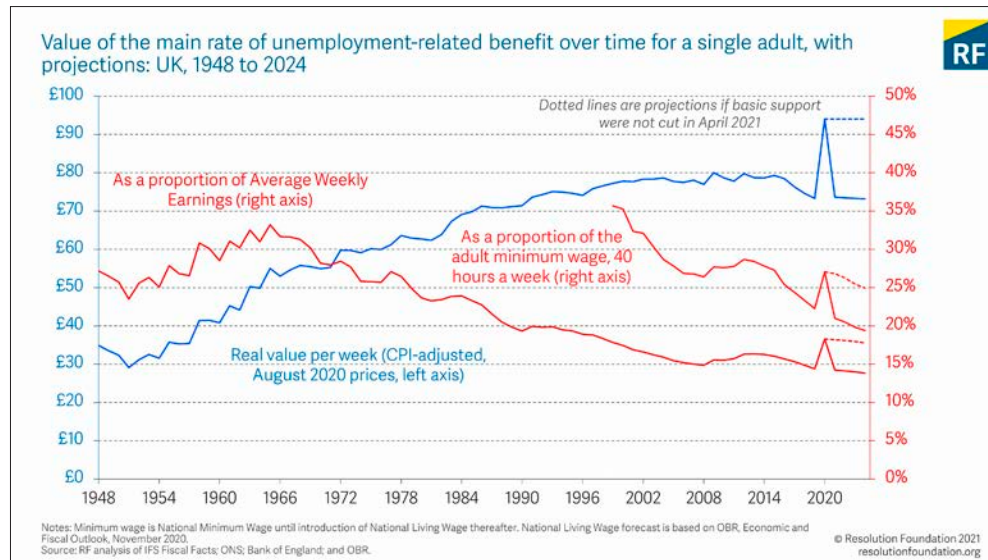
Although a government review the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is not yet making any recommendations, it has already concluded PIP is “not fit for purpose”.

Chaired by Social Security and Disability Minister Stephen Timms, overseen by a steering committee of disability experts, and informed by nearly 39,000 public submissions, the review was conceded after last summer's protests against cuts to the health components of Universal Credit. Its [interim report](#) came out on 9 July.

The government originally intended to cut PIP, a non-means tested cash benefit for people living with disabilities and long-term or terminal health conditions.

The *Financial Times* has reported that Timms wants a more flexible system with a wider range of payment rates, with some claimants offered therapy or treatment instead of cash. Timms's preference is raised in a coded way in the report; for example, it says the emphasis should be “on supporting independent participation in society.” A more flexible system with less cash paid out will bring the cost of disability and long-term ill-health benefits down (£24 billion to working-age recipients in 2025). It would be a cut by any other name.

However, the government has a problem. The review makes a big deal of its “co-production” with disabled people; it was set up this way because the opposition to the 2025 cuts successfully scandalised the complete lack of consultation with disabled people. Any unrealistic or unsustainable alternatives to the cash benefit may not be popular with



the review's committee.

Nonetheless, as the government has scrapped the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), it seems likely that a changed PIP assessment will become a one-stop gateway to benefits or other forms of support. The WCA is an intensive process through which claimants have to prove they are less capable of working on a short term or long term basis. The assessment, like the current PIP assessment, is tortuous and dehumanising.

Flexible

It seems like that the new one-stop assessment will be less difficult and more flexible. The interim report strongly criticises the PIP assessment's many flaws.

Applications for PIP (and the legacy benefit Disability Living Allowance) have been steadily rising since its introduction in 2013. There are many reasons for this. The report highlights how more people

are self-reporting as disabled, the various long-term effects of the pandemic, pressure from a rising cost-of-living pushing people to apply, long waits for treatment for chronic health conditions, rising mental ill-health and diagnosis of neurodivergence.

Four million people are now entitled to the benefit (including some pensioners who made claims before retirement). This is why the government is panicking. That said, according to the government's own figures, the increase in numbers entitled to the benefit slowed down between 2023 and 2025. This is not highlighted or explained in the report.

For the Tories and Reform the amount spent on disability benefits is a signal that the UK has become a nation of “scroungers” and “layabouts”. Some Labour MPs are vulnerable to that reactionary propaganda. It underlies Labour's drive to make the cuts last year

and Burnham's recent statement that he wants to reduce welfare benefits without “crude cuts”.

Pitiful

Labour claimed cuts to Universal Credit last year were not crude; they were accompanied by £2.2 billion in extra support to help get disabled people into work. However, spread out over four years, that is a pitiful amount of money. Getting work as a disabled or chronically ill person is becoming harder. Review submissions, quoted in the Timms interim report, highlight how a more fragmented and demanding labour market, with increased reliance on digital interaction requiring sustained concentration and self-management, is bad news for people with certain health conditions.

Unfortunately this review, despite the involvement of very sincere people, is not fit for purpose. If the committee really wants to radically overhaul PIP without causing distress to current claimants it will have to address that fact that the welfare system, especially after the unreversed Osborne cuts, cannot adequately respond to lack of social care, poverty, inadequacy of other benefits system, failing mental health care services, and all kinds of social exclusion. All those impact on people who need PIP to survive.

Whether PIP continues as a more easily obtained cash benefit or even if it were to be partially replaced by more therapeutic and other practical help, more money needs to be found. It can only be found by taxing the rich. That is unlikely to be one of the review's recommendations! □

Migrant rights

Lambeth Council to stop helping immigration enforcement

By a Workers' Liberty activist in the Greens

Lambeth's Green-led council has declared it will halt co-operation with immigration enforcement.

The new council leadership announced the move on 15 June — the start of Refugee Week. It has ordered a review of policies and practices across the council and its commissioned services, with a view to ending any collaboration or data-sharing that it finds beyond the required legal minimum.

This reflects a commitment placed in the local Green Party

manifesto by members, and has long been a demand of migrants' rights organisations. Activists and the council unions must keep an eye on the review and ensure it is followed through without diluting that commitment.

Minimum

There are some limited areas where the law requires councils to provide information to the Home Office. However, it is common for councils to cooperate and share data far beyond that minimum. Many environmental health, workplace safety and similar inspection

services collaborate with immigration enforcement. This may involve passing on reports when they discover or suspect a person's immigration status. Often it goes as far as joint visits — turning an inspection of a dodgy boss or landlord into a raid on their exploited employees or tenants.

Beyond the racist brutality of the state's anti-immigrant apparatus, this creates another problem. People are less likely to engage with essential services if they fear that they might be handed over to the Home Office. Employers and landlords

are empowered to continue neglect, abuse and hyper-exploitation.

Resist

Workers in these services can and do resist. For example, when housing environmental health inspectors in another London council discovered their managers planned to begin coordinating visits with the Home Office, they collectively declared that they would refuse to cooperate. They told their bosses that their job was to support tenants against neglectful landlords — not to help the Home Office attack those

tenants. The planned cooperation was cancelled before it even began.

Lambeth is not the first local authority to stop this kind of collaboration. But the high-profile announcement is an opportunity to push other local authorities to follow suit. Green and Labour Party members should press their councillors and bring motions to their local parties. Council workers should organise in our unions to identify and resist collaboration, and link up with community anti-raids groups. □

Turkey clamps down as Israel recognises 1915 genocide

By Pete Boggs

The Israeli government has announced (28 June) its intention to recognise Turkey's genocide of Armenians during World War One. Maybe over one million Armenians, out of about two million in the area, were killed. Others were expelled or forcibly assimilated, in territory where their community had lived for thousands of years.

Traditionally, Israel refused to recognise the genocide because of their close relationship with Turkey and an idea that recognising other genocides diminished the uniqueness of the Nazi Holocaust. Since Erdoğan came to power relations between Turkey and Israel have gradually and unevenly worsened. They are now especially poor as their respec-

tive security states circle post-Assad Syria like vultures, and questions about the role of Turkey in the Gaza "Board of Peace".

The Turkish government responded to Israel's announcement angrily, saying that Israel is simply trying to distract from its own genocide against Palestine, and that "in our history there is no genocide, no massacres, no oppression, no colonialism". The official terminology in Turkey for the Armenian genocide in Turkey is simply "The Events of 1915". Since this spat, an Armenian graveyard in Istanbul has been vandalised.

The Azerbaijani government, a close ally of Israel, has also denounced recognition of the Armenian genocide. They have felt deeply betrayed after their loyal silence and support throughout the war in Gaza, complaining that the same actors accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza are the same ones accusing Azerbaijan of "ethnic cleansing" in its recent wars with Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

Azerbaijan

"For Baku, this is a red line. Azerbaijan did not come out against Israel over Gaza, Lebanon or Iran, despite an international campaign and pressure placed on it. The Azerbaijanis feel Israel did not

respond with the same level of consideration".

The main reason for the recognition coming now, rather than many years ago, is likely a cynical move against Turkey. Indeed, the planned vote on the Knesset to confirm the Israeli cabinet's recognition of the genocide has now been suspended and will not take place before the parliamentary elections in October.

Broader repression

This has come at a time of broader repression in Turkey. The country has become vastly more undemocratic in the decade since sections of the military failed to overthrow Erdoğan, and political dissent has effectively been criminalised.

The comedian Deniz Göktaş is on trial for "insulting the president" and "de-meaning religious values" after releasing his latest stand-up special "Black Sea" on YouTube, where he calls Erdoğan a dictator and makes jokes about burkinis and the Quran, calling it "the fourth book in the series" (after the Torah, Psalms, and Gospels).

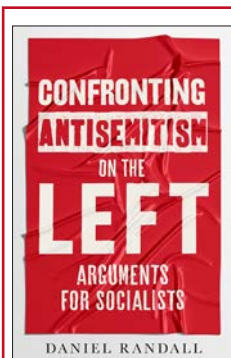
Ekrem İmamoğlu, formerly the leading politician in the opposition party CHP and the Mayor of Istanbul before his arrest, is now facing stacked charges which add up to a prison sentence of

2,430 years. After he was removed as leader of the CHP he was replaced by Özgür Özel, who was himself removed by court order in May and replaced by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the previous long-time head of the CHP. The revolutionary socialist group Marksist Tutum has covered this affair and Kılıçdaroğlu's role in it at bit.ly/chp-coup.

There was also extensive repression in the run-up to the NATO summit in Ankara (7-8 July), and there was particular anger at the government fixing long-deteriorated transport infrastructure solely for this event.

The left response to the NATO summit has left something to be desired, often falling into nationalist arguments. The Communist Party of Turkey, a Stalinist organisation which frequently presents itself as "patriotic", advertised its own anti-NATO protests with the slogan "we are marching for our country and our honour against NATO", and marched with communist flags and Turkish flags.

Marksist Tutum have criticised this attitude and instead raised the slogan "Don't look outside, NATO is already inside!", arguing that criticism of the Turkish state and militarism should not be sidelined by presenting NATO as a purely external phenomenon: bit.ly/t-nato □



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

Women's Fightback

Sperm, health, and manliness

By Ruth Cashman

Scientists are warning of a global male fertility crisis. Total testosterone levels in men declined by 54% across a range of countries between 1972 and 2019.

The researchers do not know why. They have suggested chemicals in household products disrupting hormones and the heating world are factors. Increased obesity and diabetes, which are known to reduce testosterone, will explain part of the decrease.

The meta-analysis combined six previous longitudinal studies in industrialised countries tracking testosterone. They included data from 118,593 individuals from Israel, the US, Brazil, Finland and Denmark,

from 1972 to 2019. Each of the studies found a decline in testosterone. When the data was combined, the overall reduction came out at 54%, appearing to accelerate after 2000.

Manosphere

Testosterone decline has been a obsession in the far-right manosphere at the grassroots and in the rhetoric of political leaders.

Robert F Kennedy Jr, United States Secretary of Health and Human Services and conspiracy theorist, describes male fertility decline as an "existential problem".

The far-right has presented testosterone as a symbol of traditional masculinity and a biological counter to left wing politics. Declining levels gave

been associated with a panic over the decline of "manliness" in society. Manosphere grifters often promote men's health (Testosterone Replacement Therapy, sun exposure, strict diets...) to restore male virility, and they believe that will also reduce Democrat voting.

Researchers have warned, however, that black-market testosterone may lead to a reduction, rather than an increase, in male fertility, by shutting off sperm production.

Prejudices

The far right, including those in government will pick and choose scientific findings to promote or ignore to fit the prejudices they already have. We must work to counter this. There is nothing wrong with

research informed by a political commitment. Indeed, it is necessary. We want science to improve human life – that is a social question. But we don't want left biology or left medicine as an alternative practice.

In the UK the testosterone drop is far from our only worrying health finding. Child health and healthy life expectancy are stagnating or falling, whilst comparable countries are recovering following Covid

We fight in the labour movement for funding for research, and funding for prevention, screening and treatment for health issues and risk factors we are already aware of. □

New Issue



Women's Fightback is a socialist feminist magazine by Workers' Liberty. We stand for trans-inclusive, sex-positive, class struggle feminism. With articles on the history of women's healthcare, campaigns of workers improving trans healthcare, fighting HIV stigma, saving care services and supporting sex worker decriminalisation, get your copy now! £3 (inc. post) □ www.workersliberty.org/wf

China: the crisis behind the hukou changes

By Chan Ying

On 22 May 2026, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime quietly announced what seems to be a big change to the hukou household registration system, potentially benefiting hundreds of millions of migrant workers. According to Xinhua, the official news agency of the People's Republic of China (PRC):

"China's State Council has issued guidelines on providing basic public services based on where people actually live, rather than the location of their household registration, as part of efforts to support the country's people-centred new type of urbanization.

"The guidelines aim at ensuring that residents without local household registration enjoy the same access to basic public services as those with local household registration, known as hukou, according to a notice issued by the State Council.

"The move will help meet people's growing needs for a better life and is key to improving the quality of urbanization and boosting domestic consumption, the notice said.

"The guidelines outline measures to strengthen educational support for migrant children, and encourage more cities to expand public rental housing coverage to residents without local household registration but with stable employment.

"Household registration restrictions on participation in employee social insurance will be fully lifted, and access to basic medical coverage and employment services will see improvements.

