

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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FEATURE

SPANISH STATE

A step forward in Andalusia

Daniel Albarracín

FEATURE

ARGENTINA

The anti-capitalist left surge in Argentina and the letter that sparked a crucial debate

Eduardo Lucita

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UNITED STATES (USA)

Mamdani Advances His Agenda, Helps Elect DSA Candidates to Congress

DAN LA BOTZ ·

Mamdani succeeded in forming a partnership with New York Governor Kathy Hochul to provide \$73 million for the childcare program for 2-year-olds. This will expand soon to \$425 million to provide for 12,000 children and cover all eligible children within four years. He has also established an unprecedented rent freeze on New York City's roughly 1 million rent-stabilized apartments. But Mamdani has been unable to get sufficient financial support from New York State to create the free public transportation system which is his goal.

The mayor has called for the abolition of the federal government's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and reinforced the city's "sanctuary" policies by prohibiting city government agencies from cooperating with ICE.

Mamdani, who is himself Muslim, has also spoken out forcefully against antisemitism and Islamophobia. He has himself been unjustly accused of antisemitism by 600 Jewish rabbis and the conservative media for his remark that American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Zionist lobbying group, is "a monster" that attempts to control legislation. And he is personally the victim of anti-Islamic attacks, such as Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville's post showing Mamdani's photo alongside the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11 together with the caption "the enemy is inside the gates."

Stunning Election Success

Rising above personal and political attacks, Mamdani used his political influence and DSA's remarkable mobilizing capacity to win stunning victories in the recent Democratic Party primary elections in New York City. Mamdani backed as candidate for Congress former

rival for mayor Brad Lander, who as former comptroller had been the highest-level Jewish official in NYC government. Lander defeated incumbent Dan Goldman, who was backed by the Israel lobby. Mamdani's other candidates for Congress, both DSA members and virtual unknowns also won. State assemblywoman Claire Valdez, 36, and campus activist Darializa Avila Chevalier, 32, both defeated powerful progressive rivals. Valdez defeated Antonio Reynoso, the Brooklyn borough president, and Chevalier won over Representative Adriano Espaillat, the influential chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Having won their primaries, these candidates are virtually assured of election to Congress given the notorious weakness of a Republican Party in New York City.

Mamdani and his crew defeated long established Democratic politicians, progressives backed by the Working Families Party, and candidates supported by the labor union bureaucracy. The Mamdani-DSA victories have shaken up the local Democratic Party and the city's progressives too.

"These victories prove that democratic socialists are building a winning coalition," NYC-DSA co-chair Grace Mausser said in a statement. "While the Democratic establishment and MAGA fascists ignore the needs of working people, democratic socialists are speaking to the ever-growing base of voters demanding we end war, abolish ICE, tax the rich, and win universal healthcare."

The question is whether Mamdani's influence and DSA's politics and organizing ability can really reach beyond New York City and have an impact on the national Democratic Party, dominated as it is by moderate professional politicians and corporate donors. Can Mamdani and DSA reach the heartland?

28 June 2026

BRITAIN

Burnham - a left response

DAVE KELLAWAY ·

Whatever people on the left are saying about Burnham one thing is clear. Activists in the labour movement are discussing issues today that were buried under the Starmer/McSweeney regime.

Darren Jones and the Labour Together tribute act are lobbying hard against Ed Miliband becoming Chancellor with his net zero agenda. Veteran peer, Alf Dubs, who came to Britain as a refugee from the Holocaust, has today called on Burnham to sack Shabana Mahmood and rip up her anti-migrant policies.

This is Labour's reset moment when we can consign to the past some of the appalling language used by politicians to describe refugees: 'invaders', 'an island of strangers', 'tearing our country apart'. We can't reset by bringing with us policies that many in the PLP do not support, spearheaded by a home secretary who divides opinion. [1]

The Productive State

A policy document called The Productive State from Mainstream – the Labour ginger group that has helped drive Burnham's rise to power – provides us with a devastating critique of the damage privatization has done to our society. It outlines a reformist framework for change that has been previously totally rejected by Starmer and his allies. For example Starmer's ministers have consistently rejected taking water back into public ownership. A detailed analysis by Simon Pearson of the Mainstream/Commonwealth document and its limits is currently available on this website. Trade Union Congress leader Paul Novak has welcomed Burnham and called for a real reset in favour of working people.

The current heatwave is provoking a debate within and between major unions about further drilling in the North Sea. Unite leader Sharon Graham has attacked Miliband becoming chancellor going so far as talking of him as putting a 'noose around job creation'. Of course the net

zero economy is growing strongly and can easily replace jobs lost in the winding down of the North sea fossil fuel industry.

Yes, Burnham may pivot completely to some sort of continuity with the Starmer government but at least the political space in which we operate has changed.

The bosses and right wing press are piling in alongside the Labour right and its apparatus. For example they are backing Streeting for chancellor and smearing Ed Miliband. Rocco Forte, a hospitality magnate, has specifically called for a block on Miliband. If Burnham does adopt some or all of the proposals in Productive State he certainly would come under sustained attack from national and international capital which wants to restrict public spending and increased taxation. Already Burnham has floated changes to capital gains tax and some other proposals to raise money that Starmer's team rejected.

Why is this discussion about Burnham important?

Many socialists see their mission as working with like-minded people to build a party that can lead and participate in a mass movement to build an eco socialist alternative to capitalism. But the conditions in which we do that change as social economic and political forces change. The people who may be attracted to our ideas may come from different currents and mobilize around various issues. We have no choice about who those radicalizing people are – we have to move to them. Our narrative needs to intersect with their discourse and language. We have to work with people generally to our right.

For ultra left sects with their timeless method and definitive programmes nothing ever changes – denounce everybody except yourselves and build your party.

Under Corbyn's rise many of us joined Labour. The radicalisation in the Greens means we are relating to them

in a way we did not five years ago. The end of Starmer and the beginning of a Burnham project is not a repeat of Corbyn but it means we have to adjust again. If he really proposes progressive taxes, proportional representation, new devolution or ending privatized utilities we have to respond. We have something to contribute.

WE engage with anything that improves the lives of working class people. At the same time – we denounce and campaign against any continuities with Starmer on Palestine, Trump, defence spending, migrants, dropping of green issues, democratic or trans rights

.

Two wrong positions on what Burnham represents:

• He is just the same as Starmer

Josh Simons' Labour together is still really in control and nothing policy wise will change, the labour machine will absorb and manage Burnham who will further turn on all his promises. Things will not materially improve one jot for working people and he will continue to open the door to a reform government. Our only task is to denounce his continuity with Starmer. As a Socialist Worker article stated Labour is swapping one centrist with another

• A new coherent soft left alternative has been born

We are going to see a massive increase in public ownership/control, a democratic revolution with a new electoral system, citizen assemblies and devolution including an English parliament. The Labour party will be revitalized with a real political debate and the end to witch-hunts. All this will stop Reform and return a Labour government for a second term. John McDonnell tears on Burnham's victory expresses somewhat this view. Anthony Barnett has written an article in New Statesman along these lines.

As ecosocialists we disagree with the simplistic response of the both these positions. We need to be more nuanced and understand the complexity of the political shifts going on.

Contradictory indicators

Reading the runes is very difficult at the moment. There are contradictory indicators. The Burnham team says Reeves is out, but at same time their leader has been consulting with Jim O'Neill ex-Goldman Sachs manager. He has proposed dropping the triple lock and for orthodox neo-liberal economics. Other Bank of England economists have been brought on board too. Blairite, James Purnell, who has headed a big lobbying/consultancy company advising firms like Amazon, has been taken on as chief of staff. We have to await the full cabinet team sheet before a proper assessment is possible

We cannot define Burnham just from his past history as a minister in Blair and Brown's governments or even as a leadership challenger to Corbyn. You also have to take into account his work in Manchester and the fact that politicians can and do change. Tony Benn started off in the centre of Labour politics under Wilson.

Burnham is not quite the empty vessel with no political base that Starmer was. The latter was easily controlled by Labour Together and the party machine. Burnham has a project in a way Starmer never did. It may be limited, contradictory and end up not changing much. The new leader has talked about the 'politics of place,' 'Manchesterism' and the Preston community wealth building model. This is different from Starmer's junior partnership with corporate capital. Burnham built his base to win leadership through Mainstream and the soft left in a way that Starmer never did. Starmer was propelled by the McSweeney/Mandelson matrix who did all the base building inside the apparatus. Burnham has kept himself largely outside that grouping.

Of course that does not mean that the ex Labour Together team will not try to get on board with Burnham and try to keep him under their control. Neither does it rule out Burnham bringing some of them into his team as evidence of a new ecumenical, broad church approach. He may even integrate somebody from the Socialist Campaign Group. The latter had brought out a good list of demands for Burnham to take up that would radicalize his project.

No Burnham surge

Currently there is no sign of any movement back to Labour similar to the Corbyn surge. However those socialists who have stayed in Labour will be encouraged to a degree by the Burnham victory. The demise of Your Party will further convince them of their position so a certain revitalisation of inner party debate and activity may happen. Given Burnham's bad positions on migrants, Palestine, defence spending, democratic rights to protest and a full green programme it is unlikely he will attract any of those thousands who have joined the Greens back to Labour.

A coronation now looks likely and it does mean the opportunity for a full discussion of Burnham's ideas at this stage is still born. The Socialist Campaign Group started off by criticising the lack of debate but John McDonnell more or less accepted that there was nothing to be done and we had to get on with it. The Burnham movement is still very top down dominated by the leader and the MPs, there are no real democratic structures constraining his actions.

Can Burnham stop Reform at the next general election like he did in Makerfield? There were exceptional circumstances since you could vote for Burnham, stop Reform and get rid of Starmer. Greens and Liberal Democrat voters did that and their parties did not campaign. Burnham did not confront Reform's racism head on in the way the Greens did in Gorton. He knew he could win without doing that. Nevertheless you cannot clone Burnham in 600 seats and we will have 2 years of his government with his shine possibly being worn off.

Many people excited about Burnham are forgetting the far right still got 40% in the by-election. A poll shows 43 % of Britons felt no difference after Starmer going. Only 20 % were a bit or more optimistic. His northern schtick also may not run so well in London and the rest of the South. John Curtice, the elections specialist, has suggested that the Reform threat remains live. Another poll puts Labour 3 percentage points ahead of Reform when the leaders are referenced but Labour are still 4 points behind when people are asked Labour or Reform.

Reform could be stopped if Burnham really were to carry out the changes currently being discussed by some of his team. Taking control of utilities and some progressive taxation may enable his government to reduce energy costs for most families. If his radical talk about building more social houses were to be turned into reality that too could change voters' minds. But will Burnham stand up to the bosses' counterattack against any radical reforms. Just building a broad church cabinet of the right and left will not cut it.

Socialists will need to adapt our campaigns and demands to relate to the new political issues and debates that are emerging. We still need to build our eco-socialist alternative independent of the Labour Party and the Greens. A resurgence of even 'soft left' ideas provides us with an opportunity to engage with broader forces on questions that have only been discussed in much smaller circles since the end of the Corbyn project

28 June 2026

Source: **Anti*Capitalist Resistance.**

MENA (MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA)

Trump-Netanyahu Debacle: A World of Collateral Damage

DAVID FINKEL ·

But seriously, amidst the swirling uncertainties about whether the war is really over and what comes next, there are some things we need to be clear about. First, this was a hideous imperialist war with horrific global consequences, a whole world of collateral damage.

Second, once having launched the war, it was essential that the United States and Israel be defeated in their aims of total regional conquest. We have to say out loud that this was not only “Trump’s war of choice,” as many Democrats do, but that it deserved to lose.

Third, we say this with no sympathy for the murderous Iranian regime with its record of mass murder and executions of its own population for decades, including this year while Trump was issuing empty noise about “help is on the way.”

Fourth, the angry split between the gangster administrations of Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu is real, and tactically important for the Palestine solidarity struggle.

Strategically, however, the U.S.-Israeli partnership remains intact — and may be disastrously enhanced by a proposed “United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative” in the draft 2027 National Defense Authorization Act, to essentially fuse their military-industrial operations.

Anatomy of a Debacle

Trump and some of his advisers are furious with Benjamin Netanyahu for suckering the U.S. president into launching the war on the absurd promises of instantaneous military victory, rapid Iranian regime collapse, and installation of a client government on the Venezuela 2.0 model.

In the end, Trump surrendered to reality, achieving nothing of what he arrogantly promised at the outset of “Epic Fury.”

Part of the MAGA base is furious with Trump for starting the war; many pro-Israel neocon hawks and even some “pragmatic centrists,” including Democrats, are angry that he failed to continue and “finish the job”; financial markets verged on panic of world economic hemorrhage if the war continued; and most decisively, the U.S. population was staggering under the war’s inflationary surge for what people correctly see as having no constructive purpose.

Inside Israel — where the majority of the Jewish population since October 7, 2023, has become tragically inured to the genocide in Palestine and catastrophic suffering in Lebanon — when the war began Trump’s popularity surged well past their own prime minister’s.

With the U.S.-Iran “Memorandum of Understanding,” Trump’s political standing in Israel has slumped. As for Netanyahu, he needs permanent war to preserve his coalition of far-rightists, religious fundamentalists, and essentially neonazi settler pogromists, and to keep his own corruption trials suspended. And the ostensible main opposition in Israel is denouncing Netanyahu not for starting the war, but for accepting the U.S.-dictated “humiliation” of the ceasefire.

For this Israeli government, then, it is essential to blow up the U.S.-Iran agreement and force the resumption of this ruinous war. That’s the number-one reason why Israel continues bombing Lebanon, with dozens of civilians killed daily, immediately after announcing yet another “ceasefire” deal.

Global Consequences

Where this leads in U.S., Israeli, and Iranian broader regional politics and global economy will take time to

emerge. But let us not overlook how the peoples of the Middle East (as some now call it, Western Asia) and the world are collateral damage in this imperial debacle.

The longterm effects of the Strait of Hormuz blockage have implications for hunger in the Global South that won't be fully known for at least a year. And this at a moment when a "super El Niño" phase in the Pacific Ocean can impact agriculture by massive climate disruptions.

Israel's occupation-annexationist rampage in southern Lebanon threatens the very existence of the Lebanese state. In Gaza and the West Bank, the Palestinian people are human sacrifices on the altar of settler-colonialism and U.S. and European indifference.

If the Iranian regime has won the war — at least in terms of its survival and control of the Strait of Hormuz, and promises of sanctions relief and massive reconstruction subsidies from Gulf states — the Iranian people have not. Over a million Iranians are newly unemployed, and thousands or tens of thousands were murdered by the government earlier this year.

And let's remember that the Iranian president a year ago — before the 2025 "twelve day war," before the mass

murders of protesters, and before the most recent war — was warning the nation that the capital Tehran would have to be "evacuated" as it would ultimately run out of water, as if there were anywhere for the population to go.

Iran's internal crises rule out the scenario proclaimed by some geopolitical pundits, and parts of the anti-imperialist left that should know better, that Iran has now become a "fourth global power."

The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran is yet another example of imperialism creating problems it can't solve. Again, the U.S.-Israeli defeat in this war and the partial U.S.-Israeli rupture are to be welcomed — and if all this weakens Trump's death grip in American politics, so much the better.

But there shouldn't be illusions that this automatically opens a road anytime soon to progressive solutions, which will require mass movements, popular mobilizations, and alternative politics that remain to be organized.

27 June 2026

Source **Solidarity webzine**.

MEXICO

Down with the Neoliberal Reform to ISSSTE Pensions!

MSPP ·

[1]

This change has worked very well for bankers, who reap millions in profits year after year. The losers are the workers, who now receive paltry pensions that, in some cases, hover around 4,000 pesos per month and decrease annually due to the payment via Unidad de Medida y Actualización (Unit of Measurement and Update or UMA). [3]

This has led thousands of workers from the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Coordinator of Education Workers or CNTE), which is a democratic current within the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Union of Education Workers or SNTE), to start a strike to demand the repeal of the 2007 reform.

The demands of the CNTE workers are legitimate, especially those concerning the return of the solidarity pension system, where active workers funded retirees' pensions, guaranteeing a dignified pension, eliminating payment in UMA, and they deserve a serious response from the government of President Claudia Sheinbaum. Her offer to "create a public insurer specialising in pension payments and strengthen the Fondo Nacional de Pensiones de los Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado (National Pension Fund for State Employees or Pension-issste), currently the only 100 percent public pension fund in the country," while a step forward, does not solve the problem of individualised accounts nor guarantee a decent pension.

The best approach is to speak the truth directly, without beating around the bush. It is true that returning to a solidarity-based pension system requires a state contribution that is not budgeted for and necessitates legislative changes that will take longer to process. A solution

cannot be found overnight. However, it is possible—and this is what negotiations should focus on—to reach a commitment from the federal government to present a constitutional reform initiative that guarantees fair pensions and their funding. This implies higher state revenues that can only come from a progressive tax reform for both large companies and those with great wealth, and from an audit of the public debt to stop paying the odious debt derived from the frauds committed by past neoliberal governments.

It is a matter of basic social justice that those who have more should pay more in taxes and that workers receive higher and better wages, pensions, and working conditions. In the last year, Mexico's 24 wealthiest individuals earned US\$100 billion, an astronomical figure that contrasts sharply with the stagnation of real wages.

It is surprising that, despite having a fair argument and the power to mobilise public opinion and gain greater negotiating power with the federal government, some sectors of the CNTE resort to acts of vandalism and provocation that do nothing to help their cause. These sectors have a different agenda than the movement and are only seeking to gain political advantage for themselves. To achieve a swift and peaceful resolution to the conflict, it is crucial that the CNTE disassociate itself from all forms of violence and that the federal government keep its promise not to repress the movement, thus preventing a repeat of regrettable incidents like the one that cost a teacher his sight.

NEITHER AFORES NOR UMA, FOR THE RETURN OF THE SOLIDARITY PENSION SYSTEM! [4]

Mexico City, June 8, 2026

*Translated and annotated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from Poder Popular.*

SOUTH AFRICA

50th anniversary of the Soweto uprising

PAUL MARTIAL ·

Short for South Western Townships, Soweto is known for the riots of June 1976, immortalised by Sam Nzima's photograph showing a man carrying the body of a 12-year-old boy, Hector Pieteron, who had been killed by the police. Walking beside him is a young girl, his sister, her face etched with grief. This image has become the symbol of the brutal repression meted out against peaceful demonstrators.

Bantu Education

The protests were triggered by a circular making the use of Afrikaans compulsory in schools – a language associated with racist oppressors. But beyond this measure, South Africa's black youth were confronted with a deeply unequal education system. The government allocated 644 rands to each white pupil, compared with just 42 rands per black pupil.

Such inequality was not justified solely on economic grounds. Dr Verwoerd, the proponent of Bantu education, explained his policy in these terms: "The natives (Black people) must learn from an early age that equality with Europeans (White people) is not for them." Education was thus an instrument designed to reinforce apartheid.

The limited progress observed over the years in the schooling of young Black people resulted mainly from pressure exerted by employers, who needed a more skilled workforce.

The revolt

In secondary schools there was an organisation, the Student Christian Movements (SCMs), which was officially apolitical but largely infiltrated by activists from the South African Students' Movement (SASM), linked to the Black Consciousness movement. These activists

carried out significant organisational and awareness-raising work.

They first set up an Action Committee, which later became the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC). These activists played a decisive role in triggering the protests.

Hundreds of young people left their schools to join a demonstration. Without warning, the police opened fire. Numerous eyewitness accounts report teenagers being shot dead whilst they were fleeing.

The Soweto uprising spread across the country, drawing in large sections of the population. Everywhere, the authorities responded with ruthless repression. The army was deployed and the police did not hesitate to fire on township residents in order to sow terror.

The Turning Point

The Soweto uprising marked a genuine turning point in the struggle against apartheid. Following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the leaders of the main nationalist organisations, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), had been imprisoned or forced into exile. The regime seemed unshakeable at the time.

However, the authorities were forced to back down by abandoning their reform imposing the use of Afrikaans in schools. Above all, a new generation of activists had emerged. They were to considerably strengthen the anti-apartheid organisations, whether trade union or political.

On the international stage, the brutality of the South African regime sparked major solidarity movements which helped to shift the balance of power within the country. Following the Soweto riots, more and more South Africans became convinced that apartheid was no longer inevitable and that it would eventually come to an end.

23 June 2026

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from ***l'Anticapitaliste***.

WORLD

Earth's first trillionaire – a damning indictment of late capitalism

SIMON HANNAH ·

Musk got this money from piggy backing on other people's success, busting trade unions, moving to low tax states, selling carbon credits from Tesla to highly polluting companies and getting government contracts for SpaceX. He is a grifter, a narcissist, a crypto fascist and a hypocrite. He advocates for outright race war in Britain. In short – he is a perfect representative of late stage capitalism.

This is emblematic of the gulf between the rich and the rest. We all know it is happening. The society we live in today generates more wealth and money than any in human history – but it is all going into the hands of smaller numbers of people.

The TUC in Britain released a report in 2022 that found that “Shareholder pay-outs have soared £440bn above inflation since 2008, while wages have been squeezed, growing £510bn less than inflation”. 2024 saw the largest ever increase in low paid jobs, 800,000 more than in 2023. That meant that nearly 1 in 6 (15.7%) UK jobs were paid below the real Living Wage in 2024, up from 1 in 8 (13%) in 2023.

What is it like for the property owning and financial speculative class? As of June 2026 there are 3,400 billionaires globally with a combined wealth of over \$20 trillion. Let's look at the global stock market? 15 companies – nearly all tech or finance – have transferred an estimated \$27.0 trillion in wealth to shareholders over the past 10 years.

These are the consequences of decades of neoliberalism and austerity. Neoliberalism was never about free markets, such policies were mere tools to get to the end point – a new gilded age of unassailable wealth concentrated in the hands of a few. It was about crushing working class people's resistance, narrowing political options and asserting the absolute supremacy of the

capitalists. The market was never “free”, it was just a tool to batter down trade barriers to poorer nations.

We also deal with sky high rents or house prices. Across the UK tenants pay around 36% of their income in rent. But in London they typically pay around £1,700 to nearly £2,000 per month, consuming 41.6% of their gross income. Some pay as much as 50%.

And now the new tech bosses relish their power. We can see the huge distorting effect on politics, look at the almost limitless resources available for the far right coming from men like Musk or those Crypto millionaires living around the world.

We are in a world where the rich do what they will and the poor are made to suffer as they must. No doubt some will celebrate the world's first trillionaire as a remarkable achievement – surely this shows that someone can get incredibly rich if he has business savvy and can smooth talk investors? These same people no doubt dismiss concerns about massive wealth inequality as just the complaints of losers who can't make a buck.

Some people scoff at lower paid workers, as if their main problem isn't a structurally low waged economy, but they are just lazy and should have got a job in finance or tech. They think that nurses using foodbanks to make ends meet is their own problem. They rely on baristas to make their coffee before work but detest the same people when they ask for a living wage. When teachers strike for better wages to improve their living conditions to make teaching easier these pro-capitalist types deride them and call on them all to be sacked.

They promote the hustle culture of taking on 2-3 jobs and selling stuff on the side whilst they “work” 5 days a week and take home millions in dividends.

In their view there should be a class of genius capitalists and an underclass of people with no rights, no powers

and no ability to fight for a good quality of life. That is why these super rich capitalists are advocating for cities that they can control with no democratic right to local governance.

Donald Trump calls them Freedom Cities – freedom for the billionaires to do as they please in completely privatised cities. They are building bunkers because they know their capitalist system is pushing the world towards ecological collapse. And in the meantime they fund far right demagogues to convince people that refugees are the problem.

In this context, no wonder people are turning to assassinations of CEOs or burning down workplaces. That isn't an approach that will overthrow the capitalist class but it is understandable as a response to the deepening misery of this world. When workers started burning down warehouses and filming it the call went up that was understood by millions of workers – “all they had to do was pay us a decent wage.” But they won't. Because they don't think you deserve a decent life.

It is becoming clear to more and more people that we will need a revolution. This capitalist class will not go

quietly into the night after losing votes in parliament. They will fight tooth and nail to keep their power and privilege, the far right and fascist forces they fund are only their shock troops, but they intend to take and maintain state power to use the highly militarised modern surveillance state to police and subdue opposition as the planet spins towards heat death.

But a mass revolutionary force in society can beat these capitalist monsters. We need organisation, energy and coordination across struggles and we need to make the case that there is a better world beyond capitalism as an alternative to climate death.

The question is – what are we going to do about it? AntiCapitalist Resistance is organising and doing our part to build a political revolutionary movement to bring down capitalism. If the world's first trillionaire being a bigot who does Nazi salutes infuriates you, you should join and help build a movement that can bring down this hated system before it is too late.\$

18 June 2026

Source: Anti*Capitalist Resistance.

SENEGAL

How to deal with illegitimate debt in Senegal?

PAUL MARTIAL ·

The dismissal of prime minister Ousmane Sonko by president Diomaye Faye puts an end to the slogan of the PASTEF party, founded by Sonko: “Sonko mooy Dimayye” (“Sonko, it’s Diomaye”), put forward during the 2024 presidential election, where Faye represented plan B since Ousmane Sonko was blocked from running.

Reasons for the breakup

A few months after the presidential election, which was won handily in the first round with 54% of the vote, the first differences between the two men emerged on justice issues, concerning the arrests of senior officials of the former regime for corruption. Sonko appeared to be the guardian of the orthodoxy of the PASTEF program, while Faye seemed anxious to preserve national harmony by opening dialogue with the former leaders of the Macky Sall regime.

Another source of divergence lies in the abysmal debt left by the previous regime. It amounts to 132% of the country’s GDP. Many progressive economists unanimously agree: “Senegal’s external debt of and the obligations associated with its servicing are unsustainable.” And for good reason: the country’s revenues for 2025 are estimated at 4,382 billion CFA francs, while debt service for the same year was 4,400 billion CFA francs. So how do you deal with the problem?

Tactical differences

For Faye, a debt restructuring must be negotiated with the IMF. This implies the implementation of structural

adjustment policies, even if we now speak of “budgetary consolidation”. The result for the people remains the same: reduction in public services, particularly in education and health, as well as the removal of subsidies on electricity and gas prices. Experience shows that IMF policies only lead to debt perpetuation.

Sonko defines another way: to repay without going through the IMF, by mobilizing the country’s internal resources. However, this sovereignist approach amounts to carrying out a policy of austerity against the population. At no time is there a challenge to the legitimacy of the debt by highlighting the responsibilities of the IMF and the previous regime of Macky Sall. The latter, with the benevolence of France, is now applying to succeed António Guterres at the head of the United Nations.

The solutions proposed by Faye and Sonko, although different, lead to the same result: the people will have to bear the burden of a debt that has in no way served to improve the living conditions of citizens.

On the other hand, the two leaders seem to agree to offer an outlet for social anger by stigmatizing the LGBT+ community, which is an integral part of the country’s history. In the absence of social change, it is hate speech that is proposed, under the guise of tired reactionary verbiage.

13 June 2026

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from *l’Anticapitaliste*.

UKRAINE

Russian army on the defensive, Ukrainian people on the offensive

NPA-A UKRAINE SOLIDARITY INTERVENTION GROUP ·

On 3 June, Ukrainian missiles hit energy and military sites at the opening of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, where Russia's political and economic elite received their foreign guests under plumes of black smoke. Responding to the deadly attacks of the previous day, Kyiv thumbed its nose at Putin's arrogance while demonstrating its growing ability to break through Russian air defenses.

On 2 and 3 June, hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles reached residential areas in Kyiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia (40 dead and 250 injured). Following hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries in April and May, these attacks target homes, civilian infrastructure and public services. Putin is seeking to break the morale of the Ukrainian people. In vain.

Increasing pressure on Russian rear

On Ukrainian soil, the army succeeded in blocking Russia's spring offensive, neutralising attempts to regroup men or equipment. The Russian occupying forces, despite the multiplication of assault operations, made little progress. "600 km² of Ukrainian territory have been liberated since the beginning of the year," said Oleksandr Syrsky, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces.

For several months, the Ukrainian army has been conducting offensive operations on Russian territory, destroying refineries, industrial facilities, weapons factories and military bases in order to disrupt Russian logistics lines and war capabilities. These strikes, deep into Russian territory and on the rear of the occupied territories, are shaking a civilian economy already weakened by inflation and the war economy.

Kyiv has increased the use of strike systems combining medium-range missiles and combat drones to reach the Russian rear up to 200 kilometers. The Ukrainians are holding important supply routes under constant fire: Crimea is particularly affected, which has consequences for supplies to the southern zone of the fighting. The authorities of Bastopol have limited fuel purchases to twenty litres per vehicle. Prices of food and services are already rising.

The state of the global balance of forces does not currently open up the prospect of a victorious offensive on the ground. By multiplying devastating air incursions, the Ukrainian leadership is forcing Moscow to come to the negotiating table from a more balanced position.

A committed and combative society

Ukrainian civil society, which is very involved in the defence of the country, is active and vigilant (fighting against corruption and oligarchs, defending living and working conditions). After the demonstrations in May against the draft of the new Civil Code (which infringes on the rights of sexual minorities and allows the plundering of common goods), two examples of struggle illustrate the permanent mobilization, despite the state of war, of citizens.

In Kyiv, during the public discussion on public transport, the Kyiv Passengers Association, which organises quality checks on the routes and even discusses the choice of vehicles, gathered the opinion of almost 1,500 people opposed to the quadrupling of prices. The student union Priama Diia has joined this struggle, denouncing a new blow to students.

Teachers and parents of students in Rivne, in northwestern Ukraine, are opposing the closure of several schools.

The soldiers on the front, from their city, sent a video of support. The municipality backed down.

Despite the war, despite the mourning and fatigue, civil society, committed and concerned about the future of the country, is speaking out publicly about the economic, political and legal orientations that are dangerous for the rule of law, social and democratic achievements —

essential battles for the reconstruction of the country once it has regained its democratic sovereignty.`

11 June 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from ***l'Anticapitaliste***.*

IRAN

Trump's War a Failure, Trump's Peace a Failure Too

In his typically grandiloquent and bombastic style, Trump said that he had reshaped the Middle East and “saved Israel from nuclear annihilation.” He declared, “Ships of the world, start your engines. Let the oil flow.” But, as I am writing on June 21, few ships have moved through the Strait of Hormuz and little oil has flowed.

Trump, even as he promoted his peace plan, intermittently threatened to begin bombing Iran again.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, unhappy with Trump's deal, has continued attacks on Lebanon, with more deaths and destruction. Furious, Trump told Netanyahu, “What the fuck are you doing? You're fucking crazy. You'd be in prison if it weren't for me.”

The Iranian government, believing a ceasefire in Lebanon was part of the deal, now refused to move forward after Israeli attack. Netanyahu argues there is no deal until Hezbollah is disarmed. Israeli fascist National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir made the horrifying declaration that Israel should “burn all of Lebanon.” By and large, Israelis oppose Trump's deal and now 60% of them oppose Netanyahu, largely because the peace deal doesn't eliminate Hezbollah.

In the United States recent polls show that 60% of the American people are unhappy with Trump's peace deal. Republican and Democratic politicians don't like it either. Republican leaders believe that the deal gives too much to Iran: ending all sanctions and agreeing to pay \$300 billion to Iran, while postponing the negotiation of an agreement to end Iran's nuclear program. Republican Senators Bill Cassidy, Ted Cruz, Roger Wicker, Tom Cotton and Lindsey Graham have all criticized the deal in those terms. Cassidy called the deal the “worst foreign policy blunder in decades.”

Cotton, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said, “certain aspects of this deal are a step in the wrong

direction.” Cotton criticized lifting U.S. sanctions on Iran's oil exports, which he estimated would allow the country to bring in between \$4.5 and \$6 billion a month. “That's a lot of money,” he said. “And we know that this terrorist revolutionary regime is not going to spend that money on day care or on hospitals. They're going to use it to rebuild their drone stockpiles, their missiles, to fund Hamas and fund Hezbollah.”

American politicians and the American public don't understand that Hezbollah was created as a Shiite militia in reaction to a previous Israeli invasion in 1982, that led to an 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah became a political party and established large scale social services in southern Lebanon. Lebanese of all faiths and politics, except the Christo-fascists, have come to accept it an integral part of Lebanese society, even if many would like to see Hezbollah disarm. Short of Ben Gvir's genocidal call, “burn all of Lebanon,” Hezbollah is not going away.

Trump's deal, if it ever actually goes into effect and if there is also a nuclear deal, will probably be less effective in restraining Iran's nuclear program than President Barack Obama's 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, torn up by Trump in 2018.

At the moment supposedly there is no war, actually there is no peace, and almost nobody is happy with the deal, except maybe Iran's leaders. In the United States, people want the war over, but there is no anti-war movement to end it either. The American left has been focused on the primary elections and the national elections coming in November that will determine who controls congress. And, if we're in the streets, that could change U.S. foreign policy.

21 June 2026

NIGER

Anti-LGBTI laws tightened in Niger

LALLA F. COLVIN ·

Criminalization now explicit

A new milestone has therefore been reached in the repression of the LGBTI community, with the appearance in the new Penal Code of several articles explicitly criminalising same-sex relations.

This decision marks a break: until now, same-sex relations were not explicitly prohibited in the country, although strongly stigmatized.

From now on, “committing or attempting to commit an indecent or unnatural LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex or asexual) act or practice” is punishable by five to ten years in prison and heavy fines (around 150,000 euros), while weddings and their participants (organizers, witnesses and so on) can be punished by ten to twenty years in prison. A similar penalty will be put in place for “any person who manages, directs, operates, finances or participates in clubs, societies, organizations or associations for homosexuals or LGBTQIA+.”

It is therefore in truth the entire LGBTI community that is targeted, because, although officially no law has been passed against trans identity, sex and gender transition is indeed an integral part of the abbreviation “LGBTQIA+” and is, as such, just as targeted by this new Penal Code.

A hardening of authoritarianism amidst political instability

Far from being an isolated measure, this criminalization is part of a context of hardening authoritarianism since the 2023 coup. The constitution was suspended by the junta on July 26, 2023. At the same time, the borders are closed and the institutions (civil government, institutions of the 7th Republic, parliament and assemblies and so

on) suspended. The constitution, since 2025, has been replaced by a transitional charter.

Niger’s step backwards is all the more worrying as it is part of a broader dynamic that has been taking place in recent years in West Africa, where several states have recently strengthened their anti-LGBTI legislation. Indeed, more than 30 out of 54 countries on the African continent criminalize homosexual relations. Countries such as Senegal or Tanzania can go up to ten years in prison, five years in Burkina Faso. Others, such as Uganda or Somalia, punish them with the death penalty.

