

COUNTERFIRE

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AS GAZA STARVES...

HANDS OFF PALESTINE PROTESTS

STOP ARMING ISRAEL

LIFT THE BAN

EXPEL THE AMBASSADOR



INSIDE: THE FASCISTS BEHIND THE HOTEL PROTESTS • HOW WE TURN THE TIDE AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT

NEWS



Your Party: people have their say

COUNTERFIRE

A series of mass meetings around the country has confirmed huge enthusiasm for a new party of the left. Meetings for Your Party supporters to discuss the kind of party we need in Preston, Ipswich, Haringey, Manchester, Croydon, Norwich and East London in August have attracted big numbers and generated intense discussion.

The meetings, initiated by socialists, some from Counterfire, on an open basis, were addressed by various independent councillors, candidates and activists before extensive discussion from the floor.

They attracted very political people but reached well beyond the active, organised left. The organisers of the Preston meeting said that although there are regularly very big political meetings the city, they didn't recognise at least half of the 120-strong audience. An organiser of the Croydon meeting told us that the audience of 130 was made up of an impressive number of

ordinary, local people as well as the existing left.

At all the meetings, a sense of relief and excitement was reported that the new initiative had finally been announced. A whole range of issues were raised. One of the organisers of the Ipswich meeting said that speakers from the floor stressed the need for inclusivity and for reaching out into local communities because many people still didn't know about the new party. People present agreed to do stalls to start strengthening the party's base.

In Manchester too, there was discussion about the left being absent from lots of working-class communities. One of the hosts said there was a strong sense that activists and representatives from the new party needed not just to reach out but to organise collective campaigns to win improvements for working people.

In Croydon, there was a very good response to demands for complete opposition to austerity and solidarity with Gaza.

There was also a strong feeling that policy should be made by members not by what one speaker called 'liberal opinion formers'. Calls for unions to disaffiliate from Labour also went down well.

In the Preston meeting, people broke into groups after some discussion to come up with policy priorities for the new party. Among the most favoured policies were 'a wealth tax on the fabulously wealthy to raise funds to deal with inequality and poverty and broken services', 'public ownership of transport, utilities and services', 'Welfare not Warfare, prioritising welfare services over military spending and overseas wars' and 'addressing the housing crisis'. A whole range of other policies from tackling the climate crisis, investing in education and fighting all forms of inequality, oppression and injustice were popular.

The importance of democracy and grassroots control was a theme at all the meetings. As one speaker from the floor at the 150-strong East London meeting

said, one member one vote would be the best way to ensure there is real debate and discussion, but also unity once decisions had been taken. Some people at the meeting pointed out that no electoral pacts with other groups should be made without full discussion at a national conference.

A sense of urgency, even at times frustration, about getting organised was reported from the meetings, partly because of next year's council elections, but also because of the need for a strong left response to the threat from the right.

Another recurring theme was the need to be radical and not become a 'Labour Party Mark 2'. A strong feeling was reported from all the meetings that people are crying out for change, and that the party had to mount a real challenge to the status quo, not just talk about change as Labour does.

At the Haringey meeting, the first for Your Party supporters in David Lammy's constituency, the meeting emphasised fighting for working-class interests and internationalism to defeat Reform

Finally, to make sure this happens and to push back against the inevitable resistance there will be from the establishment, lots of people spoke about the importance of being rooted in all communities and of being tightly connected to the mass movements over Palestine, austerity and racism, as well as to the trade unions. At the East London meeting, the point was made more than once that Corbynism had been sabotaged by the establishment and that these kind of links were necessary to stop this happening again.

What was common to all the reports was that people are being inspired by the idea of a different kind of party, committed to radical change, campaigning alongside ordinary people and amplifying the extra-parliamentary movements.

As Europe rearms at triple speed, head to Paris for peace

JOHN REES

It's a simple choice: either a militarised Europe or a Europe committed to peace.

Activists are preparing an international peace conference in Paris just as the Financial Times reports that European arms manufacturers are expanding at triple the normal pace.

The Financial Times found seven-million square meters of new industrial development after tracking changes at 150 facilities across 37 companies who make ammunition and

missiles.

Rheinmetall, Germany's largest defence contractor, has seen its stock rise by 1,000%. The firm produces armoured vehicles, ammunition, and other military equipment.

In response to the Trump-mandated European rearmament programme, politicians and activists across Europe are organising a peace conference in Paris on 5 October.

The conference comes after hundreds of activists across the continent signed a call to halt the militarisation of Europe and to use the

resources to rebuild crumbling infrastructure and reverse the welfare cuts that every citizen faces.

The Paris conference already has nearly 2,000 registered to attend in the huge Paris venue. The event will be a huge gathering of Palestine solidarity. The aim is to restart the Europe-wide social movement, the European Social Forum, that galvanised opposition to neoliberalism and the Iraq war in the early years of the century.

A follow-up conference is already being planned for

London in 2026.

Every peace activist and trade unionist should get to Paris for this important initiative.

Sign up here: bit.ly/4giEfHH



FUNDING FOR SEND IS AT CRISIS POINT

CLEMENTINE RUSSELL

Government funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (Send) is at a crisis point.

While the issue often remains unnoticed by much of the general public, to those who have had experience dealing with local councils to try to get the support their children need, the problem is glaringly obvious.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, high-needs spending has been consistently above funding by £200–800 million per year between 2018 and 2022. For many children across the country, this means not getting the vital support they need.

Parents often have to fight with local councils to get their children Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), and even if they do succeed in this, they sometimes end up having to draft the entire EHCP themselves, and the burden of finding alternative educational provisions is often on them.

This is particularly hard for working-class parents, who do not have the time to do the council's job for them, and parents whose first language is not English. Moreover, there is less alternative provision for children outside of big cities.

Despite this dire situation with over half of councils saying they could be insolvent next year, Labour failed to do anything about it in the Spending Review. Their plans to 'transition to a reformed system' in the autumn sounds alarmingly like an attempt to limit Send provisions rather than fund it properly.

While EHCPs have been described as 'golden tickets', in reality, they are the basic requirements: provision must follow to ensure disabled children have the support they need.

All children with learning disabilities, neurological disorders such as autism, and mental-health issues should have access to the support they need to flourish in education, but right now they are being ignored.

Help fight for better funding for Send on 15 September at Parliament Square Gardens.

EDITORIAL



PALESTINE PROTESTER, POLICE. PHOTO: ALISDARE HICKSON / CC BY-SA 2.0

STARMER SUPPORTS GENOCIDE IN GAZA, REPRESSION AT HOME

COUNTERFIRE

One day people will find it hard to believe the things we are living through.

In the middle of a genocide, when Israel is launching a murderous new invasion of Gaza City, when it is systematically slaughtering journalists and doctors, and deliberately starving thousands of people to death, a Labour government is trying to criminalise a movement demanding the end of the slaughter.

As well as implementing the ban on Palestine Action and arresting hundreds of opposing it, the police are stopping people from marching near synagogues, while at the same time allowing fascists to organise protests right outside migrant hotels.