"The guidelines also call for gradually extending basic public services, including child welfare, elderly care, social assistance and disability support, to residents without local household registration, while easing household registration restrictions."

This apparently monumental announcement barely caused a ripple in domestic and international news media. The text of the Xinhua article is revealing:

- These are guidelines, not directives.
- Note the tentative phrasing — "aims to ensure...", "access ...will see improvements", "gradually extending...", "easing .. restrictions"
- Cities are "encouraged" to expand public rental housing, but only for those with "stable employment". Most migrant workers do not enjoy long-term contracts; they typically work in transient sub-contracted jobs in factories and

construction, and are now the backbone of China's 200 million-strong gig economy workforce.

- There is no mention of how this expansion of public services is funded yet the government sees this move as key to "boosting domestic consumption".

Nevertheless, it is likely that this policy change, if implemented in good time could lead to greater flexibility of the labour force and aid economic recovery:

- Migrant workers would have incentives to bring their families in the countryside to join them in cities if free education and affordable public housing and health care becomes available

- Provided central government provides more finance (issuing yet more bonds?) to urban local authorities, some could buy up huge stocks of unsold private housing from the five year old property slump and rent them out to incoming migrants as public housing

- Migrants in contracted employment would gain social insurance in any urban job, and this would enable enterprises in top tier cities to more easily attract technically skilled and professional workers

- Migrants typically save much more than urban residents, taking precautions out of much greater insecurity. If this is unlocked in the medium to longer term, the money would likely be spent on everyday consumer goods and services, boosting the domestic economy

Smaller cities

Smaller cities in largely rural provinces would however face immense pressure from short-distance migration, with insufficient funds to quickly expand education, housing and public services. Older generations who have seen so much policy changes and social turmoil may still decide to stay put to hang on to their village house and arable land plots, their ultimate safety net.

Before discussing why "boosting domestic consumption" is mentioned, below is a brief recap on the hukou household registration system within the context of major economic and political changes in China in recent decades.

After their 1949 civil war victory, the CCP imposed strict control over China's population. Individuals' access to work

and welfare was tied to their hukou, while their dianwei (workplace unit) was expected to take care of them and their family's needs from cradle to grave. Government permission had to be obtained to change jobs and location, but any such move did not change the person's original hukou. This system kept over 80% of China's population tied to the countryside, until the end of the Mao era in 1976.

By that time, the cumulative effects of multiple disasters had brought the PRC to its knees. The utter failure of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, an utopian attempt at forced industrialisation, which led to agricultural collapse and three years of famine in 1959-62, during which around 60 million starved to death, was followed by the upheaval of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, a wasted decade for hundreds of millions, leaving the CCP shell-shocked, the country in chaos and the economy in ruins.

Deng Xiaoping took over in 1978 to steer the regime towards recovery. He opened up the economy to foreign investment through Shenzhen and four other Special Economic Zones (SEZ) along the coast, loosening up price controls while allowing state-owned-enterprises to produce beyond planned quotas and engage in market trading of surplus products.

Hong Kong and Taiwan-based entrepreneurs were the first to establish factories in Shenzhen and the other coastal SEZs, seizing a historic opportunity to exploit mainland Chinese labour to manufacture textiles, footwear, furniture, toys and household goods. Soon to follow were Western and Japanese giants — Volkswagen, Coca Cola, General Motors, Honda, Panasonic, Motorola, Siemens, Nokia, Proctor and Gamble, etc. — establishing more technical and capital-intensive manufacturing for the expanding domestic market as well as for export.

During the 1980s, younger people in the countryside started to mi-

grate to the coastal SEZs as factories multiplied. Shenzhen grew from a sleepy village of 30,000 across the border from Hong Kong to a small city of half a million by 1988. (It then grew to 13 million by 2018 and to around 18 million today, China's sixth largest megacity). Many cadres became wheeling-and-dealing managers of profit-making state-owned enterprises now freed up from rigid central control. The regime devised a two track price system to lessen the shocks of market forces, but this enabled cadres to use their insider connections to buy goods at state-subsidised prices and sell them at much higher open market prices.

Workers were soon angered by cadres' arbitrary exercise of new managerial powers and widespread corruption, as well as the chaos and hyper-inflation which eroded their wages' purchasing power and even their "iron rice bowl" job security. Students and intellectuals became disillusioned by social instability caused by disruptive market forces, uncertain about their future government jobs and the absence of political reforms. This led to nation-wide protests for democracy and against corruption focusing on Beijing, culminating in the CCP regime facing an existential crisis and its subsequent bloody crackdown on students and workers on 4 June 1989.

Sweeteners

Shunned by western governments in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre, as well as reeling from the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the CCP under Deng and then his successor Jiang Zemin survived the 90s by offering further sweeteners to western capitalism — joint ventures to exploit cheap labour and China's growing market, as well as placing large orders for

continued on page 12 →



Pic: @gibography2001

People's Liberation Army (PLA) at the Moscow Victory Day Parade, 2025



western industrial products — machine tools, technical equipment, chemical fertilisers, telecommunications, rail, cars, industrial vehicles and civilian aircraft.

Whilst the CCP's conservative wing were appeased by the Party State retaining control of strategic areas of the economy by consolidating defence, technology, telecommunications, shipping, steel production, energy etc. into large national state enterprises, Jiang gave technocrats and reformists the go-ahead to push through extensive privatisation of many smaller state-owned-enterprises, along with privatising land leases (all Chinese land today is still technically owned by the State). Meanwhile Jiang, in the wake of Tiananmen, lost no time in stepping up control and surveillance of the population, and later established the Great Fire Wall to deny Chinese citizens free access to the World Wide Web.

During this free-for-all get-rich-quick era under Jiang Zemin (1989 — 2002), sometimes termed "the Wild East", Jiang changed the CCP rules to enable entrepreneurs, professionals and business managers to become Party members. This led to the CCP membership rising rapidly from around 50 million in 1990 to 80 million in 2010. Millions more every year applied to join, as Party membership was the gateway to prosperity, privilege and every corrupt practice under the sun.

The newly established giant state-owned enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s were generally quite inefficient, struggling to raise productivity without being able to dismantle "iron rice bowls" of relatively well-paid urban workers with long service records and some capacity to push back. Only from 1998 onwards did the State act over a number of years to dismantle the job security and social welfare framework of SOEs. However, the new private sector, kick-started by external investment, was the driver of double digit GDP growth. Foreign companies made monumental profits. For some, like Volkswagen, Motorola and Coca Cola, China became their most crucial market. Joint ventures soon gave way to wholly owned enterprises after China was accepted into the WTO in 2001. By 2003, China surpassed the United States as the country with the largest foreign direct investment inflow in the world. Soon domestic entrepreneurs emerged to join in the action,

resulting in the establishment of companies like Alibaba, Tencent and Huawei, all eventually becoming huge internationally well-known companies.

It is worth noting the origin of the PLA's involvement in economic modernisation, since USA hawks now often assert that many Chinese companies are PLA-controlled. During its pre-1949 days as a guerrilla army, it sought to grow its own food and operated light industries in CCP-controlled areas. In the post 1949 Mao era, after the end of the Korean War, the PLA engaged in much industrial and agricultural production, rather than just military activities.

Deng understood the vital importance of the PLA and engaged it at the very start of economic reforms, because it had skilled personnel already in China's major industries, and it controlled most communications and transport infrastructure (rail, all airports).

When Vietnam attacked and dismantled the Chinese-backed Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea/Cambodia in 1979, Deng ordered the PLA to invade Vietnam "to teach them a lesson". Instead, the PLA was beaten back by a battle-hardened Vietnamese army and Deng realised that the PLA was no longer the tough fighting force it was three decades before. Still, Deng was a leading military veteran, and the PLA was his powerbase.

Influence

By the mid-1980s, when the CCP was no longer concerned about defending itself against invasion, Deng reduced the bloated and inefficient PLA from four to three million (still the world's largest standing army in 1991 after the breakup of the USSR), but the PLA top brass continued to wield influence and expanded their trading activities. With its connections to defence, communications, transport and engineering industries the PLA quickly launched huge conglomerates like the Poly Group (headed by Deng's son-in-law) which exported military hardware, and the New Era Group which imported defence electronics, aviation and precision technology, as well as thousands of smaller-scale companies. PLA enterprises operated mines, telecoms, factories making vehicles, textiles and pharmaceuticals, construction companies building apartment blocks, and even fee-paying hospitals, hotels and other services. The PLA also held much strategically located land which

it profitably leased to others. Both Deng (1993) and Jiang (1998) tried to rein in this vast range of enterprises, not to mention massive corruption, which was further eroding the PLA's capacity as an actual armed force. Jiang's successor Hu Jintao had even less success, and the endemic corruption continued, until Xi Jinping's mass purges of the PLA top brass in 2012 and in 2018.

All these enterprises, PLA, domestic private enterprise or foreign multinationals, had access to migrant youth from the countryside with little experience of industrial work, and minimal capacity to fight for better wages and conditions. Basic labour protection laws introduced in the mid 1990s were largely bypassed or ignored. There was extensive use of child labour.

Migrated

In the past four decades, around three to four hundred million, have migrated from the countryside to work in cities, while about another hundred million have migrated from small towns to larger cities. The urbanised population rose from 18% in 1978 to 60% in 2017, the fastest rise worldwide historically. It is now about 67%.

This massive migrant workforce, with their rural hukous, is super-exploited under the harshest working conditions, repressed by an unholy alliance of employers, local government and the state-sponsored trade union, and deprived of social insurance and public services like health, housing and education for their children.

The maturing manufacturing networks, concentrated in geographical hubs, with young, increasingly skilful, migrants enduring 12+ hour shifts 6-7 days a week, later led to more complex technological production relocate profitably from west to east. 2007 saw the first iPhone made in a Chinese factory, owned by the Taiwanese manufacturing company Foxconn and relying on a complex supply chain of components from all over the world.

Over the years, whilst significant numbers of migrants (around 100 to 150 million) have secured urban hukous, through specific local schemes, spheres of employment, or bribery, a large majority (250 to 300 million) have remained as migrants. Migrant children inherit their parents' hukous even if born in the city they reside in. Some get "left behind" with grandparents either in other urban areas (25 million) or in villages (41 million) but a majority (estimated to be around 70 million in 2026) live with their parents in cities, with no access to public education and health care.

A further twist to the supply of migrant labour was the one-child policy, introduced by Deng in 1980. The post-Mao regime was concerned that large families encouraged during Mao's era was about to cause a population explosion, depleting the country of food, water and other resources, weakening its drive for modernisation. An estimated additional 13 million children, called "heihaizi" (literally meaning black children) were born, who had no birth certificate and no

hukou!

As the one-child policy was less well policed in the countryside, overwhelmingly heihaizi were rural. A rural child with no hukou had no access to anything, most crucially no land to farm on, so getting urban factory work was their only means of surviving. Soon there were several million heihaizi, under-age and illegal, working in factories by buying fake IDs. Factories were keen to hire them without even registration because they were more easily exploitable, costing the employer no taxes or social insurance etc.

As these youngsters grew up, they could not open bank accounts, could not travel legally and were often cheated out of wages. Eventually the Government had to concede to their existence and allowed them in 2016 to register for a legal hukou when the one-child policy was abolished.

As a result of this explosive economic growth under Jiang which led to massive wealth divide, rural poverty, and struggling welfare networks, the CCP was facing widespread social unrest and turbulence in factories. The manufacturing workforce was highly transient, in search of better pay, but also digging in to fight against unpaid wages, unsafe working conditions and factory closures, using wildcat strikes and occupations. (Factory owners would habitually defer paying wages until Chinese New Year, then liquidate their business in order to disperse their unpaid workforce, only to start up again elsewhere).

By this time, a generation of young labour rights lawyers, independent journalists, women's rights campaigners (60% of migrants working in factories are women, as reported in National Bureau of Statistics of China: Present Workers Monitor and Survey Report 2009), and various NGOs supporting migrants and workers have emerged, increasingly effective in challenging factory management and local governments.

For years, migrants with temporary residential rights to work in cities were subject to continual harassment and extortion by police, through a Custody and Repatriation (C and R) procedure originally enacted to clear the city of vagrants, beggars and undocumented migrants. The police would pick up migrants at will, detaining them for long periods until relatives paid money to release them. Hundreds of C and R detention centres picked up on average two million migrants every year, until the infamous Sun Zhigang case in 2003. Sun, a 27 year old graphic designer migrant worker, was killed after brutal abuse in detention. This was the spark that led to widespread protest by an already very discontented migrant workforce.

Hu Jintao had just taken over from Jiang in 2003. He quickly abolished C and R, and introduced other labour rights reforms from 2004 onwards under a new slogan, "harmonious society", to diffuse the rising tide of industrial militancy and social unrest. In 2008, he introduced the landmark Labour Contract Law. This required employers to issue formal open-ended contracts with min-

imum wage and severance pay, provide social insurance and other regulatory improvements. This was aimed to prevent cowboy practices of rogue employers from further provoking workers and causing widespread disruption to the economy.

The new law also lined up the official state-controlled All-China Federation of Trade Unions to conduct wage bargaining and mediation of disputes, to nip in the bud any development towards autonomous trade unions facilitated by NGO campaigners. Furthermore the regime started to offer incentives to enterprises to move away from low wage low skill manufacture to more high tech, automated production.

The regime aimed to transition away from horrific untrammelled factory work environments comparable to the worst industrial practices in Britain's Victorian era, to patterns of wage exploitation currently in place in the 38 OECD countries, hoping to gradually increase wages and consuming power of workers in order to build up and stabilise the domestic economy, develop the rural hinterland and be less reliant on foreign investments and exports. More crucially, the CCP regime sought to continue its post-Tiananmen efforts to win back more legitimacy from the population by delivering improved working and living conditions, food supply, education, health and other public services.

Later in 2008 however, the global financial crisis broke — very bad timing indeed for the CCP regime. Just as after the 1929 stock market crash, the bursting of the housing bubble in the US triggered banking failures, and global recession, from which no country including China has yet to fully recover. And then there was COVID 19.