These repressive policies can be attributed to conservative religious pressures. But also and above all to an anti-Western discourse instrumentalized in order to serve a conservative goal: since coming to power, General Tiani has failed to oppose Niger’s jihadists. Repression of homosexuality, which is very taboo in Niger, can therefore be seen as a way of appeasing certain populations in the country and illustrating the government’s new position.

The fight against these policies cannot be left to the Western powers or to international institutions, which are only interested in subjugating the peoples of Africa and plundering their wealth. It must be part of an internationalist movement in support of LGBTI communities, supported by all peoples and oppressed.

Defending countries in struggle against imperialism must not lead us to close our eyes to the repression suffered by the oppressed in their countries, and must not distract us from the return or appearance of archaic laws aimed at stifling the freedom of life of everyone, and of expression of all.

14 June 2026

Translated by International Viewpoint from l’Anticapitaliste.

ALBANIA

What the “Flamingo Revolution” reveals

ALBANIAN ANTI-CAPITALIST COLLECTIVE (KASH) ·

We propose to review these recent events and re-trace their chronology. More fundamentally, we want to show that the current mobilization goes far beyond the defence of the environment: it reveals the major tensions that still run through contemporary Albania around questions of territorial sovereignty and the broader right of the population to self-determination.

To understand these conflicts and potential breaking points, it is necessary to examine their causes—including the convergence of interests between foreign investors, oligarchs, local landowners, and politicians, which leads to a progressive commodification of territory. In other words, we intend to highlight the capitalist, neoliberal and imperialist nature of the combined mechanisms that lead to the democratic denial against which the Albanian people are currently rising.

Chronology of the opposition movement

It all began on 15 March 2024, when Jared Kushner, Donald Trump’s son-in-law, published computer-generated images on his Instagram account presenting several luxury tourism projects in Albania. On 16 January 2025, Reuters revealed that Edi Rama, Albania’s prime minister, had reached an agreement estimated at \$1.4 billion with Atlantic Incubation Partners LLC, an affiliate of Affinity Partners, to develop a vast hotel complex on the island of Sazan.

Located at the entrance to Vlorë Bay, Sazan is the largest island in Albania. Long closed to the public, it served as a strategic military base under the regime of Enver Hoxha. After the fall of the latter, Sazan’s prolonged isolation helped preserve its remarkable landscapes and biodiversity, as urbanization transformed much of the Albanian coastline as early as the 1990s.

While the revelations about Sazan have acted as a catalyst, they are not the only ones to fuel widespread

opposition. On the coast of Vlorë, in the Zvërnec and Narta region, another large-scale tourism project is taking shape. This includes the construction of thousand villas, apartments and hotels as well as tourist infrastructure on several hundred hectares located near one of the most important ecosystems in Albania. In the area, hundreds of distinct species of birds have been observed, some of which settle there to winter — for example, the pink flamingo. The latter has become both the symbol of the ecological richness of the site and its fragility in the face of tourist projects, so much so that it has been adopted as an emblem of the protest movement. The term “Flamingo Revolution” (*Revolucioni i flamingove*) has thus gradually taken hold among the demonstrators to designate the mobilization.

At the end of April 2026, the first works began in the area of Pishë Poro and Portonovo. Bulldozers entered the site, which was previously accessible to the public, while fences and barbed wire were installed. On 23 May, residents and environmental activists gathered for the first time near Narta Lagoon to protest against the fences erected around Pishë Poro beach.

A week later, on 30 May, a new demonstration took place near the Portonovo construction site. Clashes then broke out between demonstrators and private security agents in charge of protecting the future construction site. Images of these incidents circulated quickly on social networks, causing a wave of indignation across the country.

In the days that followed, thousands of people took to the streets of Tirana and several major cities in Albania to demand the abandonment of current projects, to demand stronger legal protection of the territory, and to call for the resignation of prime minister Rama.

Barbed wire revives old memories

While opponents of the Zvërnec and Sazan projects denounce the destruction of protected natural areas and the privatisation of the coastline, the anger that has been expressed in recent weeks is not limited to environmental concerns alone. To understand the cause of the protest and its extent, it is necessary to sketch the history of the Albanian people. For more than a century, the question of their self-determination has been at the centre of their concerns: whether as a popular project or as a project of local elites, it has been negotiated or even repeatedly denied, which has profoundly influenced political consciousness and national historiography.

In 1913, at the London Conference, the major European powers recognised Albania's independence and drew the country's borders. A significant part of the Albanian population remained outside the new state. Kosovo was assigned to Serbia, while other territories were attached to Montenegro or Greece. Independence was thus born of a political paradox: that of a state finally recognized by influential nations, but deprived of a significant part of the population it was supposed to gather.

In addition, this newly independent Albanian state was then placed under the authority of a foreign prince, Wilhelm of Wied, appointed by the European powers in 1914. This tutelage continued during the twentieth century, with the predominantly Albanian territories continuing to be subject to multiple influences and forms of external domination: military occupations, interventions by the great powers, political or economic tutelage and so on.

Of course, the tourism projects of Zvërnec and Sazan differ significantly from these historical sequences. But the images of barbed wire, private militias and beaches closed to the public revive a collective memory maintained by a deeply rooted historiography. Indeed, in the Albanian national narrative, the motif of a small people resilient in the face of centuries of foreign domination is central; the identity of Albanians has thus survived the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires, the Balkan wars, the fascist and Nazi occupations of the twentieth century, and, more recently, the policies of ethnic cleansing carried out in Kosovo.

Recent events add to this long-running narrative. For a part of public opinion, the fundamental question of the political destiny of Albanians is once again being asked, in a new form: who decides the future of the territory? Until the fall of the colonial empires and the entry into neo-colonialism, foreign domination was manifested — and partly exercised — by arms.

Today, imperialism is taking the less visible routes of markets, investment, major private infrastructure projects and agreements between governments and big business. The mechanisms have certainly changed, but recent events reveal on the one hand the discernment of a population in the face of this reconfiguration of imperialist domination, and on the other hand its fear of losing its right to self-determination. For many protesters, barbed wire is not just a sign of beach closure; They revive a collective trauma, passed down from generation to generation, which is still painful.

In this regard, it should be added that the current mobilizations in Albania do not follow a single political line. There are very heterogeneous orientations and sensibilities: ecologists, left-wing activists, citizens with no particular political affiliation, but also nationalists from more traditional movements. This diversity can be explained precisely by the historical, symbolic charge that the question of territory has in Albanian consciousness and historiography. Albanian nationalism is not an imperialist nationalism, but a nationalism of resistance, anti-colonial struggle and self-determination. Its origin does not diminish its political contradictions, nor the violence it may have engendered. However, this ideological relationship to the nation makes it possible to understand why the defence of a lagoon, an island or a beach can today mobilise far beyond ecologist circles — an adhesion that may be surprising from the point of view of Western Europe.

A logic of neoliberal dispossession

However, the planned projects for Zvërnec and Sazan are not isolated projects. Since the fall of the Stalinist regime, part of the country's coastline, agricultural land and natural resources have gradually been ceded to private interests. These decisions were taken without

real popular consultation, often for the benefit of a minority of local or foreign investors. The neoliberal dynamic has accelerated under the government of Edi Rama, who has made attracting foreign investment and tourism development one of the pillars of his economic strategy. For its supporters, this policy is a means of modernising the country and promoting its European integration. In practice, it has mainly resulted in an increased concentration of wealth in the hands of a minority, in the strengthening of the political power of Albanian oligarchs, and in the gradual transformation of the territory into a commodity auctioned off for the benefit of the wealthiest investors.

The development policy designed by Rama has gradually become a reality over the past few years. Since the adoption of the Strategic Investment Act in 2015, several million square meters of public or semi-public land have been made available to private investors. According to a survey by Citizens.al, nearly 5.8 million square meters had already been allocated to strategic investors in 2023, a significant portion of which was on the coast. More recently, the Albanian government presented a portfolio of 83 priority projects related to tourism and infrastructure development aimed at attracting foreign capital. This data shows that the tourism industry is not a side project of the government. On the contrary, it represents one of the pillars of the economic model that has been in place for several years. Indeed, tourism would represent about 26% of GDP, including its indirect benefits. For the demonstrators, the Zvërnec barbed wire is not simply a democratic denial, but is the tangible expression of an entire development model, fundamentally based on the privatization of the public domain.

It should also be pointed out that, even when it is not sold off to private capital, Albanian territory is a resource that is willingly abandoned in exchange for any economic reward, even if indirect. In 2023, Edi Rama and Giorgia Meloni, Italy's far-right prime minister, reached an agreement for the construction of a refugee camp in Gjadër, near the coast in the north of the country. For the Meloni government, it is a question of relocating the processing of refugee applications outside the national territory, at a lower cost; for Rama, the aim is to present the Albanian government as a reliable

partner in the management of the migration crisis, with a view to facilitating the process of integration into the EU. He expects such integration to have major economic benefits: boosted exports, foreign investment made more fluid by the legal framework, economic aid and so on.

Like the plans for Zvërnec and Sazan, this project claims to indirectly strengthen the country's economic development, in defiance of any democratic decision-making process on the management of the territory: the Albanian people have never been able to express their opinion on this dehumanising policy that transforms their land into an open-air prison of Frontex – the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

This logic is not new. For more than twenty years, Albania has been importing waste sporadically, mainly from Italy, while it is already facing real difficulties in managing its own waste. This is evidenced by the many open-air landfills that dot its territory. Before his first term, Rama had promised to put an end to the public-private agreements responsible for the phenomenon. He then changed his mind; the situation was only regularized in 2022, after an investigation was conducted and several individuals and public entities were indicted for corruption.

More recently, the government has introduced a particularly advantageous tax regime to attract European pensioners, particularly Italians, who are exempt from tax on their pensions when they move to the country. Their number has grown from a few hundred to nearly 3,000 in just a few years. The logic remains the same: Albanian territory is being sold off to foreign states, in this case EU members, whose political favour is to be gained.

Who sells Albania?

Kushner and Affinity Partners did not arrive in a virgin Albania; the ground had already been prepared for them. In fact, it would be too simple to summarize the challenge facing Albania to an opposition between foreign capital and national interests. Today's major tourism projects are not isolated phenomena, but are the result of an older process during which the territory was gradually monopolized by a nebula of local actors: business-

men, speculators, dubious intermediaries, figures close to the government and the nouveau riche who appeared in the chaos of the privatizations of the 1990s.

The project covers an estimated area of 437 hectares. Of these, 251 hectares are affected by construction, and are mainly owned by two major landowners: Redi Struga, who owns 120 hectares through his companies (South Adriatic Development and Smart Construction Invest), as well as Arthur Shehu, a resident of Florida, who owns 110 hectares. Similarly, several investigations point to the role that Shefqet Kastrati — one of Albania's most powerful oligarchs, head of the Kastrati group — allegedly played in the conduct of negotiations related to the projects.

This nebula of interests makes it possible both to facilitate the contribution of foreign capital and to conceal the responsibility of the main players in the operation. The question of land ownership is nevertheless quite central. Who owns the territory for the Zvërnec and Sazan tourism projects? A few private owners, international investment funds, or the relevant local authorities? The current controversy therefore goes beyond the question of the direct nuisance caused by the real estate project. It concerns issues of sovereignty, democracy, and the management of the country's common wealth.

What future for the mobilization and for Albania?

The Zvërnec and Sazan affair reveals the convergence of interests between Albanian economic elites, a neoliberal political power, and international investors in search of new spaces for the valorisation of capital. Local oligarchs provide the land, governments change laws and create favourable conditions for the planned projects, while foreign capital provides the necessary financing for the land development of the territory. In this system, citizens lose all control over part of their

land without ever being consulted and the environment becomes a simple resource, an asset whose value is measured by its ability to generate profit.

Lenin wrote that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. More than a century later, the barbed wire in Albania offers a particularly concrete illustration of this. It is no longer armies that threaten Albania, but capital that buys sections of its coastline at low prices. Violence has not disappeared; it is now exercised in other forms, more subtle, discreet, diffuse — those of a mode of development imposed by foreign capital at the expense of the Albanian people.

The demonstrations of recent weeks, however, show that this violence is contested and rejected. Despite the speeches exalting the development and the influence of the economic interests at stake, thousands of Albanians have seen the forces at work behind the barbed wire and the issues that the situation raises. They have not only identified an ecocidal tourism project, but also a tangible manifestation of a denial of sovereignty, democracy and control of the territory.

In an international context that keeps repeating that there is no alternative to the demands of capital, markets and investors, the Albanian demonstrators propose another narrative: no development can be considered legitimate when it is built against the will of the populations concerned. Behind the defence of a lagoon, a beach or an island, it is ultimately the right of peoples to decide their own future that is at stake. The challenge now lies in the political materialization of this struggle: in a country without a real radical left front against Rama's Socialist Party, how can these popular demands be directed towards a real anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist policy? Albanians will tell us.

18 June 2026

Translated by International Viewpoint from Marx21.ch.

PERU

Steadfast in defence of the people's vote: the struggle continues

NUEVO PERÚ ·

1. The people's and citizen's vote has spoken

On June 7, the majority of Peruvians residing in the country opted for the Juntos Por el Perú (Together for Peru or JP) [1] option, a vote that expresses rejection of the current situation in the country and demands an end to the crisis generated by more than 30 years of neoliberal policies, the result of which is the growth of inequality, rampant citizen insecurity, widespread corruption, and abuse of power against the weakest. The next government will face this undeniable reality. The election results will not bring an end to the long cycle of crisis the country is experiencing. The demand for continuity or change is more pressing than ever. National unity cannot be achieved unless we begin to resolve the structural crisis that divides us by driving a profound process of change. Our party will continue to advocate for this path.

2. The people faced an electoral process of rigged rules that favour the continuity of mafia power.

In Peru, we have not experienced a fair and democratic electoral process, yet the vote for change is fighting back, and the outcome is still to be decided. A strategy was devised and directed from within the Congress of the Republic in order to favour the main parties of the corrupt political alliance. Since the congressional coup against Pedro Castillo [2], we have seen how the playing field has been tilted to favour, Fujimorism [3] in particular: Bicameralism and the reelection of congressmen were imposed, throwing the 2019 referendum in the trash; the primaries were eliminated, favouring party fragmentation and the dispersion of the citizen vote; pro-crime laws and exemptions for economic groups were approved, who then paid by financing campaigns; competitors were eliminated using judicial persecution; in the middle of the elections, the head of the Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales (National Office of

Electoral Processes or ONPE) was changed; in the middle of the electoral process and in an unprecedented way, the procedure for the digitisation of votes abroad was changed. All of this has been accompanied by multimillion-dollar disinformation campaigns and manipulation by corrupt media outlets favouring the Kaos [4] candidate, as the Misión de Observación Electoral (Electoral Observation Mission or MOE) has pointed out. Despite this, thousands of Peruvians have not been defeated and remain steadfast in the fight.

3. Candidate señora Kaos should not declare victory prematurely.

The corporate media is trying to impose results and conceal the irregularities denounced by Juntos Por El Perú. The final result will be known when the last vote is counted, the last challenged or contested ballot is resolved, and the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones (National Elections Board or JNE) proclaims the winner. With 1,661 ballots still pending, nothing is certain. We remain steadfast in defending the will of the people and their votes. Our party will continue mobilising, demanding clarification of various indications and irregularities detected, and above all, demanding that the Jurados Electorales Especiales (Special Electoral Boards or JEE) and the National Elections Board act with transparency and fairness.

4.- Let us continue to build the broadest political and social unity for change

The upcoming battles demand that we continue building the broadest political and social unity to give continuity to the sense of change expressed by the vote of vast sectors of the citizenry. This unity must be expressed in different spaces, in the Bicameral Congress, promoting an agenda that dismantles mafia power and recovers democracy for the majority, citizen mobilisation, exercising surveillance, respect for their rights, solutions

to their demands and recognition of their proposals; and also the political unity of all the forces that support a just, sovereign, democratic and sustainable homeland. New Peru for Good Living expresses its commitment to continue working on this unitary effort.

16 June 2026

National Political Commission,
Nuevo Perú por el Buen Vivir

*Translated and annotated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint**.*

ALBANIA

The Pink Flamingo Revolution

ALEX BASCHMAN ·

150 kilometres southwest of Tirana is the island of Sazan, a former military base for the regime of Enver Hoxha. Its magnificent beaches bordered by the Adriatic and its rich biodiversity make it a real natural sanctuary, a refuge for colonies of pink flamingos.

It is on this paradise that Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's daughter and son-in-law, have decided to set up a luxury tourist complex estimated at 1.4 billion euros. In addition, a second project is planned in Zvërnec, on the coast facing the island. The start of the work is scheduled in one year.

The murky conditions in which the investment fund Affinity Global Development, of which Jared Kushner is a partner, obtained permission to carry out this pharaonic project, as well as the threats it poses to the environment, are fuelling public anger.

Every evening since the beginning of June, thousands of demonstrators have been taking to the streets in Tirana to denounce this project and the policies of the Socialist

Party Prime Minister Edi Rama. Under the slogans “Albania is not for sale” and “Ivanka go home”, Albanian flags mingle with the effigies of pink flamingos that have become the symbol of mobilisation. [2]

Rama, who has offered the project ten years of tax exemption, justifies this decision by the need to develop tourism in order to support Albania's application to join the European Union.

In a region marked by Russian influence and massive Chinese investment, Trumpist politics is unfolding its now familiar face: a mix of geopolitical ambitions and real estate business, like the disastrous Riviera project in Gaza.

We will not let them do that. Against the capitalists and their world, from Sainte-Soline to Zvërnec, let's all be bustards and pink flamingos!

16 June 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **l'Anticapitaliste**.*

LATIN AMERICA

Violence and drug trafficking - what response from the revolutionary left?

IRVING RADILLO MURGUIA ·

The drug lord's death sparked a wave of violence in more than half of the country's states, with CJNG members blocking roads and burning businesses, vehicles and gas stations, leading to the suspension of work and school activities and a lockdown of the population as in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The "Narco war"

The situation of violence we are experiencing in Mexico cannot be understood without taking into account the context created by the so-called "war on drugs" launched in 2007. In December 2006, Felipe Calderón, of the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN, "National Action Party", conservative right), became president following electoral fraud against Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a representative of progressivism. Millions of people took to the streets to denounce the fraudulent elections and demand a recount of the votes. To establish his legitimacy, Calderón announced a "war on drug trafficking" just weeks after taking office, in which he brought the military out of their barracks to confront the cartels. The message to Mexican society was clear: you have to choose your side, either you are with the government, or you are with the criminals.

Calderón's term in office ended with a 148 percent increase in homicides, more than 17,000 people missing and 230,000 people displaced due to violence, as well as human rights violations and a security strategy based on militarization, pursued by subsequent presidents. Moreover, it has been shown that this so-called "war" was nothing more than the use of state forces to favour certain cartels to the detriment of others, since Calderón's Minister of Public Security, Genaro García Luna, was arrested and convicted in 2024 in the United

States for drug trafficking, as his links to the Sinaloa cartel were established.

Those of us who live in Mexico know that the fall of a drug lord does not mean the end of violence. The "Narco war" has taught us that after the decapitation of a cartel, power struggles ensue between interim cadres for succession, as well as acts of revenge against the Mexican state and attacks on rival cartels that will take advantage of this moment of weakness to gain influence. And this is because, even though El Mencho has fallen, the transnational structures that produce, feed and exploit these drug lords are still in place.

Capitalism and Narco, a structural problem

The major drug consumption centres and arms companies in Mexico need illegal organizations that produce the substances they consume and that are loyal buyers of their war products. Even if Washington is outraged by drug trafficking and violence, the facts show that the cartels' weapons were sold by US companies taking advantage of that country's permissive legislation.

Between 2012 and 2025, Mexican authorities seized 137,000 rounds of ammunition from the state-owned Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, located in Missouri, not from commercial gun shops. In addition, Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum said that 85 percent of the weapons seized during the El Mencho operation came from the United States.

Drug trafficking is an economic activity governed by the capitalist laws of competition and the pursuit of maximum profit. Cartels are companies that, by operating illegally, push these economic dynamics to their ultimate consequences, thus highlighting the most violent form of a system that reduces human beings to mere disposable labour.

There is a strong international trade network that ensures the distribution and marketing of drugs. In addition, the cartels have diversified their activities to extend to other economic sectors, both illegal (human trafficking, arms trafficking, organ sales and racketeering) and legal (avocado agribusiness as well as the restaurant and leisure sectors).

In many areas controlled by organized crime, there are mining megaprojects, such as mines and dams, and this organized crime is involved in assaults on unionized workers, journalists, and environmental activists. A few days ago, the T-MEC group of experts revealed that the Canadian mining company Camino Rojo, which operates in the northern state of Zacatecas, had used drug traffickers to threaten workers of the National Miners' Union after their victory in the union elections.

The socio-political power of the cartels stems from their immense economic power and the acts of violence they commit to secure their profits, such as intimidation, assassinations, enforced disappearances, money laundering, illicit enrichment through capital injections, corruption and complicity with the state security forces.

Decades of neoliberal policies have increased precariousness, migration and undeclared work, as well as rural exodus and lack of opportunities. These difficult living conditions, combined with the individualistic, meritocratic and ruthless competitive ideas promoted by neoliberalism, have led many people, especially young people, to work for organized crime in the hope of a better life.

The deregulation of international trade under NAFTA and then CUSMA (United States-Canada-Mexico Free Trade Agreements), as well as Mexico's subordination to the great power of the north, allowed the entry of large-calibre weapons into our country and led us to become suppliers to the drug market in the United States.

Only one way out: a break with the system

It is clear that violence linked to organized crime is not an easy problem to solve. As this is a systemic phenomenon, analysing it in all its complexity is a first step and we can only remedy it through systemic changes.

On the Mexican revolutionary left, we are convinced that, while working to destroy this deadly capitalist system that engenders drug trafficking, we must always side with the victims of violence and support the initiatives that emanate from the popular classes. This is why we are in contact with the associations of mothers of missing persons and support them in their demands and mobilizations; We have also participated in demonstrations for peace and against militarization and American intervention. We believe that our priorities are as follows:

- To strengthen community ties to protect ourselves collectively from violence.
- To denounce the hypocrisy and responsibility of imperial powers such as the United States, which take advantage of the insecurity on this side of the border, both politically and economically.
- To denounce the dangers of security strategies based on the use of armed forces, because of the human rights violations they entail and the gradual transfer of political power to military power.
- To study other security strategies set up by the communities, such as the community police in the mountainous and coastal regions of the state of Guerrero (southern Mexico) or the Zapatista “caracoles”.
- To reject discourses that criminalize and stigmatize the working classes by presenting them as traffickers. Attempts by the right to link the security crisis to the so-called “loss of family values” that it attributes to advances in women’s and LGBTIQ+ rights.
- To show solidarity with the victims and their relatives, to accompany them in the actions they decide to take, to contribute to strengthening political awareness and self-confidence, and to encourage left-wing organisational processes based on demands for peace and security.
- To approach the problem from a class perspective and to help to understand it, in the absence of sufficiently in-depth analyses.

February 2026

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UNITED STATES (USA)

Four Thousand Worker Activists at Labor Notes Conference Plan to Fight

DAN LA BOTZ ·

At the opening session, Labor Notes staff member Barbara Mandeloni opened the conference on a serious note: “We live in deeply tumultuous and dangerous times.” And she listed the wars in Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine, the attacks on immigrants and their defenders, and the broader general assault on workers. “As someone said recently, ‘Trumpian fascism is the management style of contemporary capitalism.’...So we’re here to learn from each other how to organize, strategize, fight collectively and win.”

In the conference workers participated in some 300 educational workshops. At the heart of the conference were discussions of contract bargaining, preparing for and conducting strikes, and workers’ health and safety issues. For example, one workshop dealt with “Lessons from Health and Hospital Strikes,” Another, titled “Beyond Bread and Butter” dealt with expanding what unions bargain for.

Historically Labor Notes avoided partisan politics because American workers were divided between Republicans and Democrats, this year it was hard to avoid the fact that many of our fights are against President Donald Trump. So for example, one workshop dealt with Trump’s “Biggest Union-Busting Effort in U.S. History: Federal Workers Fight Back.”

The conference’s opening panel heard from union activists who had been involved in the struggle against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) which, as Mandeloni said, “have been kidnapping workers and breaking up their families. Eva Lopez, president of 8,000-member Service Employees (SEIU) Minneapolis Local 26 explained how the union had been involved in organizing with a coalition called Monarca that had

trained 50,000 people to participate in rapid response networks to resist ICE.

Immigrant workers, Lopez said, had been terrorized, but they decided, “It was better to raise our voices together than to be terrorized at home.” As they organized the movement grew. “Little by little, stores, schools, museums announced that they were joining us. We were not alone.” Eventually 100,000 came out to march on January 23, 2026 and she estimated that 340,000 people had supported the strike. She pointed out that afterwards, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino had resigned and that two ICE agents had been arrested for their violent behavior. In many cities ICE was still kidnapping immigrants, but she said, “The power of the workers is greater than that of Trump and ICE.”

The conference was not without controversy. Labor Notes had excluded Colleen Donovan, a member of the Teamster Mobilize network, apparently because her group has been critical of both Teamster President and Trump supporter Sean O’Brien and of Teamsters for a Democratic Union, which is allied with O’Brien. But Kieran Knudson, President of Communication Workers Local 7250 and Minneapolis activist, raised the issue in workshops, calmly stating that worker activists should not be excluded.

This largest Labor Notes Conference was focused on future action against the corporations, the billionaires, and Trump. May Day Strong, a coalition of unions, human rights organizations, and community groups, took advantage of the opportunity to work on organizing for a national general strike in 2028.

15 June 2026

CUBA

Visiting Cuba 2026 — A Critical Point

ROBERT BARTLETT ·

I VISITED CUBA over the 2026 May Day week with a delegation from Building Relations with Cuban Labor. The effects of the 65+ year U.S. embargo and recent blockade of oil were everywhere to be seen. [1]

The airport was practically empty with only one terminal open and another closed due to the lack of aviation fuel necessary to refuel planes, other than those who could carry enough fuel to do a round-trip visit. Canada was one of many countries whose airlines cancelled travel to Cuba, curtailing tourism and its income. Other countries are similarly affected.

The Cuban Revolution is today under the most serious threat since the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961. That was defeated, but the U.S. intention to overthrow or cripple the Cuban government has never ended, no matter whether Democrats or Republicans are in power. Today the economic pressure exerted against the entire country is reaching a critical point with military action a real possibility.

The tourist industry is practically shut down. This has dramatically decreased one of the main sources of foreign currency needed to buy products on the international market.

Along with the embargo on oil shipments the Trump administration has escalated the pressure by threatening sanctions on companies who continue to invest in Cuba and now have pressured the bank that was processing Visa and Mastercard transactions in Cuba to cease operations.

Two Spanish resort chains Iberostar and Melia, which operated 12 and 15 hotels respectively, just announced they are withdrawing from their partnership with GAESA, a Cuban governmental institution. Blue Diamond, a Canadian company which according to the New York Times ran dozens of hotels, is also leaving.

On the streets of Viejo Havana, a tourism magnet of colonial buildings and maze of restaurants and hotels, was practically deserted. The people who would drive visitors around in their 1950 vintage cars were mostly absent, and restaurants that would normally be open were closed along with music clubs that cater to tourists.

It had the feeling of a ghost town, but one in which the population was still present.

Due to the blockade on Venezuelan oil, traffic was sparse and electric vehicles and motorcycles were more numerous than gas ones. On the major highway traversing the island there were few cars, fewer buses and trucks. The oil shortage has wreaked havoc on the necessary mechanisms to move people and goods.

Power Outages and Daily Life

Power outages are regular in all areas of the island and probably longer in rural areas. In the town of Viñales, which we visited, power might be on for less than half the day and people will charge electric vehicles and batteries while they can. I saw no gas stations that were open during a ten-day period.

Some people, a minority, who have been fortunate enough to have solar panels, use them to supply their houses in the day and store energy in batteries for the periods when power is out.

Prices have risen, and the exchange rate for access to U.S. dollars has climbed to over 500 pesos to a dollar on the informal market. Access to dollar stores which supplement the basic food supplies that are available in monthly rations are reduced accordingly.

The average base salary according to people we talked to is roughly 3000 to 4000 Cuban pesos (between \$6 to \$8 a month), which doesn't go far. This has led many people we talked with to have to work three or even four jobs to survive. This has amplified the effects of this long policy of economic starvation.

What Do People Think?

First, there is no hesitancy to speak freely about the difficulties that they are facing individually and what they would like their lives to be like. During our trip we met with artists, workers in the privately owned restaurant industry, medical people and leaders of various institutions across health, biotechnology, education and farmers, as well as our host families in Viñales.

Not being fluent but able to have limited conversations in Spanish, and longer ones with people whose English was better than my Spanish, along with conversations that other members of our delegation shared, gave a similar picture.

People have dreams of a better life, but confront a daily reality where they think their dreams could probably more likely be achieved in other countries. Younger people wished to be able to travel and believed that their lives could be better in another country, Europe being a destination mentioned frequently.

Austerity and Migration

An urban planner who gave our delegation a history of Cuba from Colonial days to the present gave some context when he talked about the effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 on the economy, and the beginning of the first “special period” and significant emigration from Cuba.

He stated that 65% of the migrants over the past ten years are from Havana and most are well educated. That is striking and alarming as some of the best educated people don’t see a future under the present conditions of austerity.

This is a reality, and people’s expressions of what to do range from those who don’t see life improving in the foreseeable future and thus want to leave, to those who just want the suffering to stop no matter how.

In one extended conversation I had with a university-educated server in a restaurant, he stated that he was not supportive of the United States but critical of what he said were inequalities within the Cuban system where those with resources have ways of gaming the system. He was dismissive when I brought up some of the

achievements of the revolution in terms of education, literacy and health care.

It is unwise to generalize from a small sample of society, but I have the impression that the economic impact of the last 35 years has been one of erosion of the major gains of the revolution in bringing a country from subservience, illiteracy and exploitation by foreign ownership, an economy that was dominated by sugar production and the unsavory mob influence in Havana.

Socialism in One Country?

Being in Cuba reminded me of visiting Nicaragua before and during the U.S.-funded-and-directed Contra war. Two years before the counter-revolutionary war began, investments were being made in schools, clinics and other social services that had only previously been available to a small slice of society.

After the war started, the effect of having to divert resources to defending the revolution was evident from what was attempted in 1980 through 1982.

The effects that I could see in Cuba are due to the lack of access to resources available on the world market and denied either directly by the United States or indirectly through Washington’s economic and political threats to other countries willing to trade with Cuba.

All small, underdeveloped countries face daunting challenges in trying to compete with larger countries whose industrial capacity and economies of scale are more efficient than what any small country can muster.

This makes them dependent on trade and purchase of goods which can’t be manufactured locally. This leaves any small country, socialist or not, subject to market pressures and the inequality of selling low while buying high for value-added products.

An example is the Biotechnology research center. Cuba is rightfully proud of being able to develop medicines and vaccines, but limited access to the international scientific community through conferences, and the inability to afford the latest technologies – like automated gene sequencing, reverse transcription technology, the restriction enzymes used to produce the new

RNA vaccines — makes developing new medicines slower.

These are products difficult to manufacture and expensive to buy. While using dated technology is still effective, it also hobbles production and incentivizes scientists to pursue other options like emigration.

Compromises to Survive

The challenges that Cuba faces in the face of an economic blockade are many and have led to coping mechanisms to withstand the pressure. A basic divide in Cuban society is between those who have access to either the tourist industry or remittances from relatives who live outside Cuba, and those who don't.

Many people have family who have emigrated and send money back to Cuba, while fewer have a direct connection to the now diminished tourist economy where daily tips at a restaurant or hotel can equal the monthly salary of school teachers or doctors. Those with dollars can supplement their diet through access to dollar stores, while those without are even more dependent on auxiliary income through multiple jobs.

The economy since the collapse of the Soviet Union has evolved into parallel state and private sectors. While the private one based upon tourism injects significant money into salaries and helps the state sector continue to subsidize basic food allowances, healthcare and education, it is vulnerable to the pressure of U.S. actions and also can lead to resentments over the inequality present with the dual systems.

Ending the economic blockade would allow the Island to restore sources of hard currency like tourism and even barter arrangements where doctors could provide health care in other countries so that oil and other products in

short supply in Cuba could be purchased. That would restore public transit, which is needed for many to go to work.

It is hard to assess just how soon real access to materials would begin to restore production and alleviate some of the most grievous effects the population is suffering. On the long term a continued conversion of the energy sources from oil to solar and other renewables will take a long time and most easily achieved by purchases from China, thus once again reliant on hard currency.

Agriculture is an industry that faces challenges as well. Life on a farm is demanding in every country and people can have easier lives in cities, yet dependence on agricultural imports should be minimized.

The too-long dependence on sugar sold or bartered on the world market delayed addressing self-dependence for food. In the rural town we visited, our host now goes to their field via a horse cart, not a car.

Lack of fuel renders much machinery useless and makes it difficult to get to a market. In the long run sustainable agriculture, renewable energy production and the further development of a balanced economy are essential goals; they will not be advanced by any surrender to U.S. economic and possible military actions.

Cubans want solutions to this dilemma and short of international counter-pressure and willingness to break the blockade, an internal dialogue among all Cubans on the future of the revolution needs to be part of a solution. And for us, of course, the urgency of stopping this strangulation of Cuba is critical.

May 2026

Source: **Against the Current.**

CUBA

Sadistic Savagery on Display: Trump-Rubio's Assault on Cuba

DAVID FINKEL ·

THE SADISTIC SAVAGERY of the Trump regime's starvation-and-regime-change assault on Cuba comes into relief when you look at the surrounding circumstances and context.

The controversies within the left over the character of the Cuban government and state are irrelevant to the brutality that the United States is practicing. It's the U.S. imperialist state and government that need to be on trial.

That's the state and Trump regime that brags of blowing up more than 50 boats in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific, on the lying pretext that they were "running drugs," killing close to 200 people including victims of "double-tap" bombings — probably fishing vessels in most cases — without a shred of evidence, let alone judicial process.

That same regime has now indicted Cuban former president and defense minister Raul Castro in the shootdown of Cuban exile "Brothers to the Rescue" planes three decades ago.

It's nothing to do with justice or any national security threat, but raw imperial power exercised under the "Donroe Doctrine" of a floundering U.S. presidency, combined with the zealotry of Marco Rubio's savior-complex obsession over "rescuing Cuba from communism."