Four leaders of the Palestine coalition face trial for organising peaceful protests and, in their most ludicrous move so far, the police have banned the banging of pots and pans as a protest against Israel's manufactured famine in Gaza.

At the root of all this is the fact that Starmer's government is complicit in the genocide against which so many are protesting. The huge movement has caused a crisis for the government over Palestine. The government knows it is losing the argument. The pressure has forced Starmer

and Lammy to condemn Israel's atrocities and to call for a ceasefire.

However, there are practical steps they could take that would have an immediate impact on Israel. They could stop all arms sales and military support. They could expel all Israeli diplomats and they could impose sanctions. These moves coming from the US's closest ally would have a huge impact.

Unfortunately, Labour's leaders have no independent politics or convictions that would allow them to challenge Trump and Netanyahu or to break Britain's tradition of supporting Israel, so it resorts to repression.

For Starmer this is a pattern. Completely wedded to the establishment, he and his cabinet of chancers have done nothing to bring in the change he promised vaguely during last year's election. So they resort to increasingly authoritarian measures.

Labour MPs who show any signs of decency or independence of mind are suspended. Disabled people are demonised to justify cuts to their benefits. Starmer tweets daily about what he calls the scandal of increased immigration.

This is deeply damaging. Not only is it bringing the left into disrepute, it is actively shifting politics further to the right in this country.

These moves are backfiring. Starmer's government is the most unpopular since polling began. There is now not just massive opposition to Israel but huge sympathy up and down the country for the Palestine movement. We must turn that sympathy into active involvement. That means reaching out into every community, every workplace, every college and university to boost the turnout at the national demonstrations and local protests.

We must also organise protests against the shocking cuts to services in the sixth-richest country in the world. We need to support every strike by workers as the cost of living continues to spiral, and we have to broaden the movement against the racist protests outside asylum hotels.

This won't be easy, but the magnificent Palestine movement shows what can be done when hundreds of thousands of people are brought together in a concerted campaign.

The emergence of the new party is a huge boost, and an opportunity to strengthen resistance on the ground. We need to ensure that it isn't just a talking shop or an electoral machine but that it becomes a vehicle for the kind of mass working-class action that can break this government.



WEEKLY BRIEFING

Cut through the media bias with Lindsey German's analysis on the latest political developments straight in your inbox every Monday morning



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RANK-AND-FILE ROUNDUP



GLASGOW VILLAGE HOTEL PICKET LINE. PHOTO: @FAIRHOSPITALITY/X

HISTORIC VICTORY FOR WORKERS AT GLASGOW'S VILLAGE HOTEL

EILIDH STEWART

Young workers at Glasgow's Village Hotel were out on strike between 3-22 August, in a dispute about fair wages for all ages, being paid the Real Living Wage and a lack of breaks. This is the first strike at a major hotel chain in 46 years and will hopefully set a precedent within the sector for workers to organise and take collective action.

The strike came to an end after three weeks of continuous action, with some major wins. Workers succeeded in achieving a 10% pay rise for the youngest workers, backdated to 1 April 2024, a four-hundred pound payment for workers over 21

who did not benefit from the equal-pay uplift, and the replacement of exploitative and precarious zero-hour contracts with minimum-hour contracts. On top of these huge wins, Village Hotels will cover all tax and National Insurance: an unprecedented move.

These wins cannot be understated. The workers, mainly aged under 21, have not only taken successful strike action in an industry which is notoriously difficult to organise and sees low union representation, they have organised against a hotel owned by the biggest asset manager in the world: Blackstone. Blackstone, a company which pledged \$7 million to Israel in

2023 and donated \$125 million to Tel Aviv University's medical school in 2025 amid the ongoing genocide, was not willing to pay its workers the 39p pay rise for which they were asking. However, these young workers did not let this deter them. They bravely stood up for their rights and took on this enormous company, winning thousands for some of the lowest-paid workers in the country, while gaining mass support and inspiring us all.

Further attesting to these workers' resolve is their willingness to continue fighting for full equal pay and the real living wage. During the mega-picket on the last day of their strike, Daniel, the Unite representative at the hotel, stated: 'We're not finished here ... we've not won the war yet, we've only won a battle. Our pursuit of a workplace that is genuinely and firmly equal goes on until we don't have these discriminatory pay differentials and people are genuinely treated equally and receive equal pay for equal work.'

The picket was also attended by Jeremy Corbyn who congratulated the workers and spoke to the inspiration this achievement will have on workers across the country: 'Your victory here today is an example to so many others, think about all the other workers in hospitality all over Scotland ... all over, everywhere else, will look at this and say wow, it can be done, you can win, but it has to be done by being united.'

Corbyn also gave a rallying call to other workers in the sector: 'If you are working in hospitality, hotels, catering, whatever form it happens to be and you feel your conditions are poor, you feel you're exploited ... and all the other pressures that you are often put under, then do two things: one is join a union ... and when you've joined the union, make sure the union works for you and not you work for the union.'

As highlighted by Corbyn, the victory of these workers will be an inspiration to many and hopefully cause a rippling effect throughout the country.

DEFIANT AIR CANADA WORKERS VICTORIOUS

JOHN CLARKE

A strike by roughly 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants has forced the company to retreat and generated a humiliating setback for Mark Carney's Liberal government. Within hours of their walking off the job, the workers were hit with a back-to-work order that would have forced them to accept binding arbitration, but they chose instead to defy this and forced Air Canada back to the bargaining table where a tentative agreement with substantial gains was secured.

The arrogant assumption that these workers could simply be intimidated into taking down their picket lines and returning to work was a serious miscalculation. 97.7% of the workers had voted in favour of strike action.

Key issues were low wages of junior flight attendants and the practice of not paying flight attendants for the work they perform when planes are not in motion. The demand for 'ground pay' and Cupe's 'unpaid work won't fly' campaign contributed enormously to the overwhelming popular support the strike enjoyed. Polling showed nearly 90% of Canadians supported the strike and 59% percent even felt it should continue without government interference even if it resulted in major travel disruption.

Faced with the authoritarian attempt to stop the strike, Cupe national president Mark Hancock stated that: 'Our members are not going back to work. We are saying no.' He ripped up a copy of the back-to-work order outside the airport terminal, where union members continued picketing, and mass rallies with support from other unions were held at airports across the country.

This fight is playing out in a context where the government is planning to cut spending by 15 percent. The prospect of massive job losses among federal public-sector workers and the gutting of the services they deliver are posed by this development.

An unprecedented attack on workers and communities is now underway in Canada. The fight taken up by the Air Canada flight attendants has been massively significant in its own right but it points to even more decisive battles that are now looming. Neoliberal governments' class-war agenda won't be stopped without a readiness to defy, disrupt and build a united working-class movement that can bring together all those facing this attack and mobilise decisively to defeat it.