The CCP regime under Hu turned to rescuing beleaguered enterprises, and dragged its feet in implementing the 2008 Labour Contract Law while businesses smartly bypassed it with outsourcing, service agreements and other loopholes for a number of years. Nevertheless, this did signal the end of the low-tech, low wage manufacturing model.

Toys, textiles and shoe factories either moved to inland provinces with lower minimum ages, or out of China to Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia where labour costs were lower and government regulations were more relaxed. Steered by strong government subsidies, manufacturers of vehicles, electronics and engineering goods e.g. Foxconn the iPhone maker, responded to this rising cost of labour by investing heavily in automation and robotics.

Robots in Chinese industry rose dramatically from 32,000 in 2008 to 132,000 in 2013, overwhelmingly imported from Japan, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland. and the USA, making China the world's largest market for installing robots. Then, by 2025, after intensive research and development, China's own robotics industry grew quickly and more robots were exported than imported. The government plans to expand robotics further.

Even prior to 2008, some migrants have chosen not to seek an urban hukou for a variety of reasons. Some of the earliest migrants were exhausted and close to retiring, or returned home to farming after over 25 years of factory work; others fell into seasonal or insecure work. In some small cities which have relaxed access to public services to non-residents there was no urgency to convert.

Since 2008, the significantly restructured economy has led to the number of migrants choosing not to seek an urban hukou rising to an estimated 100 to 150 million, about 40% of rural hukou holders. In industrial districts with high automation, a significant proportion of rural hukou holders no longer felt confident enough about job security to apply for an urban hukou or to bring their left-behind children to join them in cities.

Automation era impact

The automation era's impact on migrant workers were several-fold:

- Migration to smaller cities further inland, where automated factories were fewer (but local minimum wage was lower)
- Factories relocating elsewhere laid off workers, who returned home to farming
- A small minority with higher technical skills secured better wages as technicians managing automated production lines and robots
- Some switched from manufacturing to construction, a more fragmented industry, where subcontracting and other casualisation schemes (akin to Irish lump labour in UK building sites in the late 1960s) enabled companies to bypass the 2008 Labour Law.
- Switching to the service sector — some 20 million former manufacturing workers were absorbed into ride-hailing or delivery jobs, representing up to 40% of delivery riders.

Up until 2008, as with the dynamic economies of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan in earlier decades, China's officially published figures for GDP growth averaged around 10% annually, rising with the high tide of globalisation. While these published figures involved exaggeration because provincial cadres secured promotion and access to more bonuses and bribes on the basis of inflated growth data, the growth was clearly substantial.

Western-owned enterprises or joint ventures secured huge profits, while domestic private enterprises rapidly geared up. The economic growth was very uneven, leaving hinterland provinces behind, and often involved wasteful prestige projects. This pace of expansion could not be sustainable, after the one-off dividends of a young workforce, urbanisation, expansion of tertiary education, WTO entry, and leasing of land assets had been used.

Up to just before 2008, neoliberalism reigned supreme after the collapse of the USSR, and Western powers confidently expected that economic liberalisation in China would open up China to social and political reforms, leading to the CCP gradually dismantling its au-

thoritarian one-party rule. No Western politician imagined back then that the CCP Party State could in two more decades devise and operate an aggressive version of mercantilist capitalism whilst further tightening its authoritarian grip on Chinese civil society and becoming an imperialist power.

But now China's strenuous investment in research and development and infrastructure, its manufacturing prowess, its expansion of influence in the developing world through its Belt and Road Initiative, its accumulation of huge trade surpluses through pervasive state-subsidised exports, its alliance with Russia and threats to Taiwan and neighbouring countries, and its harassment of the Chinese diaspora, are now disrupting a weakening USA's global dominance.

The regime responded to the 2008 global financial crash with a massive fiscal stimulus package of 4 trillion Yuan (\$586 billion USD), about 12% of its GDP, which contained unemployment and partially insulated China from the global downturn. Much of this went into infrastructure, such as creating a high speed rail network and green projects including waste and water management, afforestation, upgrading electricity grid and replacing older steel mills and power stations etc, as well as subsidies for automation and robotics already mentioned above.

Stimulated

Domestic demand was stimulated by aggressively lowering interest rates, offering tax cuts for vehicle purchases etc. Construction output had previously been increasing by about 20% annually even before 2008, but this stimulus triggered a massive skyscraper boom. 60% of skyscrapers built globally since 2000 have been built in China.

This launched the Chinese economy forward, no longer as rapidly as before, but further transforming its productive capacity during a period of tepid recovery in the global economy. However, this debt-fuelled growth created a huge speculative property bubble and other problems, which were left to Xi Jinping to deal with.

In 2012, when Xi came to power, official GDP growth had dropped from 9.7% the year before to 7.8%; the era of official double-digit growth had ended. (In Xi's third term as leader, the official GDP target for 2025-26 is down to 4.5%).

The regime would boast about its GDP being the world's second largest. But for thousands of years, due to their large populations, China and India had long been the world's two largest economies. In the early 1800s, China under the Qing dynasty was the world's largest economy.

A more useful gauge was GDP per capita, indicating that China is somewhere in the middle, much higher than India, just above Thailand and just below Malaysia, but significantly below its other neighbours, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, countries which have all broken through what mainstream economists call the "middle income trap".

So China has a dual character — on

the one hand exerting the clout of an imperialist power, with some key leading-edge technologies, but still not yet out of the middle-income pack of developing countries. The top 10% of its population (around 100 million) may have a comparable standard of living to OECD countries, but the rest of its population, mostly on rural hukous, subsist on much lower incomes, and they are getting old before any prospect of Deng's promise of "getting rich". In 2020, during COVID 19, Premier Li Keqiang said that "China has over 600 million people whose monthly income is barely 1,000 yuan", i.e. the bottom half of the population survives on about £110 a month.

Xi's appointment was a compromise between factions unable to agree on how to address multiple problems corroding the CCP's hold on power, including:

- Systemic corruption within the CCP and the PLA has worsened, becoming very rampant and widespread, sapping the morale of aging party veterans whose parents had participated in the 1949 revolution, and further eroding the population's tolerance.

- The CCP's informal social contract with the population post-Tiananmen could best be understood as "performance legitimacy". Essentially the population grudgingly accept the CCP's one-party dictatorial rule and even some corruption, as long as the promise of economic and social improvements to Chinese society as a whole is kept. This had become harder and harder to deliver as the economy slowed down.

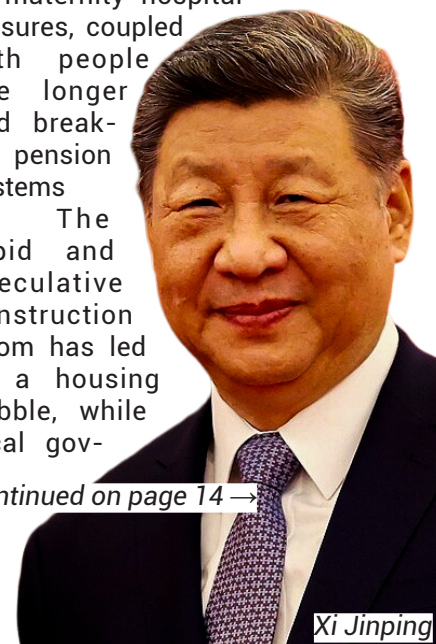
- The domestic private sector continued to run ahead of the state sector, The bird was about to fly out of its cage. Companies like Alibaba and Tencent operated massive digital platforms comparable to Amazon and Facebook, with access to probably even more personal data than the government's surveillance systems

- Despite heavy censorship, the internet has enabled sections of civil society to more confidently challenge the CCP, specifically on labour rights issues

- A whole host of demographic problems caused by the one child policy coming home to roost — an aging and diminishing working population, and birth rates dropping leading to waves of maternity hospital closures, coupled with people live longer and breaking pension systems

- The rapid and speculative construction boom has led to a housing bubble, while local gov-

continued on page 14 →



Xi Jinping

ernments still relied heavily on land leases to developers for income

- Real national and local government borrowing has become dangerously high, with all major banks seriously saddled with bad loans.

Xi Jinping undertook drastic actions to re-establish strong control of the economy and of civil society, in the name of national security and social stability, and in doing so, himself wrest personal control of the CCP.

Starting in 2012, very high level cadres and military top brass have been purged in an ongoing anti-corruption campaign, while cadres personally loyal to him get rapidly promoted. This has continued and still ongoing.

In 2015, hundreds of leading human rights lawyers and activists were targeted in the “709” crackdown on 9 July — detained, arrested or “disappeared”. This was followed by activists, journalists and NGOs connected with organising or promoting workers rights campaigns and strike actions being severely repressed. Foreign journalists from news media giving unfavourable coverage of events in China were refused work visas for years afterwards. That continues to the present day.

In 2015, the “Made in China” ten year plan was launched, seeking to achieve world dominance in EVs, green energy, semiconductors, robotics, aviation through massive investment in research and development. In the same year, the Bank of China shook world markets with a 2% devaluation which supported further expansion of exports.

In 2016 the one child policy was abolished, replaced by a two child and then a three child policy. China’s population is in absolute decline — birthrate of 1.3 is way below the replacement rate of 2.1 (OECD average is 1.5), with no immigration to mitigate this dramatic decline. A necessary correction but probably too little, too late as too many workers of child-bearing age, mostly born as the only child in their family, have to care for 2 parents and 4 grandparents (known as 4-2-1 syndrome) and cannot afford to contemplate having children.

However, one positive consequence was over 14 million heihaizi gaining an open and legal identity, albeit still with rural hukous, able to open bank accounts, travel legally, get married. 14 million, 1% of the population, was too small to materially affect the rapid decline in population and birth rate.

By 2017, there were 20 million CCTV systems, combined with facial recognition software and large databanks to monitor Chinese citizens, rapidly rising to an estimated 700 million CCTVs, one camera per two citizens, most concentrated in urban areas.

In October 2017, “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” was formally included in the national constitution, followed by the Chinese Parliament decision in 2018 to remove Presidential limits, and its decision in 2022 to appoint Xi into his third five-year term of office.

In 2018, the most determined attempt to fight for recognition of independent

unions and collective bargaining, at the Jasic factory in Shenzhen, led by an underground Maoist group, was brutally smashed.

In 2020 the monopolistic powers of major tech enterprises were accused of “disorderly expansion of capital” and heavily curbed, their social media influence curtailed and their compliance with Party priorities reinforced.

This iron fist approach was best exemplified by Xi’s handling of the COVID 19 outbreak — news blackout, strong denials, severe lockdowns, forcing production workers to continue working by confining them inside factories.

Housing bubble

Starting in January 2021, the speculative housing bubble burst. That threatened to bring down not just the banking sector but the whole economy, by imposing borrowing constraints on real estate developers. The government deliberately burst the bubble with its “three red lines”, which were

- Liability-to-asset ratio must not exceed 70%
- Net-debt-to-equity ratio must not exceed 100%
- Cash-to-short-term-borrowing ratio must be greater than 1.

This created a severe liquidity crunch which caused widespread developer defaults, projects unfinished, collapse in new construction, house prices, consumer confidence. Since the GDP and local government income relied heavily on the construction industry, the effects of its collapse spilled right across the whole country, with no sign of recovery.

The COVID outbreak nevertheless greatly weakened Xi’s authority within the country and the Party, even though he forced through constitutional changes to secure his third term of office in 2022. Widespread urban protests, powerfully expressed by youngsters parading with blank sheets of A4 paper, brought down the extended lockdown, the first time Xi failed to succeed with brute force policing and conceded a tactical retreat. The post-COVID period threw up further problems to the regime:

- Graduate unemployment surged into double figures, peaking at 21% in 2023, and still remaining above 16% in 2026 after the government changed the basis of its “calculations”.

- As entry level urban jobs dried up, youth drifted into sporadic economic activity just to subsist — a trend called “lying down”, a passive but widespread challenge to Xi’s narrative of a prosperous and strong China

- The pension system was predicted in 2019 to spiral downwards into insolvency from 2027 onwards. This led to the government in 2024 raising the retirement age for men from 60 to 63 and for women from 50 to 55 (except for women in managerial roles from 55 to 58), as well as increasing the number of contributing years from 15 to 20. Experts already note this is insufficient as a long term solution. The population, aging and living longer, and the massive 320 million strong gig economy workforce (at least 50% with rural hukous) overwhelmingly

cannot afford, or chooses not, to make “voluntary” social insurance contributions expected of urban workers. One more reason to delink the hukou system.

- The USA and the EU are actively pushing back against exports from China, deeming them to be hugely state-subsidised. Specific trade battles occur over semiconductors, AI systems and military-linked technologies. Indeed, the PRC now dominates world production of solar panels, mobile phones, lithium batteries and electric vehicles, container ships, and rare earth minerals needed for electronics. In 2026 China became the world’s largest exporter of machine tools, surpassing Germany for the first time.

- In May 2026, the regime banned citizens from opening overseas investment and asset management accounts with banks and brokerages. Many enterprises, influential entrepreneurs, and family members of enriched cadres have invested heavily overseas for many years. This is a very belated effort to stem capital flow out of China, a sign of panic.

- As the economy continues to stagger on, observers of the regime have noticed more unusual signs of purges of Xi’s own supporters and more visible factional strife within the CCP. The extent of purges of senior commanders with combat experience suggests that the PLA may not have the capacity to launch an attack on Taiwan, but a desperate regime may take reckless steps nevertheless.

China’s domestic economy, five years after the housing bubble was burst, is still mired deeply in debt. According to official data from China’s National Bureau of Statistics, home prices in 70 major cities are still below 2021 with no sign of recovery, and property investment in 2026 down 16% compared to same 5 months in 2025. New housing starts have collapsed by 60% from the 2020 peak.