That arrogance was on full display with the kidnapping of Venezuelan ex-ruler Maduro. Trump expected to duplicate that triumph in Iran — overlooking the detail that Tehran had the capacity to fight back. (Admittedly, those of us who knew that Trump's tariff idiocies and tax cuts would damage the U.S. economy underestimated his potential to crash the whole world economy.)

Hemispheric Ruin

More broadly, the U.S. assault on Cuba is an intended warning to any present or future progressive movements or governments in Latin America. Today, the lives of Cuban children, women in pregnancy and those needing health care, dying from the lack of electricity and medical supplies are human sacrifices on the altar of imperial rapacity and ideology.

There was a time when post-revolutionary Cuba presented some kind of radical challenge to U.S. hegemony, or at least what was called Cuba's "threat of a good example" with its advanced educational and public health achievements. In all honesty, such a "threat" ended long ago with the defeat of the 1980s Central American revolutions and then the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The ensuing 35 years, beginning with the early 1990s "special period" of austerity and hardship, have seen a struggle to preserve Cuba's independence and economic viability under conditions of constant menace, as well as waves of emigration. The events of the shootdown of the exile-flown planes in 1996 occurred in that context.

Those Brothers to the Rescue flights, whatever humanitarian assistance they may have provided to refugee boats in the early 1990s, were also deliberate provocations against Cuba's sovereignty. They had murky connections with the CIA and FBI, some of which were revealed by Cuban government operatives who infiltrated the group.

By 1996, entering Cuban airspace and dropping leaflets over Havana, they were engaging in a game of Chicken that ended tragically.

Did that justify the Cuban air force blowing small civilian planes out of the sky? In my own opinion, clearly not — whatever malicious mischief or perform-

ative defiance they may have intended, those flights were no imminent security or military threat.

Cuba certainly had non-lethal methods of intercepting them. And the political impact was destructive, resulting in even tighter anti-Cuba sanctions by “bipartisan” agreement of the Clinton administration and Republican congressional leadership

Was the shootdown perhaps worthy of an independent investigation? Maybe so — in a different world with a body competent to perform it. In the real world, the United States government and judicial system are no such entity, and have no right to prosecute Cuba or its officials for this or any other case. U.S. imperialism should be the defendant.

There are Cuban exiles, and not only extreme right-wingers, who think that Trump and Rubio will “liberate” the island. They ought to have a look at Venezuela, where Maduro’s post-Chavista police-state regime remains in place under new Washington-client leadership and the miserable conditions of life persist.

The intention of the assault on Cuba is part and parcel of the effort to subjugate all of Latin America to multinational and especially U.S. corporate domination and privatization, democracy be damned. It is a fast-track road to hemispheric ruin, which makes the stakes especially high.

28 May 2026

Source: **Solidarity webzine.**

BOLIVIA

Bolivia on the Edge

FORREST HYLTON ·

The pace of events quickens, with too many developments to track adequately. This was the case in 1780-81 when Tomás Katari, Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari nearly toppled the Spanish Empire in Peru; during the National Revolution in April 1952; and again in September to October 2003 and May to June 2005. [2]

The compression of time has a spatial counterpart, pitting the besieged urban citizenry against the campesino countryside. There are currently around a hundred blockades, in seven of nine departments. Movement between cities is restricted, and in La Paz, after more than a month of siege, it is restricted within the city too, since taxi and minibus drivers are among those on strike and private citizens have little fuel left in their cars.

The contest over who rules Bolivia, how and on whose behalf, will ultimately be decided by endurance and numbers, not armed force. According to the Ombudsman's Office, the country is on the 'edge of the precipice'. Each passing day favours those who have risen up – chiefly Aymara campesino communities from twenty provinces in the department of La Paz. They produce their own food, which they take with them to the capital. They arrive by minibus and move about the city on foot or by cable car. As with community leadership or the sowing of fields, they take turns participating.

Last week, tens of thousands of people – the campesinos were joined by miners, factory workers, teachers, transport workers and others – occupied the centre of La Paz, surrounding the presidential palace without trying to break the three rings of riot police around it. There were only twenty arrests. As in 2003, though unlike 2005, the point was to show strength in numbers, minimising physical confrontation in order to return another day in even greater numbers – until Paz resigns. (His defence minister stepped down on Tuesday.)

In the remotest corners of the republic, mostly young Aymara and Quechua citizen journalists have filmed the collective local leadership declaring adherence to the communiqué issued on 24 May by the CSUTCB campesino union, condemning the death of 24-year-old Víctor Cruz Quispe in Vilaque, in Túpac Katari's home province of Aroma, at the hands of the authorities the previous day. They were supposed to be on a 'humanitarian' mission to get medicines, oxygen and fuel moving between La Paz and Oruro. But there was no evidence of the Red Cross or the Catholic Church, or of any effort to engage in dialogue with the protesters.

The mission was led by President Paz's cousin, Mauricio Zamora, the minister of public works, whose qualifications include owning an expensive restaurant in Calacoto, an upscale neighbourhood of La Paz. He failed to accomplish his stated goals of clearing the roads and fled back to the city along secondary roads after being ambushed twice.

At Cruz Quispe's wake, the collective leadership spoke in turn, as is customary; his widow was too grief-stricken to speak, although she spoke in La Paz on Monday, calling for justice and the president's resignation. She has a two-year-old daughter and a baby of three weeks. A preliminary police report has suggested that her husband's death was due to friendly fire, even though 9 mm shells were recovered at the scene. Highland Bolivian campesinos don't carry 9 mm pistols.

Last Tuesday, Congress passed a bill to allow the military to be deployed against protesters. In their own words, lawmakers are 'panicked' and 'terrified'. As in the coup of 2019, the urban middle class is projecting its fears onto an Indigenous campesino 'invader', which includes the many citizens of Aymara descent who live in El Alto and work in La Paz. [3]

The US State Department and the Bolivian government claim that the uprising is being organised by former

president Evo Morales and funded by narco-traffic. [4] Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater, has suggested that Colombian and Peruvian narco-guerrillas are involved. This tale is being spread through the airwaves from Miami by José Carlos Sánchez Berzaín, a former defence minister wanted for extradition to Bolivia for his role in massacring 67 people, most of them Aymara, in September and October 2003. Sánchez Berzaín claimed that Colombians and Peruvians were outside agitators in 2003. On 2 June, Paz claimed that outsiders were invading Bolivia and threatening its integrity, and would therefore be rooted out and expelled.

Like Sánchez Berzaín, the perennial far-right presidential candidate ‘Tuto’ Quiroga has been begging for a state of exception for weeks, claiming that Morales and narco-traffickers are directing and financing the popular protest. The more honest among the urban middle class admit that a state of exception will lead the military to fire on unarmed demonstrators, killing at least some, and that highland campesino trade unions do not respond to Morales or get paid to demonstrate.

The deputy minister of the interior has said that, assuming legislation declaring a state of exception passes the Plurinational Assembly, ‘humanitarian missions’ to unblock roads will begin with efforts to convince the protesters to demobilise. Force will then be used judiciously, not indiscriminately. Ostensibly at least, they wish to avoid massacring unarmed Indigenous campesinos.

Sánchez Berzaín and President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada fled to Miami in 2003 after declaring a state of exception and using lethal force. Their ghosts haunt President Paz. So does the figure of Jeanine Áñez, who came to power in a far-right coup in 2019, declared a state of exception, and, after Luis Arce was elected president in 2020, ended up in jail for the murder of unarmed demonstrators. She was only recently released.

Most political analysts speak only of the suffering of the good citizens of La Paz. This is not to be minimised: several people have died because the blockades prevented them receiving medical care. But there is little representation or even awareness of campesino or working-class demands – only a monothematic insist-

ence on ‘vandalism’, following the government line. Campesino leaders and community members say they are furious at being labelled ‘vandals’ by those they call the true vandals: the people who own and run Bolivia, most of them of European descent and based in the eastern lowlands.

The conflict is over constitutional rights. The mobilised communities are demanding that their rights as Indigenous citizens be respected, not trampled (*pisoteado*). The Plurinational State is theirs, too, and they have the right to demonstrate and govern themselves. They want to be treated equally, not governed by decree. They voted for Paz – he wouldn’t have got to the Palacio Quemado without them – but he betrayed their trust. They told him after their general assembly in April, and he didn’t listen – they gave him twenty days to respond but never heard back. He is really ‘Spanish’ not Bolivian and governs on behalf of big business in the east, in Santa Cruz, with laws that go against the ‘interests of our class’. When they demonstrate peacefully they are tear-gassed or even killed in the name of providing humanitarian aid for *paceños*.

There is no credible mediation in sight: the Catholic Church, Bolivian human rights organisations, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Ombudsman’s Office are all notable for their absence, in part because they discredited themselves in 2019. Regional diplomacy is also lacking, with Brazil’s President Lula calling for dialogue with no understanding of the Bolivian government’s intransigence, or of Indigenous campesino grievances.

A broad array of leaders stress repeatedly that they are following decisions taken in assemblies, and that if they don’t follow through on resolutions, their base will remove them. Quechua and Aymara campesino leadership is subject to recall. The same is true for urban neighborhood organisations and working-class unions. The head of the Bolivian Workers’ Centre, Mario Argollo, a mining leader, issued communiqués from hiding, until appearing in El Alto this week for a massive rally. Morales does the same, though to little effect beyond his coca growers’ trade union base in the tropical lowlands of the Chapare in Cochabamba.

Although La Paz and El Alto are the centre of the uprising, road blockades have multiplied in Cochabamba, Oruro, northern Potosí and Chuquisaca. In the east, Santa Cruz is cut off from Beni as well as Cochabamba: counter-mobilisations are massive, and the head of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee, Stello Cochamanidis, has declared that his UJC fascist shock troops – this is not hyperbole – will do the work the government has not, clearing the roads by force in the name of ‘security, work and development’. He has yet to follow through on the threats. On 2 June, in northwestern Santa Cruz, community members from campesino unions shut down the petroleum valves in Santa Rosa del Sara, and police moved in to make arrests. There were blockades in Pando but they have been lifted.

Last Monday, the coca growers’ trade union federation organised a motorised caravan to the headquarters of the Army’s 9th Battalion in Chimoré, Cochabamba, and conducted an inspection of the base to make sure no DEA or Argentine military personnel were on site. Barricades made of thick logs sharpened like pencils

went up. The base is still surrounded. When the lights went out in the Chapare on 27 May, coca growers assumed the US might try to take Morales as they had Maduro, and rushed to surround the nearby anti-narcotics special forces unit, taking over the roads. [5]

But it is not Morales or the coca growers – or the urban middle class – who will decide the outcome of the contest. It is the Quechua-Aymara peasantry in the western highlands and highland valleys, four million strong, and their allies in El Alto and the trade unions. On 3 June, they announced they will march on La Paz again – this time to remove Paz, who, the same day, uploaded then deleted a video calling on people to mobilise with the police and military (many of whose conscripts would be facing off against people they consider kin) to end the blockades.

5 June 2026

Source: **London Review of Books**. Notes by Adam Novak for the French translation on ESSF.

WORLD

Porto Alegre and the Rebirth of Internationalism

SUSHOVAN DHAR ·

At a time marked by the rise of authoritarian nationalism, intensifying imperial rivalries, and deepening social fragmentation, the Anti-Fascist and Anti-Imperialist Conference in Porto Alegre represented more than a gathering. It became a space where dispersed struggles began to recognise one another again, where movements separated by geography, language, and political traditions searched for common ground in an increasingly unstable world.

The Porto Alegre Declaration reflects this moment of convergence. It's true that neither does it resolve the contradictions of the present period, such as the differing approaches to activism and the challenges posed by global inequalities nor does it offer a finished roadmap. But it shows that confronting neo-fascism and imperial rivalry will require rebuilding international solidarity in ways that respond to today's realities.

Toward Authoritarianism

Multiple overlapping crises characterise the current global landscape. Across various continents, far-right forces are increasingly gaining influence, while democratic institutions are facing significant weakening. The expansion of militarisation is evident, and inequality continues to escalate. These interconnected phenomena signify a broader transformation within global capitalism.

Exploiting economic insecurity, migration crises and general political disillusionment, the European far-right continue to expand their influence. In Latin America, there are authoritarian tendencies that exist alongside fragile democratic advancements, while social movements face challenges in their efforts to safeguard social rights. The Asian political landscape is marked by majoritarian nationalism and authoritarian governance are reshaping political landscapes. In Africa, external

interventions, debt dependency and internal authoritarianism intersect in complex ways.

These developments unfold alongside intensifying imperial rivalries. The United States seeks to maintain its global dominance while emerging powers expand their influence. Military alliances are strengthened. Defence budgets rise. Geopolitical tensions escalate.

In such a context, fascism does not emerge as an isolated phenomenon. It grows within a global environment shaped by militarisation, inequality, and political crisis. Authoritarian nationalism thrives when democratic institutions weaken and when social insecurity intensifies. Imperial rivalry, in turn, fuels nationalism, militarisation, and repression. This convergence between imperialism and authoritarianism defines the current period.

A New Internationalist Challenge

A recurring debate in Porto Alegre was how to approach anti-imperialism in a world shaped by competing imperial powers. Well, the pressure to side with one camp against another is difficult to avoid, but doing so risks reinforcing the same patterns of rivalry and domination that many movements are trying to move beyond.

In Porto Alegre, many discussions pointed toward the need to move beyond this kind of thinking. Opposition to U.S. imperialism, solidarity with Palestine, rejection of Russian aggression in Ukraine, and support for democratic struggles against authoritarian regimes were treated as compatible. Rather, we can increasingly consider them part of the same internationalist approach; one grounded in solidarity with peoples rather than alignment with states.

This approach rejects campism, the idea that anti-imperialism requires alignment with particular states; prioritising solidarity with people at the centre. Such a perspective is not abstract. It emerges from concrete realities.

The US–Israeli attacks on Iran represent a dangerous escalation of imperial aggression and militarisation. These actions blatantly violate sovereignty, risk regional war, and strengthen authoritarian tendencies across Western Asia. However, opposing imperialist aggression does not mean supporting the Iranian government, which still limits civil liberties and represses democratic movements. The Iranian people themselves have repeatedly mobilised for political freedom and social justice. Solidarity must, therefore, be directed toward the Iranian people: against both external aggression and internal repression.

Similarly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine illustrates another dimension of imperialist aggression, not only violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and inflicted devastating consequences on populations. Our solidarity with the Ukrainian people is possible without aligning with NATO or Western geopolitical strategies, as it is possible to support Ukraine’s right to self-determination while also criticising the military alliances that may exploit the situation for their own interests. A consistent internationalist perspective rejects both Russian aggression and the militarisation driven by competing global powers. These examples illustrate a broader principle: anti-imperialism must be rooted in solidarity with peoples, not states.

Multipolarity and Its Limits

The Porto Alegre discussions around multi-polarity is instructive as many people frequently portray the rise of new powers as a counter to Western dominance. However, multi-polarity does not inherently lead to a more equitable world.

Competition among powers can deepen militarisation, intensify resource conflicts, and reinforce authoritarian tendencies. Many on the left advance the idea of multi-polarity as a panacea for such evils. Multi-polarity may shift the balance of power; it’s only among elites while leaving the conditions of working people largely unchanged.

India can be taken as a telling example of these contradictions. As a member of BRICS, it is frequently depicted as part of an emerging multi-polar order. However, concurrently, India is strengthening military

cooperation with Western alliances aimed at containing China. This contradiction is enough to reveal the complexities of contemporary geopolitics.

Internally, India also exemplifies the rise of authoritarian majoritarian nationalism backed by an ideological agenda of the RSS, rooted in a century-old vision influenced by European fascism, which aspires to transform India into a Hindu majoritarian state. The erosion of democratic institutions, attacks on minorities, and centralised power form part of this process. At the same time, the growing strategic proximity between India and Israel reflects the unity of authoritarian governance models across borders.

These developments reinforce an important lesson: multi-polarity among states does not necessarily translate into emancipation for peoples.

Resistance in a Fragmented World

Despite these challenges, resistance continues to emerge. Mass mobilisations against authoritarian governments, labour struggles against austerity, feminist movements confronting patriarchy, and grassroots campaigns against extractivism all demonstrate that opposition to authoritarianism and imperialism remains alive.

The electoral setback suffered by Viktor Orbán in Hungary reinforces the hope that far-right consolidation is not linear. Social movements across Latin America persist in their efforts to confront neo-liberal policies and resist authoritarianism. Workers’ struggles across continents confront precarious labour and economic inequality. These struggles often remain fragmented. Yet they share common dynamics. Porto Alegre provided a venue where these diverse struggles could start to come together.

The Difficult Task Ahead

The conference also revealed the difficulties facing renewed internationalism. Differences in geopolitical analysis, historical experience, and political traditions remain significant. These divergences did not disappear in Porto Alegre.

The assembly highlighted a significant point: unity of action can be achieved even in the absence of complete consensus. In an era characterised by fragmentation, such convergence is becoming ever more essential.

The rise of neo-fascism, intensifying imperial rivalry, and the deepening crisis of global capitalism necessitate responses commensurate with their magnitude. This necessitates the rebuilding of international networks, the strengthening of solidarity, and the development of collective strategies.

The Porto Alegre Declaration announced concrete political moments where this emerging internationalism could take shape. The anti-NATO meeting planned in Turkey in 2026 comes at a time of expanding militarisation, growing military budgets, and the widening geography of NATO's strategic ambitions, from Eastern Europe to the Indo-Pacific. Bringing together movements opposing militarisation, war, and geopolitical bloc politics, the meeting has the potential to link struggles against military alliances with broader resistance to austerity, authoritarianism, and imperial competition. Similarly, the G7 counter-summit in France and Switzerland in June 2026 offers an opportunity to confront the economic dimension of imperial power, debt regimes, austerity policies, sanctions, and financial domination, imposed by the world's most powerful economies. These initiatives signal that Porto Alegre was not simply a moment of discussion, but part of an emerging calendar of coordinated international mobilisation, where resistance to militarisation and resistance to economic domination can begin to converge.

A Beginning, Not a Conclusion

Porto Alegre should not be considered an endpoint. It represents a moment — a fragile but meaningful step toward renewed internationalism. In the present day, internationalism will not appear as a fully realised entity. Instead, we must be ready to traverse a long path through continuous dialogue, relentless struggle, and creative experimentation. This process will inevitably be uneven and open to contestation, as various political entities and groups might harbour conflicting interests and priorities that shape their engagement with internationalism. Nevertheless, the urgency for such internationalism has seldom been more pronounced.

The world is moving in contradictory directions. Authoritarianism is rising. Imperial rivalries intensify. Inequality deepens. But resistance persists. Movements regroup. Alliances are reconsidered. New forms of co-operation begin to emerge. Porto Alegre offered a glimpse of this process. Not a finished project. Not a unified movement. But a beginning - fragile, imperfect, and necessary. In a time of fragmentation, that beginning matters.

26 May 2026

Source: CADTM

An earlier version of this article appeared in the May 2026 issue of *The Hammer*.

GREECE

The “chalk revolution”: when a society rises up to defend public education

APHRODITE MARA ·

On the one hand, a public institution conceived as a pillar of social justice and democracy; on the other, a system that is gradually aligned with the logic of the market, profitability and individual responsibility.

On the morning of Thursday, 4 June 2026, a mobilization of exceptional magnitude materialized this divide. Thousands of people – teachers, pupils, students, parents, education and social sector actors – converged on the capital, Brussels. Their objective was clear: to express a massive rejection of the policies implemented by a government perceived as increasingly authoritarian and deaf to the demands on the ground.

This day did not emerge from nowhere. It was the culmination of 18 months of growing tensions, major mobilizations and an accumulation of reforms experienced as a systemic attack on public education.

A government accused of undemocratic behaviour

Since coming to power, about a year and a half before the events of June 2026, the government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has embarked on a series of reforms aimed at thoroughly restructuring the education system. Very quickly, relations with teachers and their representative organisations deteriorated.

The criticisms converge: lack of consultation, decisions imposed without real negotiation, and a clear contempt for the actors on the ground. The unions denounce a top-down logic in which the professional expertise of teachers is systematically marginalised. The emerging collectives speak of an assumed political will to circumvent social resistance.

This tension reached a climax with the adoption of a central text: “decree-programme 2”. In order to ensure its adoption, the government has resorted to exceptional

parliamentary procedures. On two occasions, the established rules were circumvented in order to reduce debate to a minimum and prevent the opposition from fully playing its role.

For the opposition parties and a large part of civil society, these decisions constitute genuine breaks with democracy. The vote of 4 June 2026 therefore appears not only as a legislative moment, but also as a revelation of broader institutional drifts.

“Decree-programme 2”: a systemic reform with cumulative effects

At the heart of the protest is the very content of “Decree-programme 2”. Presented as a measure of budgetary rationalization, this text introduces a series of profound transformations in the education system.

Among the most emblematic measures is the increase in the workload in higher secondary education, which goes from 20 to 22 weekly periods, without a salary increase. For teachers, this change is not a simple technical adjustment: it implies an intensification of work without improving pedagogical conditions, in a context already marked by overload and burnout.

The text also provides for a significant restriction of rights related to sick leave and absences without a medical certificate. End-of-career arrangements are being tightened, limiting the possibilities for the most experienced teachers to gradually reduce their workload.

At the same time, social measures were abolished. In particular, the budgets devoted to the free distribution of meals in institutions with a precarious public have been repealed. This decision is particularly outrageous, as it directly affects the most vulnerable students.

In higher education, the reform provides for a substantial increase in tuition fees (from €835 to €1,194 per year in

universities – an increase of more than 40%; and up to five times higher in some institutions). This measure is combined with an extension of student work (they are allowed to work more hours) and a lowering of the age of access to this work (from 16 to 15 years old), creating a paradoxical situation: students have to work more to finance studies that have become more expensive, at the risk of compromising their academic success.

Other provisions complete this picture: the abolition of free art academies for children under 12 years old, the questioning of previous reforms aimed at strengthening the equality of the system, and the lack of salary recognition for the extension of studies (from 3 to 4 years) for future teachers.

Taken in isolation, each of these points could be the subject of a specific debate. Together, they are designing a structural transformation: a school that is less accessible, more unequal, and based more on individual resources than on collective solidarity.

Austerity as part of a broader framework

Educational reforms do not unfold in a vacuum. They are part of a broader set of policies adopted at the national level. These include the “double index jump”, which reduces the purchasing power of employees by suspending the automatic indexation of salaries to inflation, as well as the tightening of the conditions of access to sick leave and end-of-career arrangements.

The introduction of “negative bonus” pension mechanisms affecting the future retirement of part-time workers further reinforces this feeling of precariousness. For teachers, these measures come on top of sectoral reforms, producing a particularly severe cumulative effect.

In this context, the protest quickly went beyond the framework of education. It joins broader concerns about the future of public services, the deterioration of working conditions and the rise of inequalities.

The birth of an unprecedented social movement

The movement was not born on 4 June 2026. Its roots go back to the autumn of 2024, when the first cost-saving

measures affected state schools. From October 2024, local mobilizations emerged. They remained initially limited, but laid the foundations for a dynamic that would gradually expand. Teachers then expressed their concern about the deterioration of working conditions and the questioning of certain recent advances.

A turning point took place after the 2026 spring holidays. On 12 May 2026, a large demonstration against the federal government — often referred to as the “Arizona government” — helped to unite previously dispersed anger. In this context, several general meetings at schools, particularly in Liège, decided to launch renewable strikes. In Brussels, schools organised to strengthen their coordination and their capacity for action. It was at this pivotal moment that the “Mars attacks” collective emerged, an inter-school coordination that played a central role in the structuring of the movement.

The eruption of collectives

One of the most striking features of this mobilization is the emergence of autonomous collectives. Alongside the unions, a new generation of actors is organizing. Among the most visible are “École en lutte [School in Struggle]” and “Université en colère [Angry University]”, which respectively bring together primary and secondary school teachers, and higher education actors. These collectives seek to revitalize a social movement that is considered too institutionalized and sometimes disconnected from the realities on the ground.

The “Mars attacks” coordination plays a particularly decisive role. It organizes inter-school assemblies, coordinates actions and helps produce alternative information to what activists perceive as misleading government communication.

Quickly, other initiatives emerged: “Parents attack” and “Élèves attack [Students attack]”. These collectives extend the mobilization to the entire educational community, transforming a professional protest into a societal movement.

Self-organization and grassroots democracy

From May 2026, the movement entered a phase of intensification. Inter-school general assemblies (GAs) are organized in several large cities. These General Assemblies become places for collective deliberation and decision-making. They discuss the renewal of strikes, the organization of pickets, student evaluation methods, and communication strategies.

This dynamic of self-organization is one of the most innovative aspects of the movement. It reflects a mistrust of traditional structures, but also a desire to regain control of decisions. For many participants, this experience gives a political meaning to the teaching profession and to collective commitment.

4 June 2026: a massive demonstration under high tension

On Thursday, 4 June 2026, the mobilization reached its peak. In the morning, processions from all over the country converged on the Parliament district. About five thousand teachers, joined by pupils, students and trade unionists, were faced with a police force of unusual size. Roadblocks, anti-riot units, massive presence of officers: everything indicated an anticipation of a high level of conflict.

Very quickly, the situation became tense. Clashes broke out near the FWB Parliament. Several witnesses report particularly violent interventions by the police. Teachers are trying to protect their students, most of whom are minors. Young people aged 14 to 15, often present for their first demonstration, were at the heart of a brutal police repression. The trap technique — consisting of encircling demonstrators to arrest or even repress them — was used. It was denounced by many organizations as a problematic, even illegal practice.

Repression and targeting of young people

Tensions did not end on 4 June. In the following days, on 5-6 June 2026, so-called “preventive” control and arrest operations multiplied, concentrated in particular around transit areas, such as the central station. Several testimonies mention stops targeting young people — in

particular, black teenagers and teenagers of North African origin.

These practices fuel a sense of injustice and reinforce the political dimension of the movement. The issue of police violence and institutional discrimination is now at the heart of the mobilization.

An immediate response: the appeal of 8 June 2026

Faced with these events, the reaction was swift. On Monday 8 June 2026, a joint call was launched by school and university collectives, teachers’ unions and youth associations, for a broad and peaceful demonstration against all forms of violence against young people. It marked a convergence between the different components of the movement and underlines its ability to reorganise itself quickly.

A movement that is spreading

Beyond the one-off demonstrations, the movement is a long-term one. The strikes continue. The general assemblies continue to meet. Rotating events are organized in different cities. A new deadline has been set: 16 June 2026, a major interprofessional demonstration in Namur, the capital of the Walloon region. This event marks a possible expansion of the movement to other sectors.

Demands that are being structured

If, at first, the mobilization was built around the rejection of the reforms, it is gradually evolving towards a formulation of positive demands. These include reducing class sizes, increasing teaching resources, recognizing teachers’ pedagogical freedom, and harmonizing salary scales. More broadly, the movement defends a conception of school as a space of equality, emancipation and the fight against discrimination.

International reach

The “chalk revolution”, as the movement has been called, is not an isolated case. It is part of an international dynamic in which many countries are experiencing similar mobilizations. Everywhere, teachers, students and parents are mobilizing against policies perceived as attempts to commodify education. The issues are simi-

ar: access to education, working conditions, funding of public services. In this sense, the movement observed in June 2026 can be interpreted as a warning signal, but also as a laboratory for new forms of mobilization.

A struggle that has only just begun

Despite the adoption of “Decree-programme 2” at dawn on 5 June, the movement shows no signs of running out of steam. On the contrary, it seems to be entering a new phase. The mobilization has already produced effects: it has highlighted issues that are often invisible and has made it possible to build unprecedented alliances.

It remains to be seen whether this dynamic will be able to influence political choices. One thing is certain: the question of the future of public education is now being asked centrally.

And, well beyond the borders of Belgium, it challenges all societies confronted with the same fundamental question: how can we defend (and expand) the right to education and public and democratic schooling?

11 June 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

PORTUGAL

The general strike in Portugal scored points, but the future is uncertain

ANTONIO LOUÇÃ ·

The tourism industry was severely affected by the cancellation of numerous flights at Lisbon, Porto and Faro airports; public transport was paralysed in the major cities, with the exception of minimal bus services and some rail connections between the centre and the outskirts of Lisbon; schools were paralysed in the middle of exam season and public hospitals only operated for emergencies. The big news was the significant participation from the private sector, clearly higher than that seen in the general strike in December, with stoppage rates that the CGTP (Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses or General Confederation of Portuguese Workers, the largest trade union federation) estimated at 100% for companies like Sovena and Cimpor, 95% for Bosch and 88% for Glavidro. [1]

The working class was not swayed by the siren songs that guaranteed the rejection of the "package" in the parliamentary vote. The previous strike, in December, had been strong enough to force the neo-fascist Chega party to change its voting position and announce its opposition to the approval of the bill promoted by the (minority) conservative right-wing government. But Chega's about-face was, and remains, one of its many opportunistic manoeuvres, and no one can trust it to stick to its position. The struggle had to continue, and the call for a new general strike, despite all the postponements and vacillations by the CGTP, offered the working class the opportunity to make its position clear. And that opportunity was seized decisively.

In addition to rejecting illusions about the uncertain outcome of the parliamentary vote, the working class resisted the highly demobilising effect of the five-month interval between the general strike in December and this one in June. During that time, employers and the Gov-

ernment negotiated in the forum known as "Social Concertation" with the social democratic trade union federation UGT (União Geral de Trabalhadores or General Union of Workers), excluding the CGTP, in its majority tied to the communist party. Excluded from negotiations, they did not use that time to mobilise within companies, warning about the danger posed by the government project, but instead went around in circles until calling for a new general strike on June 3.

When the Government's intransigence forced the UGT itself to refuse to agree to the package, the CGTP had a golden opportunity to promote assemblies in the companies that would eventually drag the UGT into joining the strike. In fact, even without that pressure from below, several UGT unions gave their members the green light to join the strike called by the rival union. However, the CGTP preferred to issue a top-down call, emphasising the UGT's "yellow" nature and avoiding opening the Pandora's box of a widespread workplace assembly process that could potentially sustain the struggle in the coming weeks and months.

The absence of assemblies resulted in a very uneven distribution of picket lines. In many workplaces, the union bureaucracy left the mornings free for strikers to stay home or go to the beach and simply called for afternoon demonstrations in each city. Thus, workplaces with a long tradition of assemblies and pickets were now deprived of both. The strike's coincidence—anything but accidental—with a public holiday the following day, and with a Friday that invited long weekends, exponentially worsened the demobilisation. In Lisbon, the afternoon demonstration was less attended than the one in December 2025.

On June 3, 2026, the working class made its mark with a powerful strike. But there is no strategy or leadership that can guarantee the defeat of the labour package. We

are still far from defining that strategy and building that leadership.

5 June 2026

*Translated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from **Huella del Sur**.*

WORLD

Macron's G-Zero

JEAN BATOU ·

Why in Evian rather than Paris?

– **For security reasons: between the Alps and the lake, the area around this small town is relatively easy to control. Furthermore, the street demonstrations that such a summit is bound to provoke will have to be managed primarily by the Swiss police.**

– For symbolic reasons: Évian is the perfect setting for a “diplomatic bubble,” isolated from the social tensions of the real world. The Hôtel Royal was, in fact, built in 1909 as a luxury hotel for the elite. Its name refers to King Edward VII. For over a century, it has welcomed sovereigns, heads of state, diplomats, industrialists, and the very wealthy.

– Due to Geneva's proximity, its international organizations, and its globalized economic and financial position. Giant companies such as ADM, Alcon, Bunge, Cargill, Caterpillar, DuPont, Gunvor, L'Oréal, Logitech, Mercuria Energy Group, Merck Serono, MSC, Richemont, Trafigura and Vitol have their European or global headquarters in Geneva.

Growing rivalries

This G7 has little to do with the summits of the era of “happy globalization.” We have entered fully into an era of rising inter-imperialist conflicts.

Signs of disagreement are multiplying between the United States, the European Union, and Japan. To name just a few: industrial, trade, and customs policy; the regulation of major digital platforms; the strategic and technological autonomy of European defence; the future of NATO; relations with China, Russia, and Iran; the status of Greenland; and the role of major international institutions (UN, ILO, WHO, WTO, etc.). On all these points, the divergences between the United States and

the major European powers, and to a lesser extent with Japan, have only grown.

This is why there is little chance that the G7 will be able to agree on a common response to the crisis factors that are disrupting international relations: the rise of US protectionism, the loss of competitiveness of EU countries, the continued rise of the Chinese trade surplus (\$1 trillion); the issue of energy security; the shortage of certain critical resources, particularly rare earths; the challenges of AI; the reshaping of development aid (more funding COMING from countries of the South, more private funding); the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

“Macron's term is drawing to a close. His popularity at home is low. France is a ‘middle-ranking power’ with little chance of securing concrete commitments from the United States and China, let alone Germany. Moreover, China isn't even a member of the G7. In 2026, we can expect a plethora of academic papers, scenarios, and speeches on global imbalances, which will only underline what we already know. But the United States and China, along with many European countries, are unlikely to change the policies that have created these excessive global imbalances, any more than they have in the past two decades.” (Mark Sobel, senior US Treasury official for 40 years, OMFIF, March 3, 2026)

Towards a G-Zero

In reality, the various organs of “global governance” are increasingly malfunctioning: the UN is considerably weakened, the WTO has been marginalized by the unilateral tariff policy of the United States, the G20 struggles to agree, even on a final declaration, the BRICS represent contradictory interests... It is in this sense that the very influential American political scientist, Ian Bremmer, author of *US vs Them: The Failure of Geobalism* (2018), predicts a G-Zero.

"Geopolitical expert Ian Bremmer stated that the American operation that led to the capture of the Venezuelan leader reflected a deeper shift toward what he calls a 'G-Zero world,' where no country is willing or able to assume global leadership. He argued that the United States was turning away from the international order it once established, based on collective security, the rule of law, and democratic norms, and replacing it with unilateral action guided by brute force." (*India Today*, January 7, 2026)

To plug the leaky hull of the "global governance" ship, various options are being debated. Some advocate expanding the G7 to include Australia, South Korea, and Spain, suggest inviting more middle-ranking powers, and strengthen its collaboration with international institutions to counterbalance the unilateral policies of the United States—the US would not necessarily participate in all discussions. Others advocate cooperation among the willing, with the EU, Canada, and the UK potentially taking the lead, aimed at creating leverage for negotiations with China.

