

# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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### A (temporary) calm before the storm in Iran

*Houshang Sepehr*

## FEATURE

MIDDLE EAST

### The framework agreement Lebanon-Israel, a capitulation to multiple threats

*Joseph Daher*

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**International Viewpoint**, the monthly English-language magazine of the Fourth International, is a window to radical alternatives world-wide, carrying reports, analysis and debates from all corners of the globe. Correspondents in over 50 countries report on popular struggles, and the debates that are shaping the left of tomorrow.

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## ITALY

# The murderous state, presumed innocent

STÉFANIE PREZIOSO ·

## *Shooting Burglars in the Back*

**On July 15, 2026, Mario Roggero was definitively sentenced to 14 years and 9 months in prison for killing two of the three burglars who had attacked his jewelry store, armed with a toy gun and a knife, as they were fleeing. The footage is crystal clear: the robbers had already left the store, were not threatening anyone, and the jeweler shot them multiple times.**

The entire right and far-right of the government are rallying around Roggero, who is seeking a presidential pardon—already supported by Justice Minister Carlo Nordio, outside any legal framework. Matteo Salvini says he is considering running him as a candidate in the next elections in order to grant him parliamentary immunity. The League is taking this opportunity to introduce a bill that has been a priority for the party since at least the 2018 elections, aimed at expanding Article 52 of the Penal Code, which deals with self-defense.

Congressman Claudio Borghi has thus introduced this proposal:

"Any reaction to a criminal act is not punishable, regardless of the proportionality of the means used, the persistence of the danger, and the strictly defensive nature of the conduct."

Giorgia Meloni, for her part, was quick to declare that the sentence was disproportionate. Mario Roggero has quickly become the "national hero" of Italy's right-wing and far-right political spectrum, which remains firmly in power in the absence of serious opposition.

As for Elon Musk, he is waging a campaign on X against the Italian judges, who he claims should "be

imprisoned" for handing down this verdict—in the same vein as his support for Marine Le Pen ("the only hope for France"), whom he claims is a victim of the French justice system.

## *Rise in police violence*

On July 17, 2026, several hundred people protested in Venice against the U.S. Ambassador to Italy, Tilman Fertitta, whose mega-yacht — 117 meters long and 30 meters high, as imposing as a six-story building — had dropped anchor right in the middle of the Festa del Redentore, one of the city's most important festivals, partially blocking residents' access to the fireworks display. The protesters, dressed in children's swim rings (frogs, unicorns, and turtles), were violently charged by the police.

On July 19, Abderrahim Fakir, a 43-year-old Moroccan national who had arrived in Italy from Casablanca at the age of 7, was killed by two police officers in Bologna, in the working-class neighborhood of Pilastro; there, too, the images are as clear as they are unbearable: wounded in the head and in a state of confusion, he pleads for help while two police officers hold him down, handcuffed and facing the ground, after spraying pepper spray in his face; four paramedics watch this man die without intervening... Remember, "I can't breathe," said George Floyd, just before he died in Minneapolis.

On July 20, following the violent death of Abderrahim Fakir, a massive crowd flooded the streets of Bologna, called out by the Democratic Party mayor, Matteo Lepore, to demand truth and justice—while, for the first time since the Security Decree-Law, pushed by the Meloni government, went into effect, police officers and healthcare workers were protected by the "criminal immunity shield" (a more radical law on the presumption of legality for law enforcement shootings had just

been passed by the French Parliament by a vote of 313 to 199, supported by the National Rally, The Republicans, and Macron's supporters). Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi then felt compelled to argue that Italy was not a "police state"...

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### **A license to kill?**

As Cecchino Antonini explains:

*The security decree also expands the 'criminal shield' for law enforcement, that is, the legal protections for officers who commit offenses in the line of duty under circumstances of necessity. Following President Mattarella's remarks, the government clarified that this protection applies not only to officers but to anyone in similar circumstances. Indeed, it is worded more cautiously: any person who commits an offense when there is an "obvious cause for justification" is not entered into the ordinary registry of persons under investigation, but into a separate registry, with an expedited procedure that should result in the case being dismissed within thirty days, unless the prosecutor decides otherwise. Politically, this measure introduces a principle of preventive legitimization of the use of force, and the "shield" risks having selective effects by further exposing people considered foreign or marginalized, such as young people and migrants.*

French law is more radical, as it involves a reversal of the burden of proof by presuming the legality of the act from the outset—which is legally far more radical, and it is precisely this that has led opponents to label the French law a "license to kill."