Property

Property has long been the cornerstone of the economy, representing about 85% of most households’ wealth (compared to 25-30% in the USA), hence a much stronger link to consumer confidence. Since 2020, developers liquidated with huge unsold stock and massive defaults amounting to \$150 billion USD, leaving banks with bad debts, many households in double-digit negative equity and local government finances plummeting as land sales, their main source of income, have fallen by about 40-50%. Local government relied on bonds and other financing vehicles to fund infrastructure projects but are now having to cut back as their debt mounts, estimated to be about 100 trillion RMB (13 trillion USD), much of which was borrowed with the expectation of continued rising land lease sales.

As the construction industry, once representing 25% of GDP, contracted sharply, many jobs have gone, including those in manufacturing sectors supplying cement, steel, timber, furniture and household appliances.

This has spurred the vast majority of households to preserve savings and pay off debt rather than respond to the government’s attempts to boost domestic consumption. Recovery has been highly uneven, concentrating in the most prosperous coastal megacities particularly in those high tech AI development hubs e.g. Hangzhou, home to Alibaba and robotics firm Unitree, while second-tier cities continue to struggle with massive over-supply. Small rural towns are faring even worse. Empty properties in China total tens of millions, enough to house several European nations’ entire population.

To sum up, this latest move to change the hukou system is a part of the regime’s attempt to address a toxic cocktail of adverse economic and geopolitical challenges. The State Council is following a number of coastal provinces and cities who have already taken local initiatives in the past few years, usually competing with each other to coax migrant workers with technical skills to stay.

Rural hukou holders who could not previously buy and sell urban property have benefitted least from capital gains during the housing boom from 1980s to 2021, when it collapsed dramatically. With a stagnant property sector, the present round of hukou reforms merely seeks to tempt or prompt rural hukou holders to part with their savings rather than enable them to catch up with their urban compatriots. Most are too wary of government ploys to take the bait.

Xi’s perceived invincible power and control of the CCP may be a mirage and the regime’s sustainability is less secure, but for us, the greatest obstacle to real change is the difficulty for a strong workers’ opposition movement to emerge. □

- References in online version bit.ly/hukouc

CHINA AND TROTSKYISM



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Marx on the “18th Brumaire”

By Martin Thomas

Marx and Engels wrote three surveys of the revolutions which started across Europe in 1848 – *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, *The Class Struggles in France*, and *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

The 18th Brumaire was the last-written, and is usually reckoned the richest in unexpected arguments and intricate dissection. That is why it figures in our barebones “Marxist reference points”.

It was also the most intricately-woven. Although many passages in it are so famous as to be known to many people who have never read the whole text, a lot of it is difficult for people today who do not have the knowledge about current events since 1848 and about the French Revolution of 1789-94 which Marx assumed his readers would have.

This page therefore gives a skeleton timeline.

France (Paris, really) started the revolutions of 1848, with a street uprising which forced the king to flee and instituted a republican Provisional Government. At first the Provisional Government also had “social” policies of public works providing jobs for the unemployed, the National Workshops.

The closing-down of those workshops sparked a workers’ uprising in June 1848. A republican general, Louis-Eugène Cavaignac, suppressed it bloodily, using artillery to break barricades and killing thousands. The most radical and organised worker-politicians, Auguste Blanqui and his comrades, had already been jailed and sidelined after another rising in May.

Power was thus in the hands of the bourgeois republicans. But it was complicated.

The “republican” National Assembly was actually dominated by three monarchist or quasi-monarchist factions. The Legitimists wanted the restoration of the full-on reactionary Bourbon monarchy of 1815-30. The Orléanists wanted the restoration of the more conciliatory monarchy, led by another branch of the royal family, from 1830-48.

The Bonapartists wanted to restore the rule of the Bonaparte family. Napoleon Bonaparte, a general in the French armies during the European wars which followed the French revolution, had seized power in November 1799 (18th Brumaire by the French revolutionary calendar), and declared himself Consul and then (from 1799) hereditary Emperor. But he continued the anti-feudal, pro-free-trade social policies of the revolution, and even extended them to other parts of Europe.

Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815. His nephew and would-be heir Louis Bonaparte was a political adventurer, mostly living outside France. He was in

poor health, a poor public speaker, and in later life obese and walking only slowly and with a cane; but he presented himself as a “social” candidate for power, and had some credit, especially among the peasantry.

Marx’s pamphlet tried to show how this “adventurer who hides his trivial and repulsive features behind the iron death mask of Napoleon” could nevertheless seize power. In doing so, he argued that working-class revolutions could and would not proceed as the Revolution of 1789-94 had done, by an apparently irresistible escalation to the left marked by successive days of street uprising and the drawing-in of increasing numbers of the urban poor.

They required a lot beyond bravery and bravado: political differentiation, critical discussion, organisation.

“The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped away all superstition about the past. The former revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to smother their own content. The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead in order to arrive at its own content. There the phrase went beyond the content – here the content goes beyond the phrase”.

Further:

“Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm more swiftly from success to success, their dramatic effects outdo each other, men and things seem set in sparkling diamonds, ecstasy is the order of the day – but they are short-lived, soon they have reached their zenith, and a long period of regret takes hold of society before it learns to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period soberly.

Proceed

“On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century [so Marx hoped], constantly criticize themselves, constantly interrupt themselves in their own course, return to the apparently accomplished, in order to begin anew; they deride with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses, and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their opponents only so the latter may draw new strength from the earth and rise before them again more gigantic than ever, recoil constantly from the indefinite colossalness of their own goals – until a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves call out: Hic Rhodus, hic salta! [Here is the rose, here dance!]”

Marx, Engels, and following them the left wing of the Second International, would work through those differences more in decades to come.

Marx depicts the relation between politics and social classes in much more complex fashion in this study of particular events in a particular period than he does in some sweeping generalisations in other texts.

He describes seven different political factions or coalitions, with different bases in different classes or fractions of classes or combinations. He variously describes Bonaparte as based on, or serving, three classes or fractions of classes. The fly-by-night Paris middle class were his active base; the peasants, his passive electorate; the solid capitalist class, those whose long-term interests he served.

All that is to be read with the necessary framing provided by Marx:

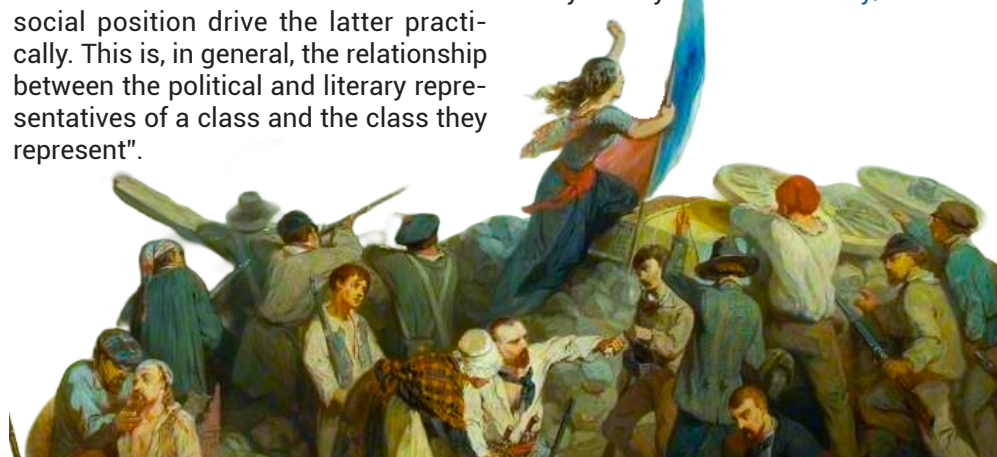
“One [must not] imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven and earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent”.

In another counter to the simplistic “Marxist” ideas of the state being a plain reflection of power in civil society which can be derived from his polemics against non-communist democrats, in *The 18th Brumaire* Marx writes that the state “enmeshes, controls, regulates, supervises, and regiments civil society”.

The “Bonapartist” regime built from 1852, and lasting until 1870 when it collapsed with France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, served the fundamental and longer-term social interests of the capitalist class. It fired up railway-building, expanded industry, promoted free trade.

At the same time, it did that by establishing some political autonomy for itself from day-to-day control by the capitalist class. And it built its political power on concessions, or apparent concessions, to the ruined urban middle classes, the peasantry, and even, at times, in the 1859-70 “liberal Empire” period, to workers. It shored up, or tried to shore up, its political power also by nationalism and militarism, with a number of (often not very successful) military ventures in the Crimea, Indochina, Mexico, Italy.

The text is at bit.ly/18-brt. Audio version at bit.ly/18-br-a. Workers’ Liberty study notes at bit.ly/18-br. □



Timeline

1848, 22-24 February: the people of Paris come onto the streets and erect barricades in protest against the banning of a liberal banquet. The king abdicates. Provisional government set up by the previous liberal opposition. Social reforms, including National Workshops to create jobs for the unemployed.

23 April: elections to Constituent Assembly in France. Conservative rural votes give a majority to more conservative factions.

15 May: Blanqui and Barbès lead an attempt to dissolve the assembly. They are jailed

21 June: The conservative-republican government shuts the National Workshops. Workers’ protests suppressed by troops; over 3,000 killed, and 15,000 exiled.

10 December: elections for president of France: Bonaparte wins thanks to peasant votes

1849, 13 June: bourgeois radicals (“The Mountain”, led by Ledru-Rollin) stage a protest, especially against the French army’s intervention in Rome. They are suppressed, and Ledru-Rollin flees

1851, 2 December: Bonaparte carries out his coup. After street protests are suppressed, on 20-21 December a referendum endorses the coup

1852, 7 November: referendum makes Bonaparte Emperor rather than President. □

The Spanish revolution of 1936

By Sean Matgamna

The Spanish civil war was not primarily a struggle of “democracy against fascism”. It was a class struggle of the Spanish workers and peasants against capitalist, landlord and priest rule in Spain. This working class struggle was subverted by the Stalinists, who came to dominate the Republican areas from which the old ruling class had fled. The workers had effective power in society, but, led by anarchists who did not believe in class power, the Spanish workers did not consolidate that power.

The Spanish Communist Party, under the military discipline of Stalin, defended in the Republican areas the interests of the Spanish bourgeoisie, even those who had fled to the area controlled by the fascist General Franco. Why?

Stalin wanted to show Britain and France, hoping for an alliance with them against Germany, that he could quell any threat from the working class in any part of Europe. Erecting a police state in the Republican areas, the Stalinists drove the peasants off the land they had seized from landlords and quelled the independent workers’ movement in Catalonia.

The carrying through of the social revolution in the Republican areas would have won workers and peasants from Franco; the granting of independence to Morocco would have won over Franco’s Moorish troops. By crushing the social revolution in the “anti-fascist” areas instead, and refusing to grant Moroccan independence, the Stalinists strengthened Franco, and ultimately ensured his victory.

It was the Stalinists, not the fascists, who killed the Spanish revolution: the fascist scavengers then moved in for 40 years of fascist rule in Spain. That is the story in brief.

Workers’ Liberty 26 published documents, eye-witness accounts and contemporary political analysis which amplified, demonstrated and proved these statements.

In June 1931 the second Spanish Republic is instituted. The government disestablishes the

Catholic Church and makes some weak liberal reforms. It crushes the strike wave of July-August 1931.

In October 1933 the Spanish fascist movement, the Falange Española, is founded.

At the end of 1934 anarchist and socialist workers organise huge protests around the country, and in the Northern Asturias a miners’ insurrection is crushed by an army led by General Franco. 5,000 are killed, 30,000 arrested.

In September 1935 a new left party in Spain — the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) — is formed by former followers of Trotsky such as Andrés Nin and the Workers’ and Peasants’ Bloc, a “Bukharinite” group originating in the Catalan Communist Party and led by Joaquín Maurín.

In February 1936 the “Popular Front”, an electoral alliance of the Socialist Party, left Republicans, Catalan nationalists and the tiny Communist Party, wins the general election.

Denounces

Trotsky bitterly denounces the Popular Front as an alliance tying the working-class parties to the bourgeoisie.

The Republicans, however, govern alone until September 1936, when the Socialist and Communist Parties join the government. Both anarchists and the POUM support the Popular Front’s election, but keep their distance.

Despite a gigantic wave of peasant land seizures in March 1936, the government equivocates on agrarian reform, though Spain has the most unequal distribution of land in Europe. The vast majority of the rural population are landless labourers or small tenant farmers.

On 17 July 1936 the Spanish military rise in rebellion, supported by the Falange, the Catholic Church and monarchists. The government refuses to arm the workers, who arm themselves.

Those who had stayed with Trotsky’s Left Opposition after 1935 — the



“Bolshevik-Leninists” — are very small in number but they are the only group to consistently call for the establishment of soviets, the arming of the workers, for the replacement of the Republican/Popular Front government with a workers’ government.

With the Stalinists working ruthlessly behind the scenes, gradually the government, which after September 1936 has a Socialist Prime Minister, Largo Caballero, wrests control away from the workers’ organisations.

The Stalinist slogan — behind which they organised a bloody counter-revolution — was “win the war against the fascists first, then make a workers’ revolution”. While the POUM and the much larger organisations of anarchist workers — the CNT (syndicalist union) and FAI (anarchist “party”) — support workers’ control, both adapt themselves to the Stalinist line. Both join the Popular Front government (the POUM in Catalonia and Valencia). Anarchist leaders such as García Oliver and Frederica Montseny remain in the government that is at war with the revolutionary anarchists!

Smears

In August 1936 — the months of the first of the Moscow Trials, in which the leaders of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 are tried as fascist agents and sentenced to be shot — the Stalinists begin a campaign of smears and attacks against both the POUM and the anarchists. In December 1936 the POUM is kicked out of the Catalan autonomous government.

Stalin sends “experts” from his secret police (GPU), and the Spanish Stalinists begin to organise a local GPU.

In May 1937 Assault Guards, at the behest of the Stalinists, attempt to seize the Barcelona telephone exchange which had been won by the anarchist workers in July 1936 from the army. Spontaneously, barricades go up around Barcelona. This was plainly an attempt to liquidate the most militant group of workers in Barcelona and strike a fatal blow at the workers’ revolution. The battle ends after the anarchists and POUM leaders “negotiate” a deal with the government. After three days the POUM orders their members to leave the barricades.