PICKET LINES THIS MONTH

BIRMINGHAM BIN WORKERS

Union: Unite
Dates: Continuous
Location: Sites across Birmingham

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Union: UCU
Dates: 8-12 September
Location: Edinburgh, EH8 9YL

LONDON UNDERGROUND

Union: RMT
Dates: 5-11 September
Location: Various

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT SECURITY STAFF

Union: PCS
Dates: 3, 10 September
Location: London, SW1 OAA

FAWLEY OIL REFINERY CANTEEN STAFF

Union: Unite
Dates: 1-5 September
Location: Southampton, SO45 1TX

EDINBURGH AIRPORT OCS WORKERS

Union: Unite
Dates: 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26 September
Location: Edinburgh, EH12 9DN

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

Union: EIS
Dates: 8-12 September
Location: RGU Garthdee campus, Aberdeen, AB10 7AQ

AIRBUS UK WORKERS

Union: Unite
Dates: 2, 3, 10, 11, 15-19 September
Location: Broughton, Chester, CH4 ODR

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

Union: UCU
Dates: 22-26, 29, 30 September
Location: Liverpool, L16 9JD

WREXHAM BIN STRIKES

Union: Unite
Dates: 6, 13, 20, 27 September
Location: Various sites in Wrexham

INTERVIEW

Why I left Labour and my hopes for Your Party



Can you tell us a little about your background in politics?

The first time I went canvassing for Labour, I was literally in my pushchair! My mum was a member and took me out with her in the village of New Longton (a Tory hotspot near Preston). So I was born into a political family in that sense.

As a teenager, I went on a few CND marches. When I was eighteen, I became a nurse and joined the union. and was on the picket lines during strikes and in support of the miners.

But then life, family, work and, to be honest, political disillusionment (with the mainstream parties) crept in and I was far less active.

It was the campaign to get Jeremy Corbyn in as Labour leader that reinvigorated me and gave me hope. My mum, my daughter and myself all joined and rejoined Labour at that point. Under Corbyn, I remember mum went canvassing again for the first time since she was a young woman with babies. She was registered blind by this time and said as long as she could feel for the doorbell, she should be fine!

I was then asked to stand as a councillor to Preston City Council. There weren't enough women elected and I was approached. I became a cabinet member a couple of years later.

I think we all had high hopes for Corbyn as leader and that he

Carol Henshaw is a Preston City Councillor who recently resigned from the Labour Party and joined Preston Independents. Michael Lavalette spoke to her about Labour's silencing of Palestine solidarity and where she thinks Your Party can go.

would bring an end to the years of Tory cruelty. But that dream was broken by the Labour right's attacks.

I was terribly disappointed in Starmer. My mum and daughter resigned from the party. If I hadn't been a councillor and cabinet member, I would have resigned then too.

I was also clinging on to the hope that you can't change something if you're not a member of it. But that position has become increasingly difficult to hold to, especially with the horror in Gaza.

Can you tell us a little about the pressures on you, as a councillor, from the Labour Party, over the last couple of years?

The ongoing genocide in Gaza is horrific. What we are watching is almost beyond belief, and the hatred directed against Palestinians breaks my heart.

I have attended a few of the Preston pro-Palestine rallies and I've been to London to the nationals. But it's stressful, constantly worrying that I might be seen and, as a result, might be suspended by Labour for marching for Palestinian rights. It is a huge, unseen pressure on Labour councillors, large numbers of whom are horrified by what Israel is doing, but the pressure is always to keep silent and keep your head down.

I spoke about some of this in a Labour group WhatsApp. As a result, I was labelled an



anti-Semite and suspended for months 'pending enquiries'.

To me this is an example of the lack of democracy within the Labour Party.

Can you tell us a little more about your suspension?

In March this year, comments and questions made by me in a private WhatsApp group of

twenty or so fellow Labour councillors was leaked to a Zionist member of Preston Labour Party. It was shared by other pro-Israeli activists. They made a complaint accusing me of anti-Semitism.

I tried to diffuse the situation. I met with a couple of local Zionists, one who told me: 'if one of my children was kidnapped and hurt or worse killed by someone in Blackpool, she felt sure

I would want to destroy all of Blackpool.'

I was stunned by this. The mentality was horrific!

Following this, I knew I would resign from Labour once I had been cleared of these malicious allegations.

But then things changed! The announcement of the formation of Your Party reignited my fire!

I think this new movement is proving so popular because the current political system is broken. Starmer's influence has made many socialists politically homeless. This new party is attracting so much popularity because of the hope Jeremy Corbyn inspires.

So what are your hopes for Your Party?

I am feeling as excited about this new party as I did campaigning for Jeremy's Labour Party. I am a firm believer that the power at the top should come from its grassroots. It has to be a truly symbiotic movement to differentiate it from the existing political parties.

It will need local branches, voting for representatives to take their issues and ideas higher up, and people must be accountable. It can't become a male-dominated talking shop (like Momentum did in my opinion).

I hope lessons from Jeremy's leadership will be learned and acted upon. We need to be strong and principled, but we need to be able to talk and listen, to each other and to the vast number of disillusioned people in working-class communities.



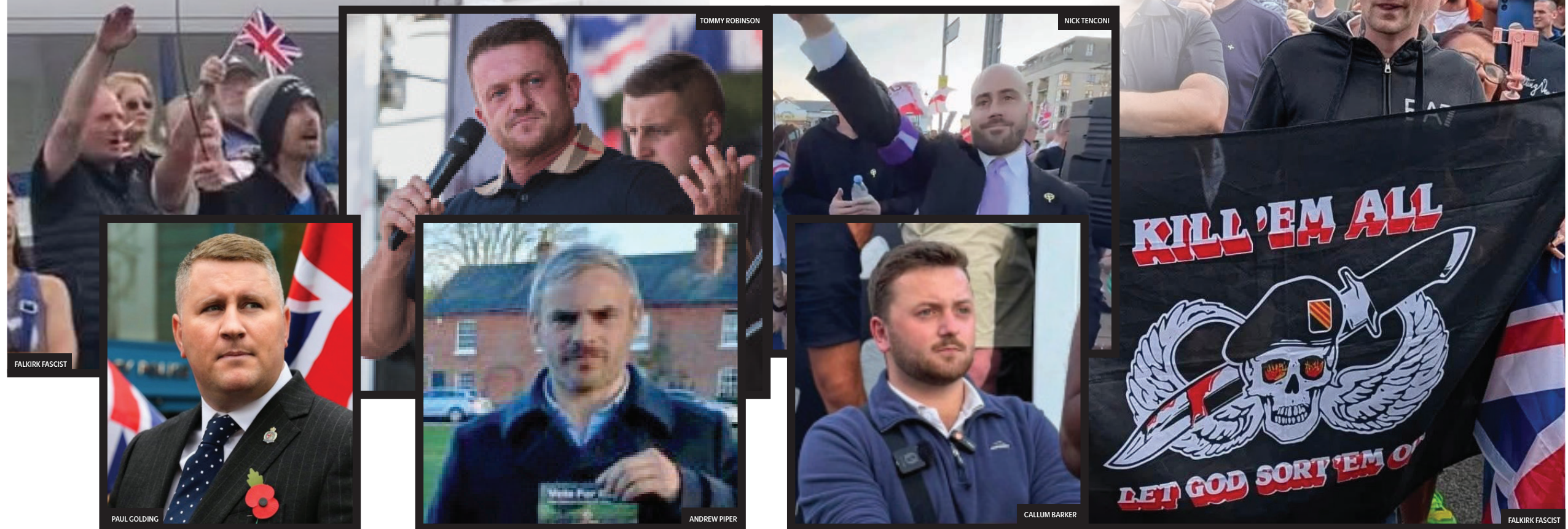
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The fascist thugs behind the 'local' protests



CHRIS NINEHAM

This summer's protests outside refugee hotels have been reported as local events and have sometimes drawn large crowds, but they have been organised by national, fascist hate groups.