The only points of agreement: intensifying the class war

On at least six objectives, the G7 members will agree without difficulty:

1. Continue to favour the enrichment of the richest; 2. Continue to dismantle our public services and social insurance; 3. Further reduce our freedoms and democratic rights; 4. Intensify the hunt for migrants ; 5. Turn a blind eye to climate change; 6. Accelerate the arms race.

But precisely, they hardly need to debate that in Évian. The matter is settled!

1. Continuing to enrich the wealthiest: the number of dollar billionaires grew from 1,810 in 2016 to 3,028 in 2025. Together, they hold \$15 trillion, equivalent to the combined assets of the 5.5 to 6 billion poorest people (70% of the world's population). But this staggering imbalance doesn't interest the world's elite, and for good reason.

2. Continue the dismantling of our public services and social safety nets. Whether they wield a chainsaw or a plane, businesses and governments are committed to a systematic reduction of social spending. Emmanuel

Macron explicitly acknowledged this before the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 23rd, feigning regret, of course:

"Everywhere, we are reducing and undermining our shared ambitions to finance major global challenges. Collective funding for healthcare is collapsing, as is funding for food security and education."

3. Further curtailing the freedoms and democratic rights we have acquired through more than 150 years of struggle in order to establish more authoritarian regimes. Indeed, the governments of the G7 countries are now looking enviously towards Russia and China, where authorities and businesses do not have to take into account trade unions, political parties, or associations independent of the regime in power. Imperialism on its last legs has never been compatible with democratic rights...

4. Intensify the hunt for migrants : Over the past ten years, 30,000 people have died trying to enter Fortress Europe illegally — Frontex relies on several thousand agents (10,000 planned for 2027) — not counting the much larger forces of national police forces — a budget of one billion euros, dozens of physical barriers, sophisticated weaponry, and several hundred detention camps. In the United States, 7,000 people have died attempting to cross the border; ICE has more than 20,000 agents and a budget of 11.3 billion dollars.

5. Turning a blind eye to climate change. A leader in this area, the United States actively promotes fossil fuels, reduces federal regulations on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and lowers its international commitments. The other G7 countries also play a key role in reducing the COP climate targets.

6. Accelerating the arms race. The United States currently spends \$1 trillion annually on armaments, and Donald Trump has announced plans to increase this colossal budget to \$1.5 trillion. The EU and the UK allocate approximately \$500 billion to their military spending, and these amounts are expected to approach \$800 billion by 2030.

It is against these six objectives shared by the Swiss government and the Geneva financial centre that we

must mobilize in Geneva and in France, from June 13 to 17.

Servility towards the United States

Despite growing disagreements, the subservience of G7 members to the United States and the bluster of its president is impressive...

During the preparation period for the Summit, the six other G7 countries made numerous conciliatory gestures so as not to irritate Donald Trump.

First, South Africa, a regular guest at G7 summits, was not invited this year under pressure from the United States. To ensure Africa wasn't completely excluded from the festivities, France had to call upon Kenya...

Why didn't Trump want South Africa?

- Because of its complaint against Israel before the International Court of Justice for violation of the Genocide Convention in Gaza.
- Because of its land reform allowing the expropriation of certain lands without compensation to correct the inequalities inherited from apartheid.
- Because of the alleged persecution of white farmers, presented by Washington as a premeditated "white genocide".

Then, regarding Iran, on January 14, the G7 foreign ministers, unflinchingly echoing Donald Trump's rhetoric, published a joint statement outlining the following undertaking:

No opposition to the war in Iran...

"The G7 members remain ready to impose further restrictive measures if Iran continues to repress protests and dissent in violation of international human rights."

Yet, on February 28, the US and Israeli aggression against Iran made no further mention of "international human rights." It was now solely about uranium and missiles. Furthermore, it strengthened the powers of the petro-theocracy of the Revolutionary Guards and massively intensified domestic repression, while exposing the civilian population to the direct and

indirect effects of massive bombings, also causing significant shortages.

Silence in the face of increased repression by the Revolutionary Guards

Repression has intensified in Iran since the beginning of the American-Israeli aggression.

From November 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026: 121 death sentences were carried out

From March 1 to May 31, 2026: 321.

(Source: Iran Human Rights)

This did not prevent the G7 foreign ministers from using doublespeak on March 1st, jointly declaring that they "would continue to closely coordinate their actions in the face of the various challenges facing the international community."

However, despite repeated calls from Donald Trump, this time his allies did not lift a finger to help him get out of the impasse he has plunged headlong into in Iran.

The German chancellor went even further, recalling American failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, referring to a quagmire, and even adding that Iran had "humiliated" the United States. This was more than the champion of "Make America Great Again" could bear, and he announced the withdrawal of 5,000 American troops from Germany.

Trump's latest whim

As if all that weren't enough, "President Trump, in order to organize a boxing match under a tent erected in the White House gardens on his own birthday, imposed the postponement of the G7 summit in Évian. Trump's circus thus forces the postponement of the ceremony honouring Marc Bloch, the historian, author of **Strange Defeat**, resistance fighter, and hero who died for France" (Pierre Ouzoulis, Communist senator). Indeed, the interment of Marc Bloch in the Panthéon, initially scheduled for June 16, exactly 82 years to the day after his assassination by the Nazis, had to be postponed to June 23.

4 June 2026

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ARGENTINA

The anti-capitalist left surge in Argentina and the letter that sparked a crucial debate

EDUARDO LUCITA ·

As we believe it is important to raise awareness internationally about what is happening in Argentina, we interviewed Lucita, a signatory to both letters, on May 27. He discussed this process, provided an overview of the international situation and argued the case for building on the successful anti-fascist conference recently held in Porto Alegre in Brazil.

Your open letter addressed to the parties in the FIT-U has had a big impact within left-wing circles and beyond. Its impacts have even been felt here in Brazil. Could you give us an overview of the letter's purpose and why it was published now?

I will focus on the letters' main points. To start, there is a broader context to bear in mind: the deepening social crisis and young people's sense of a lack of future; the president's declining popularity and strong rejection of his government's actions; the serious difficulties Peronism has resolving its internal crisis; and the rise of the anti-capitalist left, embodied in the figure of Myriam Bregman. This general context seemed to us a turning point in the political situation, as well as both an opportunity and a challenge for the left.

So, the first objective was initiating a debate about this juncture, which I view as exceptional. Judging by the comments, criticisms and suggestions we have received, and that the Socialist Workers' Party (PTS), Workers' Socialist Movement (MST) and Socialist Left (IS) [all parties within the FIT-U] published the first letter on their websites, I think this first objective was achieved.

Beyond the analyses and characterisations, the letter also puts forward concrete proposals, such as creating "Committees of Struggle and Support for Myriam Bregman," and establishing technical working groups to develop the left's program with greater precision. We believe this would help consolidate its rise.

As for why now, the idea flowing through the text is that, for the first time in more than 40 years, the chance exists to mobilise sections of the masses to support a workers' government and, within a broader perspective, raise the idea of contesting for real power. As we say, the committees could play an important role in this. It strikes me as an unprecedented situation that we must capitalise on.

Polls show surging support for Bregman, in terms of her image, approval and voting intentions. Did this surprise you?

Well, Bregman's profile has been rising for several years. She is a left-wing activist with a long track record around human rights, and supporting trade union and social struggles. She is also a very powerful voice in the National Congress.

But I would be lying if I said that the surge in support for her over the past two months did not take me by surprise. She is the only political figure in the country with a positive approval rating and has an average voting intention of 10%. I am pleasantly surprised by all this.

What do you think explains this explosive rise in the polls? Is it her personal qualities, the policies she proposes, or rather the political and social situation being ripe for a figure as disruptive as Milei was in his day?

It is a combination of several factors. On the one hand, there is no doubt that the socio-economic situation carries significant weight. This is reflected in Milei's falling approval ratings — now at their lowest point since he came to office [in 2023]— and, above all, by the 60% disapproval of his government's performance.

The shift to the right within Peronism is also important. The party's leaders have drifted a fair way from its

historic base, which is fragmented, leaderless and disoriented. In a recent conversation with colleagues from some outer Buenos Aires suburbs, they said they had observed a shift in voting intentions within Peronism away from traditional figures towards Juan Grabois [who leads a progressive wing of Peronism closely linked to sectors of the Catholic Church], but now, for reasons unknown, Grabois's rise had stalled and people were looking to vote for Bregman. I do not know if that is exactly the case, but such anecdotes are worth bearing in mind.

I believe her role as an uncompromising opposition figure who has never made deals with any government (just like the other FIT-U MPs) has been decisive. Her personality and charisma also carry weight. She is pleasant to deal with, always smiling, cultured and intelligent. She is also not afraid to speak out in parliamentary debates, to put her body on the line on the streets and to speak with the media, becoming the most sought-after figure these days.

I would also add that she has been a member of a Trotskyist party [the PTS] for 20 long years. You, as a full-time party activist, and I know full well the demands such parties entail. Bregman's personality stems from her DNA, but I also believe it comes from being shaped and raised within that party.

The first open letter disagreed with statements by Bregman and Christian Castillo [another PTS leader and FIT-U MP] that the conditions do not exist for a left-wing government, nor for contesting power, as there is no powerful social movement or organs of dual power.

In my opinion, those statements were rather unfortunate. It is not that they are entirely wrong, but they failed to account for the context and came across as defensive, whereas we believe — and the letter makes this clear — that the conditions exist for a more active stance, putting forward proposals and seeking to overcome resistance.

Fortunately, our comrades have not repeated those statements. I think there was a process of reflection, and Bregman recently said in an interview: “Of course we want to be in government, of course we want to have the power to transform this situation at its roots.”

You also controversially characterised the current moment, saying that “an electoral breakthrough is more likely than an insurrectionary one”, before proposing “Committees of Struggle and Support for Myriam Bregman”. Is this not a sign of electoralism? How does this fit with the PTS's proposal for a new workers' party? And is the open letter not overly optimistic?

Well, in the face of so much resignation and despair that others want to impose on us, we have opted for the optimism of the will. But not in the abstract; rather, an optimism based on the shifting situation.

As for a workers' party, I cannot answer definitively, as I am not clear what they are proposing. Speaking at the Ferro stadium on May 1, Bregman referred to a workers' party, then to an instrument of the workers, then a party of the new working class, and finally a new historic movement. I suppose this proposal will be more defined in time and be discussed within the FIT-U, whose co-ordinating committee I understand is due to meet in the coming days.

As for electoralism, no one doubts that capital, led by Milei, is waging an offensive against working people's living conditions, environmental protections and women's rights, the LGBTQ+ community and various minorities in the country involved in multiple resistance movements.

But a common feature of these struggles — which all indications suggest will intensify — is that they are dispersed, fragmented and often influenced by identity politics, which hinders attempts to unify and centralise them. To make matters worse, leaders such as those of the CGT [General Confederation of Labour] favour negotiation over confrontation, or simply look the other way.

No one believes a social uprising is imminent, although the class struggle is obviously unpredictable. Otherwise, we would have all predicted the 2001 uprising [against neoliberal policies that forced the resignation of several presidents]. As I am older, I remember the 1959 conflict at the Lisandro de La Torre meat-processing plant, which culminated in a general strike organised via word of mouth. But it is a fact that the polls show electoral

progress is far more likely to occur today than an uprising.

In the second letter, “Some reflections on the tasks ahead”, you place great emphasis on the committees, presented under the slogan “For a workers’ government: Myriam Bregman for president”.

Yes. The proposal for committees — which, it must be acknowledged, Bregman took up in her May 1 speech when she spoke of “organising support” — seeks not only to unite activists from parties in the FIT-U or other organisations and movements, but also intellectuals, artists and, above all, those leading the currently scattered and fragmented struggles. It aims to call for the broadest possible unity so that we can discuss together a minimum program to address the emergency we face and opens possibilities for profound transformations.

In recent days, the PTS launched its public call of “We need you.” We support this as a step forward, which invites people to organise around the idea of a workers’ government. It also raises the idea of a workers’ party and/or a new historic movement, but as I said, this requires more in-depth discussions.

Logically, these committees, convened by and rallying behind Bregman, should also be involved in election campaigning. The reality is that we will most likely enter a lull period now, due to the World Cup. But elections will be happen soon after it finishes. And they will be important, not only because many think things cannot go on as they are, but because within the ruling classes there is a sector already doubting that Milei will be re-elected, or if it is even in their interests if he is. So, there is no shortage of people wanting to drop him to save their project, and are already looking for a replacement.

So, for me, this is not electoralism. It is about seizing an unprecedented opportunity. But looking at the two open letters, you will see that they insist on not abandoning the struggles or the streets. The electoral arena is just another battlefield. As they used to say in the past, we must not ignore the battles on the terrain that the rulers dominate.

You also talk about shifting from defence to offence. I find this interesting, and not just for the Argentine left. Can you explain what this might look like?

It is clear that Bregman’s support and the shift in public sentiment that I have described — and it is not just me talking about this — will not automatically translate into organised support or votes. Achieving this political objective requires a sort of cultural shift on the left, here and around the world. It involves leaving behind a simply self-serving or self-referential politics and prioritising the general interests of the workers’ and popular movement. That is to say, less vanguardism and more mass politics to reach broad sectors hit hard by the crisis, including those who do not identify with anti-capitalism or socialism.

In our case, we need to reach out to the many groups and sectors within Peronism that are now directionless — without a project, program, or clear leadership — and who have repeatedly expressed their intention to vote for Bregman, to ask them to join the committees.

This leads us to the need for left unity, not simply because together we are more, but because it allows us to jointly think and act. This unity cannot simply be declared, it has to put aside fruitless arguments and create independent, democratic and autonomous committees as a common space for uniting the activist energy currently dispersed across multiple, often ineffective, spaces.

Making progress on this front requires a change in attitude among the members of the various parties in the FIT-U. If we manage this, we can leave behind the defensive position we have been stuck in for a long time, and go on the offensive. This would allow us to go beyond just resisting to envisioning ways to transform this intolerable reality, deal with the problem of power and forge the alliances needed to make this possible.

We have an unprecedented window of opportunity that also poses a major challenge for the left. This opportunity is not open-ended. We know politics abhors a vacuum. If the left does not occupy that space, others will. There is no time to lose.

I also have the international situation in mind. In that sense, how do you see what is happening in Argentina, but also in Bolivia, fitting into a world marked by geopolitical tensions, the rise of the right, and a figure like Donald Trump?

Well, Argentina is, to some extent, an exceptional case. We have a president who defines himself as an anarcho-capitalist and is at the ideological vanguard of the right's global rise. As if that was not enough, he has also subordinated the country's foreign policy to Trump's US and Netanyahu's Israel.

On the other hand, we have an anti-capitalist left, I believe, unlike any other in the world at the moment. It is spearheaded by an electoral alliance (the FIT-U) of four Trotskyist parties, which has existed for 15 years now, something equally unprecedented.

Bolivia is undergoing a severe political crisis fuelled by a workers', indigenous and peasant uprising that has blocked the country's main roads and cities. They demand the Rodrigo Paz government, elected just over six months ago, resign. If this happens — and we should not rule out that something similar could happen in my country, given the critical social situation — it would have a tremendous impact internationally.

Even defeating Milei in the 2027 presidential elections would be significant. It would concretely demonstrate that, whether through insurrection or the ballot box, the far right can be defeated. And if the anti-capitalist left plays a decisive role in these movements, it would serve as an example for the left internationally.

As for Trump, it is clear that he heads a decaying empire seeking to take refuge in the "Western bloc" and that, as it declines, has become more aggressive and predatory. This was demonstrated by the military invasion of Venezuela and kidnapping of its president, the threats and strangulation of Cuba, and his remarks about annexing Canada and Greenland.

Trump allowed Israel to drag him into the Middle East war, while letting Israel run rampant in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Trump became involved in the war without a clear entry or exit strategy. It is now clear that he will emerge weakened from this self-inflicted chaos.

This could have consequences for the US November mid-term elections.

The flip side is the rise of China, now the main reference point on the global chessboard, as a Spanish political scientist put it. In just under a week, China's president Xi Jinping received Trump and Vladimir Putin on state visits to Beijing and signed various trade and political agreements with both, granting neither anything of significance. He forced Trump to back down on arms sales to Taiwan and made clear to Putin that China is more important to Russia than Russia is to China.

We face a changing world order, and everything indicates that we are heading towards a division of spheres of influence. This may stabilise the situation for a while, but tensions will return, especially considering that global capitalism's unresolved crisis underlies all this.

Finally, here in Porto Alegre, we held the 1st Anti-Fascist Conference for the Sovereignty of Peoples in March, with a significant delegation from Argentina. What were your thoughts on this event and how do you see it developing in the future?

I do not know if you are aware, but I collaborated with Eric Toussaint in organising the conference. I no longer travel, but from the reports I received and comments from various comrades, the conference was a success in terms of participation and the diversity of topics debated in the various panels and self-organised activities.

There is no doubt that this success stemmed from focusing on the common objective of an international convergence to confront far-right forces across the world, an objective shared by various parties and social movements in Brazil and internationally by organisations such as CADTM [Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt], the Fourth International, Jubilee South and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

A large delegation from my country took part, comprising members of anti-capitalist organisations and centre-left and/or progressive movements, as well as some prominent intellectuals.

I believe the conference must be followed up. This was also the view of the International Committee, which decided to organise two events, one in Mexico and

another in Argentina. We will see when these can take place. The decision has been made and it is our duty to carry them out.

2 June 2026

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UNITED STATES (USA)

What Sort of Electoral Politics? A Debate in the U.S. Left

DAN LA BOTZ ·

The issue came up again last week at the Tony Mazzocchi Centennial Conference held at Rutgers University Labor Center in New Jersey. Mazzocchi, a leader of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers and a central figure in the fight for legislation to protect workers' health back in the 1960s and 70s, was the driving force in the attempt to organize a U.S. Labor Party back in 1996. Labor union leaders who had been part of that effort spoke on a panel to remember and celebrate Tony's work that provided a forum for a discussion of working-class electoral strategies.

The United States has never had a successful labor party, a Socialist Party, or a Communist Party, that is one that was a serious contender for political power. The high point was reached by the Socialist Party when in 1912 Eugene V. Debs, its candidate for president received almost one million votes or 6% of all votes cast. The Communist Party's high point came in 1932 when William Z. Foster received 103,307 votes for a mere 0.3% of the total. The Labor Party that Mazzocchi helped to found was created with the support of several major national unions and many regional and local unions. But the party's leadership hesitated to run candidates against the Democrats in national elections, never ran a presidential candidate, fearing that a left party would weaken the Democrats and aid the Republicans. The party petered out with Mazzocchi's death in 2002 and it died in 2007.

Today, as in the past, labor and left activists and organizations present two major strategies: the Democratic Socialist of America (DSA), the largest socialist group in the country with 100,000 members, which has rejected forming an independent socialist party and endorses and works for candidates in the Democratic

Party and elects some such as congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. Labor Notes staffer Jenny Brown spoke for that position at the conference, arguing that DSA candidates are movement activists who run as socialists. The Working Families Party does have its own ballot line, but it too supports Democrats. Les Leopold of the Labor Institute, a former associate of Mazzocchi, advocates carrying out education to win disaffected working-class voters of both major parties to the idea of a labor party.

The Green Party, which as an environmental-socialist platform, wins some local elections, but it has never received more than 0.7% of the vote for its presidential candidates. It is ignored by DSA, WFP, even by the far left.

Far from the progressive coasts, in the Republican state of Nebraska, Dan Osborn, a mechanic, a former union president, and the leader of an important strike, is running for the Senate as an independent—and he has a chance of winning. In a race for the state's other Senate seat last year the Democrats decided to give him some financial assistance and he won 47% of the vote. Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist and a political independent praised Osborn for his working-class campaign. Osborn has referred to the Senate as “a country club of millionaires that work for billionaires.” Clearly, he hopes to break into the club and shake it up.

One could say that Osborn is, on his own, testing the Labor Party idea, so far, a Labor Party of one. The question is, can the left, in search of a strategy, connect with working class candidates like Osborn, if there are more of them? Does our future lie there?

7 June 2026

PALESTINE

Israel mistreats Flotilla activists and tortures Palestinian prisoners

AN GWESPED ·

Turkey, Spain, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, Libya, the Maldives and even Meloni's Italy have denounced these abductions as "flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law".

Violence against flotilla activists

On Wednesday, 20 May, Ben Gvir, Israel's Minister of National Security, released a video of flotilla activists kneeling and with their hands tied, after being detained in southern Israel, at the port of Ashdod. Violence constituting an attack on human dignity.

"Welcome to Israel, we are at home," the minister says in these images published on X, with the Israeli national anthem playing in the background. An activist is shown stretched in half and violently pushed by a uniformed guard, whose hand holds his head downwards, before being dragged to the ground. Other prisoners were also subjected to violence, forced to move with their backs bent, their hands tied and their heads held to the ground.

In other propaganda images, Ben Gvir, a large Israeli flag in his hand, proudly points to the tied activists, saying: "Oh they were very proud, look at them now, where are they?" Then he addresses Benjamin Netanyahu: "Give them to us, give them to me, so that we can keep these terrorists in prison for a very long time."

All the kidnapped activists were released at the end of last week, but all of them reported humiliation as well as physical and sexual violence — which is also confirmed by our two comrades from the NPA-Anticapitaliste, Laetitia and Macéo, who are part of this flotilla. This is just a glimpse of the violence against the Palestinian

people, especially against prisoners who are subjected to torture and sexual violence on a daily basis.

Torture of Palestinian prisoners

On the eve of Ben Gvir's intervention, a UN special rapporteur, Alice Jill Edwards, denounced the fact that Palestinian prisoners are subjected to torture, sexual violence and other ill-treatment. It said it had documented 52 cases of torture in various forms, as well as 33 cases of sexual torture and other sexual violence.

Among the reported cases are "beatings, stress positions, excessive restraints, electricity, sleep deprivation, malnutrition and starvation, prolonged secret detention", as well as conditions of detention deemed "inhumane and degrading". In a communication to the Israeli authorities, she noted that of the 1,680 complaints lodged against the Israeli intelligence services, none had resulted in an indictment.

As a reminder, according to *Addameer*, nearly 9,400 Palestinians are detained in Israel, including 2,200 in administrative detention. We must demand that our complicit states stop selling arms to Israel and impose sanctions on this colonial and apartheid state. France banned Ben Gvir from staying in "reprisals", while condemning "the uselessness of the flotillas" (Jean-Noël Barrot). The fact that the French authorities were forced to take this measure against this Israeli fascist proves that the flotillas were useful — unlike French diplomacy.

29 May 2026

Translated by International Viewpoint from l'Anticapitaliste.

BRAZIL

General Strike Rejects Labour Reform Package Once Again

ADRIANO CAMPOS ·

The general strike called for this Wednesday by the CGTP, with the support of eight UGT unions and many independent ones, began with a high level of participation, particularly in the transport, health, and education sectors.

“It’s turning out to be a major general strike; the data we have from last night shows workers are determined to treat today as a major day of struggle,” said the CGTP’s General Secretary in the morning outside one of the striking schools in Lisbon.

Based on the data he had gathered so far, Tiago Oliveira told reporters that “hospitals are operating with minimal services; in rubbish collection, participation was 100% in most districts; the ports of Setúbal and Sines are closed; and there is strong participation in public transport—including the Lisbon Metro, Transtejo, Soflusa, and CP—as well as in the aviation sector. And in industry, we have a large number of companies with 100% participation or with production halted.”

For the CGTP leader, “the scale of today’s action shows that workers are fully aware of what the labour package entails,” a bill presented “with the stamp of the 21st century.”

Tiago Oliveira does not expect the government to change course, as “it has been arrogant and overbearing in the way it has handled the whole process,” and the prime minister’s statements about the general strike the day before, “show a lack of humility and awareness of reality”. And that is why “it will be the workers who will defeat the labour package”.

In Lisbon, the unions announced early in the morning 100% support at the São José and São Francisco Xavier

Hospitals, as well as at the São João Hospital in Porto and in Coimbra, and 90% at the Santa Maria Hospital.

CP trains are operating a minimum service, as are the other major public transport companies where strike action has been called. In the aviation sector, unions report 500 cancelled flights.

In Porto, Fenprof Secretary-General Francisco Gonçalves said that most schools in the city were expected to close. The proposed labour package brings additional difficulties for those working in education, and the union leader strongly opposes the implementation of individual time banks, which “would be an absolute disaster for teachers’ already deregulated personal lives.”

After joining strike picket lines the previous day at Vidralva in Marinha Grande and at the Lisbon Metro, José Manuel Pureza began the day with workers at Autoeuropa.

“Turnout is very high, and since Autoeuropa is such an important workplace, this gives us reason for hope,” the Bloco coordinator told reporters, emphasising that “what is at stake is decisive for putting an end to this proposal, which must be defeated politically in Parliament”.

Pureza added that this general strike “is a very important day and a source of great hope for those who believe that their lives and wages do not have to get worse and that their working hours do not have to increase.”

3 June, 2026

Translated by Iain Bruce for International Viewpoint from Esquerda.net.

LATIN AMERICA

"Until the president resigns..."

JAVIER ROJAS ·

The current mobilizations combine indefinite strikes, demonstrations, roadblocks and clashes with the forces of repression. They are an extension of the December 2025 movement against the neoliberal policies of the right-wing Paz government and an austerity plan that makes the popular classes pay for the crisis. Organized around the COB (Bolivian Workers' Federation), the movement then made the government back down, with a central role for grassroots activists and the peasant and indigenous movement.

Peasants and indigenous peoples against the agrarian reform

2026 has opened a new chapter in the class struggle against the Paz government and its austerity policies. In April, legislation made it easier for small farms to be placed on the market. Peasant and indigenous communities denounced a regressive agrarian reform that favoured the concentration of land and the return of the latifundium to the benefit of the most economically powerful sectors. They also pointed out that they have not been the subject of any consultation, which implies a questioning of the community organisation guaranteed by the 2009 plurinational constitution.

From the north of La Paz, Beni and Pando, marches converged on La Paz to demand the repeal of the law. For 28 days, the mobilization won the support of peasant and indigenous organizations from other parts of the country. While the government ended up talking about repealing the law after the march arrived in La Paz on 1 May, it was mainly trying to buy time to achieve the same goals by other means. Faced with this manoeuvre, the peasant movement radicalised the mobilisation by launching road blockades.

Trade union strike against inflation and austerity

At the same time, inflation and the tightening of austerity policies — the end of fuel subsidies and privatizations — have aggravated the conflict between the COB and the government. On 1 May, the COB launched an indefinite strike that has lasted for more than 20 days and has resulted in 70 roadblocks, mainly around La Paz. The demands include the defence of collective agreements, investments in indigenous communities, currency control, an end to privatisation and the defence of health and education.

In addition, the shortage of fuel and a scandal around adulterated fuels have pushed hauliers, mainly those in La Paz and El Alto, to join the strike, as well as teachers in urban and rural areas and some health workers.

Repression and crisis of power

Rodrigo Paz has intensified the crackdown with the support of the region's right-wing and far-right governments. Former president "Tuto" Quiroga called for a tougher repressive approach, accusing the demonstrators of committing "crimes against humanity". Conversely, Evo Morales, who has taken refuge in the Chapare, supported the movement and denounced the sending of "anti-riot equipment" from Argentina.

The demand for the "immediate resignation of the president" has become the main slogan of the movement, without however achieving a consensus throughout society. In recent days, the country's main organizations have mobilized in El Alto and La Paz despite the repression. Since the beginning of the conflict, it has left dozens of people injured and has been accompanied by a political persecution against several leaders, such as the secretary general of the COB, Mario Argollo, who was accused of incitement to terrorism and has now been forced underground. There have been five deaths.

Today, 56 roadblocks remain in place in 7 departments and the indefinite strike continues. It remains to be seen whether the rebellion will manage to spread nationwide and unify around common demands. President Rodrigo Paz appears increasingly weakened and, even without

resigning, his government has ever less room for manoeuvre.

28 May 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **l'Anticapitaliste**.*

SPANISH STATE

A step forward in Andalusia

DANIEL ALBARRACÍN ·

History has no philosophical meaning. But it is politically intelligible and strategically thinkable, because, in real history, the vanquished are not necessarily wrong, and the victor is not necessarily right.

Daniel Bensaid

The post-election scenario of the 17 May 2026 Andalusian regional elections has put the Partido Popular's (People's Party or PP, the major conservative party) absolute majority model in crisis, as it falls back to 53 seats, losing its parliamentary dominance. The social-democratic Partido Socialista Obrero Español - Andalucía (Spanish Socialist Workers Party-Andalusia or PSOE-A) of María Jesús Montero, although it gained 60,000 votes, obtained the worst result in its history with 28 seats.

Meanwhile, the sovereignist left of Adelante Andalucía (Forward Andalusia), led by José Ignacio García, rose to 8 deputies (400,000 votes), surpassing in relevance the project of Por Andalucía (For Andalusia, an alliance of Podemos Andalusia, the Communist Party and several other groups) headed by Antonio Maíllo, which while losing some 20,000 voters has maintained its 5 seats.

Initially, it seems clear that the 8.71% increase in voter turnout to 64.84% (recovering levels not seen since 2015) did not benefit the PP of Moreno Bonilla. While the right-wing bloc (PP, VOX and Se Acabó La Fiesta – the Party is Over or SALF) increased its share by 163,365 voters, the left-wing bloc gained 271,748 votes.

Is this the beginning of a shift in dynamics? To attempt to formulate an answer, our perspective cannot begin with the latest election results, but rather with an analysis of Andalusian political history. In this regard, we operate on a fundamental premise: there is no electoral victory without a prior social and political victory. In the south of the Spanish state, the right wing did not conquer the institutions by chance in 2018; it did so by

first winning the battle for "common sense", displacing collective frames of reference and colonising the public agenda long before the ballot box validated its hegemony. The real thermometer of this transformation was not found within the framework of surveys, but in the micro-politics of everyday life: in conversations in workplaces, in the fruit shops and in the bars of working-class neighbourhoods. There, the demobilisation of traditionally left-wing sectors and the lack of a project that could inspire have created a scenario where disengagement from public and common affairs is the norm. While the left became mired in technocratic management or sterile internal debates, the right managed to normalise its narrative, taking advantage of the existential void left by the disintegration of the traditional PSOE-A project.

But has the PP's model of absolute majority now irreversibly broken down? What are the real limits of right-wing hegemony in Andalusia? Is there a groundwork for a reconstitution of the left-wing bloc?

2012 - 2018: Susana "it all started with you" [1]

As we explained in an article four years ago, in 2018 in Andalusia an "(almost) natural relationship built over four decades" was broken. For the first time, the association of the (Andalusian) people, (left) ideology, the (working) class, the (PSOE) party, and the Junta (Regional Government of Andalusia) administration was no longer in equivalence. The Junta changed hands almost eight years ago, but the left had lost ground long before that.

Without the power of the Junta, the party has become almost a ghost since the 1980s, a "body without a soul," and now without the bones that supported that body through public institutions. The loss of the Junta reflects the profound existential crisis and strategic disorientation of the PSOE-A, a process marked by three fundamental milestones.

First, 2012 and the Pact of Necessity. After the fallout from the ERE scandal and the 15M movement [2], the PSOE turned to Izquierda Unida (United Left or IU, an alliance of the Communist Party and other groups) to survive, highlighting the end of its hegemony. Second, the liberal shift of 2015. Under Susana Díaz, the party broke with the left and allied itself with Ciudadanos. [3] In a suicidal move in terms of territorial identity, the PSOE-A abandoned the concept of "Andalusia" as a political entity to embrace a statist, centralist, and Spanish nationalist discourse, conditioned by the Catalan independence movement, unsuccessfully attempting to win over the conservative vote. And third, in 2018 we witnessed the active abstention of the left-wing voter, in the face of a drift that they no longer recognised as their own, putting an end to the symbiosis between party and administration.

2018 - 2022: the consolidation of the right-wing bloc

The Andalusian People's Party made an unprecedented leap, going from its historical low in 2018 (remember that Moreno Bonilla achieved the worst results for the PP in Andalusia, 20.75% and 26 deputies), to leading the conservative bloc through a sophisticated absorption of its competitors and a management of differentiated profiles, which led it to an absolute majority.

In the first place, the key political operation was the instrumentalisation of Ciudadanos and the absorption of its electorate after co-government from 2018 to 2022. As we explained in *Andalucía: Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, Cs was a "lever" to capture the moderate PSOE voter (who still felt distant from what the PP acronym represented). As a good majority partner in Andalusia and after unseating Cs at the state level, it occupied its electoral space without resistance.

By 2022, Moreno Bonilla's neoliberal government actions moved swiftly along the same tracks that Susana Díaz's PSOE had set. Healthcare agreements, cuts and privatisations to education and other public services (forest firefighters, emergencies, etc.), as well as the neoliberal idea of the Andalusia Brand, did not begin with the arrival of the PP to the Junta. Remembering this, and insisting on it, is not an affirmative bias of a

particular political tendency; it entails an analytical necessity without which we cannot understand the politicisation of Andalusian society, which has accumulated decades of experience in public policies in favour of the private sector in Andalusia.

Therefore, secondly, we must discuss the communication strategy of the Andalusian PP. Faced with the rise of the radical right, the PP is playing two cards: Ayuso's Castilian Trumpism and Juan Bonillas moderate profile. Its success is resounding; here, VOX is central, like the "bad cop" who makes the other one look good. This empathetic tone dismantles the fear of the right and demobilises class resistance. So, the question that needs to be asked is: why has the PP lost its absolute majority? We will try to answer this step by step and from different perspectives.

2026: The PP loses its absolute majority and puts a stop to VOX. Is the party over?

As we said at the beginning, the right wing has gained the support of more Andalusians in these elections. Thus, it seems clear that the insufficient votes for Ciudadanos (Cs) to secure representation in 2022 (121,567, 3.29%) have been fully absorbed by the PP (whose growth is approximately 146,000 votes) and VOX.

However, a third, invisible actor must be factored into the equation. Although without parliamentary representation, the more than 100,000 votes cast for *Se Acabó La Fiesta* (SALF) have contributed to the PP losing its absolute majority. Analysing the situation province by province, SALF could have cost the PP at least two seats (in Málaga and Seville), in addition to halting the electoral rise of VOX.