What did the Trotskyists propose? Our comrades argued for a general strike, for the arming of the working class, for unity of the POUM and the anarchists in defence of the revolution, for soviets and the working class to seize power.

In another counter-revolutionary attack elsewhere in Catalonia, at Tarragona, in May, hundreds of anarchist workers are murdered. Things like this are repeated in many places.

By the middle of June the POUM is outlawed, its leaders arrested. Their foremost leader, Nin, is kidnapped, tortured and murdered.

The repression of the workers’ movement is pursued ruthlessly. The Stalinist Republican police state has much in common with Franco’s police state.

By strangling the workers’ movement the government weakens the fight against the fascists. The strength of the militias, the production of food and arms depends upon the real, lived, committed involvement of the workers in the struggle. And because the struggle for equality, which is absolutely central to it all, has become sidelined and crushed, it no longer has the hearts and minds of the workers. The Stalinists killed workers’ control in the economic sphere. Class differentiation and class rule were introduced into the International Brigade, demoralising the volunteers.

As a traceable consequence of the counter-revolution in Republican Spain, from late in 1937 the tide of war turns in favour of the fascists. In January 1938 the fascists advance into Catalonia and Valencia and the bombardment of Barcelona begins. A year and two months later Madrid surrenders. The fighting ends. The workers are defeated, and 40 years of Francoist rule begin. □

• Introduction to feature, “The Spanish Revolution and those who killed it”, *Workers’ Liberty* volume 1 #26, November 1995: bit.ly/wl26spain



Spanish Republican militia during the civil war

Leon Trotsky on Spain

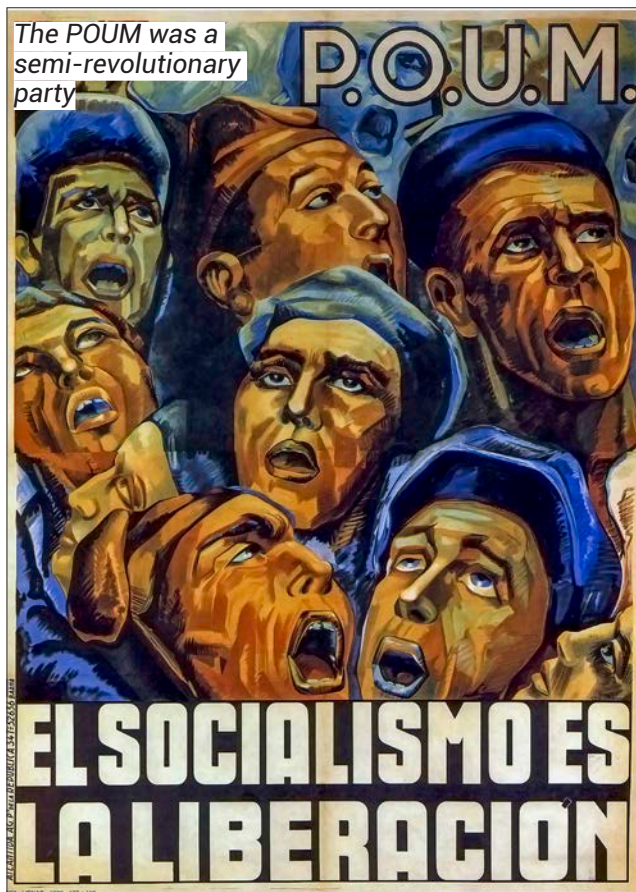
30 July 1936

Even now, in the midst of civil war, the Popular Front government does everything in its power to make victory doubly difficult. A civil war is waged, as everybody knows, not only with military but also with political weapons. From a purely military point of view, the Spanish revolution is much weaker than its enemy. Its strength lies in its ability to rouse the greater masses to action. It can even take the army away from its reactionary officers. To accomplish this, it is only necessary to seriously and courageously advance the program of the socialist revolution.

It is necessary to proclaim that, from now on, the land, factories, and shops will pass from the hands of the capitalists into the hands of the people. It is necessary to move at once toward the realisation of this program in those provinces where the workers are in power. The fascist army could not resist the influence of such a program for twenty-four hours; the soldiers would tie their officers hand and foot and turn them over to the nearest headquarters of the workers' militia. But the bourgeois ministers cannot accept such a programme. Curbing the social revolution, they compel the workers and peasants to spill ten times as much of their own blood in the civil war. And to crown everything, these gentlemen expect to disarm the workers again after the victory and to force them to respect the sacred laws of private property. Such is the true essence of the policy of the Popular Front. Everything else is pure humbug, phrases and lies!...

The workers' party that enters into a political alliance with the radical bourgeoisie by that fact alone renounces the struggle against capitalist militarism. Bourgeois domination, that is to say, the maintenance of private property in the means of production, is inconceivable without the support of the armed forces for the exploiters. The officers' corps represents the guard of capital. Without this guard, the bourgeoisie could not maintain itself for a single day. The selection of the individuals, their education and training, make the officers as a distinctive group uncompromising enemies of socialism. Isolated exceptions change nothing. That is how things stand in all bourgeois countries. The danger lies not in the military braggarts and demagogues who openly appear as fascists; incomparably more menacing is the fact that at the approach of the proletarian revolution the officers' corps becomes the executioner of the proletariat.

To eliminate four or five hundred reac-



tionary agitators from the army means to leave everything basically as it was before. The officers' corps, in which is concentrated the centuries-old tradition of enslaving the people, must be dissolved, broken, crushed in its entirety, root and branch. The troops in the barracks commanded by the officers' caste must be replaced by the people's militia, that is the democratic organisation of the armed workers and peasants. There is no other solution. But such an army is incompatible with the domination of exploiters big and small. Can the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois republicans agree to such a measure? Not at all. The Popular Front government, that is to say, the government of the coalition of the workers with the bourgeoisie, is in its very essence a government of capitulation to the bureaucracy and the officers. Such is the great lesson of the events in Spain, now being paid for with thousands of human lives.

But here we are interrupted by the exclamation, "How can one dissolve the officers' corps? Doesn't this mean destroying the army and leaving the country disarmed in the face of fascism? Hitler and Mussolini are only waiting for that!" All these arguments are old and familiar. That's how the Cadets, the Social Revolutionaries, and the Russian Mensheviks reasoned in 1917, and that's how the leaders of the Spanish Popular Front reasoned. The Spanish workers half-believed these rationalisations until they were convinced by experience that the nearest fascist enemy was to be found in the Spanish fascist army. Not for nothing did our old friend Karl Lieb-

knecht teach: "The main enemy is in our own country!"

16 August 1936

The question most on my mind concerns relations between the POUM and the syndicalists. It seems to me it would be extremely dangerous to let oneself be guided exclusively or even primarily by doctrinal considerations. At all costs, it is necessary to improve relations with the syndicalists, despite all their prejudices. The common enemy must be defeated. The confidence of the best syndicalists must be won in the course of the struggle. Before October we made every effort to work together with the purest anarchists.

The Kerensky government often tried to use the Bolsheviks against the anarchists. Lenin resolutely opposed this. In that situation, he said, one anarchist militant was worth more than a hundred hesitating Mensheviks. During the civil war the greatest danger is lack of decisiveness, a spirit of equivocation, in a word — Menshevism.

25 February 1937

One does not demonstrate one's friendship for a revolutionary organisation in a difficult situation by closing one's eyes to its mistakes and the dangers arising from them. The situation in Spain can be saved only by an energetic, radical, and heroic comeback of the left wing of the proletariat; thus an immediate regroupment is necessary. It is necessary to open up an implacable campaign against the bloc with the bourgeoisie, and for a socialist program. It is necessary to denounce Stalinist, Socialist and anarchist leaders precisely because of their bloc with the bourgeoisie. It is not a question of articles more or less confined to the columns of [the POUM journal] *La Batalla*. No. It is a question of marshalling the masses against their leaders, who are leading the revolution to complete destruction.

The policy of the POUM leadership is a policy of adaptation, expectation, hesitation, that is to say, the most dangerous of all policies during civil war, which is uncompromising. Better to have in the POUM 10,000 comrades ready to mobilise the masses against treason than 40,000 who suffer the policies of others instead of carrying out their own. The 40,000 members of the POUM (if the figure is accurate) cannot by themselves assure the victory

of the proletariat if their policy remains hesitant. But 20,000, or even 10,000, with a clear, decisive, aggressive policy, can win the masses in a short time, just as the Bolsheviks won the mass in eight months.

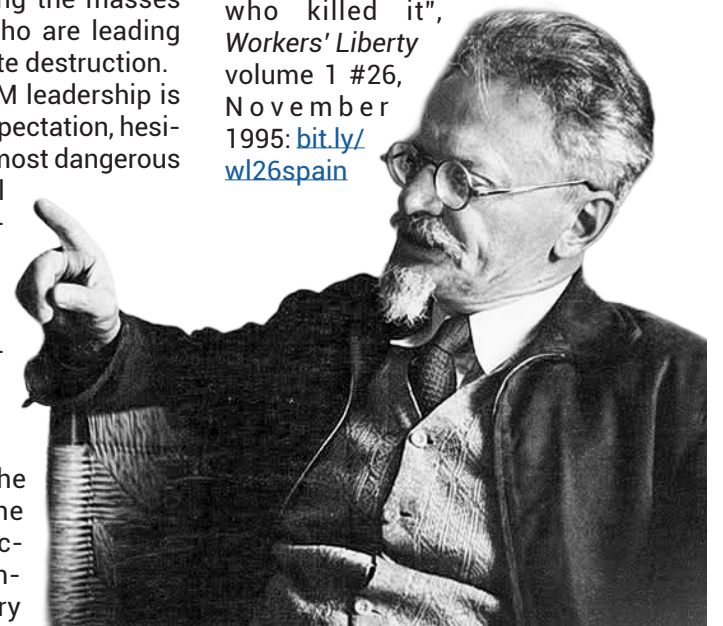
8 August, 1937

When Andres Nin, the leader of the POUM, was arrested in Barcelona, there could not be the slightest doubt that the agents of the GPU would not let him out alive. The intentions of Stalin were revealed with exceptional clarity when the GPU, which holds the Spanish police in its clutches, published an announcement accusing Nin and the whole leadership of the POUM of being "agents" of Franco.

The absurdity of this accusation is clear to anyone who is acquainted with even the simplest facts about the Spanish revolution. The members of the POUM fought heroically against the fascists on all fronts in Spain. Nin is an old and incorruptible revolutionary. He defended the interests of the Spanish and Catalan peoples against the agents of the Soviet bureaucracy. That was why the GPU got rid of him by means of a well-prepared "raid" on the Barcelona jail. What role in this matter was played by the official Spanish authorities remains a matter for speculation.

Quite apart from the differences of opinion that separate me from the POUM, I must acknowledge that in the struggle that Nin led against the bureaucracy, it was Nin who was right. He tried to defend the independence of the Spanish proletariat from the diplomatic machinations and intrigues of the clique that holds power in Moscow. He did not want the POUM to become a tool in the hands of Stalin. He refused to cooperate with the GPU against the interests of the Spanish people. This was his only crime. And for this crime he paid with his life. □

• From the feature, "The Spanish Revolution and those who killed it", *Workers' Liberty* volume 1 #26, November 1995: bit.ly/wl26spain



What Farage wants to turn back the clock to

By Bas Hardy

In the early seventies I had a clerical job at County Hall in London. During a lunch break one day, I nipped out to the shops and got stopped by two plain clothes coppers. My long hair had aroused their suspicions and their hope of improving their arrest rate on the off-chance I had some wacky backy on me.

"What you got in that bag?" demanded the older of the two, whilst his younger oppo, who looked like a plod learning the job, stood pen and notebook at the ready in the expectation he'd be writing down evidence of a good collar.

Brandishing the only item in my bag, I declared "A book, officer. *Dialectical Materialism* by Henri Lefebvre."

"OK, you can go" said the older one somewhat disappointedly. His rookie companion seemed much relieved to be spared the task of having to spell dialectical materialism, or Henri Lefebvre for that matter.

I wondered if I'd have got off so easily had I been a black youth. A search might have indeed "discovered" possession of illegal substances. It was not unknown for corrupt officers (and there were plenty in the Met then) to plant drugs on people to bump up their arrests, and courts invariably found for the police in the absence of any witnesses.

Blatant

In the 1970s the attitude of the police towards black people wasn't just dire, it was worse. One of the most blatant cases at that time centred around Emmanuel Quaye and his family in Lewisham. It certainly wasn't exceptional, and showed just how bad members of the black community were treated then.

Bill Quaye, as he preferred to be called, was a fitter with British Rail. Originally from Ghana, he'd been living in Britain for twenty years, and had married an English woman, Ellen. They had two teenage daughters.

When two WPCs turned up at the Quaye home after their younger daughter had been arrested, accused of stealing a purse and assault, they demanded to search the house. Bill, standing up for his rights, refused them entry because they had no warrant.

After the visit, the family went to the police station to see their younger daughter Susan and were met by a certain Sergeant Ferguson. Bill Quaye's insistence that a warrant was required



Pic: @gibography2001

earned a response from Ferguson, who was apparently smelling heavily of alcohol. "That law is for Europeans, not blacks like you." Bill accused Ferguson of obvious racism, who responded "Warrant or no warrant, we are going to turn you over like you've never been turned over before."

The Quayes got home that evening and saw seven cop cars outside their flat. Bill was arrested, beaten and kicked to the ground outside his own front gate by five or six coppers. He was then bundled into a police car, throttled by one officer, and told "You've really got it coming to you now, black bastard."

It was much the same at the station, with Bill forced to strip on the pretext he was being searched for drugs and left naked in a cell for two hours! Kathleen Quaye, the elder daughter, in her mid-teens, was subject to verbal and physical abuse, being called a "black c**t" and slapped and punched by Ferguson.

Par for the course. When it came to court the magistrates believed pretty much everything the police said, maintaining as they usually did that police would never lie. The court cleared Ferguson of all allegations made against him and instead fined Bill and Kathleen for assault.