The first big protests at the Bell Hotel in Epping in July were no exception. The administrators of the 'Epping Says No' Facebook group which co-ordinated the protests are members of the Nazi Homeland party.

One of them, Callum Barker, is a hardened neo-Nazi who helped to establish Combat 18 as the street-fighting security detail of the Nazi British National Party in the 1990s.

He has posted images that reference the code '1488' which refers to Hitler and the phrase, 'We must secure a future for the white race and also for white children.'

Barker has also posted pictures of himself wearing a leather mask holding up the manifesto of Ted Kaczynski, a US terrorist who murdered three people during a seven-year reign of terror.

Another admin of the group, Andrew Piper, is a parish councillor in Market Deeping, 85 miles away from Epping. In January 2024, Piper posted a series of tweets claiming it is 'factually true' that 'the Jews' run 'banking and government' and cast doubt on some of the facts of the

Holocaust. Homeland split from fascist Patriotic Alternative group in 2023. It was founded on Hitler's birthday by former officials of the British National Party, led by Holocaust denier Nick Griffin.

Homeland's leader is Kenny Smith, formerly a senior figure in the BNP under Griffin, and a man with a 2022 conviction for firearms offences.

A 500-strong Manchester protest in August was organised by Britain First, a viciously Islamophobic political group. They believe in a clash of civilisations between the Christian West and Islam, and regard Muslims as a fundamental threat to British identity.

In its early years a decade ago, it tried to differentiate itself from other far-right groups like the EDL by wearing paramilitary uniforms and parading in military vehicles.

Its leader is Paul Golding who was the star speaker at the Manchester event. According to Britain First's own count, Golding has 'been arrested twenty times, been in three different prisons and prosecuted ten times' as of October 2021.

He has been banned from entering all mosques in England and Wales in 2016, he served time for religiously aggravated harassment in 2018, for producing material intended to stir up hatred in 2019, and in 2020 he was convicted under the Terrorism

Act. Ukip leader Nick Tenconi has helped organise some of the recent far-right protests including one in Liverpool last month and Southampton earlier in the year. Tenconi spoke at a Tommy Robinson conference in January, calling for the detention and deportation of "all Islamists" and "all migrants who are here to colonise".

A leading member of Turning Point UK (TPUK), linked to the American far-right Turning Point USA, he helped to move it towards a street-fighting strategy, forging links with the violent Democratic Football Lads Alliance. In case anyone has any doubts about his philosophy, he was caught on video at a protest in Portsmouth last month appearing to give a Nazi salute.

Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson, has been encouraging the protests on his socials just as he did the riots last summer. He very publicly promised to attend one of the protests in Epping, although he did not show up.

He too was briefly a BNP member when he was in his twenties, until he became the main organiser of the English Defence League that caused mayhem with racist demonstrations in city centres up and down the country in the 2010s.

He claims that he is an anti-Islam campaigner, not a white supremacist or a fascist. Unfortunately, his own words tell another story. His obsession with Islam

is really cover for a violent hatred of all Muslims. He made this clear with his 2016 threat to 'personally send every adult male Muslim that has come into the EU over the past 12 months back tomorrow if I could. Fake refugees.' His list of violent attacks and threats includes storming offices and making night visits to the houses of political opponents.

From Bristol to Stockport and the Isle of Dogs in London to Falkirk in Scotland,

a similar pattern is being reported of an organised hard right or fascist core pulling around them groups of angry local people who are being drawn towards dead-end but very dangerous racist ideas. This is being enabled by mainstream politicians and the media who are daily pumping out lies and distortions about the situation. There is much to be done, but one central task is to expose the extreme racists and fascists at the core of these protests.



TURNING THE TIDE AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT

SHABBI LAKHA

The momentum of the growing far-right movement in 2024 was stymied in large part by the huge, spontaneous anti-fascist mobilisations that confronted the riots. But despite this, Tommy Robinson still mobilised 15,000 to march in London in October 2024, Reform has been the highest polling party since April and were the biggest winners of the local elections in May, and the current hotel protests are supported by the Tory leadership.

Two things are clear: Tommy Robinson, while still a significant figurehead, is no longer uniquely capable of mobilising in large numbers, and splits within the far right have done little to hamper their overall development. The liberal sit-back-and-watch-them-tear-themselves-apart strategy has been thoroughly debunked. The internal divisions mean the strength and coherency of the far right is not greater than the sum of its parts, but the component parts are becoming stronger and more coherent.

The change in direction from spontaneous attempted pogroms last year or the Ballymena riots in June this year, to the largely organised and focused protests we have seen this summer is the outcome of both of these points.

While the protests are undeniably organised and led by fascists, they are attracting wider layers of support and

our strategy must seek to drive a wedge between the core and the periphery.

Drive a wedge

One of the ways we have to do this is to expose the fascists at the centre of the movement and to confront them whenever they mobilise. There can be no doubt that far-right protests left unchallenged are a far greater boost to the confidence and ideas of those on the protests, as well as those who are on the road to being convinced by them.

But to do this successfully requires outnumbering them. This is both a quantitative and qualitative point. Numbers matter. When recent far-right protests in Bristol and Liverpool were massively outnumbered by anti-racists, those on the other side will be less likely to turn out next time or succeed in pulling in others.

Qualitatively, wider forces are required than just the activist left. The success of anti-fascist struggles of the past were predicated on drawing in large sections of working-class communities. It is powerful when a woman in Southport held up a sign saying "hope not hate" in the middle of the riot or a man argued with the far-right activists putting up St Georges flags in his area about why it's being used as a symbol of hate and division. Less so when activists from outside the area travel to a counter-protest and say 'refugees are welcome here' and 'Nazi scum off our streets'.

Our slogans and arguments can't simply be about not hating migrants, but debunking the reasons they are being scapegoated and directing their anger at those who are really to blame at the top of society.

Palestine and welfare not warfare

Right now, the Palestine movement is the largest anti-racist bloc of people in society. It is predominantly working-class and has maintained an ability to mobilise in very large numbers nearly two years on. It is a movement that has proliferated into all corners of the country.

Mobilising the Palestine movement to oppose the far right has to be a key component of our strategy. It also has to be strengthened in its own right because it is the most capable of pushing back the state that is generating the racism and authoritarianism the far right are piggy backing on.

The Islamophobia, scapegoating of refugees and utterly debunked 'grooming gangs' rhetoric are all generated by the state, as are the austerity and war policies they are cover for. So a Palestine movement that is capable of confronting and weakening the state is an invaluable part of this fight. The Palestine flag which has become a universal symbol of liberation helps open up the conversation about why the Union Jack and St Georges flag are the precise opposite and are not the flag of the working class.