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### **Democracy Gutted**

Democracy thwarted, democracy suspended, democracy gutted: a new political era is dawning in Italy, the United States, and also in France. The piece-by-piece construction of an absolutist governmental sovereignty, which is taking hold by methodically disarming each of the powers that could stand in its way.

The methods may differ on either side of the Atlantic, but the goals remain hopelessly the same: to strip constitutions of their meaning; to undermine elections (in Italy by proposing a new electoral law that, by combining a disproportionate majority bonus with closed-list systems, guarantees an overwhelming majority for the outgoing right-wing and far-right coalition while giving party leaders the de facto power to decide who sits in Parliament; in the United States, by already doing everything possible to hinder the exercise of the popular vote, and even contesting the results of the midterm elections—as Donald Trump did in his latest speech); undermining the "red" judiciary; attacking democratic freedoms and rights; targeting migrants—and with them, all the exploited—by promoting mass deportation, and incarceration; ensuring control over a single narrative by curtailing the right to information and freedom of expression.

Such is the case with the various attempts to silence the press (Trump attacks television networks and newspapers), which becomes merely a conduit for a single narrative (a report by a RAI journalist on the death of Abderrahim Fakir was censored by the network). Taken together, these policies paint a picture of the future: the transfer of all legitimate decision-making to a single center, with no authority left capable of challenging it, and the gradual, almost silent erosion of any institutional or social countervailing power.

This is a gradual shift of the political center of gravity toward a head of government (a monarch and his inner circle) whose actions must be free of any obstacles. A process that began around the turn of the 2000s in Italy and is now accelerating on the Peninsula and elsewhere. On July 20, the rising figure to the right of Giorgia Meloni, General Roberto Vannacci, with his new party "Futuro Nazionale"—which he describes as the "true right" campaigning for "remigration"—illustrated his "project" by posting a AI video on social depicting the killing, against the backdrop of the Roman Empire, of Elly Schlein of the Democratic Party and Giuseppe Conte of the Five Star Movement.



### ***In the face of increasingly authoritarian states: Organize and fight***

On July 16, 2026, under the leadership of Marco Rubio, a "global" summit was held, bringing together more than sixty countries. Its focus: the "resurgence of political terrorism"; Italy sent its Undersecretary of State for the Interior, Nicola Molteni, a member of the Lega. "Political terrorism" is a concept first introduced by the Nixon administration in the context of the Vietnam War, targeting primarily left-wing organizations (ranging from those fighting for civil rights to the Black Panthers).

Today, it has been revived by the security decree "Combating Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence" (NSPM-7), on the basis of which the first harsh prison sentences have already been handed down in Texas. This "Antifa Summit" introduced the new concept of "far-left terrorism," (FLT) which, as stated in a White House press release, must "will be treated with the same seriousness and ferocity the world has long reserved for jihadist terrorism."

Following this summit, the U.S. State Department released a new report on Cuba's "campaign of subversion against the United States" which reads like a blacklist of left-wing groups and activists: "Many of the most significant upheavals in recent American political history — from the George Floyd riots to the rise of Antifa to the explosion of pro-terrorist activism on American college campuses — can be linked, in some way, shape, or form, to Cuban influence." [1] The list includes New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, Democracy Now! journalist Amy Goodman, Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream, as well as the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and Black Lives Matter...

The steamroller of the powerful right-wing coalition has begun rolling right before our eyes, brandishing the specter of its old demons—the "Reds"—in the face of any social resistance. Its real goal, is to undermine our hard-won freedoms and rights by criminalizing those who are fighting today for equality and emancipation.