I forget now how we became aware of this dreadful occurrence, but together with another comrade from Lewisham International Socialists [forerunner of today's SWP], now sadly no longer with

us, I visited the family to see if we could help. We were staggered to learn that Bill was a member of the Communist Party — quite influential in that part of London at the time — and they'd done bugger all about it!

We wrote up the story for *Socialist Worker*, the local CP got off its arse, the National Council for Civil Liberties got involved, and an article appeared in the *Sunday Times*. The charges against the Quaye family were overturned, although I'm pretty sure no disciplinary measures were brought against Sergeant Ferguson and his merry band of racist coppers.

South East London had numerous instances of police malfeasance. The Maxwell Confait case and the notorious murders of Stephen Lawrence and Daniel Morgan were notable ones. Corrupt association between local coppers and the criminal fraternity were certainly evident in the latter two.

Has the behaviour of the police become "better" since then? I doubt there were any black officers in the Lewisham force in 1971. The first black person to join the Met was Norwell Roberts, in 1967, almost two decades after Windrush. When he turned up for duty at Bow Street Nick, after completing training at Hendon, his reporting sergeant's welcoming words were "look you n****r, I'll see you never pass your probation."

Roberts suffered thirty years of constant racial abuse, harassment and persecution from his "colleagues" during his coppering career.

Institutional

Many more ethnic minorities are in the police nationwide nowadays. But that recruitment doesn't solve a racism problem that is essentially institutional. The almost universal racism within police fifty years ago has gone, but racist attitudes are still prevalent.

Only last year a BBC Panorama programme exposed widespread examples of racism and misogyny at Charing Cross police station which resulted in ten of its officers facing misconduct hearings. A decade earlier two officers were sacked after sending racist text messages calling for the burning down of Lewisham "along with all the spades."

The far right would have us believe the laughable fantasy claim that the police are somehow biased against "white people". That certainly doesn't stack up with overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Official statistics show black people disproportionately more likely to be

stopped, searched and arrested. Arrests more than two times more. Stopped and searched over four times more. Strip searched, over eight times more.

Two major inquiries — Macpherson in 1999 and Casey in 2021 — have adjudged the police as being institutional racist, despite the efforts of previous Tory governments to deny this is the case.

By propagating that the police are somehow "anti-white", Farage and his crew are seeking to turn the clock back to the days of blatant police racism. They don't want racist officers to be disciplined and thrown out of the force. Hence there pushback against what they term "DEI policies".

The intent to emulate Trump's attacks on black people was obvious when Farage exploited the Henry Nowak case, describing George Floyd as "a career criminal". The far right would very much like to have the police behave pretty much like ICE does in the States.

If "two-tier policing" does exist, though, it's very much in favour of the rich against the rest of us. Nobody has been held criminally liable for the Grenfell Tower fire or the Post Office scandal. Neither has any of those who robbed the taxpayers over fake PPE during COVID. The water company CEOs who pump sewage into the rivers could do with going to prison too! □

More online

Fall-out in YP

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Estonia and 1924

When the Storm Fell Silent
bit.ly/3volest

A fight for accountability and resources

By Wade Ferguson

A series of inquiries has further exposed the depth of the crisis in UK maternity and neonatal care, with years of underfunding, staff shortages, and cultures of bullying and discrimination.

This pattern has been established by inquiries spanning over a decade: in Morecambe Bay (2015), East Kent (2022), Shrewsbury and Telford (2022), and now Nottingham last month, where the largest maternity inquiry in NHS history has identified over 500 mothers and babies who died or came to harm as a result of inadequate care.

Before the findings of the Ockenden review from Nottingham were released, a new inquiry had already been announced. This scandal affecting maternity services in Leeds, the *Sunday Times* reports, may affect an even greater number of mothers and babies than the scandal in Nottingham.

These scandals are not isolated failures. Maternal mortality has risen to around 12.8 deaths per 100,000 women giving birth, about one-fifth higher than in 2009-11, leaving the UK performing sub-

stantially worse than many comparable western European countries. Progress in reducing stillbirths and neonatal deaths has stalled since the pandemic.

Review

Baroness Amos has now published the findings of her review into the national causes of these recurrent scandals. Rather than uncovering new problems, this review concluded that multiple inquiries have produced remarkably similar findings: workforce shortages, poor leadership, racism and discrimination, fragmented services, poor accountability, and a failure to learn when harm occurs. Its recommendations include appointing a national maternity commissioner, better staffing, binding standards, and stronger independent investigations when babies or mothers die or are seriously harmed.

The Amos review points to how services have not kept pace with changes in pregnancies, as more women give birth later in life, with more chronic health conditions and more often by caesarean section. Yet comparable countries like Norway have not seen a corresponding increase

in maternal mortality.

Even within the UK, the burden is not shared equally. Maternal mortality is twice as high for those living in the most deprived parts of England compared to those in the least deprived areas. Black women remain almost three times as likely to die during pregnancy or shortly afterwards as white women, while Asian women face around twice the risk. Babies born to Black families are significantly more likely to be stillborn or die shortly after birth. Amos concluded that racism and discrimination are patient safety issues that are embedded in the way services operate.

Coincide

These outcomes coincide with years of workforce shortages and underinvestment. In response to the Amos review, the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) said, "Chronic understaffing and a decade of under-investment have left midwives unable to consistently deliver the care every woman and baby deserves. A poll published last week found that nine in ten of our members say unsafe staffing is directly affecting the quality of care – day in, day out. This is a staffing emergency."

According to the RCM, the NHS across England has a shortage of 2,500 midwives, while one in three graduate midwives have reported struggling to find a

job. The union last month succeeded in winning 1,000 new posts for newly qualified midwives.

Last year the government and NHS England cut ringfenced funding for maternity services from £95m in 2024-25 to just £2m in 2025-26, with the reallocated funds to be used more flexibly by local integrated care boards. The RCM described the cuts as "more than shocking [...] they will rip the heart out of any moves to improve maternity safety."

Successive scandals also demonstrate why workers' control matters. Many inquiries describe staff who recognised dangerous practices but felt unable to speak out because of bullying, fear of reprisals or a widespread belief that management would not act. Genuine accountability means strengthening trade union organisation, protecting whistleblowers and giving frontline workers a decisive voice over staffing, safety and service organisation.

Mothers deserve to be properly listened to and families deserve accountability. Justice also relies on those who actually deliver maternity care having the resources and democratic power to shape it, and to end decades of discrimination, underinvestment, poor staffing and neglect. □

• References in online version bit.ly/wf-mat



Pic: @gibography2001

Right to protest

Scrap the Palestine Action ban!

By Will Roberts

The "Filton Four", initially found innocent of charges relating to a break-in at an Elbit Systems factory in Filton, then later re-trialled and found guilty, were subject to an outrageous attack on freedom of expression and freedom to protest as their court case came to a close. After the jury's decision had been made, the judge announced that the defendants were to be sentenced on the basis of a "terrorist connection" to their charges – something the jury was unaware of when reaching their decision.

This increased their sentences and made their cases more damaging than they already were. On 12 June Samuel Corner was given seven years and eight months, while Fatema Rajwani, Leona Kamio

and Charlotte Head all received five-year sentences. In addition, they will have to go through 15 years of "terrorist notification requirements", including registering new phones, email addresses and bank accounts with the police, and going to regular check-ins. Charlotte Head's barrister Rajiv Menon will now face proceedings for alleged contempt of court.

All that for young people who were attempting to voice their anger and take action against a genocidal war. Palestine Action have politics on Israel/Palestine that are extremely questionable, and their activity is not the best outlet for young people looking to change the world. But to treat them as "terrorists" akin to Daesh, as both beyond the pale of civil society and posing a threat to public life, is nonsense.

The fact that terrorism charges were hidden from the jury, instead utilising a law that allows the judge to determine whether a case is related to terrorism without jury insight, shows a cowardice on the part of the government. They didn't believe they would be able to convince a randomly-selected jury of the terrorist nature of these charges, so took it out of their hands.

Continues

At the same time, the fight over the banning of Palestine Action continues. PA co-founder Huda Ammori has said that she will continue to attempt to overturn the decision, made by the Court of Appeal in June, that the initial proscription of PA by the government was, in fact, lawful. Ammori has said that the challenge "will go all the way up to

the European Court of Human Rights, if needs be".

Over 200 people have been arrested just recently, most at peaceful protests, "on suspicion" of terrorism charges, including ones carrying long sentences. Over 3,500 have been arrested since the initial proscrip-

tion, each of them just making the government decision look more and more farcical.

This is part of a broad spectrum of measures, ongoing for several years across both the Labour and Tory governments, to curtail and restrict the right to protest. The Police Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023, increasing police abilities to stop and search and increasing the remit of police powers to stop protests, was one of the most significant moments of this wave. The current bans on PA and sentences for its activists should be seen as part of the same wave.

All these decisions accumulate to a terrible rolling back of the right to protest which will infringe on a vast range of future public political activity in this country. □



Pic: @gibography2001

Sudan: support the Emergency Response Rooms

By Matt Cooper

The war in Sudan is now moving into a new and maybe even more dangerous phase. It appears that the UAE, the main external sponsor of the RSF army, which is at war with the official Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), is increasingly winning the US to its position.

After RSF atrocities in El Fasher in late 2025, the US blamed the SAF for not agreeing to a pause in fighting that would have required it to withdraw from some contested territory. The US already feared a rise of Islamism in Sudan. It had outlawed the ibn Malik Brigade in September 2025. In March 2026, it went on to list the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood, generally aligned with the SAF, as a terrorist organisation. No equivalent terrorism designation has been made against the RSF or its Tasees project.

The likelihood is the normalisation of partition of Sudan, with the UAE in a stronger regional position.

The SAF could be considered the lesser evil. The RSF are far more unrestrained in their brutality. The humanitarian activist Alex de Waal, who has worked on Sudan for 40 years, has spoken of the dangerous “revolutionary nihilism” exhibited by the RSF and their belief in a new Sudan being built only through genocidal violence.

But there is an existing third, positive, alternative. The revolutionary movement threw up local Resistance Committees. The spirit of these continues in the Emergency Response Rooms, which now number more than 700 in Sudan,

mobilising more than 26,000 volunteers. They are education and health workers, along with community activists, filling in for social functions of the state that have been abandoned by the purely military machines of the SAF and RSF. They were originally funded by the Sudanese diaspora and have some NGO and Western development aid, although support from USAID has all but dried up under Trump.

Welfare

These community-based institutions of mutual aid have become the country's real welfare infrastructure, working under bombardment, hunger, arrest and threat from both sides. An estimated 160 have been killed, and hundreds more detained or tortured. As a representative of the ERR stated, “We are not victims waiting to be saved. We are citizens building Sudan's future, and we have [our] own vision.”

Those institutions are the legacy of the popular movement of 2018-19, which succeeded in overthrowing the 30-year rule of Omar al-Bashir and raised the possibility of civilian democratic rule, workers' organisation and the dismantling of Sudan's old military-Islamist state.

That was first thwarted by compromise with the generals, then crushed by the joint coup of Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), in October 2021. Since April 2023, the two armies have turned on each other in a

war waged without regard to the civilian population.

The worst of the violence comes when SAF or RSF forces (or their local allies) attempt to ensure the loyalty of the local population by driving out, starving or killing those whose loyalty is suspect, a judgement often based on ethnicity. In March and April 2026 alone, Médecins Sans Frontières reported an SAF drone attack on El-Daein hospital in East Darfur which killed 70 people, and an RSF attack on Al-Jabalain hospital in White Nile state which killed at least 10, including medical staff. Aid convoys have been similarly attacked. These are part of a deliberate strategy to make life impossible for civilians in these areas.

The worst of this was the fall of El Fasher in October 2025 after an 18-month siege of the last redoubt of the SAF and its allies in Darfur. The RSF considered all the remaining 260,000 inhabitants of the city combatants, although half were children. The March 2026 UN Fact-Finding Mission report, Sudan: hallmarks of genocide in El Fasher, found that RSF crimes against Zaghawa and Fur communities showed genocidal intent. A July 2026 supplementary report and OHCHR statement strengthened this, describing mass killings, abductions and gang rape in El Fasher as distinct markers of genocide.

There is now a risk that this will be repeated in El Obeid, the SAF-held capital of North Kordofan (in central Sudan, to the east of largely RSF-controlled Darfur), which is now under siege by

RSF forces. In late June, the UN Security Council warned that this could be “another El Fasher”, and on 6 July the Human Rights Council ordered an urgent inquiry into alleged RSF abuses around the city, including summary executions, abductions, torture and sexual violence.

On the back of its strong grip on Darfur, its increasing strength in Kordofan and the Blue Nile region in the south-east of Sudan, the RSF has renewed its efforts in building a military state. It announced its Sudan Foundation Council (Tasees) in 2025 and established the “Government of Peace and Unity”, which was not a government and promoted neither peace nor unity. Recently, the RSF has been attempting to give this more of the functionality of a real state to create a de facto partition of Sudan, although so far not even its allies have recognised it as such.

In this, the RSF may have been encouraged by its increasingly favourable regional and international environment.

Leverage

Since the start of the war, the SAF has used its status as the recognised government of Sudan as a key source of diplomatic leverage. It is supported by Egypt and Saudi Arabia despite its continuity with Bashir's Islamist state, based on the political rule of the Muslim Brotherhood. After restoring links with Iran in 2023 and using Iranian drones in 2024, the SAF has more recently distanced itself from Iran in order to make itself more acceptable to Washington, Cairo and Riyadh.

Nonetheless, there are openly Islamic militias in the SAF's network (indeed, the al-Baraa ibn Malik Brigade was instrumental in retaking Khartoum alongside the SAF in 2025), and these have resisted being integrated into a unified command structure. Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt back the SAF because they see it as the main hope for regional stability, while hoping that, like al-Bashir after 1999, it will subordinate its Islamist networks to state and regional-security priorities.

The UAE, the major backer of the RSF, is not simply less tolerant of the SAF's roots in the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist allies. The RSF is part of the UAE's attempt to build a broader alliance in the region, including a key alliance with Ethiopia.