It also creates fertile ground to campaign around welfare not warfare. It is far more concrete and easier to explain today than it has ever been that our government is deliberately choosing to spend public money on eye watering sums for the military, for building bombs to kill Palestinian children, for prolonging the war in Ukraine, instead of funding our NHS, schools or welfare.

A socialist alternative

Today, there are 4.5 million children living in poverty. 350,000 people are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. There are 7.4 million people on NHS waiting lists. It's no wonder that fascists telling people that asylum seekers are living in hotels (which they aren't) is resonating.

Your Party has generated a mass of enthusiasm with nearly a million sign-ups before the party has even launched. There is a huge opportunity for the party to provide a bold and radical socialist programme that can counter some of the pull to the far right. But if the party becomes constrained by pure electoralism, is separated from the struggles on the streets and in workplaces, or makes concessions then it will fail to capture the insurgent spirit needed.

The key thing, however, is the creation of avenues for working-class people to not just understand who their real enemy is but for their self-organisation in challenging them.

Exposing and demoralising the fascists at the heart of the movement by mobilising sufficient numbers against them, popularising socialist ideas and building working-class organisation against austerity and imperialism, are our urgent tasks to stopping the march of the far right and taking on the system that breeds them.

Mythbuster: Are migrants really to blame?

JAMAL ELAHEBOCUS

► Migrants are not causing the NHS crisis

In every area bar one, migrants use the NHS less than UK-born nationals, because they tend to be young adults with few long-term health conditions. Migrants also make up 17% of the NHS workforce and 27% of nurses, filling jobs vital to the health service.

been a net loss of 177,000 social homes since 2012.

► Migrants are not a drain on the economy

Most arrive at working age so do not need the education or other public-service provision needed in childhood. Migrants contribute approximately £83bn to the UK economy annually.

► Migrants do not drive down wages

Their effect on wages is at worst negligible but usually positive as they contribute to economic growth. Years of real-terms pay cuts and low-pay jobs are the causes of low wages.

► Immigration does not increase crime rates

There is no rise in crime associated with rises in immigration to the UK. The key determinant of crime rates is the same as it is for UK-born nationals: labour-market opportunities, which have reduced due to years of stagnation and austerity.

► Migrants are not causing the housing crisis

Asylum seekers are ineligible for social housing and 90% of social housing is allocated to UK-born nationals. The real cause is a historic low in social-housing building: there has

► Migrants do not take jobs

They tend to fill job vacancies that are otherwise not filled by UK-born workers in health and social care, hospital-ity and agriculture.



PHOTO: ALISDARE HICKSON

THE CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASS



JUSTICE MINISTER SHABANA MAHMOOD HOSTING A PRESS CONFERENCE ON PRISON CAPACITY. PHOTO: LAUREN HURLEY / NO 10 DOWNING STREET / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Inside Labour's carceral state



by **Terina Hine**

The UK is in the midst of a severe prison crisis. Prisons across the country are operating at 97.5% capacity, while attacks on prison officers and inmate deaths have soared.

According to Ministry of Justice figures, the number of people dying in prison rose by almost a third, with 401 deaths in the twelve months to the end of June 2025. Of those, 86 were recorded as 'self-inflicted' and seven as homicide.

Overcrowding, inexperienced staff, drugs, gangs and escalating levels of violence all go hand-in-hand. For the twelve months to March 2025, there were 30,846 cases of assault: a 9% rise on the previous year, with assaults on staff increasing by 7%. During the same period, there were 77,898 incidents of self-harm; that's one incident every seven minutes. It is clear something has to change.

A recent independent review by Anne Owers, former Chief Inspector of Prisons, found that England's prison estate came within days of collapse several times between 2023 and 2024. Things are no better today. The UK's prison estate and criminal-justice system is failing every single possible constituent: prisoners, guards, governors, courts, criminals and victims.

Law and order is a right-wing hobby-horse and the collapse of the justice system is playing directly into their hands. Reform is having a heyday pushing for the deportation of foreign criminals to reduce costs and free up cell space.

The government has capitulated and announced new legislation will be brought before parliament so that foreign criminals can be deported immediately on conviction. The government has also announced

its intention to expand its 'deport now, appeal later' programme, so those convicted will be deported before an appeal can be heard.

Right-wing news outlets are decrying the fact that more than 26,000 prisoners have been released early from jail, including a number of serious offenders. Tory justice spokesman Robert Jenrick said, 'the public are sick of soft justice' seemingly forgetting that the early release scheme to deal with gross overcrowding in our prisons was first used by his former boss Rishi Sunak.

By using early-release schemes and housing prisoners in police cells for longer and longer, the government has been able to ease some of the pressure. However, systemic problems remain, including the deplorable state of prisons themselves, the excessive use of custodial sentences and the length of time prisoners are remanded in custody awaiting trial. Owers' damning report revealed that it cost the state £70 million to keep prisoners in police cells between February 2023 and January 2025.

The government response: a prison-building programme for 14,000 new places 'so our jails never run out of space again'. However, just as motorway building increases car use, prison construction will likely result in greater use of custodial sentencing.

As Pia Sinha, chief executive of the Prison Reform Trust, said, 'We cannot afford to indulge in the fantasy that building more prisons will solve this crisis – history shows it won't. Instead, we must confront the reality: reversing the long-term rise in sentence lengths and investing in rehabilitation are the only sustainable ways

forward.'

A cursory glance at Scandinavia and the Netherlands show how this might be achieved, if only our politicians would look. The Netherlands has one of the lowest incarceration rates in the world, is repurposing its prisons as cinemas and shopping centres, and leasing empty cells to neighbouring countries.

In the decade from 2014-2024, when our prisons were filling up and Britain recorded the highest level of incarceration in Europe, more than twenty Dutch prisons were closed as their prison population decreased by more than 40%. How? By tackling health issues, particularly mental health, both inside and outside jail, and by focussing on rehabilitation rather than retribution. The Dutch prison system provides good healthcare, with particularly high inmate-healthcare to worker ratios, alongside education, training and employment.

In the Netherlands, it is accepted that a stay in prison may do more harm than good. Prisons are seen as places where inmates are introduced to new criminal networks and become dehumanised. There's an understanding that time inside reduces employability, increases homelessness and family breakdown, all of which exacerbates mental-health issues and reoffending rates.

Yet here in the UK, non-violent protesters are held on remand for almost two years without trial, the government has dug-in over the proscription of Palestine Action, and arrested 532 peaceful, mainly elderly protestors and threatens supporters of the proscribed group with 'the full force of the law'. No wonder the courts are clogged and prisons are full.

World's governments fail to protect the environment, again

KIERAN CROWE

In July, a major world conference intended to tackle the global plastics crisis fell apart in a spectacular way. At the UN summit in Switzerland three years' worth of work on trying to tackle the world's plague of plastic waste was trashed. Mainstream reporting on this massive failure has only hinted at a "deep division" between various countries over plastics.