Marx and Engels wrote as early as 1847:

*A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter; Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police spies.*

Today, the powerful of this world—whether they call themselves centrists, right-wingers, or far-right —have resumed this fight with redoubled energy against democracy, which hinders their absolute freedom to enrich themselves as they see fit.

It is therefore time to move from the spontaneous organization of resistance to sustainable forms of organization, uniting labor, feminist, anti-racist, and environmental movements on a democratic, class-based foundation, clearly defending an inalienable set of rights and social demands aimed at equality and the collective ownership of our common goods. To achieve this, we must rebuild ties across borders by reviving a militant, enduring internationalism.

The total state is on the march. It is up to us to grasp the full extent of this reality and equip ourselves to counter it by situating our struggles today within the long-standing fight of the working classes for democracy and social justice.

*23 July 2026*

Translated by **New Politics** from **marx21.ch**.

## PAKISTAN

# Deaths in Pakistani controlled Kashmir

FAROOQ SULEHRIA ·

**I'm doing this program with a very heavy heart. Yesterday in Rawalakot, another twenty one people were killed. This is second time in almost seven weeks that Rawalakot has been the site of another massacre.**

Earlier, on the night, between 6 and 7 June, the security forces fired on a peaceful sit in in Rawalakot. And at least ten people were killed at that time. What is going on in Kashmir has largely been ignored in global media. Not only global media. Even the Pakistani mainstream media is either not covering it or is simply busy doing an ugly propaganda against an Intifada-like movement which has gripped Pakistani controlled Jammu and Kashmir.

I perhaps need to offer a bit of context to an international audience listening to this podcast. Well, there was a long march announced by Joint Awami Action Committee (or Joint People's Action Committee), which is an organizational form of a huge social movement that has gripped this region of Jammu and Kashmir in about three years.

This was third time that they had announced a long march from Mirpur, which is an important town in one corner of the Jammu and Kashmir. And they were supposed to march on Muzaffarabad, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is an autonomous region. In a way, it is not part of Pakistan. It is not integrated into Pakistan the way India has integrated the occupied part of Jammu and Kashmir that India controls.

Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistani control, has its own parliament, own prime minister, own Supreme Court and elections were supposed to be held on 27 July, yesterday. The first round of elections was held in fact, yesterday, and it was largely

boycotted. There were hardly any voters turning out to vote anyway.

Ahead of these elections, the Joint Action Committee had announced a long march on Muzaffarabad, and the key demand was to rescind twelve seats reserved for the refugees. The refugees from Indian held Jammu and Kashmir, who migrated to Pakistan and were settled in Pakistan for last about eighty years. There are twelve seats reserved for them now. The problem was: through these reserved seats. Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. Or, you know, the Pakistani state, would control the election system and form a government of their choice in Muzaffarabad. So there was this demand by Joint Awami Action Committee to eliminate these seats, to end these reserved quotas for refugees, so that a genuine government that represents the people of Jammu and Kashmir, in Pakistani controlled Kashmir, can form a government of their choice. Ahead of this Long March, which was supposed to begin on 9 June, the security forces tried to kidnap one of the key leaders, Umar Nazir. Kashmiri, who comes from Rawalakot and Rawalakot, has been the hub of this movement. That's where this movement started and was translated into an organizational form called Joint Awami Action Committee.

This Joint Awami Action Committee has a core committee. It has almost thirty three core members, and they represent all parts of Jammu and Kashmir. That is to say, Pakistani controlled Jammu and Kashmir. Every district has a branch of Joint Awami Action Committee. These people are elected by the by the residents of that area. The attempt to kidnap Umar Nazir Kashmiri outside of Rawalakot on 5 June, actually led to the killing of his close associate, Shahzeb, his close comrade. He was killed, a young man in his early thirties, and

Umar Nazir Kashmiri himself was injured in the police firing. The residents of Rawalakot started a sit in with the dead body of Shahzeb outside of the local military hospital, and next night, the security forces, fired live ammunition on the agitators. And at least ten or twelve people were killed in the incident. This really agitated the entire region. And despite the atmosphere of fear, the Long March was started from Mirpur and on its way to Rawalakot, which is halfway Muzaffarabad, the long march was fired upon yet again, and at least five people were killed. And according to different accounts, seven people were killed. Well, this long march arrived, Rawalakot. Meantime, Rawalakot was under curfew and the whole region was under the siege, the state of Pakistan stopped the trucks bringing food for the region.