One of the things that election day allows us to do is engage in dialogue with our own poll watchers and observers (both our own and those from other parties), as well as with the voters who come to the polling stations. There, often in an exercise that anthropologists call "participant observation," we obtain very valuable information for understanding certain dynamics that may or may not ultimately influence the final results. On the one hand, "I'll still vote for the PSOE, but this time

four of my family members are going to Adelante,” “we voted as a couple, one for Por Andalucía and the other for Adelante.” On the other hand, PP representatives recount how their families split their votes between the PP, VOX, and SALF. We’re not talking about sectors recently captured from the right-wing movement, but rather traditions fraught with internal tensions that manifest themselves within families through a division of votes within the bloc.

In this sense, to understand the changing landscape of May 17th, we cannot look solely at the emergence of Adelante Andalucía (fundamental, as we will analyse below), but also at the internal disputes within the conservative bloc. Ultimately, it is a matter of understanding how and to what extent the right wing’s hegemony extends in Andalusia today, and what its margins are in future electoral contests.

Fortunately, although with frustration and helplessness at the lack of initiative from politics in Andalusia, during the last legislature left-wing people have not stopped advancing their criticism of the Moreno Bonilla government. The movement for healthcare, housing, labour rights, etc., despite defeat in many of its struggles, is gaining social influence. It is within this context that the strategic contribution of José Ignacio García [4] and Adelante Andalucía in the Andalusian Parliament finds its place and meaning. In 2022, we asked ourselves whether the left should “continue to be the caboose of social liberalism or whether it is possible to build a real sovereignist alternative.” The work of these past years and the outcome of the 17M protests have begun to write an answer.

17M: Left-wing sovereignty wipes the smile off Bonilla's face

While María Jesús Montero of the PSOE and Antonio Maillo of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and IU have performed within the expectations of their respective parties (which in both cases speaks to the resilience and the social and militant body of both political spaces), Jose Ignacio García’s Adelante Andalucía has added more to the left-wing bloc than expected, exceeding all predictions, with the good and not-so-good that

this entails. Today, the role of VOX in this legislature and the potential consequences for people’s lives are a major concern for the people of Andalusia. This concern must be kept in mind from the outset to stay attuned to public sentiment and to prepare a response.

To try to explain the result of Adelante Andalucía we will talk about four factors: the predictability of the result, the place of Adelante Andalucía, the new Andalusianism and its communication policy.

First, the predictability of a right-wing victory opened a window of opportunity. In a context more open to the possibility of a change of government than the current one, there would have been more pressure on the emerging force, fostering the anti-political mantra of unity for unity’s sake, which is resurfacing like the boy who cried wolf in certain sectors of the left. Therefore, the 2026 scenario presented possibilities, and Adelante Andalucía understood this from the outset.

Second, was the platform from which Adelante opposed the Moreno Bonilla government. Although somewhat weakened, the call did not come at a time of social and political weakness for the right wing. However, Adelante Andalucía has been better able than other political forces to channel the rejection of the PP’s policies. The pertinent question is, why? In our opinion, the PSOE and Por Andalucía share a common denominator: their coalition government at the national level. The result demonstrates that there are thousands of Andalusians who, while disagreeing with Moreno Bonilla’s government, also do not applaud the one led by Sánchez, supported by certain left-wing forces in Madrid. In other words, there are voters who identify with the left-wing spectrum who, had they not been appealed to by this third independent space, would possibly have swelled the ranks of abstention, as in 2018 and 2022.

Thirdly, we must point to the “new Andalusianism.” For over a decade, we have witnessed a resurgence of Andalusian nationalism within associations, the cultural sphere, social movements, and so on. From the Andalusian feminism of Mar Gallego to the housing movement in the form of “corralas” (traditional tenement buildings). From Andalusian historical memory with activists like the Maqueda sisters, to the proliferation of popular-

isers like Antonio Manuel; influencers with an Andalusian accent like Manu Sánchez, Sara Laupers, Juan Amodeo and Sandri; or artists like Califato ³⁴, La Plazuela, Dellafuente... It is no surprise that Andalusia is the cradle of great cultural creators and social and political activists. What is new, however, is that in the last 15 years we have seen a resurgence of concerns about Andalusian identity, both in popular and cultural terms. All of this, within a turbulent national context and an international crisis, has contributed to building a sense of belonging, pride, self-esteem, and a reconnection with our own history. Ultimately, it has nurtured and rebuilt our sense of community. Given this, it was only a matter of time and initiative before this social impulse would find its political counterpart. While other political movements have used Andalusia as a bargaining chip, some, since the emergence of Podemos, have been charting their own course. An Andalusia for itself, for its people, and for humanity, an Andalusia that, from a sovereign perspective, now has its place.

Fourth, regarding the importance of communication, we want to highlight the analysis carried out by activist Macarena Hernández in her article *La alegría como brecha: cosas que ha entendido Adelante Andalucía* ("Joy as a Breach: Things Adelante Andalucía Has Understood.") Without going into detail, we highlight some key ideas: Jose Ignacio's role as Teresa Rodríguez's [5] replacement; the appeal to joy; and the continuous media exposure of recent years.

Regarding Teresa, she has faced bias due to her identity as a young, combative, feminist woman, and, crucially, an Andalusian with a strong accent, making her the perfect target for hate from pundits and digital "gentlemen." José Ignacio, on the other hand, operated from an angle of less media resistance; a gender and profile advantage that the campaign skillfully exploited.

In this scenario, Jose Ignacio has focused on highlighting concrete elements that connect with general, tangible dynamics—the things we eat—without resorting to abstractions. In this sense, the discourse that Jose Ignacio has intelligently crafted, supported by his communications team, can foster a greater degree of connection with multiple sectors, in contrast to more in-depth

analyses that might widen the gap between the spokesperson and the voter. The key, therefore, will be to develop these specific elements to convey more complex explanations to the public in the medium term, appealing to the universal material problems of the poor. Adelante's potential to become a viable alternative actor with a solid long-term social base may depend, in part, on this. This also requires taking shape, participating, and organising in assemblies and social spaces.

Regarding "joy," we recall a reflection by Miguel Romero, who stated that "politics cannot be done without people's feelings." Therefore, we echo the words of Macarena Hernández when she affirms that "people don't just vote for proposals; they vote for emotional frameworks in which they can recognise themselves." We are feeling-thinkers, and we don't think unless the issue moves us. In this campaign, joy has been named and conveyed as that of someone who has nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Finally, and equally important for us, we must point out that none of the above is very effective without media visibility. In this regard, we believe it is necessary to highlight the results of 2022 and the political work carried out over these four years. Campaigns can only do so much, but without certain conditions—good spokespeople, good platforms, and good speeches—they can't work miracles. You simply can't ignore the social and political conditions of each era.

Who Voted For Adelante Andalucía?

In the absence of further post-election studies, our hypothesis is that Adelante Andalucía has consolidated most of its base (those 168,960 in 2022), has brought many people who voted for the forces of change in the 2010s wave out of abstention (less structural -long-term- and more cyclical -2018 and 2022-), and has played an important role in attracting new voters.

Thus, on the one hand, the consolidated vote has a matrix of continuity from the period prior to the refounding of Adelante Andalucía in 2021, that is, it is a voter who has mostly made the journey from the convergence of 2018 to the present and moves between left-wing and Andalusianist coordinates.

On the other hand, regarding the vote from abstention, our hypothesis is that most of it comes from the remobilisation of part of Podemos voters in 2015 (among those 592,371 votes that gave 15 deputies in Andalusia). This profile, which perfectly aligns with the position from which Adelante Andalucía has been in opposition, is a voter who before 2015 may have supported PSOE or IU due to tradition or ideological affinity, but who is defined by being more informed, less passive, and more critical of both the social and political situation and the internal dynamics of the parties. We must also consider that activist sector and those voters who were critical of the regional and municipal coalition in 2018 and 2019. And now, in a context of erosion of the state coalition government (due to various issues), that voter has been reactivated in a specific way, nothing more and nothing less.

A more detailed analysis would be warranted for the phenomena occurring in provinces with a greater presence of Adelante Andalucía, such as the Province of Cádiz, where the struggles within the territory and the former Mayoralty of Cádiz may have opened a crack in the base of the Por Andalucía space (especially IU) if we consider the loss of votes compared to 2022 (being the constituency where it loses the most voters).

And finally, without confusing wishes for reality, we do believe that Adelante has been one of the main forces attracting new and young voters, perhaps because of its fresher and more up-to-date character.

With all the above elements, the result for Adelante can explain at least up to four of the seats taken from the right (Cadiz, Cordoba, Malaga and Seville), which have taken away the PP's absolute majority. It also took two seats from the PSOE (Huelva and Granada), not because it lost votes, but because Adelante performed well among new voters and gained more support from those who had abstained. Meanwhile, in Andalusia, it held steady with almost unchanged results, with negligible net vote transfers.

New problems, good problems

The relaunch of Adelante Andalucía in 2021 arose as a response to the "weak hypothesis" of the left, subservi-

ent to the PSOE. Faced with the frustration generated by coalition governments that fail to address the underlying causes of inequality, Adelante proposes an independent Andalusian political entity with a genuine ambition for its own power. Its "strong hypothesis" is based on a forceful confrontation with the right wing, political independence from the PSOE-A, and the definition of Andalusia as a Political Subject (sovereignty to break with its historical role as an extractive periphery), compatible and articulated with an open and universal class and popular solidarity.

Now it's time to consider how the opposition to the right wing in Andalusia will continue and what role Adelante will play. These are some questions that we believe should be asked at some point: What parliamentary strategy will Adelante follow and how will it integrate it with a stronger territorial presence where it is still insufficient? What conditions must be met for any kind of collaboration with other progressive forces? How can we restore confidence in the plurality of a left-wing political space without resorting to backroom deals or fictitious alliances? And what about expectations for the municipal and general elections? Will Adelante Andalucía remain focused on its own territory or will it look further afield? Will we settle for a Frankenstein territorial solution à la Rufián, [6] without any real common debate or proposals? Will we seek a cordial solution consisting of "each in their own territory" but turning our backs on each other without any programmatic agreement for the period ahead? Are we giving up on setting conditions (no subordination to the PSOE, redistribution of wealth, ecological transition, no to war or militarism, breaking ties with Israel) to make collaboration possible in a broad-based meeting place? Or will we seek common programmatic points for the period, demanding flexibility from all actors to acknowledge the independence of parties, with compromise electoral solutions in specific territories, based on a framework of agreed-upon agreements and differences? On the other hand, is the Portuguese experience of the Bloco and PCP [7] one from which to learn and surpass?

All these questions, and many more, don't have a direct answer within the dynamics of political parties. Rather, from our perspective, it would be a mistake for the

Andalusian working people to delegate the strategic debate to Adelante or any other party. Without social, cultural, and political struggles gaining influence in Andalusian society, taking root, and forging new paths, there will be no electoral victory or lasting political power.

Today the right-wing bloc is based on the mobilisation of 2.5 million Andalusians (805,155 more than PSOE, Adelante Andalucía and Por Andalucía) with a participation of around 64%. These figures, if we recall, haven't been achieved by the left-wing bloc since 2004 and 2008, with the absolute majorities won by Manuel Chaves's PSOE-A, with one caveat: back then, voter turnout was more than 10 points higher than it is now. The left and Andalusian nationalists have valuable experience from that period. The right does too. We mustn't confuse our wishes for reality. The game is on, and we have to play it. If we fail to show up or simply repeat the same old tactics, we already know the outcome. The right wing is far from relinquishing control; we'll have to wrest it from them with all our energy and intelligence. Today we're far from our goal,

but after the May 17th regional elections, we're a little closer to making our mark on the history of Andalusia in the next decade.

In 2011, three months before the outbreak of the 15M movement, the comparsa [8]“Los Currelantes,” led by Jesús Bienvenido—the same Jesús Bienvenido whom the PP so fears and wants to censor—accompanied by a young lead singer, José María González “Kichi,” sang a pasodoble dedicated to Marcelino Camacho with a clear message for the working class. Today, 15 years later, we continue to say the same: “Always Forward and always to the left...”

"It is necessary to dream, but on the condition of believing in our dreams. Of carefully examining real life, of comparing our observations to our dreams, and of scrupulously realising our fantasies."

Lenin

25 May 2026

*Translated and annotated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from **Vientosur**.*

COLOMBIA

"Surprise" election result poses new challenges for the left in Colombia

ANA C. CARVALHAES ·

Bogotá – Having rooted for the candidate to succeed Gustavo Petro, most left-wing and democratic Latin Americans were unlikely to have been exactly surprised by the meteoric rise, in the final weeks of the presidential campaign, of a Milei-style candidate in Colombia. The libertarian lawyer Abelardo de Espriella rose rapidly and reached the second round ahead of Ivan Cepeda, the reserved and meticulous university philosophy lecturer and human rights defender, chosen by Petro's Pacto Histórico [1] for a second term of local progressivism. Abelardo, nicknamed El Tigre, secured 43.72% of the vote against Cepeda's 40.92% (a difference of 600,000 votes). [2] Paloma Valencia, an aristocrat and granddaughter of a former president and a follower of Álvaro Uribe, secured 6.9%, compared to the 15% indicated by the initial polls; in other words, the CD was run over by El Tigre's tank.

After all, neither Colombia nor any other country among the 35 in Latin America and the Caribbean is immune to the wave of the international neo-fascist far right. Although the country's history attests to a real political space for the right, until yesterday occupied by the Democratic Centre of former President Álvaro Uribe (which was never centre-right to begin with), Abelardo's achievement can be explained by the current regional and global climate. It was built on a foundation of widespread support from bourgeois-oligarchic factions (agribusiness, the financial market, big business and platforms) which swiftly replaced the CD's candidate, Paloma Valencia, with Espriella as their darling. The Colombian Milei was aided by the support of Trump and the entire far-right in power across the region; the deluge of fake news – largely originating from the US and the Spanish state [3] – blatant lies about Petro and Cepeda

and their links to the guerrillas and organized crime, in a country where regulation of social media is virtually non-existent. Rounding off Abelardo's perfect storm is the hiring of a political marketing firm – the very same one that worked for Pablo Marçal, the extremist coach who almost won the São Paulo's mayoral election in 2024 – and the planned manipulation of Colombia's (at the very least) fragile electoral system.

To understand the gravity of the war of narratives and lies in Colombia, one must remember that the country endured six decades of civil war [4], with 450,000 dead, 121,000 missing and 7.7 million internally displaced persons, countless bomb attacks in cities, against authorities and civilians, as well as the kidnappings and murders of politicians. In 2016, an agreement was signed between the government and the FARC for the disarmament and reintegration of guerrilla fighters into civilian life. Petro's government and the Historic Pact advocate the policy of 'Total Peace', through which they seek dialogue with the remaining guerrilla group, the ENL, and even criminal armed groups willing to lay down their arms. This policy is vehemently opposed by the traditional right-wing CD, the agricultural sector and the urban middle class. Espriella skilfully manipulated these sectors, accusing Petro and Cepeda of being bloodthirsty guerrillas and friends of drug traffickers.

A semi-private electoral system

The Colombian electoral system rests on a three-pronged foundation. There is no Electoral Court, but rather a National Electoral Council (CNE) composed of nine members appointed by parliament, with quotas filled through complex mathematical calculations that give the CNE a majority to whoever holds a majority in the legislature. The CNE is linked to a 'Registrar's Office', which functions as a large civil and electoral

registry office – only those who are registered can vote. The method of vote counting constitutes the third and most questionable leg of the tripod: the counting of the approximately 120,000 ballot boxes is done manually, box by box, with party observers present. However, once the ballot box results have to be processed by district, department (state) and nationally, the tally is carried out by a private Colombian security firm, Thomas Greg & Sons, which does not disclose the source code for the count and therefore does not allow for verification.

It is therefore not surprising that Gustavo Petro questioned the results on 31 May itself and is set to press ahead with his allegations of irregularities on the evening of Tuesday 2 June. This comes amid reports that Espriella had co-opted company employees and staff from the Electoral Registry (as well as members of the police and the Armed Forces). According to the president's posts, there were 800,000 votes for the neo-fascist candidate that could not be verified. Cepeda and the campaign coordination team, however, decided on Monday 1 June to endorse the result, so as not to bring the process to a standstill, as explained by leaders of the Historic Pact. This contradiction between Petro and Cepeda's campaign, which may reflect a rift between the two camps or a deliberate division of tasks, keeps the outlook for the second round in limbo.

A young progressive movement, with a grassroots base

Despite the surprise (given that Cepeda's campaign had spoken of winning in the first round), the Historic Pact and its allies in the Alliance for Life (see composition below) achieved the best electoral result for the left in Colombia's history, a higher percentage than that of Gustavo Petro in 2022 (Figure 1). The strength of this coalition of left-wing and centre-left groups and figures, alongside social movements, can be explained by the fact that they gained momentum and moved towards unity as a result of the pressure from the social uprisings of 2019 and 2021 – when the country, in parallel with the Chilean uprising, rebelled against the fiscal austerity policies of Ivan Duque's (CD) government, his mishandling of the peace agreements with the FARC and ELN guerrillas, the murders of social leaders, and the

repression of protesters. The movement weathered the pandemic and continued after lockdown, strengthening political figures and organizations identified with the protesters.

Gustavo Petro, leader of Colombia Humana, one of the constituent forces of the Historic Pact (Figure 2), won the presidential elections on that wave and characterized his government, like all progressive movements, by strictly constitutional action – that is, within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic regime – whilst at the same time distinguishing itself, compared to the governments of Lula, Boric, and Uruguay's Frente Amplio, of calling for popular mobilization to approve policies considered central. This was the case with the 23% increase in the minimum wage by the end of 2025.

Despite advances in the social sphere, Petro governed with a parliamentary minority, which he largely circumvented by channelling significant portions of the national budget through projects submitted by Neighbourhood Councils (Juntas Vecinales) and their regional federations (for more on Colombian associativism, see the articles by the Brazilian historian Tamis Parron). Cepeda's campaign, for its part, decided to capitalize on this tradition of associative organization, on a proactive policy-based campaign (without focusing on attacking opponents), on grassroots mobilization, and on the idea of a first-round victory (a debatable choice).

The impression remains, shared by international observers from left-wing parties of all stripes, that the campaign gave less importance than necessary to social media and to the very high likelihood of aggressive and widespread use of fake news and disinformation, most of it generated outside the country within a continental context of the Monroe Doctrine and the 'Trump shield'. The campaign lacked a media defence hub for the candidate and the alliance's program against Espriella's falsehoods – something that would have been perfectly feasible, even with the support of scientists and digital activists from across the region. Within the pact, there are many complaints, including from leaders, about the absence of lawyers and observers at all 120,000 polling stations.

Historic Pact becomes a party

In December 2024, the Pact decided to register as a political party and obtained legal recognition in mid-2025, with the unification of the legal entities of the Alternative Democratic Pole, the Patriotic Union-Communist Party and Human Colombia (led by Petro, Cepeda and Senator Gloria Flores). Also part of the Pact are the faction that emerged from the National Organisation of Indigenous Peoples of Colombia (ONIC), formerly known as the Alternative Indigenous and Social Movement (MAIS), the Democratic Unity (eco-socialist), the Colombian Labour Party (Maoist) and Todos Somos Colombia (a member of the Progressive International), as well as forces from feminism, environmentalism – which enjoys broad consensus on the local left – and the significant Palanquero Black movement (the Colombian name for rural communities made up of former enslaved [fugitive] Africans and Afrocolombian people).

Colombian progressivism is, therefore, a new force in the country, with just one presidential term under its belt and amid consolidating a unified political party that can provide a structure for the political project. Given this ‘youth’ – with even less experience than that of Mexico’s Morena, its counterpart in ‘late progressivism’, not to mention Lula’s PT, the Uruguayan Frente Amplio and Argentine Peronism, stems a certain reluctance towards direct confrontation – which Cepeda promises to overcome by challenging Espriella to a debate the day after the first round – and what appears to be an overconfidence in the institutions of the 1993 Constitution, as evidenced by the lack of questioning, prior to the results, of the extremely fragile electoral system.

The picture for the second round

Cepeda’s alliance was made up of forces beyond the Historic Pact: the indigenous movement, represented by the vice-presidential candidate, Aída Cilcuyé (of the Nasca people); the Green Alliance, a kind of Green

Party; by Em Marcha, a party formed in 2018 by dissident liberals, by Claudia López (former mayor of Bogotá), by independent dissident liberals, and even, according to the unsuspecting (because very reactionary) local press, by sectors of the CD conservatives who were unhappy with Paloma Valencia. They all share a commitment to the country’s pacification following decades of armed conflict.

The battle for a left-wing victory in the second round will be no bed of roses, although the most experienced members of the Pact’s grassroots and leadership know that it is possible to get Cepeda into first place, provided that (1) the problems with vote monitoring are rectified and communication and legal work on social media and platforms is strengthened; (2) as Cepeda said on the very night of the first-round vote, it is necessary to remobilize young people so that they do not fail to vote, thereby reducing abstention – this is a genuine mobilization; and (3) if new key endorsements are secured. Cepeda will have to secure new votes from the traditional supporters of the centrist Sergio Fajardo (former mayor of Cali, who received 1 million votes in the 2025 candidacy poll), negotiate officially with the Liberal Party and even develop a strategy for sectors of the CD. Indeed, Paloma Valencia’s running mate, Juan Daniel Oviedo, has already declared that he neither supports nor will vote for Espriella.

The game is still on. The whole second and exciting half of the match is yet to come. Instead of making doomsday predictions, which portray the workers and the Colombian people who form the Pact’s base as defeated before the battle has even begun, the left across the continent and around the world would do well to offer some form of assistance, whether through physical presence or online work, to ensure the tide turns. Young people in Bogotá have already begun to take to the streets.

2 June 2026

SPANISH STATE

Public education comes to a standstill in a historic strike in Valencia

MOÏSS VIZCAINO ·

The teachers' strike: a people in motion

Powerful also because of the process itself. It had been decades since the Valencian Country had seen such a large workforce challenge the Valencian government with an indefinite strike. This strike is not defensive—aimed at preventing a company closure or the loss of rights—but offensive—demanding improvements. Furthermore, it is not merely a union-driven strike; in addition to salary increases and better working conditions, the teachers are fighting for a better, higher-quality education for everyone, taught in Valencian. This is why they have received widespread public support.

But let's leave this part aside, already explained in a previous editorial, and focus on another element. One of the most fundamental aspects of the teachers' strike is the energetic grassroots organisation, in unitary central assemblies, which have played a key role, both in pushing the undecided to join the strike and in explaining to the educational communities the reasons for this struggle and the reasons why it is so important for teachers, non-teaching staff, students and families, in short, for the whole of society.

An organisation that—despite all the differences—is reminiscent of the wave of solidarity and self-management that followed the disaster of the DANA storm in October 2024. [1] Then, as now, it was the people who mobilised autonomously, without waiting for instructions or slogans, to demand that the rulers do their job. Then as now, these events have been a source of empowerment and awareness on an industrial scale. They are—like the 15M or Indignados movement, the Catalan independence process, the housing unions, and so many

others—the kind of processes that can topple governments and change a country's political culture.

As Manel Pitarch says in his article: “The indefinite strike is the result of political confusion and a disregard for thoughtful, respectful dialogue.” Or, as Vicent Maurí argues in his, translated below: “The indefinite strike is already a moral and political victory against an arrogant, authoritarian government completely out of touch with the reality of educational institutions.”

They have good reason to be nervous at the Palau de la Generalitat [2] about the teachers' revolt and the entire educational community - a nervousness betrayed by the terrible letter that Councillor Carmen Ortí sent to families last Thursday [3] - because every day that this conflict grows and becomes entrenched is one less day they have left in government.

11 May 2026

We will win: unity is our strength

May 11th will be etched in the collective memory of the Valencian people. The teachers, the grassroots and union movement, and the entire educational community will make history for the dignity, determination, and strength they demonstrated during weeks of mobilisation and organisation. The indefinite strike is already a moral and political victory against an arrogant, authoritarian government that is completely out of touch with the reality of educational institutions.

The Minister of Education, Mari Carmen Ortí, has gone from being the political head of Valencian public education to becoming the symbol of imposition, repression and contempt towards teachers. Her administration has brought nothing but chaos, hidden cuts, excessive workloads, union persecution, and a complete inability to listen to the educational community. She has preferred

to govern from her office, surrounded by propaganda and subservience to private interests, rather than go to the schools and listen to the outcry of those who sustain public education every day. `

And at the top of this offensive against social and labour rights is the president of the Generalitat, Juanfran Pérez Llorca. His government represents the worst side of politics: authoritarianism, empty propaganda, and confrontation with public services. They have tried to subdue the teachers with fear, threats, and abusive and unjustifiable minimum services, turning a fundamental right like the right to strike into an anti-democratic obstacle course. The imposed minimum services are not intended to guarantee any citizens' rights; they are intended to break the strike and intimidate the workers. This is a practice unworthy of a government that claims to be democratic.

But they have failed. And they will fail. Because this strike is not just a union response. It is a collective, grassroots, deeply democratic movement born from below. This is the response of thousands of teachers tired of precarious working conditions, institutional neglect, and the progressive destruction of Valencian public education. It is also the response of families, students, and staff at educational centers who know that defending public schools is defending the future of our people.

And if this strike is making history, it is above all for one fundamental reason: union unity. Unity built from the ground up, from local unions, from assemblies, and from a shared will to stand up for what is right. An essential unity that has set aside party labels and individual personalities to put workers' rights and the defense of public services at the forefront. This is the movement's greatest strength: trade union and popular unity.

We must strongly advocate for this unity because it is the key to any future victory. When unions coordinate, when assemblies speak out, when the educational community moves forward together, governments tremble.

And this is exactly what is happening. The Valencian government is nervous because it knows that this strike could open a new cycle of social struggle in the Valencian Country.

It is also important to highlight that this struggle has transcended borders. The solidarity shown by unions and organisations in the Spanish state and around the world demonstrates that what is happening in the Valencian country is part of a global conflict between the interests of the elites and the rights of the majority of society. The support of the Confederación de Educadores Americanos (Confederation of American Educators), Federación de Sindicatos de Docentes Universitarios de América del Sur (FESIDUAS or Federation of South American Teachers' Unions), the Forum for Education in Ibero-America, Education International, the French union Solidaires, and the International Network of Solidarity and Struggles is a demonstration that the struggle of Valencian workers is also the struggle of millions of people around the world against precariousness and authoritarianism.

Tomorrow nothing ends — a new stage begins. This strike must serve to extend the conflict and the mobilisation to other sectors of public administration and the world of work. The situation in education mirrors that of healthcare, social services, public transportation, and so many other sectors hit by cuts, privatisation, and the erosion of rights. A comprehensive response from the entire working class is essential.

For this reason the message is clear and resounding: we will win. We will win because we have the strength of reason and the strength of unity. We will win because no government can defeat an organised people. We will win because the teachers and other education workers have decided to rise up and never kneel again.

10 May 2026

Translated and annotated by David Fagan **International Viewpoint** from **Vientosur** 15 May 2026.

UNITED STATES (USA)

Trump, Miller Take away Immigrants' Rights, Sometimes Their Lives, but Resistance Continues

The latest protest has taken place at Delaney Hall, a detention center in Newark, New Jersey where protestors outside the building are supporting a hunger strike by those inside. The immigrants in detention are protesting maggot-infested food, overcrowding, lack of blankets, and inadequate medical services. The rightwing neo-Nazi Proud Boys have shown up to support ICE and to confront the immigrants' allies. ICE has roughed up protestors, fired tear gas and arrested some anti-ICE activist. New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill, a Democrat, sent the state police to the site to keep order and reduce tensions as ICE withdrew.

The protests in New Jersey are the microcosm of the larger struggle taking place across the country. Officially over 170 people have died in ICE custody or detention facilities from a variety of causes between 2003 and 2025. ICE agents have killed at least four people and maybe more during Trump's second term and ICE gunshots have injured at least another 17 and perhaps more.

At the same time, the Trump administration is taking measures to ensure that immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are denied jobs, lose medical care, are stripped of tax credits, and are kept from enrolling their children in day care. Miller hopes in this way to persuade immigrants to leave, eighty percent of whom are people of color from Asia, Africa, or Latin America, by making their lives in the United States unbearably miserable. Tens of thousands have accepted plane tickets and stipends and self-deported.

The United States has seen an enormous increase in other so-called "voluntary departures." Between January 2025 and March 2026, immigration judges issued ap-

proximately 80,000 self-deportation decisions. But these are mostly the result of coercion by ICE or immigration judges, or because of the terrible conditions in immigration detention centers or the threat of a "third country removal," for example, sending someone from Latin America to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Not surprisingly then, many immigrants will opt to go home. Some estimate two million immigrants have left.

In violation of both U.S. and international law, asylum seekers—people who fear violence in their homelands from the government, from criminals, or from domestic abuse—have been turned back at the U.S. border. The "turnback policy" began under President Barack Obama and continued under Trump has led to hundreds of thousands being turned back. The American Immigration Council, an NGO, reports that, "Some waited for years [in Mexico] forced to live in squalid conditions and falling victim to cartel members. Many were violently assaulted, kidnapped, raped, or murdered while waiting for their chance to exercise their right to seek asylum." Though several lower courts have ruled that the policy is illegal, the Supreme Court has not ruled and so the Trump administration has continued it.

Meanwhile, New York State has established new rules requiring Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to unmask, to stay out of schools, hospitals, shelters, and houses of worship, and bars police from cooperating with police. ICE says it doesn't have to abide by state laws.

Given the situation, it's important that resistance of all sorts, legislative, legal, and in the streets continue. We can be sure that it will.

31 May 2026

In-depth analysis from International Viewpoint's Features section
In-depth analysis from International Viewpoint's Features section

FEATURES

In-depth analysis from International Viewpoint's Features section

CLIMATE

Heatwave Reflections: We Won't Return to the World Before, But We Still Have the Possibility of Living, and Living Well

DANIEL TANURO · 22 June 2026

As Europe experiences its second spring heatwave of the year.

As the health, agricultural, and ecological consequences promise to be severe.

As this extreme weather event — like the heatwaves in India and in Antarctica — is a sign that global warming, driven principally by fossil fuel combustion, is tipping the Earth into an irreversible catastrophe.

As what is needed — as with COVID, but structurally — is a public emergency plan to 1) protect the most vulnerable populations and care for living beings; and 2) drastically and immediately reduce CO₂, CH₄ and other emissions, in the greatest possible social justice, beginning with the prohibition of deforestation and of unnecessary production, transport, and services (private jets, yachts, and so on).

As the ongoing deterioration of the situation makes it abundantly clear that finance, energy, and agricultural production must be wrested from the grip of big capital in order to develop a comprehensive policy oriented towards a different society — good, truly human, ecosocialist.

As all of this is obvious, in fact:

– Financial investment in fossil fuels surged again in 2025 — and not only in the United States: in Europe and China too — and in Russia, of course.

– The G7 members deferentially assembled (in air-conditioned rooms) around the most criminal, the most fanatical, the most foolish of pro-fossil climate denialists, without uttering a word about the climate. The crowning absurdity: they went so far as to congratulate him for having restored peace (!) in Iran, and rejoiced

alongside him that precious oil would once again flow through Hormuz. Woodlice. [1]

– All are competing to develop artificial intelligence, whose data centres are on course to have as great a climate impact as the entire transport sector — and will soon surpass it.

– The European Commission, in agreement with governments and under pressure from industry, continues as if nothing were wrong to unravel the wholly inadequate emissions-regulation measures taken under its own Green Deal (internal combustion engines, methane leaks, the emissions trading market: everything passes through the omnibus grinder of "simplification"). [2]

– A significant number of media outlets continue to put it into people's heads that the weather is "fine" — this absurdity is even repeated by people on the left, who rejoice at the sunshine for their end-of-year barbecue.

An anecdotal result — though not entirely so: under a blazing sun worthy of the Peloponnese in August, Ryanair planes continue their infernal to-and-fro above my garden, as if nothing were happening, and the entire political class rejoices, because "it creates economic activity." A perfect illustration of the death-dealing automaton — capitalist profit — that devours society down to its very soul and substitutes itself for intelligence.

But the wind will eventually turn (to use a climate metaphor). Inevitably, the catastrophe... will place the catastrophe back on the social and political agenda. The first signs of growing anxiety are already showing up in polls, in the United States. Even at the risk of adopting a messianic stance, we must hold firm, grounded in science. Refuse "realism." Open up breaches in product-

ivism wherever possible. Shake up the major organisations — trade unions above all — to couple the social, the ecological, and the democratic in our struggles. [3]]

We will not return to the world before — no. The Holocene — which enabled the flowering of civilisation — is over, whatever geologists may officially say. The rise in ocean levels (which will continue for a very, very long time, even if emissions were halted immediately) is irreversible. So are the losses of biodiversity (coral reefs, for instance) and of ecosystem functions (at least on the human timescale). But we still have the possibility of living, and of living well — all of us — in a manageable Anthropocene in which the mean surface temperature will remain "well below +2°C" (Paris

Agreement) and will eventually — in 2,000 years — stabilise at approximately 1°C above Holocene levels. [4] [5]

This is the only conclusion one can draw from all of this: the degree of "manageability" of this Anthropocene, the Earth we will leave to our children and our children's children, "for ever and ever," depends on our struggles NOW against the capitalist Moloch. [6] Together, let us be courageous, determined, inventive, and joyful where we can. "Brothers, humans who will live after us, do not harden your hearts against us." [7]

20 June 2026

Source: Translated for **ESSF** by Adam Novak

Anti-militarism that forgets those under attack is no anti-militarism at all

COLLECTIVE · 17 June 2026

I. What This Is About

A left-wing peace policy that forgets those under attack is no peace policy. Motion G.26 “We Won’t Pay for Your Wars!” has precisely this problem. Thus, a motion is before the federal party convention that aims to sharpen the party’s peace policy line in the name of rearmament, social cuts, and new wars.

Anyone reading it solely in the context of the German budget debate might easily mistake it for a consistent anti-militarist response. It opposes billion-euro programs for the military and armaments, Rheinmetall profits, and the normalization of war readiness, while advocating for conversion, school strikes, and counseling on conscientious objection.

We share this social diagnosis: Anyone who allocates more than 108 billion euros to defense spending in 2026 alone while simultaneously freezing the standard social welfare rate at 563 euros is waging class warfare from above. If Rheinmetall’s stock price has increased sixteenfold since 2022, that is not a market anomaly—it is a political decision. A left-wing party must fight against social cuts, arms profits, and the militarization of everyday life. But it must also honestly acknowledge that Germany has co-financed Putin’s aggressive power for years through cheap energy imports—even after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, even while Russian dissidents were being imprisoned.