Most countries in the world, particularly in the Global South where much plastic is dumped, are aware that plastic waste recycling is completely ineffective. Even if the population disposes of waste responsibly, massive quantities of unwanted plastics still build up.

Plastic production is heavily dominated by a few countries, notably including the USA and Saudi Arabia, and it makes lots of money. Those countries want to focus on recycling so that they can continue to produce as much as they want. The wealth and power of these countries meant that when they were unable to win the argument, they simply walked away.

Socialists have long argued environmentalism will always run up against the problem that capitalists will not permit them to limit production at the cost of profit. They allow debate about the consumption of resources only. This means that the media is happy to report stories about how the single-use plastics that you are forced to buy are contributing to the problem. It will usually not let you know that corporations like Coca-Cola use their power to prevent restrictions to their use of such packaging.

This September, trade unions in Britain are launching a 'Workers' Planet' initiative to help promote a worker-lead transition to a green economy. Initiatives like this should be welcomed and broadened, because we cannot rely on capitalist governments to fight the necessary battles over the environment.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

1648

11th: Leveller petition presented to Parliament

1867

14th: *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx first published

1878

20th: Upton Sinclair born in Baltimore, Maryland

1889

14th: The Great Dock Strike ends in victory for 100,000 workers in the Port of London

2001

21st: Stop the War Coalition founded at Friends House on Euston Road in London

MARXISM 101



MARX AND REVOLUTION



by **Alex Snowden**

The experience of revolution shaped Karl Marx's life and ideas. The French Revolution, the revolutionary uprisings of 1848-49 and the Paris Commune of 1871 were huge factors in his political development.

Marx was, before all else, a revolutionary. He was not merely a critic or analyst of capitalism. He was committed to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the working class. His deep work in analysing the system's laws and mechanics, published in three volumes of *Capital*, was geared towards ending capitalism.

The French Revolution (1789-94) shaped the outlook of radicals belonging to Marx's generation. Marx, born in 1818, grew up in a Europe influenced by the radical, egalitarian ideals of the revolution. However, it was also a climate shaped by lack of fulfilment of those ideals.

This was true at the formal political level. In France, democratic ideals had given way to varying degrees of authoritarianism after the rise of Napoleon in the

1790s. Elsewhere, there was little democracy or real political liberty.

At a deeper level, there was little to celebrate in the social misery of early industrial capitalism – the long working hours, poverty, overcrowded slums and rampant disease described eloquently by Marx's collaborator Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. The French Revolution and the industrial revolution were the twin revolutions that conditioned Marx's development.

The massive Peterloo demonstration in 1819, brutally repressed by the British state, expressed the working-class yearning for democracy and liberty. This mattered so much to workers because political rights, they realised, were crucial to advancing their material interests.

This was also a feature of Chartism, the world's first working-class mass political party, in the late 1830s and 1840s. One Chartist orator spoke of the vote as 'a knife and fork, a bread and cheese question', meaning that political and democratic rights mattered in order to improve standards of living.

Marx's understanding of revolution and social change built on this fusion of the democratic and the social. A democratic revolution would be an advance, but insufficient. What really mattered was transforming economic and social conditions.

The bourgeois revolutions, above all the English Revolution in the 1640s and

the French Revolution, had been led by political forces that expressed the growing dominance of capitalism. These forces desired political forms, including a very limited degree of democracy and some political freedoms (for example freedom of the press and freedom of association), that better suited the new economic and social conditions.

They expressed the interests of an emerging ruling class and the new middle class. They chafed against the old order inherited from the age of feudalism, but they had little interest in satisfying the needs and aspirations of working-class people.

This could be seen in the uprisings of 1848. Middle-class elements like doctors, lawyers and professors were dominant in these revolutionary movements. They asserted their own interests, and those of the industrialists and financiers, but were frightened of awakening popular revolt from below. This made them timid and cowardly.

Marx and Engels were active participants in the 1848-49 uprisings (on its most radical wing) and wrote about them as journalists. Once the dust settled, though, Marx analysed the contradictions. He identified that the once-revolutionary bourgeois class had become a barrier to further social progress.

Marx concluded that socialists must constantly champion independent

working-class interests in the context of any democratic struggle. More than that: the goal should be to turn democratic struggle into social revolution seeking to end poverty and inequality.

Turning the democratic revolution into social revolution is what Marx dubbed permanent revolution.

A key discovery for Marx was the agent of this transformation: the working class. As industrial capitalism grew, workers were concentrated into factories and other workplaces, with their conditions under attack as exploitation was increased. Workers would be the gravediggers of capitalism.

In 1871, workers in Paris rose up and took control of their own workplaces and communities. The Paris Commune was crushed after a little over two months, but Marx glimpsed in it the possibilities of working-class revolution.

Crucially, he concluded that the existing capitalist state, with its coercive instruments like the army and the police, must be abolished and replaced with popular, democratic forms. Only workers, acting collectively, could do that.

Finally, Marx observed how socialist revolution (even more than in the French Revolution or 1848-49) could transform the ideas, challenge the prejudices and broaden the horizons of those taking part. In changing their conditions, people changed themselves and their ideas.

COUNTERFIRE & MOVEMENT EVENTS

Counterfire branches around the country organise regular in-person or online public meetings discussing key topics of the moment. We also organise national and regional events like Revolution! and Marxism in a Day periodically. Our events are open to all, and listed below along with key movement dates for your diary.

See [counterfire.org/events](https://www.counterfire.org/events) for updates.

TYNESIDE

A meeting for Your Party supporters
Tuesday 2 September, 7pm
Gallowgate Lounge, Tyneside Irish Centre,
Newcastle, NE1 4SG

LONDON

National demonstration for Palestine
Saturday 6 September, 12pm
Assemble at Russell Square, march to
Whitehall

BRIGHTON

Welfare not Warfare: Lobby the TUC
Sunday 7 September, 2pm
Brighton Centre, Kings Road, BN1 2GR

BRIGHTON

Stop the War TUC Fringe meeting
Tuesday 9 September, 6pm
Friends House, Ship Street, BN1 1AF

LONDON

Stop the DSEI arms fair demonstration
Wednesday 10 September
Details tba - follow @stwuik for updates

BRISTOL

**Spycops: The state vs democracy,
protest and justice**
Wednesday 10 September, 6:30pm
Kit Form, 37-39 Jamaica Street, BS2 8JP

LONDON

National march against fascism
Saturday 13 September, 12pm
Assemble at Russell Square, march to
Whitehall

LONDON

Culture workers march for Palestine
Sunday 14 September, 12pm
Assemble at Royal Opera House, Bow
Street, WC2E 9DD

LONDON

**National demonstration against Trump's
state visit**
Wednesday 17 September, 2pm
Assemble at Portland Place, W1A 1AA,
Rally at 5pm - location tbc
Follow @stwuik for updates

CANTERBURY & WHITSTABLE

A meeting for Your Party supporters
Wednesday 17 September, 7:30pm
Canterbury Baptist Church Hall, St
George's Place, Canterbury, CT1 1UT

GLASGOW

**The left and elections: Learning from
the past, fighting for the future**
Saturday 20 September, 12pm
Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, G2 4JP

STAFFORD

Welfare not Warfare public meeting
Wednesday 24 September, 6:30pm
Littleworth Community Centre, 6A Saint
Thomas Street, ST16 3UU

MANCHESTER

The far right, flags and the British state
Monday 29 September, 7pm
Friends House, 6 Mount Street, M2 5NS

PARIS

International meeting against the war
Sunday 5 October, 1:30pm
Dôme de Paris, 37 Boulevard Victor, Paris,
France

Join the revolutionary surge

LOUIS BAILEY

Sustaining itself for nearly two years, the Palestine movement has had thirty national demonstrations. It has fought off and ended the career of the vile Suella Braveman, won the battle over Armistice Day and humiliated the far right, defended the right to protest, destroyed claims that from the 'river to the sea' chant is antisemitic, and is now one of the most sustained protest movements in British history.