More broadly, the UAE is keen to build alliances with the USA and Israel in the region, and to distance itself from other Gulf states, for example by leaving OPEC in May 2026. The main international diplomatic body focused on Sudan is the Quad of the USA, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In this, the USA has previously been seen as playing the role of “honest broker” between the two SAF-aligned states and the UAE. It has never been willing to damage its economic relationship with the UAE to pressure it to stop arming the RSF, and now looks to be swinging more pro-UAE. □

Letter

Government by enlightened littérateurs?

I agree with Ruth Cashman's criticisms of James Marriott's essay “The Dawn of the Post-Literate Society”, which I used as a jumping-off point to argue for a dedicated effort to rebuild a culture of what I called “deep literacy” on the left and in the labour movement.

Some similar criticisms were in my article, including highlighting Marriott's failure to locate the source of the trends he critiques in questions of political economy, including the neo-liberal marketisation of higher education. I also agree with Ruth that Marriott's historicisation is deeply flawed. I said in my article: “Marriott's historical picture — an ‘age of print’, which inculcated democratic politics, being overthrown by a counter-revolutionary ‘age of the screen’, which precipitates the ‘death of democracy’ — is dramatically oversimplified. It has surely not escaped his notice that some of the worst affronts to democracy in human history took place in the pre-smartphone era.”

I also strongly agree with Ruth's points about the necessity of discussion, the deep value of the spoken word, and the “emotional” capacities of the written word. Perhaps ironically, the hyperboles in Marriott's article on these points, for example arguing that the “world of print” is uniquely “orderly, logical, rational”, are presumably flourishes aimed at boosting the viral potential of the piece. Ruth's conclusion, that Marriott's article is “more of a manifestation of the insubstantial, instant and outraged literary style of the internet than a con-

crete analysis it” is therefore probably fair enough, at least to some extent.

I am not sure Ruth is right to say Marriott's “belief in enlightened administration as the route out of our current crisis is wrapped up in his thesis”. One can read Marriott's personal politics between the lines of his article, and infer them from his other writing, interviews he has given, etc. But his original Substack does not particularly suggest any “route out of our current crisis” at all. His presentation is shrilly alarmist, but also nihilistic and defeated. He concludes: “As tech companies wipe out literacy and middle class jobs, we may find ourselves [in] a second feudal age. Or it may be that we are entering a political era beyond our imagining. Whatever happens, we are already seeing the world we once knew melt away. Nothing will ever be the same again.” He does not appear to be advocating government by enlightened littérateurs. Perhaps his forthcoming book, which expands the article's themes, will do that. Let's see.

Fortunately, Ruth doesn't throw the proverbial baby out of the bathwater by refusing to acknowledge the problem Marriott points to because she finds fault with his analysis of its origins or disagrees with his implied solutions. Others should take care to do likewise. □

Daniel Randall,
London

• Rest of the debate: bit.ly/post-lit

NHS Trusts are still cutting jobs

By Todd Hamer

According to the Unite union, East London NHS Foundation Trust is planning to cut £24.9 million this year, axing 330.75 WTE (whole-time equivalent) jobs or about 5% of the workforce. Over the past two years, mental health services in ELFT have suffered nearly £70 million cuts at a time when demand for services has spiralled.

At Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust, £115 million cuts are planned with an estimated 1,000-1,200 job losses and 100 bed closures. UCLH is planning £96 million cuts. Homerton University Hospital Trust is planning £29 million. Despite the overall rise in the NHS budget, it's a similar story elsewhere, driven by accumulated Trust deficits.

An April 2026 [report](#) by Unison found that Trusts in England "will cut at least 21,600 posts by 2028 as they wrestle with deficits totalling more than £1.1bn

last year". The standard practice seems to be to freeze recruitment and delete unfilled vacancies, minimising redundancy payouts.

But 21,600 job losses at a time of rising demand for healthcare is a disaster for staff and patients. In February this year, 150,000 patients, almost one in three of those requiring emergency hospital admission had to wait over 12 hours before they were placed in a bed. This is a 100-fold since 2019.

Avoidable deaths

Dr Ian Higginson, President of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, told parliamentarians: "From our point of view, we cannot understand why [corridor care] hasn't got the focus it deserves because it is actively killing patients". RCEM analysis from 2024 found long A&E waits caused 16,600 avoidable deaths.

Meanwhile 41% of NHS workers re-

port feeling unwell due to work-related stress.

Among the health workers who are at risk of redundancy are international nurses, brought in to prop up the NHS post-Covid after sub-standard infection control in our hospitals (and high rates of long term disability and death among NHS workers) and lack of workforce planning led to dangerous under-staffing. Having actively recruited in Sri Lanka, the Philippines and elsewhere, NHS managers are now threatening these nurses with redundancy and maybe deportation.

A few short years on, and newly-qualified nurses are struggling to get NHS jobs and those international nurses are having their lives upended. All the while, demand for services continues to rise.

At present, the level of protest and alarm about these cuts is extremely muted. The slow starving of NHS resources does not feature, even in the

leftist liberal press, like the *Guardian*. Less than a decade ago, when the Lansley reforms were being pushed through under post-financial crash Tory austerity, the TUC put hundreds of thousands of trade unionists on the streets. Now, when things are so much worse, there is barely a murmur of resistance.

London's Unite branches in the NHS are trying to turn that situation around through intensive organising, lively demonstrations, and preparations for strikes. □



Pic: @gibography2001

Debate

Seeing Israel as representing male supremacy?

By Dale Street

Kara Jesella's *Feminist Antisemitism: An Intellectual History* is the latest publication of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism.

Jesella does not argue that there is an antisemitic current within the form of feminism now dominant in American academia (and elsewhere). Her argument is that that form of "feminism" is itself antisemitic — and anti-feminist.

Feminism used to be a matter of women striking for equal pay in car factories, fighting for union recognition in sweatshop employers, and cam-

paigning for abortion rights — a woman's right to choose. That kind of thing.

But now, in its more recent queer iterations, it is more a matter of "the degradation of women, feminism, mainstream lesbians and gays, Israel, Zionism and Jews; and imagined identifications with Palestinians."

Hence its response to 7 October 2023: "[It] didn't just diminish mutilating and sexually violating women but legitimised it — as long as it was perpetrated against the right women. ... [It stood] on the side of rapists and people who brutally and proudly murdered women and children."

A brief — or even lengthy — review of the book cannot adequately summarise the various stages and manifestations of the "intellectual history" referred to in its title, which include women of colour feminism, double jeopardy, intersectionality, women-identified women, Women's Studies, Whiteness Studies, Jewish whiteness, Gender Studies, standpoint theory, settler-colonial theory, postcolonialism, decolonialism, transnational and postcolonial feminism, critical race studies, disidentification, anti-identitarianism, critical trans politics, queer theory, queer of colour critique, feminist antizionism, queer antizionism.

Wealth

Nor can a review give a flavour of the wealth of writings cited by Jesella which functioned as staging posts in the feminist odyssey from sisterhood to antisemitism/antizionism:

"New feminist writing about Israel resonated strongly with historical antisemitic tropes about Jews as liars and unrepentant capitalists. Much of the writing by Black feminists portrayed them as wholly negative: Jewish American Princesses cosplaying at activism, Aryans

stealing African ideas."

In essence, Jesella's book describes a convergence over time of three fundamental themes:

- Jewish women were white, and therefore on the wrong side of the oppressor/oppressed divide. In fact, they were worse than other white women: "The Jewish woman as a white woman as a liberal as a racist and as worse than almost any man had one last damning attribute: she was a Zionist."

- Zionism and the Zionist entity (i.e. Israel) were the ultimate enemy of feminist and queer politics: "To support Israel was to be capitalist, racist, a white man — the worst thing a feminist could be. Israel came to be characterised as 'a macho imperial stand-in for all of the world's male supremacy'."

- Uncritical solidarity with Palestinians became metaphysical self-transcendence: "Now that I have entered into a relationship with Palestine, I am a citizen of what I am thinking of as the queer international" (Sarah Schulman); "I was born a Black woman; and now I am become a Palestinian" (June Jordan).

Those responsible for the emergence of feminist anti-

semitism, argues Jesella, include some prominent Jewish feminists. Judith Butler makes her appearance as early as page eight of the book.

There is certainly much to challenge in some of the specific points argued by Jesella. And unlike other writers (such as Eva Illouz and Susan Neiman), Jesella's book does not view feminist antisemitism as an aberration but as what "the left" necessarily stands for.

Even so, Jesella is right that an intersectional "feminism" which can stand up for [pets](#) but which cannot condemn the rape of (Jewish) women has clearly lost the plot.

Trends

Positive change, concludes Jesella, is unlikely to come from "feminist and queer academia, which rewards intellectual trends and in-group behaviour, and where ever wilder and more outré theory has proven itself an excellent career lubricant."

Rather, it will come from feminists who "care about reproductive rights, equal pay, gender violence and other historical feminist issues more than they care about ostracising Jewish women, destroying the Jewish state, and bringing down the West." □

Letter

Cover match-fixing

The mainstream media says very little about match-fixing in sport, the left even less. The mainstream media only talk about it when they are forced to, like when Zhao Xintong won the snooker World Championship in 2025 after coming back having served a ban for his part in match-fixing. The thing is there are two X Twitter accounts to my knowledge who follow the latest investigations into match fixing. Millions of people watch sport as a pastime. I think it is incumbent on the left to highlight the problems with this. □

Jonathan Traub, Essex

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 Red 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

Diary of a Tubeworker

Is “that black stuff” really safe?

By P Ennar

While at the gates in my station, I get an email. The RMT has shared a new report to all members who work for Transport for London (TfL), a [piece of research](#) done by Imperial College London into mortality rates.

By analysing data from the TfL Pension Fund, they've found that mortality rates are significantly higher for those who work on London buses and in the Underground when compared to TfL office workers. This jumps when looking at specific causes: Underground workers have a 73% higher chance of dying from respiratory diseases, and bus workers 44%. The risk of lung cancer doubled if you worked on the Underground or on buses.

There are nuances and details worth unpicking in the data from the study, but I wasn't going to take the hour to read it while stood answering customer questions. The study did, however, relate back to earlier discussions I'd been having that day with coworkers about the risks that the job poses for our health.

D is a health-conscious middle-aged man. His wife and son both work on the Tube, and between them they have decades of knowledge about the job. “At my last station, management asked us to stop wearing masks when doing platform duties. I refused. They claim that black stuff isn't bad for your health – there's no way that's true”.

Concoction

“That black stuff” is a local concoction familiar to all London Underground staff. The dust that collects in corners of the station, especially on platforms, is jet-black and sticks to things easily. A significant part of it is brake dust, produced as trains arrive on the platforms, which is where you'll find it in the largest piles of it accumulating. TfL have repeatedly claimed that staff working on platforms are not exposed to enough of the dust to pose any significant health risk. Basic intuition does put that under some strain.

“How can it not be bad for you? I get home from work, blow my nose and the shit comes out black. They say that's because my nostrils are blocking it going

into my airways. I don't believe it.”

The experience of a black tissue when blowing your nose after work is shared by every one of the thousands of staff on the London Underground network. More research and better understanding of what risks these pose to us would be valuable, not least because it would help us demand better conditions for having to do work on the platforms, and in other areas that pose a health risk.

Other coworkers chime in. One shares a theory from a friend about tube mice. The mice are tiny little things that come out when the platforms aren't too loud; I've had a soft spot for them since I was a child.

“There's no such thing as black mice,” R claims. “They're completely white, they're covered in that dust.” I'm pretty sure there are plenty of grey mice, but his scepticism comes from a place that's easy to identify: the company lies to us about loads of things, so why not this? In lots of cases, the stakes are much higher, and the questions more important, than the colour of mice. □

Students to meet 31 July-1 August

By Sam Myerson

Students are coming together for a UK-wide meeting in Sheffield on 31 July – 1 August to discuss national campaigning against cuts.

Since the beginning of July at least six more universities have announced new or further programmes of cuts. Since 2023 over 30,000 jobs have been lost in Higher Ed-

ucation in the UK, with over 15,000 of those happening in the last year alone, and at least six more unis announcing new or further cuts since the start of July 2026.

The University of Dundee, which has cut over 600 jobs, is seeking to cut another 190. In Scotland the “precept” that is paid to unis for home students (who pay no tuition fees) has been frozen in cash

terms at £1,820 per year since 2009–10.

Hertfordshire has announced a plan to make 200 staff redundant, and is looking to close History, Philosophy, English Literature, Linguistics and Creative Writing courses, citing low recruitment.

Exeter University plans to cut 150 FTE academic jobs, and the UCU says some 500 people are at risk, 14% of

academic staff. Over 80% of those are in the Humanities.

Ballots are being run or are complete and strikes are coming. Petitions are being circulated and signed. Students, where they are still on campus at this time of year, are getting organised. Industrial action can still be strong if it targets exam marking and graduations. □

Kino Eye

Farmers, land, and developers

By John Cunningham

To pick up on the various articles on land in recent issues of *Solidarity*, here are two films well worth seeing.

The Field (1990), directed by Jim Sheridan, is based on the play of the same name by John B Keane, first performed in 1965 in Dublin. “Bull” McCabe (Richard Harris) rents a field which he has cultivated for years, but the owner decides to sell it at an open auction. Bull thinks the land should, by right, pass to him, given all the labour he has put into it.

Peter, an American, turns up wanting to buy the field for an industrial development, creating a tense situation. Bull cannot afford to buy the field. Peter is killed after a fight between him and Bull's son Tadhg (Sean Bean) and his body dumped in a nearby lake. The corpse is discovered and an increasingly frac-

tious scenario ends in yet more tragedy.

A film with some loose parallels to *The Field* is *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988), directed by Robert Redford. In New Mexico, a community of Latino farmers is pitted against real estate developers who are intent on developing a vacation resort on land which includes a farmer's bean field. The developers shut off their water supply in an attempt to drive the farmers off the land.