But Motion G.26 does not speak in a vacuum. It comes after more than four years of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and in the midst of a programmatic debate in which the party must decide whether it will continue to treat Eastern European security needs as a footnote. This is precisely where the problem lies: The

motion addresses rearmament, profits, and war readiness, but it renders the attacked Ukraine and the threatened societies in Eastern Europe invisible and reduces Russian imperialism to a side issue. Attacked societies are not pawns to be moved between power blocs, but political subjects with their own history, their own social struggles, and their own right to self-determination.

That is why we are writing not from an academic distance, but as Eastern European leftists. We know what Putin’s “peace” means—and that is precisely why we do not want it. Motion G.26 draws three false conclusions from correct observations: a false history, a false symmetry, a false answer. This text is directed against that.

II. False History — The 1914 Trap

Motion G.26 invokes the SPD’s war credits of 1914. The SPD’s approval of the war credits was a political capitulation to nationalism and a truce among enemies—because it supported an imperialist aggression between imperialist powers. No one was liberated. Everyone was sacrificed.

But 2022 is not 1914. The reference to the war credits only works if military support today means the same thing as it did then: approval of the war waged by one’s own imperialist state. That is precisely not the case here. One side is defending itself. The other has attacked. Ukraine is not the German Empire. It is the republic under attack. The attack was an imperial decision against Ukraine’s self-determination.

Those who blur this distinction are not repeating the anti-war reflex of the Bolsheviks in 1914. They are repeating the mistake of those Moscow-loyal leftists who dismissed the Hungarian uprising in 1956 as “coun-

terrevolutionary,” the Prague Spring in 1968 as “misguided,” and Georgia in 2008 as “provocative.” Each time, Moscow stood there with its tanks. Each time, a segment of the Western left showed sympathy. This is not our tradition.

Marx and Engels supported the Polish uprisings against the Tsarist Empire—not out of national romanticism, but because they understood the oppression of entire peoples as a shackle on democratic and socialist liberation. The International Brigades went to Spain in 1936—not “against both warring parties,” but against Franco. In Rojava, too, leftists have understood that self-defense against reactionary violence cannot be replaced by appeals. Anti-fascism is concrete. It chooses a side and accepts the risks that come with it. That is the tradition we are continuing.

III. False Symmetry — The Perpetrator Systematically Concealed

This distorted history also creates a false symmetry that runs throughout the entire text. The motion mentions Israel and the U.S. when it seeks to name aggressors. It does not mention what Russia has done. Not a word about Bucha, not a word about Mariupol, not a word about the Ukrainian children deported to Russia. Omission is also a stance. Anyone who does not call this war by its name has already half-accepted it.

Yet the motion speaks of “working people in Ukraine as well as in Russia”—as if both had the same choice. They did not. One side was invaded. The other side carried out the invasion. Symmetry between the aggressor and the attacked is not pacifism. It is complicity with the stronger party.

That is precisely why we must distinguish between the Russian state and the people who refuse to participate in this war. Solidarity with Russian deserters and conscientious objectors is not a substitute for or a counterweight to solidarity with Ukraine, but rather its antimilitarist corollary. A supposed “solidarity with Russia” that treats imprisoned Russian anti-war activists merely as a mirror image of Ukrainian suffering renders both invisible: state repression in Russia and the reality of everyday life in Ukraine under attack by bombs.

This weakness is not new to the party. In Crimea in 2014, in Syria, during the full-scale invasion in 2022, and in Gaza, Die Linke was too often too divided, too late, or too preoccupied with itself. This problem is also openly acknowledged in the current programmatic debate. But an admission that repeats the same gap in the next peace policy motion does not end the mistake. It only makes it more visible. And this gap specifically affects the Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, and Central European leftists in this party, whose political experience with the Kremlin predates the German debate about it.

IV. The Wrong Answer — No Weapons for Profit, but Weapons for the Attacked

This false symmetry gives rise to the wrong political answer. Yes, military spending is used to justify cuts to social services. Yes, Rheinmetall and other corporations turn war into a business model. Yes, the Left must not legitimize this profit machine. But it does not follow that military support for Ukraine is wrong. It follows that this support must not be left to the profit logic of the arms corporations.

The crucial distinction does not lie between “weapons” and “no weapons.” It lies between two ways of organizing security: as a private profit-making venture or as a democratically controlled public responsibility. Those who say, “No weapons, because Rheinmetall profits,” are leaving Ukraine to Russian imperialism and the security issue to the right-wing, the military, and corporations. Those who say, “More weapons, no matter the conditions,” turn every crisis into a free pass for extra profits, lack of transparency, and political blackmail. A left-wing response must reject both.

The question, then, is not whether societies under attack have the right to self-defense. They do. Anyone who takes the UN Charter seriously cannot pit its prohibition on the use of force against the right to self-defense of those under attack. The Erfurt Program places international law and the United Nations at the center of left-wing peace policy; this commitment must also apply to Article 51. The question is under what social conditions this self-defense is supported. Public funds must mean

public conditions: open cost control, limits on windfall profits, parliamentary oversight, and public transparency regarding procurement and exports; cooling-off periods to prevent the revolving door between ministries and corporations; and rights to publicly funded technology. No blank check for Rheinmetall. No procurement policy that serves as a corporate subsidy program. Where the market fails—in ammunition, drone defense, spare parts, air defense components, and protective equipment—public forms of production and European procurement under democratic control are needed.

This also applies to conversion. Anyone who today merely says “conversion,” as if we were still living in the disarmament debates of the 1990s, is missing the point. In reality, we are also experiencing reverse conversion: civilian industrial capacities are being opened up for arms production. That is why any publicly funded expansion of military production requires worker participation, collective bargaining agreements, training, and a civilian transition plan. In this way, support for Ukraine does not become a contradiction to left-wing anti-militarist policy, but rather its litmus test: not fewer weapons for Ukraine, but less private leverage over weapons production. No weapons for profit. But weapons for those under attack.

V. What We Demand

What we expect from the motion is not less antimilitarism, but consistent antimilitarism. This critique does not lead to abstract declarations, but to concrete changes to the motion and the party’s programmatic line:

1. Clear recognition of Ukraine’s right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. International law is indivisible—the UN Charter applies without double standards, against any aggressor. This entails political solidarity with societies under attack that are defending themselves against reactionary and imperialist violence, from Ukraine to Rojava.
2. Continuation of defensive arms deliveries to Ukraine—from democratically controlled production, with priority given to air defense and protective equipment, free from the private blackmailing power of arms corporations, and with a perspective for conversion for the

post-war era. No weapons for profit. But weapons for those under attack.

3. Democratically coordinated arms production instead of a profit-driven sector—public conditionality, open cost control, public transparency, targeted public forms of production, and democratic firewalls against the lobbying power of arms corporations.

4. Binding co-determination on conversion in both directions—conversion councils with workers, unions, and local governments, collective bargaining agreements, training, and prospects for a return to civilian life for every publicly funded expansion of military production.

5. Protection and reception of Russian deserters and conscientious objectors — because the concrete antimilitarist consequence is not symmetry between states, but support for those who evade the army of aggression.

6. Antifascist security policy as the party’s programmatic line — neither subject to NATO logic nor to arms corporations, but also not pacifism of self-surrender. Rather, a Left that conceives of security from below: for tenants, for refugees, for societies under attack and threat.

VI. Who is speaking here

This manifesto is an intervention by the Network for Just Peace (NGF). Within the NGF, leftists in solidarity with Ukraine—with or without personal ties to Ukraine, Russia, and Eastern Europe—work together. We are united not by origin, but by a political stance. The Ukrainian Left Initiative (ULI) and the BAG Russian-Speaking Left (RL) have contributed this text through the NGF. It deliberately focuses on Ukrainian, Russian-speaking, and Eastern European experiences, because it is precisely these perspectives that are missing from Motion G.26.

The Ukrainian Left Initiative (ULI) brings to the NGF the perspective of leftists in Germany who are Ukrainian or in solidarity with Ukraine. Many of us know about Russia’s war of aggression not from television images, but from family histories, flight, political work, and contacts with trade unions, left-wing organizations, and social movements in Ukraine. We are fighting for solidarity with Ukraine that goes beyond the state: for

military support for self-defense, for social and trade union reconstruction, for the rights of refugees, and against any right-wing co-optation of the Ukrainian issue.

The BAG Russian-Speaking Left (RL) brings to the NGF the perspective of Russian-speaking leftists who oppose Putin's war, nationalism, and repression—in Russia, in exile, and among migrants in Germany. For us, being Russian-speaking is neither a political camp nor an excuse for imperialist nostalgia. Many of us are witnessing how Putin's war is also dividing migrant communities here: those who oppose it are treated as traitors by the right and as disruptive elements by parts of the German left. We insist: solidarity with Russian deserters, conscientious objectors, and dissidents is part of solidarity with Ukraine, not against it.

We are not Atlanticists. We are not Putin apologists. This manifesto gives voice to what the German left has lacked for decades: an Eastern European voice from the left, supported by a network of solidarity. Precisely for this reason, we address all those who want a left-wing peace policy that sees those under attack. To ignore this voice—as Motion G.26 does—is not internationalist. It is ignorance with a leftist tinge.

VII. Conclusion

We will not pay for Rheinmetall's profits. We will not pay for Merz's rearmament fantasies. We will not pay for a policy that pits the welfare state against security.

But we will not let Ukraine pay either—with its cities, its children, its right to self-determination—so that a German Left Party consensus can maintain its simplistic slogan.

Solidarity is not symmetrical.

Anti-militarism is not looking the other way.

Peace is not the silence of the attacked.

Peace is the end of aggression.

Peace through self-determination—not peace through submission.

This is what we are fighting for at the federal party convention.

Anyone who shares this position—as a comrade, an initiative, a grassroots organization, or an elected official—is invited to co-sign this text, join the discussion, and fight alongside us at the Federal Party Convention.

Source: Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

Two Fronts: How Russia and the Ukrainian State Pressured Civil Society in 2025

ADAM NOVAK · 17 June 2026

Contract killings organised by Russian intelligence claimed Demian Ganul in Odesa in March — a civic activist, former Right Sector security wing leader in Odesa (2014–2016), and subsequently a campaigner against corruption and illegal development, who had been convicted in absentia by a Moscow court in 2024. A fourth assassination attempt against Serhii Sternenko, volunteer and drone fundraiser and former head of Right Sector's Odesa branch (2014–2017), followed in May in Kyiv. ZMINA is candid about both men's far-right political histories; less so about Andrii Parubii, former Verkhovna Rada Speaker, who was shot dead in Lviv in August — described by ZMINA only by his institutional role, without noting his co-founding of the Social-National Party of Ukraine (later Svoboda). French photojournalist Antoni Lallican was killed and Ukrainian photographer Heorhii Ivanchenko lost a leg to a targeted FPV drone strike near Komyshevakh in Donetsk region in October; both were wearing press markings and had been warned about drone activity in the area.

Volunteer centres, animal shelters, humanitarian warehouses, LGBTIQ+ offices, and the PEN Ukraine book warehouse were all struck. Across the year, 22 volunteers and activists were killed and 8 injured by Russian action; 4 media workers were killed and at least 9 injured.

The report also covers 66 documented cases of abuse by Ukrainian authorities and far-right activists. The dominant forms of pressure were intimidation and threats (14 cases), legally framed persecution including strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) (11 cases), privacy violations through surveillance (10

cases), and smear campaigns conducted through anonymous Telegram channels (9 cases). ZMINA confirmed eight physical attacks on civic activists. The group's survey of 156 activists found that nearly three quarters had encountered obstacles in their work and one in five experienced pressure regularly.

The NABU crisis and the cardboard protests

The central domestic human rights issue ZMINA highlighted in 2025 was the assault on Ukraine's anti-corruption architecture. On 21 July, Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) officers conducted over 80 simultaneous searches at the homes of National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) detectives, their relatives, and former colleagues — searches that NABU publicly stated were carried out without court warrants, with physical force, and with coerced password disclosure. The following day, the Verkhovna Rada adopted draft law No. 12414, which placed NABU and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) under the authority of the Prosecutor General, ending their institutional independence. The vote was preceded by a ten-minute committee session held online, with key amendments introduced without comparative tables. [2]

What followed was the first mass protest since the start of the full-scale invasion. Nine thousand people gathered in Kyiv on 23 July; protests in Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odesa, and fourteen other cities continued through to 30 July. Sotsialnyi Rukh (Social Movement) and Priama Diia (Direct Action) joined the protest in Ivan Franko Square, describing law No. 12414 as not merely a reform but a signal that "those in power want to bring the entire anti-corruption sector under their control and remove even the last vestiges of accountability." Sotsialnyi Rukh's own account of the year, published in December, described the movement as having

"joined mass protests numbering in the thousands, reminding people that the oligarchic system is doomed to corruption," adding that "workers' rights are not a 'secondary issue' but the foundation of national resilience." [3] The slogan they carried at the 30 July protest — "The minimum wage isn't going up because someone at the top is stealing" — explicitly connected anti-corruption work to the wartime social contract.

The protests were followed by sustained retaliation. The State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) served a suspicion notice on Anti-Corruption Action Centre (AntAC) head Vitalii Shabunin for alleged military service evasion, imposed movement restrictions, and in December circulated intimate photographs taken from his seized phone via a Telegram channel linked to the original complainant in his case. AntAC's executive director Daria Kaleniuk saw her husband unlawfully added to the military wanted list despite his legal exemption for caring for a child with a disability. The Vlasenko parliamentary Temporary Investigative Commission attempted to compel the appearance of DEJURE Foundation director Mykhailo Zhernakov and subjected former members of the Public Integrity Council — the civil society body overseeing judicial qualification — to adversarial questioning on the basis of a published opinion piece.

Nevertheless, the protests had some success. The EU, G7, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) intervened publicly; the European Commissioner for Enlargement warned that NABU and SAPO independence is a condition of accession. On 31 July, the Verkhovna Rada voted 331 to 0 to restore the anti-corruption bodies' autonomy.

Corruption, oligarchy, and the war effort

The left in Ukraine has long argued that suppressing anti-corruption oversight is not merely an abuse of democratic process but a direct impediment to the war effort. In March 2025 Sotsialnyi Rukh insisted that "the main obstacle to effectively mobilising resources" for defence is neoliberal policy that "prioritises private property above all else, encourages profiteering, and allows wealth to be accumulated by private individuals." [4] The organisation's September 2025 congress

declared that, in conditions where market mechanisms had collapsed, supporting sectors working for the common good — railways, healthcare, education — over private profit was not a political preference but a precondition of survival. [5]

The state crackdown on its own anti-corruption agencies came when NABU was actively investigating corruption in Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian Railways) procurement and in the energy sector. The July raids targeted the NABU investigators of the schemes by which defence resources were being siphoned. According to Sotsialnyi Rukh member and historian Hanna Perekhoda, "the Ukrainian government, by maintaining its neoliberal logic, not only undermines the country's economic sovereignty, but also jeopardises its social cohesion, a crucial condition for the survival of a society at war. The government is at a dead end. It is trying to wage total war against an imperialist power while clinging to the fantasy of a neoliberal economy. Founded on deeply individualistic social imaginaries and deregulated economies, it is simply not suited to defence needs that require united efforts at all levels of society,"

According to Sotsialnyi Rukh activist Oleksiy Vynohradiv "The elite, the politicians, the big businessmen, can leave the country if they want to, and start a new business. And the rest of the population only has obligations. There is a kind of breach of the social contract." [6]

There is a direct connection between the Ukrainian government's obsession with oligarchic preservation and the failures in resisting Russian aggression since 2014. Ukraine's oligarchic asset bases remain largely untouched; the country pays salaries and pensions from Western financial assistance rather than domestic tax revenues; and the wartime state, in protecting these interests through suppression of oversight, undermines the very solidarity on which resistance depends. [7]

The NABU episode illustrates in concentrated form what Sotsialnyi Rukh has been arguing throughout the war: a system that cannot tolerate accountability cannot mobilise its resources efficiently, and the population that bears the cost of that inefficiency in poverty and casualties is the same population that is asked to fight.

Pressure on trade unions

ZMINA's definition of a civil activist — anyone acting to bring about socially significant change without personal gain — is in theory broad enough to encompass trade unionists acting in a civic capacity, but like other liberal CSOs, ZMINA's monitoring practice excludes trade unions and labour activists. This highly political omission matters, because 2025 saw a campaign against Ukrainian organised labour that is as dangerous as the state interference in the work of anti-corruption agencies.

On 9 April 2025, Hryhorii Osovyi, the president of Ukraine's biggest labour organisation, Federation of Trade Unions (FPU), was detained by security forces during a FPU conference. [8] The arrests came as the government, employers and labour organisations were locked in negotiations over Labour Code reform — a reform that, as Vitaliy Dudin has documented, has been a vehicle for neoliberal deregulation. [9] On 5 June 2025, the National Agency for Asset Management (ARMA) entered the House of Trade Unions on Maidan and ordered FPU staff out — a seizure that the Ukrainian socialist left has condemned while consistently criticising the FPU leadership's accommodating posture on the Labour Code. Wartime legislation has meanwhile stripped workers of fundamental rights: Law No. 2136, adopted in 2022, prohibited strikes, reduced social guarantees, and cancelled key provisions of collective agreements. As Oleksandr Skiba documented in May 2025, territorial recruitment centres have compounded this by allegedly targeting union activists for mobilisation. [10]

On conscription abuses

Another politically motivated gap in the ZMINA report is its silence on conscription system abuses. ZMINA documents mobilisation being weaponised against individual civil society activists to silence them and others, and flags proposed legislation that would seal court decisions in conscription-related proceedings from public scrutiny. But the report does not cover systemic TCR (Territorial Centre of Recruitment and Social Support) abuses. These are numerous and serious

enough to justify a whole chapter in any study of the Ukrainian civil rights picture. The Ombudsman's office recorded a 333-fold increase in complaints about TCR conduct over the course of the war — from 18 to 6,127 — a figure ZMINA cites only in a legislative footnote.

The Ukrainian left has consistently named the problems: conscription without fixed service terms, without adequate rotation, and with the burden falling entirely on working-class men while wealthier Ukrainians purchase medical exemptions or maintain university registration to avoid the draft. Sotsialnyi Rukh's October 2024 conference resolution called for "ending the uncertainty regarding the duration of military service, as it is a matter of elementary fairness" — demanding fixed service terms, salary protections for mobilised workers, and dignified compensation for the wounded. Its March 2025 ten-point programme linked these demands explicitly to the parallel demand that the war's economic burden shift from working-class conscripts to oligarchic capital. The state refuses to tax the rich to fund the war, and relies instead on open-ended conscription of the poor. It uses the security apparatus against those who document either abuse. ZMINA, like most of the liberal CSOs, is silent. [11]

Progressive organisations and the far right

The ZMINA 2025 report does cover the multiple attacks on Priama Diia (Direct Action), the anarcho-sindicalist student trade union. In June 2025, activist Maksym Shumakov had his flat searched and his phone, laptop, and documents seized on grounds of alleged communist symbols on his Facebook page — a charge ZMINA found unsupported on inspection of his public posts. No suspicion notice had been served and no equipment returned as of April 2026. In July, a "Free School" summer event in Lviv was disrupted by far-right youth, and the venue administration subsequently threatened cancellation, citing Priama Diia's described membership of "Marxists, anarchists and representatives of more exotic movements." In October 2025, a group with Right Sector links physically attacked a Priama Diia meeting at Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, using Nazi salutes, a gas canister, and a knife; proceedings were opened as hooliganism rather than obstruction of a civic

organisation. SSU officers visited the educational institution of a female Priama Diia member and questioned staff about her political views, bank history, and family.

In April 2025, Priama Diia members observed that far-right groups show little interest in social demands — dormitories, canteens, wages — but reliably appear when progressive 'wedge' issues arise, "on LGBTQIA+, for example." [12]

Harassment of LGBTQ+ organisations was constant in 2025. KyivPride's planned charitable event was displaced from its venue under police pressure, the Sunny Bunny queer cinema festival was attacked by Prava Molod (Right Youth), KharkivPride's resource centre was vandalised, and events organised by NGO Insight were disrupted in both Lviv and Zaporizhzhia. In none of the documented cases were hate-motivated charges brought to court; investigations were systematically reclassified as hooliganism or domestic disputes. ZMINA's survey found that LGBTQ+ activists faced the broadest range of threats of any group, with 91% reporting online harassment and intimidation and 82% citing increased far-right activity. Investigations into hate crimes consistently failed to result in prosecutions.

USAID cuts and legislative risks

The abrupt cancellation of over 80% of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programmes at the start of 2025 struck directly at the civil society sector. ZMINA cites one survey suggesting 75% of affected organisations are still seeking alternative resources, 25% anticipating staff reductions, and 12% suspending programmes or closing entirely. Regional legal aid, educational initiatives, and anti-disinformation work were among the casualties. The ZMINA report notes that the vacuum may provide space for external actors to exert influence through alternative funding channels, and that the structural dependency exposed by the USAID collapse points to the need for diversification towards local philanthropy and long-term institutional support rather than project-based grants — a position the Ukrainian left, with its emphasis on building domestic solidarity networks, has argued consistently.

Two laws adopted in 2025 drew significant civil society criticism. A law restricting access to the unified state register of court decisions removed cadastral numbers and precise property addresses from publicly searchable records — ostensibly for security but applied to all legal entities, not only defence-related ones, substantially impeding anti-corruption asset monitoring. Another law, on verified humanitarian organisations, introduced a status threshold disadvantaging small, local, or newly formed NGOs, with the Cabinet of Ministers granted broad discretion over criteria for granting and revoking status. Four draft laws remained under consideration, including proposals to introduce administrative liability for "identifying a lawyer with a client" — vague enough to criminalise investigative journalism covering court proceedings — and Civil Code amendments that would expand grounds for demanding retractions and blocking digital content, without anti-SLAPP safeguards.

Two fronts, one movement

The ZMINA report is a record of persecution and of persistence. The "cardboard protests" succeeded: a legislative reversal was achieved in ten days through street mobilisation and international pressure. Sotsialnyi Rukh, reflecting at the close of 2025, placed that victory alongside sustained work on workers' rights, veteran support, and internal displacement — insisting that "due to aggressor pressure and the weakness of corrupt capitalism, the war may continue for a long time," and that under these conditions labour and social rights are not secondary concerns to be deferred until after the war, but the foundation of what Ukraine is being defended for. Priama Diia continued organising across university campuses despite repeated attacks, criminal proceedings, and SSU surveillance. KyivPride, KharkivPride, NGO Insight, NGO Bilkis, and the broader LGBTQ+ movement kept organising, documenting, and filing complaints, even knowing those complaints would not be prosecuted.

ZMINA does not just write reports. The centre's head of the board, Tetiana Pechonchyk, appeared publicly within 48 hours of the Shabunin photo leak to demand criminal proceedings for disclosure of pre-trial investigation data and violation of the right to privacy. The organisation

published a joint statement signed by over 100 Ukrainian civil society organisations condemning the political use of the justice system.

As the ZMINA report shows, Ukraine’s democratic civil infrastructure is under strain. It has not collapsed. Ukrainian human rights organisations, the democratic socialist left, democratic soldiers’ organisations — Veteranka (the Women Veterans Movement) [13] and the NGO Ukrainian LGBT+ Military and Veterans for Equal

Rights [14] — labour unions, the student movement, LGBTIQ+ activists, and environmental defenders, each face different forms of the same double pressure — from Russian recolonisation and from the neoliberal state and far-right.

5 June 2026

Source: **ESSF**

ECONOMY

Global profits: an upward turn?

MICHAEL ROBERTS · 17 June 2026

Average annual growth in global corporate profits during the 2010s – the decade of what I have called the Long Depression since the Great Recession of 2008-9 – was 3.9%. But in the first half of the 2020s, the average growth rate has doubled to 7.7%, although that’s still way less than the 16.1% average growth rate in the credit-fuelled decade of the 2000s. There were only two periods of a fall in global profits: the mini-‘profits recession’ at the end of 2015 and in the pandemic slump of 2020.

In the ten years before 2007, China’s corporate sector led the way with an average annual rise of 26.7% in profits, more than three times higher than in Japan and the US. But the picture changed in the 2010s, as China’s profits growth rate dropped away sharply. Profits growth also slowed in the other economies, with the exception of Japan. In the 2020s, so far, average profits growth in Japan and the US has increased, with the US rate more than doubling compared to the 2010s. Both German and British corporate profits growth has been dismal in the first quarter of the 21st century. So in terms of profits, Japanese capital has done very well, the US corporates too, while European capital has performed poorly.

What are we to make of this? Well, the 2020s figures suggest that capital in the major economies is not heading for a slump, with the exception of Germany, where profits growth confirms the current recessionary environment.

If we zone in on the US, using the Basu-Wasner calculation of profits from official data, we find that in the 2020s, annual profits growth has been higher than even in the neo-liberal period of the 1980s. The higher figure in the 1970s is due to higher inflation.

Source: <https://dbasu.shinyapps.io/Profitability/>

The rate of profit on corporate capital is defined in Marxian terms as total profit (surplus value) divided by

the stock of capital (fixed and circulating assets) held by companies plus the cost of employing labour in production. The overall rate of profit in the US economy has been modestly declining since the end of neo-liberal recovery period in the late 1990s. But if you isolate the productive sector of the US economy (ie exclude real estate, finance, insurance and government), then the rate of profit on productive assets fell sharply through the 2010s to the end of the pandemic slump in 2020. This explains the Great Recession of 2008-9 and the pandemic slump of 2020. But since then, the profitability of productive assets has risen.

What is the reason for the recovery in overall profits and the profitability of capital in the US – and for that matter in Japan? This is disputed. In a recent article, Ruchir Sharma, chair of the Rockefeller Foundation, reckons that US profits growth has only accelerated because of rising government budget deficits. Falling taxation on corporate profits and rising government subsidies have boosted profits. “Overall corporate earnings have risen from 7 per cent of GDP in the late 1990s to 11 per cent today. The dynamism of American business has played a role, but so have tax cuts and government spending. Lately the US deficit has risen to more than 6 per cent of GDP and a deficit that high reflects a large transfer of income to households and corporations.” Sharma concludes that “deficits have accounted for more than half of corporate profits, twice the level of the dotcom era. Strip away government support, and US profits look less extraordinary.”

Here, Sharma relies on the so-called Kalecki equation, which boils down to the proposition that investment drives profits, not vice versa. If a government runs up a big budget deficit, in other words, ‘dissaves’, it can boost investment and thus profits. “So, under a well-established accounting formula, the Kalecki-Levy Equation, corporate profits are in part a mirror image of the government’s deficit. Based on this framework, deficits

were the single largest contributor to the increase in earnings as a share of GDP since the late 1990s.”

But as I have argued on many occasions and posts, the Kalecki identity (profits=investment) is just that, an identity. It does not show the causal direction. Does investment drive profits and does government ‘dissaving’ (deficits) drive up profits? In my view, that causal direction is back to front. In capitalism, profits drive investment. And if we start from that direction, then the rise in profits is not due to government spending, but can only be due to a rise in the rate of exploitation of workers, as expressed in a rise in the share of profits in the US economy relative to wages. Corporate profits as a share of US GDP are at record highs.

Profits are not rising because of excessive government spending, but because there has been a sharp fall in labour’s share of national income – to an historic low.

If this rise in profit share can be sustained and accelerated, then the US rate of profit may well rise further from here. Much will depend on whether the huge investment being made by the AI companies and their potential clients in data centres will deliver a step change in profits (by shedding labour and thus reducing the relative wage bill). As Sharma said in a previous article of his: the US economy is now ‘one big bet on AI’. I’ll return to that story in my next post.

2 June 2026

Source: <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2026/06/02/global-profits-an-upward-turn/>.

INDIA

West Bengal Assembly Elections 2026 and the Footfalls of Fascism - A Balance Sheet

KUNAL CHATTOPADHYAY · 9 June 2026

In this situation, it banked on seat delimitation. The proposal was to increase the seats in Parliament to 850, and reassign seats base on population growth, as per the 2011 Census, since no census data since then has been published. This punishes provinces that had seriously attempted to implement the earlier government policy of population control, while the Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan core base of the RSS, including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan have had its Hindu population pushed to large scale population growth under the RSS claim that otherwise Muslims will overtake the Hindu population soon and impose Islamic domination. Delimitation under such circumstances would have meant a significant and virtually permanent majority for the Hindi heartland provinces, which are industrially less productive, but which would then economically dominate the rest of India. However, delimitation involved a constitution amendment, so admitting it in Parliament required a supermajority (2/3rds or 352 votes). With the entire opposition lining up against the Bill, it failed. Capturing large states (West Bengal sends 42 MP to the Indian Lok Sabha, the directly elected Lower House) thereafter became vital.

The results:

The elections were held in two phases – 23 and 29 April, with counting carried out in 293 out of 294 seats on 4 May. We provide the details below:

2026 compared to 2021

Total: 294 Majority: 148

Party	2026 seats	2026 %	2021 seats	2021 %	Change seats	Change %
BJP	207	45.85	77	38.4	+130	+7.88
AITC	80	40.8	215	48.5	-135	-7.22
Congress 2	2.97	0	-	-	+2	-
CPIM	1	4.45	0	5 for Left	+1	-
ISF/ AISF	1	-	1	-	0	-
AJUP	2	-	N/A	-	-	-

This however does not tell the bulk of the story. The elections this time involved a war by the federal state apparatus on an outlier province.

The story began with a change in the law about how the Election Commissioner of India was to be appointed. Under the new schema, the ruling party got a simple 2-1 majority, and the Chief Justice of India, previously a selector, was excluded. And the Supreme Court has been considering cases against the law for three years without any verdict, while a handpicked ECI acts on behalf of the ruling party. This was how Gyanesh Kumar was made the ECI.

As ECI he ordered a so-called Special Intensive Revision or SIR. The West Bengal case is particularly obnoxious, but in passing it is worth mentioning that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. K. Stalin, a staunch opponent of Hindi imposition and of the RSS brahminism, lost by a few thousand votes in a seat where the SIR had deleted over a hundred thousand voters' names. In West Bengal, the initial round excluded something like 54 lakh names. While a part are actually dead, duplicate names, moved to other place, etc, even here complaints were lodged about how actual voters' names were deleted. Then came a revision. This was a horror show. It authorised handpicked personnel to supersede the legally designated officers responsible for voter verifica-

tion. Rules changed without public notice. An ever-morphing software dictated terms to officers. WhatsApp messages and oral commands complemented written regulations. To understand why this SIR is fundamentally different, one must begin with a category that did not exist in Indian electoral practice before 2026: “Logical Discrepancy.”

The SIR required every voter to establish linkage to the 2002 electoral roll, either directly or through a relative. Voters were sorted into three groups: Mapped, Unmapped, and the newly introduced category: Logical Discrepancy.

On paper, this category captured mismatches in parental names, implausible age gaps, or inconsistencies in records. In practice, the triggers were often banal. Variations in transliteration, for example, “Mohammed” versus “Muhammad,” “Mondal” versus “Mandal”, routinely confused the ERONET software. Poor-quality scans of older rolls further undermined digital matching.

A voter could be flagged not because they were ineligible, but because software failed to recognise what any human reader would.

Midway through the process, the Commission introduced another layer: an algorithm that re-flagged voters who had already been successfully mapped. The goalposts shifted in real time, through software updates that were never publicly explained to voters or even consistently communicated to officials.

The SIR has been conducted thirteen times since 1952. Never before has a category like Logical Discrepancy been used to place millions of voters in a state of suspended franchise without a clear, public explanation of what the category means, how it is triggered, or how a voter exits it.

The target was clearly seats, and categories of voters, suspected of being pro-Trinamul.

The ECI did not stop with this. The SIR was uploaded in such a way that reading it was difficult. *Alt News* reported:

When Alt News attempted to work with the SIR Final Rolls 2026 for two Kolkata constituencies — Bhabanipur (159) and Ballygunge (161) — the obstacles began immediately.

The first barrier was access. Bhabanipur alone contains 267 zones. The ECI website allows downloads for only ten areas at a time, each gated by a CAPTCHA. Automation is effectively blocked. Manual downloading took hours.

The second barrier was the format. The scanned PDFs are, on average, 228 times larger than a digitally readable equivalent, yet contain none of the underlying structured data. This is not a technological limitation. India runs systems like Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker at massive scale. Publishing a CSV (A computerised file with Comma Separated Values) alongside a PDF is trivial by comparison. The absence of such formats is a decision.

The third barrier lies within the files. Roughly one in ten voter entries carries a diagonal “UNDER ADJUDICATION” watermark, often obscuring the name itself. This is not incidental. It directly interferes with automated data extraction and even manual reading in some cases.

In the two constituencies combined Muslim voters account for 39.5%, but among under adjudication they came to over 66 %.

The ECI did not stop with the SIR. They issued a notice to the Trinamul congress, that sounded like a BJP threat. And they virtually made the state police non functional, bringing in huge amount of central police and paramilitary forces to conduct the elections. In summary, the ECI functioned like an arm of the state waging war on the people of Bengal.

Bt the SIR also gave positive benefits to the BJP. On one hand Hindu communally minded voters were happy that this time the BJP meant business, and as a result voted more firmly for the BJP. In the other hand, there were about 27 lakh voters who objected and submitted documents. Add another 7 lakh or so from the original round of SIR. Not only did the ECI ignore them, but the Supreme Court, in the person of Justice Joymalya Bagchi, asserted that losing your vote in one election did not mean losing it for good. That a voter has the right to

vote everytime seemed to have escaped Justice Bagchi. The supine behaviour of the Supreme Court emboldened the ECI. If we look at the total votes received across the province, the BJP got 29218815, while the AITC got 26002017. The difference is 3216798. If those 34 lakhs had the vote, with the BJP getting only a small share, an assumption that appears legitimate, then the margin could have been very different. The BJP majority could even have evaporated.

The BJP's aims:

In the pre election bulletin of Radical Socialist, it had been said that The Assembly elections of 2026 have brought significant changes. From the foundation of the Trinamul Congress, the RSS has given it a considerable degree of support. Even in the 2021 Assembly elections, and the 2024 Parliamentary elections, there were fuzzy areas. Whether this means the much used and abused word “setting” can be discussed later. What is incontestable is, in 2026 the RSS, and the BJP at the central level, have been going all out to defeat the TMC. In the first place, the anti-incumbency sentiments are quite strong this time. Whether that would translate into votes against the TMC will have to be awaited, but after fifteen years, the lies, the frauds, are catching up. TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee has proclaimed about the millions of jobs she has created, while people remember her advice to sell chops in stalls, and the reality that jobs have been increasingly replaced by cash aid to the poor. We are not opposing cash aid. In fact, we believe that a Universal Basic Income for all would lower extremes of capitalist exploitation, giving working people a slight leverage. But when Rs 1000, or Rs 2500, under various heads per month replace salaries and wages, we are looking at an abysmal decline. When we look at government and other public data, at first glance West Bengal appears robust. The key industrial sectors, we are told, are tea, IT, petroleum, petrochemicals and leather. At least in three of these sectors, namely tea, IT and leather, the conditions of workers are very poor. In the IT sector, unionization remains difficult. In the tea gardens, the superexploitation of workers, including tying them down though the poor quality accommodations they are provided, means a highly exploited labour force that

cannot easily walk away, contrary to myths of the free market. That a large employment sector like the jute industry does not figure among the leading sectors is also a telling instance of this being a case of jobless growth –profit for the capitalists but no trickle down at all for the workers.