The Palestine movement has contributed to creating a space for a new left party which has now been formed by Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn. It is an exciting opportunity for the left. This party has

blossomed with popularity on its announcement and has had 900,000 sign-ups, with Labour running scared.

Counterfire has been central to the Palestine movement, nationally and locally. We have been involved in putting on coaches to the national demos, supporting and organising workplace days of action for Palestine and coordinating the banging of pots and pans up and down the country. Counterfire has also made the argument for the linking of the anti-austerity movement with the anti-war movement.


Our members have been directly involved in organising Your Party Supporter meetings, drawing in large groups of people in different parts of the country to have

broad and open discussions about the new party and ensuring they are involved in shaping it.

In recent months, we have doubled our number of branches bringing revolutionary politics to more people in more parts of the country. Our branches have regular public meetings and help organise and support local protests and picket lines.

Join us and be a part of building a revolutionary socialist left in this country that can effectively challenge this establishment and economic system. Be a part of building the movement to liberate Palestine from the river to the sea, and fight for a society based on the needs of people not profit.

Join us today.



You can join by scanning the QR code on the right and completing the form on our website or alternatively fill out your details here and hand it in at one of our stalls or post to Counterfire, UN1.30, United House, North Road, London, N7 9DP


FIRST NAME: _____

LAST NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE NO: _____

POSTCODE: _____



JOIN COUNTERFIRE TODAY

Scan the QR code or go to www.counterfire.org/join

LOCAL GROUPS

Counterfire has local branches across the country building the movements of resistance and popularising socialist ideas by organising public meetings, local activity and distributing our free newspaper.

To find out more about a branch near you or to help set one up where you are, please contact the national office.

NATIONAL OFFICE

info@counterfire.org
07807 123472

Branches:

BOURNEMOUTH

BIRMINGHAM

BRIGHTON

BRISTOL

CREWE

DEVON & CORNWALL

EAST KENT

DONCASTER

EDINBURGH

GLASGOW

HASTINGS

IPSWICH

LIVERPOOL

LONDON:

EAST

HARINGEY

NORTH WEST

SOUTH EAST

SOUTH WEST

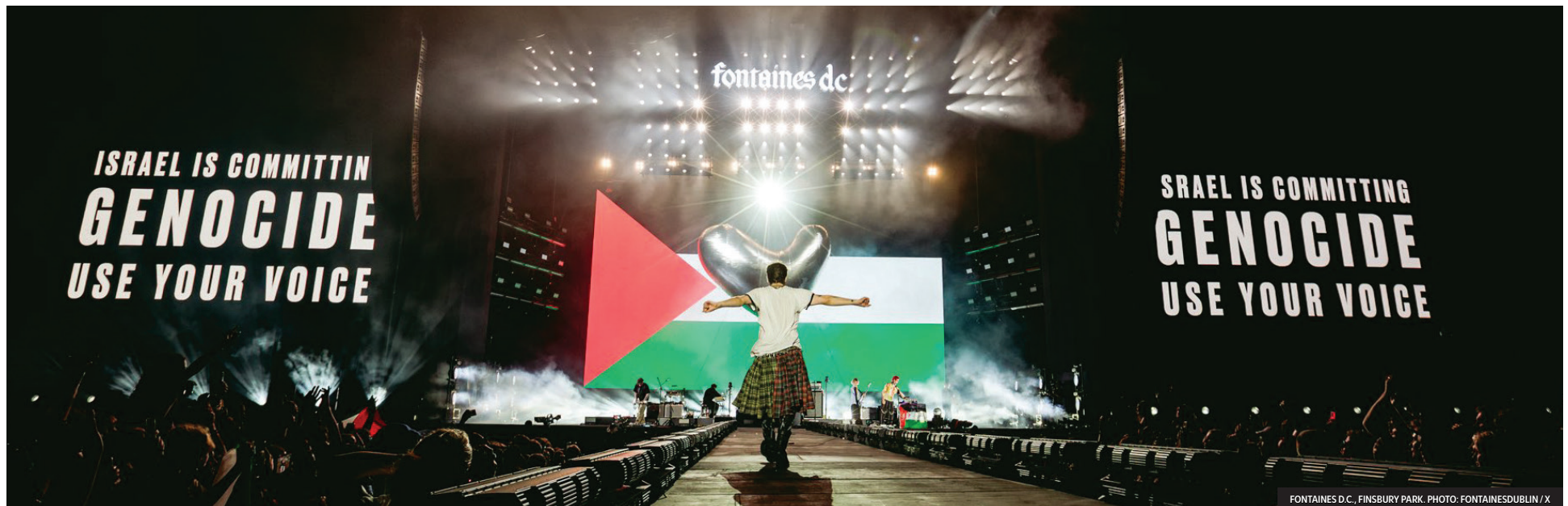
SOUTH (CENTRAL)

MANCHESTER

NEWCASTLE

PRESTON & CHORLEY

ART & CULTURE



The cultural fightback for Palestine

LUCY NICHOLS

The Palestine movement has permeated all spheres of life. A wide range of cultural figures have spoken out against Israel's genocide in Gaza, showing that solidarity with Palestine is now in the mainstream.

The genocide in Gaza is one of the most shocking displays of cruelty in living memory. Israel's evil clearly has few limits. The rest of the world's governments seem to be ignoring the genocide, while supporting Israel with all the arms and political legitimacy it needs.

One of Britain's biggest political movements has grown out of this catastrophe, changing the face of British politics and politicising millions of people. No section of society has been untouched by this genocide and the movement against it. This includes culture.

Hundreds of cultural figures have now spoken out for Palestine. This includes musicians, dancers, actors, artists, photographers, fashion designers, comedians, footballers, and more.

Each national demonstration for Palestine will have at least one well-known cultural figure speaking to the masses. There are also the huge numbers of cultural figures who, although not quite speaking on demonstrations, have demonstrated solidarity in other ways.

It probably isn't a stretch to say that a Palestine flag has appeared on some stage, at some point, at every major music festival this summer. Footballer Mo Salah called out Uefa on Twitter over its reporting on Israel's murder of Suleiman al-Obeid, a Palestinian footballer. A dancer waved a Palestine flag on stage at the Royal Opera, which since scrapped its performance of Puccini's *Tosca* in Tel Aviv, after opposition from staff.