A complex battle pitching the local community against distant, ruthless developers ensues and almost ends in a major confrontation, which is averted by the announcement that the project has been vetoed by the State Governor. □

PCS Executive's "lock-out" ends. For now

By a PCS member

The "Left Unity" General Secretary's "lockout" of the Coalition for Change led National Executive Committee (NEC) in the PCS civil service union has come to an end, but not definitively.

The ostensible reason for the lockout was that the GS, Fran Heathcote, objected to the NEC adopting new (less bureaucratised, more membership focused) standing orders (SO) by simple majority. But her unprecedented response was an assertion of GS authority over the NEC and PCS democracy.

Heathcote continues to hold the threat of further "lockouts" over the NEC. Although bound to work at the NEC's direction, she plainly has a different sense of her powers. On 7 July the NEC met, effectively only with Heathcote's "permission", to:

- Vote for a statement advanced by Heathcote, including LU's Standing Orders (SO), as the only basis upon which she was prepared to "permit" the meetings of the NEC and its sub-committees to be "recognised" and supported, and its decisions implemented, by PCS staff.

- Authorise industrial action over restructuring and redundancy by members in Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The Coalition led NEC, including the Independent Left which Solidarity recommends, was right to put support for FCDO members ahead of the immediate issue of the NEC's SO, albeit activists must continue the defence of PCS's democracy.

The PCS FCDO members had surpassed the legally required 50% ballot threshold for industrial action, with 78%

of voting members supporting strikes and 97% supporting action short of a strike. National failure to back the FCDO members and this brilliant result would have been incredibly damaging.

The GS used the NEC's anxiety to support FCDO members as leverage to secure her statement and SO. Her behaviour was reckless and hyper-factionalised, and posed a risk to the legal notification of action to FCDO management.

Voted

The President put her name to the GS's statement and the NEC Coalition majority voted for it to:

- Enable the NEC to support membership action in FCDO and elsewhere.
- Seek to launch a national campaign over pay and jobs.
- Enable the President to obtain inde-

pendent legal advice concerning NEC SO (the one "concession" in the statement).

The NEC will shortly meet again. It:

- Must build on its previous decisions to implement last May's Conference decision to campaign nationally for a 10% pay increase, £18 p/h minimum wage, pay progression, and a job security guarantee, despite the weeks that have been lost.

- Seek to spread and to link "local" disputes, such as those taking place in MHCLG and FCDO, and coordinate cross "bargaining unit" responses to the growing threat to jobs.

- Obtain PCS-funded legal advice on all matters relating to the democratic crisis.

- Must not "self-police" in the face of the threat of further lockouts. The Coalition should prepare now for rank and file activity in case of further lockouts. □

PCS steps up where-to-work dispute

By a PCS member

With effect from the 1 July PCS members in the Ministry of Housing (MHCLG) have stepped up their action short of strike (ASOS) over management's office attendance mandates, office closures, and location-neutral recruitment policy.

Previously, members had been refusing to comply with the office attendance requirements except when it suits them (for example, because of health reasons). Now, the PCS MHCLG Executive is additionally asking members:

- Not to record their formal Performance and Development outcomes on the internal system.
- To work only their contracted hours, i.e., not to work

beyond their normal hours, not to stay late to finish off urgent tasks (both endemic issues), and to work within the Flexible Working Hours system, which enables staff to bank additional worked hours within set limits and to take those additional hours later as "flexi-leave").

Questions

A membership meeting on Thursday 9 July asked plenty of questions but was solidly behind the ASOS. Members know that, while they attend the office as and when it suits them, the office attendance requirements are not in force, that movement to a higher 60%-in-the-office requirement will not be effective, and that this ASOS can be taken for 12 months following a

successful legal ballot.

However, PCS MHCLG secured a solid mandate for ASOS and for full strike action in the ballot earlier this year and is actively considering the options for striking.

Management could, as previously explained, easily move on office closures and the consequences of office closures and location-neutral recruitment policy. Nothing prevents them from also proposing an ONS-style resolution to the attendance dispute, where Office for National Statistics management replaced the staff attendance mandate with a corporate target, with staff expected to "attend the office when there is a clear purpose", considerably lowering the risk of disciplinary action.

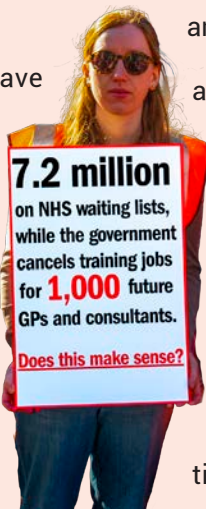
Whether any such proposal would secure PCS MHCLG membership agreement would be a matter for those members to determine on the detail. But it is sheer high-handedness of management to insist on attendance requirements, to plan to increase those requirements, and to refuse to budge one iota, all in the face of staff opposition and resentment.

PCS should be demanding that a Burnham led Labour Government instructs civil service managers to act as if they are under a Labour government that insists on (as Labour once proclaimed) a much stronger engagement with trade unions and support for working people regaining their voice in the workplace. □

Consultants ballot on pay and more

By Wade Ferguson

Consultants in England have voted decisively to support industrial action, with 76% voting yes in the BMA ballot on a turnout of 52%. Consultants are demanding renewed negotiations on salaries, but also improvements to working conditions, including better recognition of out-of-hours work, more protected time for teaching and service improvement, and measures to tackle burnout



and improve retention.

The case for supporting consultants is strong. The NHS has long struggled to recruit and retain senior doctors. Around 8% of consultant posts are vacant nationally, with some trusts reporting vacancy rates of 30% or more. The result is greater reliance on expensive locums, longer waiting lists and heavier workloads for those who remain.

The UK still has only 3.4 practising doctors per 1,000 people,

compared with an OECD average of 3.9, a shortage that inevitably feeds through into consultant staffing.

While government ministers portray consultants as already well paid, the BMA argues that consultant pay has lost around a quarter of its real value since 2008-09, and consultants in Denmark, Germany, Ireland and Australia generally earn more than those in England.

Trade unionists should support consultants' fight as part of the wider struggle for a properly staffed, publicly funded NHS. □

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The Shahrokh Zamani Action Campaign, Workers' Liberty, and the Worker-communist Party of Kurdistan came together for a protest outside the Iranian embassy in London on 11 July, demanding freedom for jailed Iranian oilworker Yaser Ahmadinejad.

The next day we heard from the Free Them Now campaign, citing a report from the Organising Council of Oil Contract Workers' Protests, that Yaser is due for release very soon. We are checking. As it ended, the prisoner-freedom protest was attacked by people from a nearby Iranian-monarchist demonstration. It was mostly verbal abuse, but one thug physically attacked a pro-freedom protester and then fled: bit.ly/11jul-ya □

Trans rights

Judicial review sought of EHRC code

By Simon Nelson

The EHRC Code of Practice (CoP) restricting trans rights in the wake of the April 2025 Supreme Court comments on the Equality Act 2010 could become statutory as soon as the Secretary of State makes an Order. This could happen at any time.

TransLucent, a trans-led campaigning organisation, is seeking a judicial review of the CoP. TransLucent states that they "believe the Code contains clear errors of law. Specifically, it wrongly states that including trans people in single-sex services is 'very likely' to be unlawful direct discrimination, and separately wrongly suggests that offering mixed-sex facilities could itself be direct discrimination against women. We say both statements misstate the law as it currently stands".

Scrutiny

The Code was, as is usual with such things, "laid before parliament" for 40 days (up to 9 July). That is supposed to allow parliamentary scrutiny. In fact it doesn't and didn't.

166 MPs signed the [Early Day Motion](#) from Nadia Whittome calling for the CoP to be rejected, but that got them no parliamentary hearing. The parliamentary timetable is almost all controlled by the

government. To get scrutiny would require a party, most likely the Lib Dems, to use an "opposition day debate" for it. But the Lib Dems had already had their "opposition day" in February.

The BAD Coalition (Bodily Autonomy and Dignity), initiated by Anti-Capitalist Resistance (ACR) with others, helped coordinate a series of small protests across the country on 9 July, including in Manchester where Workers' Liberty supporters were also involved.

The Code as it stands is unworkable, and could lead to the exclusion of many trans people from much of public life, mainly by licensing anti-trans vigilantism ("you don't look like a real woman").

As TransLucent say the code as drafted, "creates significant risk and burden for multiple groups... Service providers face financial burdens complying with the Code, alongside exposure to costly legal claims if they fail to act appropriately. Trans people risk exclusion from everyday services... Disabled people may face knock-on effects from increased competition for accessible facilities such as toilets and changing rooms. Cisgender women who do not present in stereotypically feminine ways are already reporting being challenged over facility use". □

• TransLucent's CrowdJustice page: bit.ly/t-luc

Climate change: adapt, and brake!

By Stuart Jordan

Our buildings and vehicles were constructed for a milder climate, and need to be refitted.

The Met Office on 13 July circulated research findings that more than 2,700 people had died from heat-related causes during the May and June heatwaves in England and Wales, and about 40% died because of the extra intensity, above previous heatwaves, added by global warming.

A 2024 UK Health Security Agency commissioned report found lack of climate adaptation in the social care sector was putting vulnerable adults at risk.

The UK Health Alliance on Climate Change has found 90% of NHS hospital buildings are vulnerable to overheating. Hundreds of schools have been forced to close, reporting indoor temperatures in excess of 40°C.

Many trade unionists have spent the last few weeks negotiating over necessary quick fixes: water coolers, flexible working arrangements, special carers' leave, curbing heat-emitting machinery, portable fans, mechanical ventilation and AC, dress codes. Longer term we need a sustained struggle to push employers to adapt buildings and work patterns properly.

Abandoned

The thick walls, small windows, external blinds, shading, etc. with which people in the hotter regions of the world have coped for thousands of years have been largely abandoned by modern building design. Even in some hotter countries like the USA and Singapore, the trend has been to construct buildings that trap the heat and then control indoor temperature with air con.

We end up with energy-intensive air conditioning systems which are vulnerable to failure, increase outdoor temperatures and blow the energy budget.

Employers probably can be persuaded of passive design adaptations like white roofs, external blinds, and ceiling fans, but only if reps are arguing for them.

There is also a danger that in discussing the detail we regard the rising temperatures as a "natural" phenomenon outside human control. Far from it. Global warming is being driven by human activity and stopping climate change requires revolutionary changes in the way we live, work and organise productive activity.

Without those changes, we edge ever closer to abrupt and catastrophic changes in Earth systems, such as the collapse of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Convection. AMOC collapse would bring subzero winters for three to five months of the year in the UK followed by hotter summers than we currently experience. Such extreme seasonality will make it almost impossible to grow crops and

will require a built infrastructure that can provide shelter in both polar cold and tropical heat.

Our bosses are reluctant to invest in timely building adaptations for the same reason the capitalist class as a whole has been reluctant to cut carbon emissions. At every turn they prioritise maximum profit over human need.

The solution is to build a workers movement that can take social ownership and control of productive wealth away from capital. We agitate for technical adaptations but also for a change of course, away from production for private profit. No individual should own a building bigger than their own home, no individual should own a machine bigger than their car. Our workplaces should not be someone else's private property. □

Trump steps up mass deportations

By Harold Storey

Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, a Mexican construction worker, was shot dead by ICE agents in Houston during a traffic stop on 7 July. The agents claimed Araujo tried to use his car as a weapon, but eye-witnesses dispute that. On 8 July, one thousand marched in protest in Houston.

The SEIU union and the Texas AFL-CIO (union confederation) held a further protest on 11 July.

Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum said "We cannot allow our brothers and sisters in the United States to be mistreated", and the Mexican government has taken the issue of Mexican citizens killed by ICE to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Meanwhile, ICE has upped its arrests to 2,000 per day nationally, and in June Congress voted \$31 billion in funds for ICE, covering it to the end of Trump's term.

Trump has the Supreme Court's go-ahead to scrap Temporary Protected Status for people fleeing Haiti, Syria, etc. and US employers have been told to sack workers by 24 July (Haiti) or 17 July (other countries). Many workers have already been sacked preemptively. This will affect 330,000 Haitian workers alone.

American unions need to stand up for immigrant workers, defend them from attacks by employers and the government, and mount an organised opposition to Trump. □

For a workers' government

SOLIDARITY

& WORKERS' LIBERTY



Iranian bloc at London May Day, 2026



By Colin Foster

Launching a new series of books, our counterpart-but-with-so-many-differences *Socialist Worker* says they are for those who “cheer at the US and Israel facing humiliation after they launched the war on Iran”.

But [Badr Al-Busaidi](#), the foreign minister of the profit-swollen autocracy of Oman, is nearer the truth about the war than the cheering would-be Marxists. “A catastrophe”, says Al-Busaidi.

A catastrophe for profiteers wanting to get their supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, either way, and that worries Busaidi. It is also a catastrophe for the workers and farmers across the world facing higher prices for those supplies as the profiteers try to recoup.

A catastrophe for workers in the Gulf states under Iranian bombardment, most of them

ill-paid migrants. A catastrophe for seafarers.

A catastrophe for the working people of Iran. They have been forced into even deeper poverty and danger as their rulers organised what they claim is the most lavish state funeral in history for Ali Khamenei. They are less able than ever to assert themselves against the IRGC military machine which increasingly dominates the country.

A minus for Netanyahu and Trump is not necessarily a plus for us. Israel hasn't got exiled would-be monarch Reza Pahlavi in to rule Iran. But then even Trump never thought it would. The war has given Netanyahu good cover to pursue “humiliation” and even “catastrophe” for the people in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

Trump is floundering. Maybe in the end he will have to find

some new “spectacular” to distract attention from a deal with Iran which gives it no less than Obama's 2015 JCPOA.

But that sidestep will still leave the working people of Iran war-battered and suffering.

If the now-renewed war, after the collapse of the “Memorandum of Understanding” published 15 June, escalates back to Trump's threat of 7 April: “A whole civilisation will die”, then it will be many times worse. The fact that Trump's war is unpopular even among his supporters in the USA is some protection against that, but only some. And Trump's electoral difficulties do not outbalance the suffering of the workers and farmers of Iran, so that we should “cheer” the outcome.

Neither Khamenei nor Trump, but workers' unity! Stop this war! □