So there is a growing dissatisfaction with the TMC. A part of the voters could actually transfer this dissatisfaction into the EVM. Not by tens of thousands of NOTA, but by voting opposition candidates. So this time the RSS could not treat the TMC as another, though less significant force it had nurtured in the past. If the RSS did not pull out all stops, the anti-incumbency votes are likely to go to the left. And whatever the current strength of the left, whatever the shortcomings of its Stalinist and Social Democratic politics, it remains the fundamental enemy for fascism. It does not want the left to get a single seat, or to gain a single percentage of vote. Accordingly, in 2025-26 it has become ever more aggressive against the TMC government, to show the disgruntled electorate that the alternative to the TMC must be the BJP.

The BJP saw that even losing small provinces could have serious consequences. And one of its goals is to impose a “One Nation One Election” policy. This calls for not only a parliamentary majority but 2/3rds of the state assemblies agreeing. Hence it has been using shady means – in Maharashtra, in Haryana, in Delhi, and now in West Bengal.

2011–2021-2026

In 2011, after 34 years, the Left Front was voted out as a result of mass movements over land acquisition in Singur, violence in Nandigram, etc. While the TMC was the beneficiary, it was not the force that had originally launched all the stirs. And it got votes not because masses of people wanted the TMC as much as they wanted the CPIM out.

By 2021, a decade later, the polish had worn off. What saved the TMC in 2021 was a public sentiment, supported and often organised by intellectuals and activists on the liberal and far left corners, summer up by the slogan #NoVoteToBJP . These were people who wanted to op-

pose the BJP but many of whom were also aggressively opposed to the CPIM, especially the ex-leftist liberals, but also certain currents of the far left. (For a detailed analysis of the 2021 results “2021 West Bengal Elections: Populist Right wins, Fascists Gain and the Left Disappears ”.) In 2021, the TMC/AITC won the highest number of seats. Ironical, because in 2006 the Left Front had won the highest number of seats. While the Left Front had looked at trade unions and some of their demands, and so on, while corruption under the Left Front, while very much in existence, had a limit, the period 2011 to 2026 saw corruptions galore coming into the open. Ponzi schemes, sting operations showing bribe taking, everything came into the open. Bribe taking for schoolteachers’ jobs led to a complicated lawsuit, ending with all who had been selected, regardless of whether bribe giving was proved, losing their jobs. No bureaucrat lost their jobs however, and certainly no minister. In 2024, a Junior Doctor was raped and murdered inside the hospital where she worked. Government protection meant only a minor figure was convicted. A mass movement broke out.

Corruption had become a way of life under the TMC/AITC. Left and liberal intellectuals living outside West Bengal consistently sang a song that the party of Mamata Banerjee was better than the CPIM, that the CPIM was a brutal, terror inspiring party, and Mamata Banerjee would resist the BJP. Nothing can be further from the truth. Mamata Banerjee in fighting the BJP reminded us of what her one time mentor, the late Subrata Mukherjee of the Congress, had said in 1974 in opposing the RSS—Jan Sangh (the JS was the forerunner of the BJP). He had said—we shall fight fascism with fascism. In 2021 already, she had developed soft Hindutva as her antidote to the RSS brand of Hindutva. To expect her to defend the secular fabric of the constitution is a joke of a very poor taste.

In short, there was a genuine anti-incumbency feeling in various levels. And her politics over the last five years did nothing to protect her. One of the myths peddled by advocates of “subaltern” theory for whom the TMC/AITC represents the subalterns, it is the upper castes who turned to the BJP. Keeping the SIR data in mind, we must still disagree. Women did not vote as massively

for them as in 2021. In seats with high Dalit and Adivasi voters (SC and ST in legal language) the BJP won. In Muslim majority or large Muslim voter inclusive seats, only in Kolkata did the TMC/AITC hegemonise. Elsewhere that vote was split, with the Congress, the AISF, the Left, the AJUP getting chunks.

What I am arguing is, the Trinamul Congress was created in 1998 with cadre support from the RSS. It participated in Vajpayee’s government. This was a long term plan of the RSS, which can truly plan for decades. Now, having made the Left a marginal factor in electoral politics in west Bengal, the RSS wants to oust her and get their direct forces in. The election victory is a step in that direction. But the RSS would like the Trinamul Congress to survive, because for historic reasons, the Congress, the other main bourgeois party in the state, cannot compromise with the BJP/RSS, and the RSS still sees the left as its main enemy, as Modi’s post-election speech showed. He said that for the first time in half a century India has no communist government, and this indicates a change in the mindset of people.

Prospects for the Left:

There is a clear difference between contemporary fascism and its classical ancestors. It has generally not tried to abolish the forms of bourgeois democracy, even while it scrapes a thin layer of butter over more and more space. That means the left will be tormented, activists will be accused with false charges, kept arrested without even bail hearings, public meetings will be halted, but the parties will formally be allowed to exist. The radical left needs to clarify politics, but also to try to build organisational unity based on real agreements.

The elections saw the Left Front holding their votes compared to 2021. This means the theory that the Left is consciously pushing its supporters to vote the BJP does not reflect the truth. It is evident that some who had voted the left 15 or 20 years no longer do so. Even in 2011 when it lost, the left front had nearly 40% votes. Now it has just over 5%. But voters are not serfs. Many moved to the BJP because when the Trinamul attacked left cadres the leaders failed to stand and fight, if necessary physically. Others had come in to a left

entrenched in power for loves and fishes, and hen the perks disappeared so did they.

For the first phase of the election campaign the CPIM leaders carried on their routine unless the TMC is defeated the BJP cannot be tackled type o rhetoric. Around mid-March, however, reports from the ground made them realise that the tide was flowing so sharply against the TMC they need not bother. But the tide was going to the BJP. So thereafter they focused with a single mided intensity om the BJP. This should have been done for the past five years, along withactually resisting TMC crooked behaviour on the streets.

The left now faces difficult times. It must build its bases. And it has to do in a changed landscape. Large factories have been disappearing. Building mass organisations

and movements means not just trade unions and peasant organisations, but serious sustained work among LGB-TIQ+ groups, building serious ecological left movements, and so on. That will also enable the left to make meaningful contact with Dalits and advasis.

The RSS is still relatively weak in organisational terms in West Bengal. The Left must use what time it has to go to the people with its alternative ideology, values and build resistance. For the RSS-BJP attacking independent thinking is vital. There will be an assault on Jadavpur University in line with the earlier assaults on JNU. School level education will be under rapid Hinduization. The left has to look at these dimensions as well.

7 May 2026

RUSSIA

War, economic crisis, and discontent in Putin's Russia

ASHLEY SMITH & POSLE · 8 June 2026

As the *Tempest* editors were preparing this article for publication, the Russian state designated those associated with the website Posle as a “foreign agent.” Russia’s “foreign agent” law is highly repressive, and places the editors at significant risk of criminal prosecution and other threats to their basic civil rights. Russia’s law is a model of what Human Rights Watch has identified as a critical tool in the authoritarian playbook. “The primary target of these laws are civil society and media organizations” whose activities are “aimed at influencing public policy...[and] organizing public debates, events, rallies and demonstrations.” Thus, among other purported sins, the Putin regime has based its decision on Posle’s alleged “promotion” of “LGBT relationships”. This is part of a broader attack on democratic rights internationally. It has its own parallels in the U.S., as the authoritarian creep has been escalated by Trump. *Tempest* stands in unconditional solidarity with Posle and its editors. We see in Posle fellow “agents”, not of any state, but of a democratic project of international solidarity which is the antidote to a future of unbridled capitalist barbarism. [Tempest]

Ashley Smith: The U.S. and Israel have expanded their joint genocidal war on Gaza into Lebanon and Iran. They expected a quick victory, but it has turned into yet another disastrous forever war. The Iranian regime has launched asymmetrical warfare; it has struck the region’s oil infrastructure, shut down the Strait of Hormuz, and thereby disrupted the flow not only of oil but also petrochemicals, fertilizers, and helium, which is essential for the manufacture of microchips. While stagflation threatens every corner of the world economy, it appears that Russia has benefited from the war: President Trump has lowered sanctions on Russia oil and increased fossil fuel prices have poured profits into Putin’s coffers. Is this

an accurate assessment? What impact is this having on the Russian economy?

Posle: Indeed, in the short term, Russia has benefited from the surge in oil prices and lifting of sanctions. For example, Russian budget revenues from oil exports in April doubled compared to March. However, these additional revenues are not enough to halt the catastrophic rise in the budget deficit (for instance, the deficit currently stands at 2.5%, exceeding the government’s planned threshold of 1.6% for this year). This has a negative, knock-on impact on other government spending and the strength of the rouble. This adds further pressure on the creaky financial system.

Furthermore, almost all of the windfall profits were channeled to oil companies to modernise infrastructure (which has been severely damaged by effective attacks from Ukrainian missiles). It is worth noting that Ukraine’s attacks targeting oil refineries and oil loading terminals have seriously undermined Russia’s ability to export raw materials. In recent months, ports on the Baltic Sea, for instance, have reduced oil shipments by a third.

At the same time, a sustained increase in oil prices will inevitably lead to a decline in global oil consumption, which could seriously damage the Russian economy that is already in recession. Therefore, the ongoing war in Iran and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz are not in Russia’s economic interests, although they undoubtedly offer it political advantages.

AS: Trump’s war on Iran has further disrupted the so-called rules based order, already discredited by the U.S. and Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza and Russia’s imperialist war on Ukraine. Trump launched the attack on Tehran without consulting or even alerting Washington’s NATO allies. Now that alliance is fraying with Trump increasingly threatening to pull U.S. troops out and abandoning support for

Ukraine. As a result, Europe, especially Germany, is rapidly re-arming. Given this reality, what do you believe is the current perspective of the Putin regime regarding the inter-imperial rivalry within Europe, and that between NATO and Russia, and Ukraine's struggle for self-determination?

Posle: In fact, declining support for Ukraine in the U.S. and America's further distancing from European security issues due to the war in Iran represent Putin's main political gain to date. In this sense, it is clear how the interests of Russia and its population (suffering from a falling standard of living and intensifying missile attacks) diverge sharply from those of Putin and his regime, which is prepared to prolong the conflict in order to achieve its geopolitical ambitions. These objectives include crushing Ukrainian resistance (at the cost of tens of thousands of Russian soldiers' lives) and destabilising Europe in order to expand his influence across the post-Soviet space and in Eastern Europe.

Currently, the situation around Armenia is escalating, where President Pashinyan is seeking to gradually withdraw the country from the CSTO (a pro-Russian military bloc) and strengthen cooperation with the EU. Tensions are also rising with the Baltic states, which are becoming increasingly targeted by Russian military sabotage. All these developments are of great significance to Putin, as they raise questions about the reality of NATO's support for its members and allies.

If aggression against Iran escalates, the U.S. will continue to rapidly reduce its presence in Europe, and NATO risks turning into a "paper tiger," whose members' mutual commitments are worthless. It is clear that these challenges not only lead to the remilitarisation of Germany, but also call into question the entire ideological model of the German state, built upon the trauma of Nazi militarism and the colossal sacrifices of the Second World War. All these values are threatened today, as demonstrated by the growing support for the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which has effectively become the country's most popular party.

In these circumstances, the German Left must certainly fight against the danger of fascism and militarisation, but not by ignoring the Russian threat facing Eastern

European countries. On the contrary, only consistent support for Ukraine can curb the ambitions of Putin's regime and, consequently, the need for Germany's remilitarisation, which ultimately plays into the hands of the far right.

AS: In another development that impacts Russia, voters kicked out Victor Orbán after 16 years of his increasingly authoritarian rule in Hungary. He was an ally of Putin who had blocked the EU's \$106 billion loan package to Ukraine. What is the significance of Orbán's defeat for the Putin regime?

Posle: This is certainly a serious setback for the Kremlin, as Orbán served as its chief agent within the EU. Today, the only country remaining in this role is Slovakia, which is led by the right-wing populist Robert Fico. He, like Orbán, holds anti-Ukrainian views and is focused on securing supplies of cheap Russian gas. This model of Russian influence clearly demonstrates how the Kremlin has turned energy supplies into a powerful political weapon that it will continue to wield against other European countries.

Orbán's defeat resulted from the fatigue of Hungarians (and particularly the youth) with his corrupt and authoritarian rule; however, it does not, in our view, signal the beginning of the end for far-right populists on a pan-European scale. On the contrary, this trend continues to gain momentum, and the Kremlin is placing its main bets on it – including in countries such as Germany and France.

AS: The war in Iran will also impact Russia and China, both of whom have supported Tehran in various ways. With oil supplies disrupted by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, will China turn more to Russia for its oil and natural gas supplies? What will this do to their so-called "friendship without limits"? What will their policies be toward Iran? How will this scenario impact Russia and China's rivalry with the U.S. and Europe?

Posle: The loss of Iran as a reliable oil provider (as was previously the case with Venezuela) has indeed made China more dependent on Russian supplies. Furthermore, the failure of "Operation Epic Fury" in Iran has highlighted the vulnerability of U.S. military power.

Nevertheless, a distinctive feature of Putin's position remains his efforts to develop a bilateral dialogue with Trump, despite his "friendship" with China. It is telling that Russian diplomacy, whilst repeatedly condemning the "war started by the U.S. and Israel," has emphasised "Russia's commitment to providing goodwill services to the parties."

Putin and other Kremlin officials have consistently stressed that, despite its alliance with Iran, Russia is distancing itself from the conflict and prefers to play the role of mediator. Just recently, Putin repeated his proposal to transfer enriched uranium from Iran to Russia. It appears that following the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, Russia is not ready to become seriously involved in conflicts in the Middle East and is seeking to focus on Ukraine and European affairs.

AS: What is the impact of these inter-imperial and macro-economic dynamics on Russia's ability to continue its invasion of Ukraine?

Posle: Almost five years of war in Ukraine have severely undermined Russia's economic and human resources, but this has not yet affected Putin's desire to "achieve the objectives of the special military operation" at any cost. Recently, Kremlin spokesperson Peskov stated that the withdrawal of the Ukrainian army from the Donetsk region is not a matter for possible negotiations with Kyiv, but a precondition for them.

In other words, once Ukraine voluntarily cedes part of its territory, further demands are likely to be made. It is clear that the Kremlin is not interested in a ceasefire and is planning a major offensive in the Donbas this summer and fall. The aim of this offensive is not only military but also political – it is necessary to convince Trump that Russia continues to dominate on the battlefield, and therefore the U.S. must increase pressure on Kyiv, forcing it to accept the Kremlin's terms.

Putin's plan clearly highlights a conflict between his personal ambitions and the interests of the Russian people. The Russian army's losses on the front line have reached their highest level this year – for example, in the second half of April alone, around 4,500 soldiers were killed (in total, at least 350,000 Russians have died over the five years of the war). The number of civilian

casualties is also rising due to Ukrainian missile strikes on military and energy infrastructure (though this is completely incomparable to the casualties of Russian strikes on Ukrainian cities).

Ordinary Russians are paying this price for Putin's desire to tell Trump about his army's advance of a few dozen square kilometres. The gap between the perception of the war in the Kremlin and among ordinary people keeps growing rapidly.

AS: Now, let's turn to the domestic impact of all this in Russia. Ukraine has persisted in resisting Russia's invasion and is militarily striking increasingly deep into Russia. As a result, Russian casualties have mounted at what appear to be an escalated rate during the recent spring offensive. Meanwhile, due to sanctions, and the dynamics of the war economy generally, economic conditions have worsened. There are signs of increasing dissent, expressed in a deflected way by quisling politicians and influencers. What is the domestic political situation in Russia? What should we make of the various expressions of discontent by public figures? Is this a sign of mass discontent developing among workers and the oppressed within Russia? How stable is the Putin regime?

Posle: Indeed, the first half of 2026 was marked by rising inflation and a fall in living standards. It is fair to say that the effect of the "military Keynesianism" associated with the sharp rise in public spending at the beginning of the war has now run its course. Even according to government forecasts, inflation this year will stand at 5.2 percent, whilst wages will rise by 2 percent. At the same time, the Kremlin intends to offset the growing budget deficit, as mentioned before, by increasing taxes on small businesses, as well as by cutting welfare programmes and infrastructure projects.

Against this backdrop, earlier this year, the Russian authorities took entirely unprecedented measures to restrict access to the internet in the country. Specifically, they attempted to block Telegram (used by 105 million Russians – that is, the majority of the population) and VPNs (used by around 40% of Russians to bypass blocks on Instagram, YouTube and other platforms). Furthermore, in Moscow and other major Russian cities,

wireless internet was frequently cut off entirely, causing immense damage to the economy and resulting in a dramatic increase in cash withdrawals from banks.

Behind all these measures, which have provoked widespread discontent, stands the Federal Security Service with its “sovereign internet” project, entirely controlled by the authorities. The official reason for all these restrictions, according to the authorities, is to prevent attacks by Ukrainian drones, a claim that seems highly implausible given that the increase in internet restrictions has coincided with an intensification of Ukrainian strikes. A mood prevails in the country that those in power are preoccupied solely with their own war and constant prohibitions, and are not interested in how ordinary people live.

These sentiments were further fuelled, in particular, by government attempts to cover up an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among cattle in Siberia and other regions. This move was prompted by the fact that Russia remains a significant international meat exporter. As a result, the Russian authorities seized and slaughtered tens of thousands of cattle and pigs belonging to farmers without any explanation or compensation for the damage. In several cases, this has already led to direct clashes between the police and rural communities. Nevertheless, to date, countries such as China and the U.S. have effectively acknowledged the existence of this dangerous epidemic in Russia, which will inevitably lead to a ban of Russian meat exports.

All these factors are clearly leading to a loss of trust in the authorities and increasing discontent. However, by now, any possibility of legally expressing any dissent has been completely eradicated in Russia. For example, young activists who tried to organize a protest against the shutdown of Telegram, as well as dozens of farmers attempting to protect their cattle from slaughter, have been arrested and subjected to heavy police pressure.

Increased repression and government attempts to restrict the flow of information are an answer to the growing discontent. Whereas previously the regime largely enjoyed legitimacy among the population as a guardian of the stability of everyday life, it now relies more and

more on fear of the police and secret services. In this sense, Putin may be moving towards the Iranian model, where a regime that does not enjoy the support of the majority retains power through violence.

As for the mood among the political and business elite, they are, of course, dissatisfied with the endless continuation of the war, the economic downturn, internet restrictions, and the growing power of the security services. However, contrary to the rumours being spread by a range of Western media outlets, there is not a conspiracy brewing against Putin.

This is the case for a few reasons. First, the fear of repression among the elite makes them divided and suspicious. It is worth recalling that over the past year, the number of arrests of government officials has risen sharply: dozens of employees of the Ministry of Defence (including several former deputies to Minister Sergei Shoigu) have been arrested, as well as representatives of other departments. In 2024, Transport Minister Roman Starovoit committed suicide due to the threat of arrest, whilst Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Denis Butsaev fled to the US. Several prominent businessmen suspected of political disloyalty have lost their property and their freedom (for example, this happened to Vadim Moshkovich, the owner of one of the country’s largest agricultural companies).

Second, the agenda and prospects of such a conspiracy are unclear in the current circumstances, as this elite has no common clear vision of an alternative foreign policy direction or conditions for ending the war. It also does not possess any legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Finally, Putin’s disappearance could trigger large-scale conflicts within the Russian elite over control of property. Having destroyed all the country’s political institutions over the 25 years of his rule, Putin himself has become the sole factor maintaining a relative balance of interests within the ruling class. And that is why the elite fears his departure more than the continuation of his destructive military adventures.

1 June 2026

Source: **Tempest**.

Anticolonial fraud: The Kremlin in Africa

SASHA FOKINA · 8 June 2026

In the case of Russia, the resurgence of this mindset became especially visible after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As Moscow launched its assault on an independent country and proceeded to systematically commit colonial crimes both on the front lines and in occupied territories, some observers have chosen to overlook these atrocities, arguing instead that NATO's expansion left the Kremlin with no alternative.

Amid the Kremlin's growing suppression of indigenous peoples' rights within Russia and the intensifying persecution of opposition voices — including those on the left — campist logic separates geopolitics from internal social relations. In contemporary Russia, however, this divide is even more pronounced. Despite its claims to speak on behalf of the Global South, Moscow extends its imperial ambitions far beyond its borders, reaching not only into neighbouring independent states such as Ukraine and Georgia but further afield.

In its quest for an anti-imperialist image, Russia increasingly targets African countries, which continue to be shaped by competition among global and regional powers. An alliance with an anti-Western Moscow is often framed as a path toward resisting the expansionist ambitions of former colonial powers, as well as securing stability and economic growth. Yet the reality of Russian involvement in Africa indicates something else: anticolonial rhetoric alone is insufficient to justify campism — or to deliver genuine liberation.

Cold War histories

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union, driven by its rivalry with the capitalist bloc, played a notable role in decolonization movements across many African countries. It provided key resources for liberation struggles: weapons, economic support, and ideology. At the same time, tens of thousands of students from across Africa received education in the USSR and other Eastern Bloc

countries, further strengthening the appeal and influence of the Soviet project.

After the collapse of the USSR, Moscow's presence in Africa declined sharply as the new Russian state faced internal crises. From the mid-2000s into the 2010s, the Kremlin gradually began to rebuild ties with previous partners on the continent. Its return to Africa, however, became a prominent part of public discourse in 2019, when Russia hosted its first Russia–Africa Forum in Sochi. There, President Vladimir Putin declared the opening of a “new page” in Russian–African relations. Western media captured the moment with headlines such as “Putin just took a victory lap in the Middle East. Now he's turning to Africa” and “The Russia-Africa summit, Moscow's show of ambition in the region”. Amid growing isolation in the Global North and a desire to be perceived as a real superpower, the Kremlin began actively promoting its influence in the Global South, particularly in Africa.

Conventional hard-power tools

Since 2019, the scope of Russia's cooperation with African countries has noticeably expanded: Moscow has deepened its relations with historical partners and expanded its network among the new regimes facing regional and international isolation, as well as non-aligned regimes seeking to diversify their partnerships.

Economically speaking, Moscow's presence in Africa remains limited — Russia simply does not have the capital to compete with other regional actors. While Russian media praised the historical maximum of the total trade value between Moscow and African countries which constituted almost \$28 billion in 2025, for China and the EU this index exceeds \$300 billion, while that of the U.S., UAE and India were over \$100 billion each. But Russia has managed to carve out an economic niche for itself by exporting nuclear energy projects. As the demand for energy is growing along with the region's

population, Moscow is offering its own expertise, education for future personnel, and the nuclear fuel to run these long-term projects.

Another dimension of Russia's strategic economic influence in the region concerns food security. In 2025, Agroexport, the Russian agency for agricultural exports, claimed that Moscow had become Africa's largest grain supplier, accounting for a third of the continent's wheat market. In total, Russia exports grain to around 40 African countries, with demand from Algeria, Libya, Kenya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Tanzania increasing significantly in recent years. Against the backdrop of disrupted supply chains and rising prices — driven in part by Russia's war in Ukraine, as well as climate shocks and the lingering effects of the pandemic — some African governments have accused the Kremlin of exploiting this dependency for political leverage.

However, the backbone of Russia's presence in the region is arms exports. In January Rosoboronexport — Russia's agency for military sales — claimed that its exports to African countries reached the scale of the Cold War times, when the Soviet Union was responsible for 40% of supplies to the continent. One cannot be certain if this reflects the reality or rather wishful thinking by the Kremlin, given the limitations in Russia's military exports capacities amid its war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, Moscow remains the critical actor on the continent's arms market. According to SIPRI, in 2020–2024, Russia accounted for 21% of African imports of major arms, putting it ahead of China (18%) and the U.S. (16%).

'Military presence with a human face'

In addition to conventional arms exports, for years, Russia has supplied its African partners with the services of the private military company (PMC) Wagner. The so-called 'Wagner Group' has now been formally absorbed by the Russian Defense Ministry and rebranded as Africa Corps (perhaps a reference to the German "Afrikakorps" in World War 2), following the PMC's founder's, Evgeny Prigozhin, death in 2023.

A package deal from the Russian "military instructors" — the vague mercenary job description — includes not

only the security services, but also political consulting on topics such as disinformation campaigns and staged protests, as well as the management of lucrative and extractivist contracts in an array of industries from gold and other minerals to lumber.

Case in point is the Central African Republic (CAR): its president Faustin-Archange Touadéra was the first African leader to openly welcome the Russian PMC as far back as 2018. Formally, the CAR leader invited "Russian instructors" to support the national army in its fight against local rebels. In reality, they became the guarantor of Touadéra's own hold on power. For instance, they supported the 2023 constitutional referendum, the results of which allowed the president to remain in office without term limitations. Currently the "political advisors" in CAR are promoting a foreign agent law — the Kremlin's signature repressive mechanism it has employed against its own opponents for 15 years and has exported to the friendly authoritarian regimes in decline. The Russian-backed organizations also conduct aggressive social media campaigns in the CAR, intimidating critics of the regime, with AFP sources [suggesting-<https://www.barrons.com/news/central-african-court-bails-opposition-leader-7b4349c0>] the Russian forces even track the president's opponents with drones.

In reports from other countries that have experienced Russian military instructors' presence, civilians have accused them of killings, torture and sexualized violence. Former Wagner Telegram channels are full of evidence of routine executions and desecration of corpses, especially in Mali. This is what Russian propaganda calls "military presence with a human face".

On top of that, recent reports indicate that young African men who travel to Russia for education or what they believe to be well-paid civilian jobs are instead sent to the front lines in Ukraine. Moscow views them as a source of cheap labour, essential for sustaining its war effort. Often forced to sign contracts in a language they do not understand, thousands of men from at least 36 African countries are used as cannon fodder at the frontline. INPACT investigation identified over 1,400 Africans recruited by Russia, however, additional re-

ports suggest higher numbers. Within months of arrival, over 300 are said to have been killed. Those who survive frequently receive no financial compensation, face racism from their commanders, and struggle to leave. With limited international scrutiny, the Kremlin has effectively built a transnational human trafficking network, a system of exploitation, capitalizing on the economic vulnerabilities of the very people it claims to support in their anti-colonial struggle.

Anticolonialism-washing

Such hybrid operations appear to be the perfect fit for the struggling autocracies among Moscow's historical partners as well as the young regimes that find themselves limited in their choice of partners. For instance, the Sahelian juntas — the regimes in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger — heavily rely on anticolonial sentiments. Needless to say, those sentiments originate from the real grievances of the people against the centuries-long exploitation, with France still conducting years-long military operations in the region until recently. The young regimes appeal to this inequality and unfairness, refuse cooperation with the former metropolises. They commonly end up turning towards Russia.

The Kremlin first takes the opportunity to promote a fitting image. According to the Kremlin-disseminated conspiracy theories, the U.S. runs biological laboratories across the continent and Western companies produce deadly vaccines. The Kremlin appeals to the Global South by promoting BRICS as a project battling the American hegemony. Putin openly condemns the “shameful” history of western colonialism and consistently calls for creation of the Palestinian state.

Various propaganda outlets assist the Kremlin in spreading these narratives: Sputnik Africa, RT, TASS, as well as the recently established news agency *African Initiative*. Its content is translated into all the major languages spoken on the continent. The staff includes members from the former Wagner PMC network. *African Initiative* is headed by Artem Kureev. Reports suggest he is an operative of the Fifth Directorate dealing with the foreign affairs of the Russian internal intelligence agency (FSB).

In the countries where Russian influence is already quite strong, propaganda campaigns to shape the public opinion on the ground have been handed over to local organizations and opinion leaders. At the second Russia-Africa forum, the president of Burkina Faso, Ibrahim Traoré, praised Moscow's support of African sovereignty and even compared the modern history of Russia with African countries by calling both “the forgotten peoples of the world”. On a lower-tier, a Russia-affiliated Ivorian NGO called Total Support for Vladimir Putin in Africa (SOTOVPOA) even launched an international prize in his name, honouring what the founder of the NGO called Putin's “liberating act for Africa.” Furthermore, the *African Initiative* organizes press tours of the occupied Ukrainian territories, during which bloggers from Sahelian regimes discuss the “reconstructions of new regions” and receive training in conducting information campaigns.

Against campism

As outlined above, Russia's presence in Africa has little to do with the liberation of local populations and is instead focused on sustaining partner regimes. War crimes, extractivism, and the reinforcement of autocratic rule point to the underlying motives behind the Kremlin's return to the continent — motives that are not so different from those of other neocolonial powers.

Many questions remain: Is the pretend-anticolonialism, supported by propaganda efforts and disinformation campaigns, convincing anyone? Are the protests depicting crowds with the Russian and Wagner flags staged or is there genuine support for Russia in Africa? Do a majority of people recognize the influence Russia has on their own governments, elections, economies? The generalized sociological data provides limited information: the latest edition of the Afrobarometer study shows significant cross-country variation. In Mali, one of Moscow's essential newer partners, the positive public perception of Russia's economic and political influence increased from 56% in 2019–2021 to 88% in 2023–2025. Meanwhile, in Guinea — no stranger to Russia's business activities — the positive opinion of Russian influence dropped from 63% to 49% in respective years. Simultaneously, an average positive perception of

Russia in Africa (36%) is lower than that of China (62%), the U.S. (52%), EU (50%) or India (39%).

The results of the Kremlin’s fight to win hearts and minds on the ground remain inconsistent, although it is clear that some groups are benefiting from its presence. At the same time, Moscow appears to be taking competition of great-powers in the region seriously. This is evident in the growing number of the Kremlin’s soft power institutions (such as Russian Houses), its expanding security presence, and investments in long-term infrastructure projects.

In the global context, the Kremlin’s cynical instrumentalization of anti-colonial narratives — including its claimed efforts to “liberate” African societies — appears to have achieved limited but notable traction among segments of the left. Beyond Kremlin-affiliated propagandists, this position is echoed by anti-intellectualist commentators and online influencers, as well as whole political parties (such as the German DKP), who denounce Western imperialism while overlooking the anti-democratic and reactionary nature of its geopolitical

rivals. In this framing, Russia’s activities in Africa are often invoked as evidence to support such views.

This logic is not only deeply Western-centric — within a campist framework, only the West is seen as possessing the agency to commit significant crimes — but also quite dangerous. It undermines progressive struggles against regimes that present themselves as opponents of the West, whether in Russia, Iran or Venezuela. Meanwhile, despite ostensibly belonging to opposing camps, conservative elites in both Russia and the United States alike continue to pursue overlapping interests, by scheming over their own fascist International and shaking hands in Alaska. In the current global system shaped by capital and enforced by states, only genuinely internationalist and anti-colonial movements grounded in solidarity with people across both “camps” offer a viable path toward the liberation of the exploited class.

22 April 2026

Source: **Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung.**

| BRITAIN

The 1926 General Strike in Britain

HARRY WICKS & JIM HIGGINS · 8 June 2026

In all the welter of books, pamphlets and articles that will appear on the 50th anniversary of the general strike, very few of them will actually present the authentic voice of the workers who fought and struggled at that time. Outside of, and unnoticed by, that rich field of academic research, the minutes of union executives, the theses of the Communist International and the memoirs of big and important men, there existed for a brief nine days the highest expression of working class solidarity to date. Not only that; in the frenzied preparation on the part of the ruling class, the dismal lack of preparation on the part of the trade union leadership and the massive potential strength of organised workers, there are lessons for every class conscious worker who would attempt a radical change of society.

This small pamphlet is an effort to redress the balance in favour of those who actually did the fighting and suffering rather than the well-publicised activities of those who purported to lead.

I can think of nobody who is better qualified to do this than Harry Wicks. Since his childhood in Battersea, Harry has been a militant revolutionary socialist. As a member of the Battersea Herald League in 1920, he was one of those dedicated few who came together to form the Communist Party. As a railway worker he experienced, along with a majority of railwaymen, the bitter disappointment when J.H. Thomas sold out the miners and the Triple Alliance on Black Friday, 1921. As a leading Young Communist, and a member of its executive committee, he was privy to many of the decisions and difficulties of party organisation. During the general strike itself, he was active speaking and organising around South London and was instrumental in bringing out several factories. He was fortunate to escape the fate of his friend and future brother-in-law, Alf Loughton,

who, with hundreds of other Communists, was arrested and served time for strike activity.

At the age of 22, in 1927, Harry Wicks was chosen to attend the Lenin School in Moscow, the Comintern's University for future revolutionary leaders, for a three-year course. In Moscow he first came across the ideas and criticisms of the Left Opposition, led by Trotsky. That critique made coherent a number of his own disquiets and doubts. Returning to England in 1930, he soon made contact with a small group of oppositionists in the British Party, Reg Groves, Henry Sara, Hugo Dewar and several others. In short order, their Balham Group was expelled from the CP. The years that followed were filled with the thankless and difficult work of building a movement along the lines set out by Trotsky.

With hindsight it is possible to see the failure to break through the obstructions of Stalinism and social democracy as inevitable. But it can be counted a success, in the sense that without that hard pioneering work the left wing movement today would be incomparably poorer and weaker.

That is the movement, the revolutionary socialist movement, in which Harry Wicks has spent his life, and his considerable talents. Today he is no less assured of the need for revolutionary organisation than he was in 1920. He sees the task of informing the newer, younger members of the movement of the battles, the mistakes and the victories of the past as the most important contribution he can make to building such a movement.