Stephen Kapos, who regularly speaks on demonstrations, was invited onto *Good Morning Britain*, where he was asked

about his experiences of the Holocaust and how they are mirrored today in Gaza. Walking through Notting Hill Carnival with a Palestine flag, Counterfire members were near constantly stopped for fist bumps, chants, and photos. All of this is hugely significant and demonstrates the strength of our movement.

This is not new. Major protest movements have often been supported by cultural figures, with culture playing a key part of these movements. Gerard Winstanley wrote 'the Diggers' Song' during the Diggers' movement in favour of agrarian socialism and land rights in the seventeenth century.

William Morris, whose print and textile

designs are world-famous, was a committed revolutionary socialist for the later part of his life.

Authors from Spain and elsewhere wrote novels about their experiences of the Spanish Civil War as part of the resistance against Franco. Nina Simone, Sam Cooke, Gil Scott-Heron, Bob Dylan and many more brought themes of anti-racism and equality into their music in the 1960s and 1970s.

Today, the Palestine movement in Britain and around the world is supported by key cultural figures, with films, books, music and art inspired by the fight for Palestinian liberation. This is not to mention the huge role cultural resistance plays

in Palestine itself.

This cultural involvement in our political struggles is something to encourage and expand upon. When we have the state resorting to draconian measures to shut down dissent, and a growing far-right movement launching their own kind of culture wars, we need to be fighting against this in every way we can.

We are continuing to mobilise for Palestine, and there is no sign that this movement will slow down. The involvement of cultural figures, their art and their platforms will add to the weight of pressure on the government, and will contribute to the staying power of the movement and its reach across society.

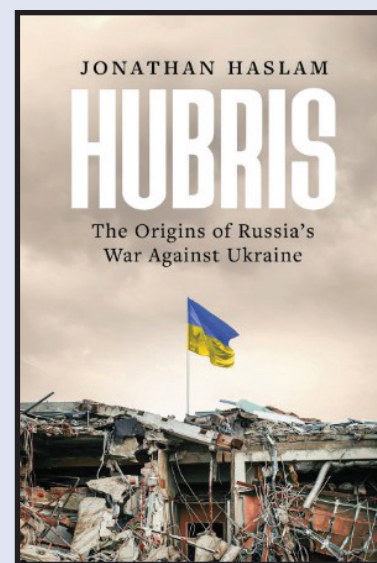
HUBRIS: THE ORIGINS OF RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

ZAHID RAHMAN

The war in Ukraine has been raging for three and a half years, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. It is the biggest war fought in Europe since WW2. In *Hubris*, Jonathan Haslam, an expert in Soviet foreign policy and espionage, explores the origins of the war in Ukraine and the events leading up to Russia's invasion in February 2022.

The book charts the role of the arrogance of the world's sole superpower, the United States, in the wake of winning the Cold War, following each US administration from the late 1980s onwards. It makes a compelling case for directly connecting the US decision to maintain the existence of Nato, enlarge and justify its existence after the Cold War, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This was despite US Secretary of State Jim Baker's assurances to Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, of 'iron-clad guarantees that Nato's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward.' The 1999 inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into Nato marked a



clear departure from that promise.

The 2004 'big bang' enlargement, bringing in seven more countries including the Baltic states, further deepened Moscow's perception that it was being encircled. The core idea for the US to have embarked on this project, that of expanding a superfluous alliance, was to maintain hegemonic dominance through a political and military presence in Europe.

In 2008, Nato arrogantly planned to accelerate the process of membership for Georgia and Ukraine, two ex-Soviet states. Russia lashed out by invading parts of Georgia that same year. In 2014, US officials as high-ranking as the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs were in Maidan Square in Ukraine working to have Yanukovich removed from power. Again, Russia retaliated by annexing Crimea and fomenting a war in the Donbas region in Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and the new Kyiv government.

Western policy served to widen the gap with Russia which led directly to the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022 which grinds on today as a deadly war of attrition.

Haslam's book is a useful addition to the case against the Western proxy war in Ukraine. It challenges the narrative of many historians in the West that the cause of the Russo-Ukrainian War is exclusively Russian territorial ambitions. I highly recommend this book for those who want to study the post-Cold War history of Russian-American relations.

INTERNATIONAL
I
 DEMONSTRATION



DRAGAN PLAVŠIĆ

Trump's unprecedented second state visit to the UK later this month will see the British establishment at its most servile and sycophantic.

Desperate to cling to a 'special relationship' that's long been nothing special, it's dusting off the pomp and pageantry to flatter a president viewed negatively by 80% of Britons. Trump's unflinching support for Israel also adds to the woes of a Starmer government much under fire for its own complicity on Gaza.

Key here has been the relentless pressure it's been under from the Palestine solidarity movement, including twenty nine national demonstrations – and counting. In July, this pressure told. Starmer announced that unless Israel agreed a ceasefire, ended West Bank annexations and committed to a two-state solution, the UK would recognise Palestine in September.

None of this means Starmer and company have suddenly come to their moral senses. After all, they continue to prosecute leading figures of the Palestine movement. They continue to

impose restrictions on demonstrations. And they continue to proscribe Palestine Action for terrorism, with hundreds arrested for defying an absurdly authoritarian decree.

As for recognition, it will be a mere diplomatic fig leaf for deflecting criticism unless matched by decisive action. So the critical questions remain. Will the Starmer government impose an arms embargo on Israel? Will it stop sharing intelligence? Will it stop training IDF troops? Will it impose economic sanctions?

These questions are more urgent than ever. Trump dismissed UK recognition as 'rewarding Hamas', while Netanyahu presses on with his Gaza occupation plan, including the murderous seizure of Gaza City and the forcible transfer of Palestinians to concentration camps in the south. Meanwhile, his far-right finance minister Smotrich says the so-called E1 plan for building 3,400 settler homes in the West Bank will 'bury the idea of a Palestinian state'.

Trump has said Netanyahu's plan is 'up to Israel'. Smotrich claims Trump agreed the E1 plan. All this points to unwavering US support for the genocidal logic of the mass

ethnic cleansing Israel is seeking. The goal is to 'solve' the Palestinian question by terrorising the Palestinians out of Palestine, dispersing them across the Middle East, and extinguishing the very idea of a Palestinian nation, let alone a state. As Trump proposed in January: 'You're talking about probably a million and a half people, and we just clean out that whole thing and say: "You know, it's over".'

The result for Washington – an ethnically homogeneous Israel no longer threatened from within by the liberation struggle of the Palestinians – will be a much fortified outpost of US power in the Middle East.

None of this will trouble the British establishment as it rolls out the red carpet for Trump. Starmer has no intention of jeopardising US-UK relations for the Palestinians. The business interests of the British state are his overriding concern.

This is why the Palestine movement has to keep up the pressure. Trump's state visit is an opportunity for a massive protest against the genocide and the ruthless imperialists sustaining it.

17 September: Trump Not Welcome National Demonstration

Assemble 2pm: Portland Place, London, W1A 1AA | 5pm: Rally (location tbc) Follow @stwuK for updates