There can be little doubt that the history of the general strike, and its understanding, are exceptionally important to socialists today. 1976, when yesterday's left trade union leaders are today's moderates, bent on conniving with government and industry to reduce living standards, has obvious parallels with 1926 and the group of so called 'trade union lefts':

Today, with a Labour government as the best defence of an ailing British capitalism, the errors of omission and commission of the Communist Party in the 1920s are an object lesson for those who wish to build a genuine mass socialist party. In this pamphlet, Harry Wicks stresses that the simple Trotskyist theory of the British Communist Party being misled and negated by the machinations of the Russian Stalinists is oversimplified. Within the British Party there were two quite distinct strands: the left, syndicalist-tinged grouping impressed by the slogan of “All Power to the General Council” as a desirable harking back to the old notion of “One big union” as the vehicle for social change. The right, ex-British Socialist Party group, still mesmerised by parliamentary power and the prospects of a reformed Labour Party, it is the combination of these two tendencies, left and right, together with the Russian influence for a diplomatic-style accommodation with Western political and industrial reformism that vitiated any chance of success that the British Communists might have had.

These two deviations from revolutionary principle and practice are themselves not without significance to socialists in 1976. Too many revolutionaries have recently taken the view that trade union militancy will inevitably spill over into socialist struggle and, when their hopes were confounded, retired into sectarian isolation. Even more, there is in the current retreat of large sections of workers, under the pressure of the economic crisis and Labour’s ideological offensive, a tendency for revolutionaries to seek refuge in entry into the warm but infertile compost of social democracy.

All of these trends are on display in today’s left-wing movement. Of them it can be truly said that those who will not learn from history are condemned to make the mistakes all over again.

One final point. There is a small but influential school of left academics much exercised by the thought that the lesson of 1926 is that the class was unable, unwilling and incapable of turning the struggle into an assault on the whole capitalist power structure. According to this thesis, it mattered not at all that the Communist Party was tactically and strategically wrong, that the Comintern was playing international politics and that the

General Council was ripe for betrayal. What mattered, apparently, was that something called working class consciousness was not ready for social change.

The truth of the matter is that only very infrequently is workers’ consciousness so ready. Nor is its preparation and development timeless and abstracted from all manner of subjective factors, not least of these being the existence of a socialist party, rooted in the class and with no interests different from the class. It is the tragedy of 1926 that the CPGB was not such a party, a tragedy that the British and the world’s workers paid for in succeeding decades of war, suffering and sacrifice. It is to play a part, albeit a small part, in building a party of this sort, that this pamphlet has been written. I warmly commend it to all socialists.

Chapter One

Across the River Thames, opposite fashionable and prosperous Chelsea, is the working class district of Battersea. Power stations, paint and candle factories, railway engine sheds, plumbing and gas works lined the riverside from Vauxhall to Wandsworth bridge.

Separated only by the width of a road were densely-populated streets of working class houses, where women battled daily against the grime belched from those riverside factories.

Battersea has been famed, not only for its Dogs’ Home, but more importantly for its militant working-class politics. Many generations of trade union endeavour and socialist propaganda left their mark.

In the twenties, to the consternation of the liberal-minded Labour leadership of Henderson and MacDonald, Battersea North elected as their member of parliament the Indian Saklatvala. Not only was he an Indian but a Communist and was sponsored by the united Battersea labour movement.

The link that Saklatvala established with his worker constituents was not that of the proverbial surgery ‘can I help you?’, ‘have you any problems?’ At that time the entire working class had a problem: that of survival against employers’ lockouts, widespread unemployment

and the downward slide of the sliding scale of wages agreements.

Saklatvala spoke at factory gate meetings and introduced the monthly report back from Westminster. There were great meetings. Long before the doors of the town hall opened queues formed just like they used to at Stamford Bridge.

The platform was always crowded. Sak, as he was affectionately known, was flanked by the entire executive of the Trades and Labour Council and numerous representatives of Indian and colonial organisations. He was short in stature, broad shouldered with flashing eyes and a magnificent orator.

Those monthly report back meetings on the doings in parliament stirred hundreds into activity. The Battersea labour movement pulsed with life and was united. Marxist classes held by the old Plebs League flourished. Trade union branches were crowded.

One such branch of the General and Municipal Workers used to meet on Saturday nights and there the Workers Weekly was sold by the quire.

It was therefore not surprising that in August 1924 the inaugural conference of the National Minority Movement should be convened in Battersea Town Hall.

What high hopes the founding of an organised opposition in the trade union movement held. The unions, to the exasperation of the rank and file workers, were riddled with sectionalism. That inner disunity within the trade union movement was regarded as the cause of successive defeats in the post war years.

Wherever workers delegates met, in the trades councils, union conferences, clubs and pubs, talk centred on the chronic weakness of the industrial movement. It was with this political setting that Tom Mann presided over the first national gathering of rank and file trade unionists, employed and unemployed, miners and metal workers, women from London's rag trade, railwaymen regardless of sectional and craft unions.

What inspiration he gave that gathering. It was time to stop the rot, to end the retreat. Time that sectional and craft barriers were broken down, time that industrial

unionism came into its own. Yet the more effective trade union organisation that he desired, was not just to obtain another penny in the wage packet, but to fashion a more efficient weapon in the hands of the workers in their battle to change society.

As he emphasised, stepping to the front of the platform, pushing up his shirt cuffs, 'kicking capitalism off the face of this planet', he demonstrated the kick like a footballer taking a penalty.

Big Jim Larkin was there. What a giant of a man, demanding to know what the movement was going to do about 'poor little Ireland'. From the South Wales coalfield Arthur Horner, then checkweighman at Mardy, outlined the grim conditions of the miners since the betrayal of Black Friday. Horner brought the message that the Miners' Minority Movement was stirring the valleys, and the prophetic warning that cheap reparation coal extracted from defeated Germany would result in fresh attacks on the miners by the coal owners in this country.

In the town hall vestibule was a man with a friendly face, a big hat and wide girth. It was George Hicks, a rising star among the left trade union leaders. He was no stranger to the Battersea movement. In fact the Bricklayers branch in Battersea had been for years his base. Yet to push open the door leading from the vestibule to the conference and identify himself with the Minority Movement was something he never did.

Both he and A.A. Purcell, who were destined to dominate the industrial scene in the years 1924-26, had since the engineering lockout in 1922 advocated a more effective centralisation of the Trade Union Congress General Council.

But to become committed to an organised trade union leadership was not their cup of tea. They chose to remain on the sidelines, to fraternise at embassy receptions, to sign a few ghosted articles for left papers and, when the hour of decision struck, to capitulate to the right wing of the trade union movement.

The growth of the Minority Movement, from its inception to the eve of the General Strike, owed a lot to the positive propaganda aimed at strengthening the workers'

movement. Laced together with a series of political and economic demands went the agitation for all embracing factory committees, the regional expansion of trades council organisation and the campaign for 100 per cent trade union membership.

Even the most lethargic union official was at his wits end to oppose the militants' call for a 'show card' day in the factories and depots. The mood was there, incipient maybe, to build industrial class power.

Labour's first government, born and buried by the grace of the Liberal Party, provided a salutary lesson in parliamentary politics. The threat by that government to use troops and invoke the Emergency Powers Act against striking workers, did more to shake confidence than did all the much-publicised photographs of His Majesty's Labour ministers in top hats, knee breeches and dangling swords.

Unemployed and employed workers, desperate for work and a revival of trade joined in the swelling protest when the Anglo-Russian trade talks were threatened with breakdown. For a moment it seemed that a significant section of the trade union movement were aligned against the Labour cabinet's possible disowning of their electoral pledges.

Chapter Two

At the Hull Trade Union Congress in 1924, Tomskey, as fraternal delegate from the Russian unions, received an enthusiastic welcome. It was a demonstration of the deep feelings running through the movement for unity.

Tomskey, a self-declared "worker diplomat", had been involved in the tortuous negotiations with the Labour government and the financiers. It was during those negotiations that he established relations with the TUC General Council.

The then President of the TUC was A.A. Purcell, who less than three years previously had been interested in launching in Moscow the 'Red International of Trade Unions'. At Hull a seed was sown that 18 months later was to produce the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee.

The dynamic for consummating that alliance between the two trade union centres was the Communist Party and the Minority Movement. An impressive Minority Movement conference was held on the theme of International Trade Union Unity.

It marked both the culmination of a campaign to bring pressure on the General Council and a perceptible shift to the right in communist politics.

Left leaders were built up. Their timidity to challenge the disruptive policies of the right wing in the Labour parties and localities passed unnoticed. In the fateful preparatory period leading up to the General Strike, the Communist Party put into cold storage its revolutionary criticism of left reformism.

The ruling class were not passive at the turn of events. Faced with intractable problems in the basic industries, particularly mining, and a rising industrial militancy, they prepared their offensive against the workers.

Parliamentary combination between the Conservative and Liberal parties made short shrift of the Labour government. Aided by the Liberals, Stanley Baldwin, at the helm of the Conservative Party, forged his way to parliamentary power.

In a fiercely fought class election, the Labour Party was defeated, but in spite of all the disappointments and faded hopes, it rallied another million labour voters. From the moment of kissing the King's hand as Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, for all his sermons on class peace, was the embodiment of class war in the interest of the employers. Under his leadership, the strategy was perfected to bring the trade unions to their knees and the wages of all the workers down.

The pattern of the employers' offensive soon became clear. They planned a wage attack on the unions sectionally. The railwaymen's All Grades programme was contemptuously rejected.

Seamen were presented with a wage reduction. The engineers, who had been negotiating for an interminable time for a £1 a week increase, were threatened with a national lockout if the unofficial strike at Hoe's engineering works was not terminated.

Coalowners, whose windfall profits that followed from the French occupation of the Ruhr had dried up, faced the miners with the demands for a 10 to 25 per cent reduction in wages and the return to local wage bargaining. So draconian was the attack on the miners' already low standards that the united trade union movement rallied to their defence.

The solidarity then displayed was sufficient to compel the Baldwin cabinet to reverse its own declared policy within 24 hours. They bought time, time in which to prepare a crushing defeat on the trade union movement. A subsidy was given to the coal owners for nine months while a Commission of Enquiry without miners' representation acted as a screen for their preparations.

How elated was the movement in those days. For a brief moment it appeared as if all the differences within the movement had evaporated on that glorious Red Friday. In a few short weeks such illusions were shattered. Ramsey MacDonald, at an ILP summer school expressed in his peculiar woolly way, the opinion that it was unethical that constitutional government should bow to the threat of force. The right-wing leadership looked askance at the growing industrial strength and its leftward trend. Within months, the parliamentary Labour leadership, stricken with what George Lansbury termed 'Front benchism' went on the offensive against the left wing.

At the Labour Party conference held in Liverpool in October 1925, a whole series of exclusions were carried, directed at the Communist influence in the party. Scarcely had the delegates arrived home and reported to their organisations on the Liverpool conference decisions when the government instituted a series of raids on the homes and offices of the leaders of the Communist Party and Minority Movement. Twelve leaders were indicted under the Incitement to Mutiny Act, 1797.

The imprisonment of the revolutionary leadership was a conscious part of the government's preparations for the maturing crisis.

Once more the unity of the movement was manifest. Thousands packed the Albert Hall from floor to ceiling and with Lansbury's inspiration, chanted the alleged

sedition call to the soldiers "not to fire on their comrades who are workers".

With the surge of popular protest, the left leaders found their voices. Clapham Common was a sea of faces on the occasion of the march on Wandsworth prison where the communist leaders were imprisoned. Wandsworth, unlike Brixton prison, seemed impenetrable. A year before demonstrators outside Brixton prison were able over the wall to shout encouragement to the Poplar councillors and to be inspired by Lansbury with his throaty voice singing the Red Flag through his cell window.

Yet before and behind the high walls of Wandsworth prison the atmosphere was electric. Thousands, singing, chanting, jubilant and confident was a sign that once again the workers were on the march.

Chapter Three

The retreat of the government in July 1925 in the face of the threat by the unions to stand four square with the miners enraged the extreme right, particularly the coal owners. They were hell-bent on the lockout that was to operate on 31 July.

To restore profitability to the mining industry, the coal owners had but one answer – wage cuts. They appeared, not only to the miners, but also to wide sections of popular opinion, as hard-faced men. The prevailing sentiment that appeared to be on the side of the miners was not lost on Baldwin.

But more urgent reasons than the tide of opinion dictated the decision of the government to postpone the conflict. They were not prepared for an industrial upheaval.

Scarcely three months before, they had made a desperate bid to re-establish the premier position of the pound sterling. Faced with the economic and financial supremacy of America, the British government sought to restore its financial leadership by up-valuing the pound.

To be able, as Churchill remarked, 'to look the dollar in the face', the pound in relation to the dollar was raised from 4.40 to 4.86. This meant dearer exports, at a time when there were already more than 1½ million workers on the live register as unemployed. Coal at that time was

a vital export; whole mining districts such as South Wales, Northumberland and Devon depended on the export trade.

The consequence for the working class was grim. Dearer exports meant, unless the workers could successfully resist, a further depression of their already low standards of living. That was the stark reality.

Two days after Red Friday, Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, a diehard Tory, declared he was ‘going to say straight out what the Prime Minister was alleged to have said in conference – namely, it might be that, in order to compete with the world, either the conditions of labour, hours or wages would have to be altered in this country’.

Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was equally outspoken. Speaking of Red Friday, he said: ‘We therefore decided to postpone the crisis in the hope of averting it, or if not averting it, of coping effectually with it when the time comes.’

Churchill’s words ‘coping effectually’ to that generation had a sinister ring. He was no stranger to the use of troops in strike struggles. The carnage from his military adventure at Gallipoli was still fresh in memory.

In the early twenties, the years of interventionist wars against Russia, Churchill was in the words of a contemporary, “the most formidable and irrepressible protagonist of an anti-Bolshevik war”.

Those two speeches from Baldwin’s Cabinet colleagues were precise enough. The government had stepped back from conflict only in order to prepare itself for a future battle.

As a testimony to past militancy of organised labour, the government of Lloyd George had been concerned with contingency planning in the event of a general strike. How would central government cope, and how would the political and military system stand up to a possible break of communication with the centre?

Top personnel in the civil service together with a small nucleus of government officials had for some years been occupied in developing a skeleton plan. Now Baldwin sought to re-activate such emergency organisation and

he chose Joynson-Hicks to head a government committee.

The plan that evolved and was first published on the declaration of National Emergency on the eve of the General Strike, was that the country was to be divided into ten divisions, each division headed by a government civil commissioner. Their primary function was to secure the co-ordination of all of the forces of the state within their divisions.

Each commissioner had a committee with responsibility for coal, food, railways, roads, canals and post together with a group of military and police liaison officers. The only omission appeared to be liaison with the judiciary. Yet as the struggle eventually unfolded there was little evidence of their being out of step.

To prepare effectively, the government in November alerted the local authorities. The difficulty of unfolding their plans over such a wide field had its drawbacks. At grassroots level, the Labour Party had widespread representation. But even here there was no flare up, no exposure of what the government was up to. The Labour Party nationally must have been aware of that secret circular issued to the local authorities.

That there were no widespread revelations and the government was able to press forward their preparations can only be explained by the policy conducted by the Labour Party at the time. They were not interested in sustaining the fighting spirit and utilising every opportunity to awaken the workers to the impending struggle.

Any talk of preparations for a General Strike was regarded by the Labour leadership as provocation. As George Lansbury wrote at the time: “Most of the front benchers have a fatal touchiness for the dignity of the House, and cannot stop thinking of the time when they will be in office again”. That was the measure of how the parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party expressed the class interests of the workers.

There was nothing mealy-mouthed about the Tories and the extreme right. They became the pacemakers in the preparations to smash the strike.

In September, the initial steps were taken to launch the volunteer Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies, an avowedly strike-breaking force with the object of protecting the public services and working the railways, trams and road transport.

Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, gave it official support. Private enterprise readily gave to the OMS lavish facilities for the training. The OMS became the national rallying centre for an entire army of blacklegs. As the government confidently advanced its preparations, ministers' speeches increasingly talked of the mining crisis in the context of a national emergency, a threat to the state, an attack on the constitution.

Every effort was made to detach support from the miners. With ruthless energy they organised their forces to achieve the defeat of the miners and the unions.

Chapter Four

Prepare to fight was the message of the second conference of the National Minority Movement held immediately following Red Friday. There was no room to doubt that the government, coal-owners and grim economic outlook coalesced to force the workers into a defensive position.

The Minority Movement, within a year of its rise, had won some significant successes within the trade unions. From the bottom up, efforts had been made to influence the agenda of the forthcoming Scarborough Trade Union Congress (1925). As a direct consequence of an organised drive within the unions the revolutionary opposition could claim authorship of no less than six resolutions to be debated at Scarborough.

A national left wing was crystallising; it was, however, by no means homogeneous. There were two distinct strands in that trade union opposition. There was a hard core from the grass roots and district leaderships that were keenly aware of the debilitating effect that unemployment and depressed conditions had on trade union organisation. They did not only advocate fighting back, but sought to fashion an offensive strategy.

Wage claims from the railwaymen, engineers and transport workers should tie in with the miners and build a

new industrial alliance to secure their demands by a greater economic power. This was the left wing strand that responded to the initiatives of the Minority Movement and made possible its dynamic growth in the years 1924-26.

The other strand was the left trade union leaders like Hicks, Swales, and Purcell whose influence in the General Council of the TUC coincided with the departure of the more right wing leaders for pelf and place in the first Labour government. The lefts' stock-in-trade was the power of industrial unionism; unions centrally directed would be able to shake the power of Capital.

Basically they were products of the pre-war industrial movement with its syndicalist tinges, the sharper edges of which had become blunted as they arrived in the leadership of important unions. From the Hull TUC they rose to particular prominence for their advocacy of international Trade Union unity.

The Scarborough Congress (1925) was a high water mark for the left-wing forces in the trade unions. Meeting as it did, separated by barely seven months from the General Strike, in an excess of left rhetoric, it evaded the central issue on its agenda – that of preparation for the coming conflict.

Never before had a British Trade Union Congress expressed itself so militantly on international politics. Resolutions were passed condemning Imperialism in India, Egypt, China, the Dawes plan in Germany and endorsing the General Council's report on the setting up of the Anglo-Russian trade union committee. It appeared as if all the insularity of the British movement had been swept away by the North Sea breezes blowing on the Scarborough sea front.

Such a view, however, would be most superficial. On the vital question – what do we do here on the home front – those same delegates who had applauded revolutionary speeches on the colonies, retreated to their parochial and craft positions. How else can we explain that the issue of extending more power to the General Council of Congress was referred back for further consideration.

Elated by Red Friday the broad labour movement was awakened to the coming struggle. From the open spaces

throughout the country, moors, commons, downs and mountainside, mass meetings became the weekend fare. A.J. Cook, from the time of his election as secretary of the Miners Federation, set the pace. From hundreds of platforms he spelt out the reality to vast crowds.

If the coal owners' demands were enforced the miners in five districts (Scotland, Lancashire, North Staffs, Cumberland and the Forest of Dean) would actually get less money wages than before the war (1914). The post war gains, meagre as they were, would be lost. Such a dire defeat would set the labour movement back a generation. He was not alone; all that was best in the movement took to the platforms, each in their own way, to warn the workers of the threatening danger.

In that period the labour press grew in dimension. Lansbury launched his Labour Weekly with the aim of building ginger groups within the movement to get back on the track of changing society. The Sunday Worker appeared under the editorship of Willie Paul. It sought to give expression to and organise the left current that was growing within the Labour Party and the unions.

The Communist Party's Workers Weekly used to advertise, "Its sixty thousand readers are the cream of the working class movement". By the time of the General Strike its circulation had climbed to 100,000. As a sign of the growing consciousness and confidence amongst communists, for the first time the organisation on a factory and depot basis actually took off. An impressive number of factory papers made their appearance, an experience that was to prove invaluable in the days ahead.

The coal industry, vital to the economy of the country, was in a critical condition. Incredibly backward in its organisation, starved of investment, hammered by falling exports and technical change, with oil replacing bunker coal, and burdened by a rapacious system of feudal royalty payments; such was the condition of the industry that even Baldwin's Commission was unable to conceal.

Not that his commission of enquiry grappled seriously with the problems of the industry. Its terms of reference had other objectives. The conclusions that it reached was the need to re-organise the industry in order to re-

establish its profitability; as an interim measure the wages of the miners were to be reduced.

All through the long days of the depression, cynical and weary politicians had traded on the lethargy and apathy of the workers. In the Spring of 1926, they were faced by an angry and militant working class. The long hoped for revival had arrived.

The great propaganda campaign to swing the whole movement solidly behind the miners was gaining ground.

In March, 1926, Lansbury's paper reported that 1,5 million workers had declared their union's support for the proposed Workers Industrial Alliance. The engineers had voted for it two to one – a Constitution was in the making. The organised left wing in the trade union movement, the National Minority Movement, called a special conference of action on March 21st in Latchmere Baths, Battersea.

The response indicated the depth of feeling flowing through the movement: delegates from 547 organisations representing 957,000 assembled; no less than 52 Trades Councils sent delegates. One measure of its impact was that Hicks, Turner and Findlay, three members of the TUC General Council, sent messages to the conference, although each letter confined itself to expressions of protest at the arrest of the imprisoned leaders.

As the conference opened under the presidency of Tom Mann, the official welcome was given by Jack Clancy, chairman of the Battersea Trades and Labour Council. He brought the conference alive by relaying the news that for their refusal to operate the Liverpool Labour Party Conference decision on the expulsion of the communists, Battersea and Bethnal Green had been disaffiliated. Regardless of the gravity of the situation facing the workers at that moment the right wing chose to split the movement.

Tom Mann, in a memorable analytical speech examined the issues facing the class, Baldwin's assertion that the wages of all workers must come down. The purpose of the Coal Commission was to divide the movement. On all sides could be seen the growing preparations of the employers and government to impose their solutions to

the crisis. Extreme right wing strike breaking organisations were mushrooming. The British Fascist organisations appeared at workers' meetings. No workman could be indifferent.

"Therefore", he went on to declare "prepare at once. Let us perfect our relations with each other; let us have our industrial machinery ready for action. The real central body through which we must function is the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. All unions should be loyal thereto and co-operate therewith." That was the clearest possible expression of communist and minority movement opinion in the days preceding the General Strike.

It would be false to present either Mann or the Conference of Action leadership as passively directing all their efforts to official channels. The great positive programme for the immediate days ahead, a programme that served the class in the nine days of May, was its call for

1. Each Trades Council to constitute itself a Council of Action that embraced all the workers organisations in the locality.
2. Establishing under the auspices of the Trades Council a Workers' Defence Force against Fascism.
3. To organise the workers on the job into factory and pit committees.
4. To demand the right of soldiers and naval ratings to refuse strike service.

With those ideas the discussions in the following months took on a new dimension.

Now was the time to prepare the organisation for the inevitable battle ahead.

In that period, hardly a Trades Council existed that was not compelled to consider the implications of becoming a Council of Action. The cleavage with the right wing in the movement, who had been content to go along with a general agitation for the justice of the miners' claim, now asserted itself. It was on the issue of preparation that the left found the greatest response. Only weeks now separated the workers from the actual struggle. In those weeks the revolutionary left, the Communist and

Minority Movement, struggled alone against the right wing in the movement.

Chapter Five

The first of May 1926 dawned with the miners already locked-out. It was the greatest May Day in living memory. In every town and city, from hundreds of meetings and demonstrations the workers asserted their solidarity with the cause of the miners. In Birmingham, the conservative base of the Chamberlains, more people were on the streets than had been seen at a recent royal visit; thousands marched.

London's May Day was the crowning achievement. From the twenty-nine metropolitan boroughs, from mid-morning to late afternoon, the streets were alive with demonstrators. Trade union banners that had not been aired for years floated in the breeze; across all the Thames bridges marchers stepped out for Hyde Park. Those contingents whose line of march was to pass Mémorial Hall, where the conference of trade union executives was in session, were told by the excited delegates that the General Strike had been called for midnight of May 3. To the rank and file trade unionists, it seemed that at last the fruitless negotiations were over and now the movement was being made ready for action.

In Hyde Park, from a dozen platforms, a militant mood swept that vast crowd of people. This was the real measure of the workers' feelings. Deep down, whatever his occupation, each felt that a defeat this time for the miners would be but a prelude to an all-round attack on the whole of the working class.

The conference of the trade union executives, which for three days had been in session, appeared to be entirely uncritical of the general council's negotiating team. At that time, no-one knew, least of all the rank and file, that Arthur Pugh, the TUC president, only a few days before had been alone with Baldwin at Chequers. Even the absence of a miners' representative on the negotiating committee, and the last-minute inclusion of MacDonald and Henderson went unchallenged. Like the masses, the lay union representatives at that conference, with their virgin illusions, thought that the General Council, by its

decision to call for a General Strike, was by that act identifying with the hopes and aspirations of the whole movement.

The leading core of General Council negotiators had other plans. No sooner was power passed to them than they sought to utilise the remaining days, not to perfect the organisation for the strike itself, but to find a formula to prevent it happening.

Anxious to secure a compromise, begging for a settlement, they finally approached Baldwin with a formula, calculated to break the deadlock, behind the backs of the miners' leaders. In essence, they agreed to urge on the miners a cut in wages subject to the mine-owners and government accepting the proposals of the Samuel Commission. The Government, however, with all its preparations in an advanced stage, its proclamation of the State of Emergency off the printing presses, the disposition of the armed forces mobilised for despatch to the main industrial centres, the OMS and special constabulary at the ready – broke off all negotiations with the TUC.

The working people knew nothing of the policy that the General Council had pursued since the closing session of the conference of executives. With empty hands, in spite of its grovelling, the General Council was left with no pretext whatsoever for calling off the strike. All that was then known throughout the movement was the General Council's strike call. And it was to that call that the workers responded with undreamed-of enthusiasm – a response so overwhelming that both the government and the union leadership were staggered by its magnitude.

With the communications system of the country paralysed by the unanimity of the strike, Baldwin addressed a message to the nation in which he declared: 'Constitutional government is being attacked.....'and urged the people to co-operate with the government 'to safeguard the privileges and liberties of people of this island'. At the same time that his message was coming over the wireless, at every police station notices were being posted of the effect of the Emergency Powers Act on the liberty of the subject. The police were by that Act given the right to arrest without warrant, enter any place, by force if necessary, and seize or detain anything they liked. Further, being in possession of any document

containing any report or statement the publication of which would be a contravention of the regulation made the individual liable to a penalty. In the following nine days the workers witnessed and experienced the full force of the state machine mobilised in defence of the privileges of the mine-owners. In the communications system that then existed, primitive compared to modern times, the monopoly was held by the government. By the full use of the BBC news bulletins and their handout, The British Gazette, everything possible was being done to undermine the high morale of the working class. Churchill surpassed himself in the art of lying propaganda.

The ostentatious display of the armed forces, armed columns providing escort for OMS food convoys, the movement into the Mersey, Thames and Tyne of warships and submarines were all provocative steps taken to intimidate and break the solidarity of the workers. From the pulpits, no less a figure than Cardinal Bourne proclaimed the General Strike a sin against the Almighty. Legal luminaries spoke of those unions and members responding to the strike call as acting illegally. Judges and magistrates were all harnessed in the service of the draconian Emergency Powers Act. With great fervour, the police and special constabulary sought out the workers' counter communication weapon, the strike bulletins, that were produced with great elan. The remaining weapon that the government possessed to defeat the strike was the obsequious union leadership. In spite of their formal break with the TUC negotiators, all through the strike, in the salons of the wealthy, backstage negotiation was continuous.

At the last minute, the generals of the trade union leadership fashioned a semblance of strike strategy. Their aim was to call the unions in successive groups into the strike struggle. Ostensibly this was to be a morale booster, ever fresher forces joining the strike. Its overall effect nationally was to produce confusion. In the provinces, unions and workers didn't know whether they should be out or in – an arse or elbow situation.

Such was the spirit that thousands who should have stayed in, according to TUC strategy, came out. In the localities, at grass roots level, the organisation of the

strike rose to great heights. Given a modest role to play in the last minute instructions of the TUC the trades councils were 'charged with the responsibility of organising the trade unionists in dispute in the most effective manner for the preservation of peace and order'. It was the trades councils and councils of action that from the very first day grew in stature, improvising and initiating a communication system, giving coherence and direction to the movement in their particular localities. Possibly for the first time, a local leadership faced the organisation of a strike, not in one factory, but over a wide geographical area. It was on the issue of permits for goods to be transported by permission of the TUC that, in the most advanced areas, the workers had a taste of power.

As the Councils of Action grew, spreading in the more militant districts to a regional basis, even the government's district commissioners began to reckon with their power. The North East, notwithstanding the government's disclaimer, was an example of the incipient and growing power of the local workers' organisation. To answer the lies of the daily broadcast, most Councils of Action developed strike bulletins of their own. Branch and council secretaries became editors and worker journalists; the duplicator, flat bed or rotary, became the tool jealously guarded from the police search. These ever growing initiatives were observed at the time by the speaker's teams sent on tour from Ecclestone Square, the TUC headquarters. This intelligence flowing into the TUC, was a source of worry to the General Council leadership. The gap between the high morale and enthusiasm of the workers in the localities and the palsy of the leadership at the centre raised threatening problems. Could the movement get into the wrong hands? That thought crept into leaders' speeches. The *British Worker*, the TUC's paper, emphasised daily that there was no threat to the constitution – 'the strikers are orderly'. As the strike entered its second week, the General Council issued a message to all trade unionists: 'Nothing could be more wonderful than the magnificent response of millions of workers to the call of their leaders. From every town and city in the country reports are pouring into the General Council headquarters stating that all ranks are solid, that the working men and women are

resolute in their determination to resist the unjust attack upon the mining community..... The General Council's message at the opening of the second week is "Stand firm. Be loyal to instructions and trust your leaders". Could there ever be a leadership so craven, backed by such a resolute following, which at the same time its 'Stand Firm' message was circulating, was locked in negotiations seeking terms of surrender.

With such a leadership, and the absence of any democratic control being exercised by the conference of union executives, it was inevitable that the strike would be brought to an ignominious end. All through the nine days, there existed through all layers of the movement an appalling ignorance of the policy that was being pursued at the top. From the first day of publication of *The British Worker* the General Council appointed its own censors to vet all material published in its name. The pretentious rise to influence of the left leaders caused them to hold their tongues. Not a word was uttered by them of the impending surrender. History had caught up with their favourite nostrum, the folded armed General Strike. They were shattered by living reality. Yet even on the field of their own philosophy, there is no evidence that the left leaders, the possessors of centralised power, struggled for an aggressive strike strategy. On the final day, before their humiliating journey to see Baldwin, the full resources of the workers had not been committed to struggle. The economic power of the electricians, the gas workers, the workers in post and telegraph, despite their aspirations to be involved, were not called out.

The six TUC leaders that finally made their way to the miners' headquarters, in the fruitless effort to persuade them to join in the surrender, included A.A. Purcell, the much publicised leader of the left. What happened to the document issued by the General Council at the conference of executives on May 1st? In a sense that document laid down the terms of reference for the conduct of the struggle. Paragraph five specifically stated: 'The General Council further direct that the Executives of the unions concerned shall definitely declare that in the event of any action being taken and trade union agreements being placed in jeopardy, it will be definitely agreed that there will be no general resumption of work

until those agreements are fully recognised' (my emphasis). In their haste to surrender, not only did the General Council repudiate its past decisions to stand by the miners, but furthermore that agreement which was made with the constituent unions was rejected.

The time had arrived for the General Council, with their army still in the field brimming with confidence, to be ushered into Baldwin's study to ignominiously surrender. What an end; as the first garbled account of the strike being over reached striking workers, their first thoughts turned to the need to organise a victory parade. No one thought in terms of defeat; the cleavage between masses and leaders was never so wide. Slowly, imperceptibly, the real meaning of the wireless bulletin penetrated the consciousness of the incredulous workers. The strike had been unconditionally surrendered. 'It can't be', workers thought. They turned to the union branches for confirmation and an explanation. At that moment, with crowds packing the streets, it seemed with synchronised timing that confused workers were savagely attacked by the special constabulary.

The writer of these lines vividly remembers the scenes at Battersea Town Hall on the afternoon of that day. Anxious for official news, the chairman of the Battersea Council of Action, Jack Clancy was sent to Eccleston Square to get confirmation. Almost overcome with emotion he related to that vast audience the news that the strike had been called off but the miners were still out. He could say no more. The loudest boo that I have yet heard went up from that crowd and was echoed all along Lavender Hill. The mood was angry in the extreme. Was this an isolated experience relating only to a small pocket in the British working class? Published memoirs, Trades Council histories, the provincial press reports reveal the contrary.

The next twenty-four hours were to bear witness to the indomitable will of the workers that alone saved the face of British trade unionism. This represented to the employers their hour of triumph. With the unions defeated, there was no barrier, according to their reckoning, to stop them imposing the most humiliating conditions governing the return to work. The workers undismayed, fought back. On the railways, in transport, at the

docks the struggle was renewed. A bitter and angry working class, now aware of the qualities of their leadership, fought on against the harsh terms of employment then being offered. This fight back was no isolated skirmish; within hours it again was assuming national proportions. It was now the hour for Baldwin to come to the aid of the demoralised union leadership. He did so by an appeal to the employers, in a typically hypocritical speech, to put behind them all malice and vindictiveness and help get the country back to work. Those sugary words covered the massive victimisation drive launched against military workers.

No one can deny the dedicated service that the members of the Communist Party and Minority Movement gave to the strike struggle, hampered as they were by the early arrest of their leaders and the police action in crippling their press. In the Councils of Action, because of their early stand for preparation they had earned some authority.

Commanding such support, why was the party unable to prepare the class for the act of capitulation by the reformist leadership? R.P. Dutt, writing after the strike, rightly comments: 'The capitulation of May 12 came as a thunderclap without warning to the majority of workers all over the country.' In a later passage he explains why the class were not prepared for such treachery. 'The intrigues of the right-wing leaders were neither countered nor exposed by the left leaders, but in the interests of 'unity' the facts were concealed and the workers left without warning.'

Such an answer assumes that both left and right trade union leaders had different policies during the strike. The facts are different. Long before the strike, at Scarborough, Liverpool and in the conference of trade union executives, the vacillation of the left leaders was known – how in the critical moment they were adept at stepping on one side and giving way to the right wing. From time to time the indecision of the left leadership was commented on, but the basic policy of the party remained to build them up as allies in the fight against the right wing. Even during the strike, in the Workers Bulletins care was taken over the critical words directed at the Left leaders. For two years it had been the policy

of the party to put its criticism of left reformism into cold storage. With its support of the left leaders, the party was unable itself to develop an alternative leadership or to correctly warn the workers of the impending capitulation.

*You can get a copy of **The General Strike** by Harry Wicks for £4.00 + P&P (£1 for UK 2nd class) by ordering from here.*

*Source: **Anti*Capitalist Resistance**.*