This is a landlocked region. Every food item, medicine, everything comes through. Pakistan. Internet shutdown has been imposed. It has largely been imposed ever since fifth or sixth of June, especially in Rawalakot region. It is very difficult to communicate with people. Even mobile services were disconnected, shut down. Anyhow, when this Long March arrived, Rawalakot, they started a sit in, a huge sit in which went on for over fifty days. In fact fifty three days until 26 July.

The security forces yet again attacked the sit in at least two times or three times. Some deaths occurred. So far, at least over seventy people have been killed in state violence from, you know, 5, 6 June to yesterday. But yesterday was the most violent day. At least, twenty one people, as I said earlier, have been killed.

Yesterday, the sit in which started its march yet again entered the city of Rawalakot, which was under curfew. Hundreds and hundreds of people. I do not have confirmed figure, but at least fifty to sixty thousand people were marching in the processions. From different sides, they entered the town. They wanted to end the siege of the town, curfew in the town and live ammunition was fired on the marchers. The violence continues. I'm doing this podcast at a time when I'm receiving more unset-

ling news from Mirpur, where a small protest demonstration was held to protest against the killings in Rawalakot yesterday.

More violence is feared, according to the reports that are pouring in. The security forces are still shelling at the the protesters, there is firing. There is use of tear gas. And the protesters, they are holding their ground. They refuse to budge. And they promise to continue their march on Muzaffarabad. I think by the end of this day, many people are fearing more deaths. This is a kind of very sad situation. And, even bigger tragedy is the fact that, this incident has been and the entire movement, which is in fact very promising, very progressive from many viewpoints, has been ignored internationally.

Now, the urgent appeal is to show solidarity, to speak about this ongoing Movement. The State of Pakistan should show restraint. Progressive forces all over the world should send protest and should show solidarity with this movement. Hopefully we expect that there will be some sort of dialogue process. And this violence will come to an end. Some of the key demands should be met. Even if Joint Action Committee has watered down its demands, the state is not listening them. The state is bent upon crushing this movement. State is bent upon showing zero tolerance, as they call it, for the movement. I will try to update you later this evening or maybe tomorrow morning. Let's hope things de-escalate.

*28 July 2026*

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## Deaths in Pakistani controlled Kashmir

Farooq Tariq

Last night, on 27th July, in one of most brutal attack on an unarmed rally, Pakistani rangers and police have killed at least 19 Kashmiris, Dozens were injured.

This direct firing by state forces on the demonstrators was without any provocation. The participants of the long march to Kashmir capital Muzaffarabad were camping for over a month in the outskirts of



Rawalakot, one of main city of Pakistani controlled Kashmir.

They were in thousands who came on the call of Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee, a non partisan civil society mass organisation who had led earlier mass campaigns for lowering of electricity prices.

This time they were asking election reforms which enable Kashmiris for real representation. They were demanding an end of 12 seats for Muhajirs (migrants) Kashmiris settled in Pakistan. These seats were mainly a political gimmick used to form the governments in Kashmir.

JAC was banned after lengthy negotiations with them by the state ministers that failed. The JAC was termed as a terrorist organisation linked to India and main leaders as Indian RAW agents. Most of the main leaders were arrested. A curfew was imposed in Rawalakot, the main centre of resistance to state repression.

However, in one of most glaring example of mass awakening, whole Kashmir was almost shut down on the call of JAC, no shops opened and no internet and no people in the streets. JAC had become the real representative of Kashmiris.

The Government wanted to go ahead with the scheduled general elections on 27th July 2026. It did go for general elections with a mass boycott of

the whole process and very small numbers of people voting.

The same day, on 27th July, JAC had announced the long march to Muzafarabad, which was met with direct firing and tear gas.

One of the main characteristics of this mass movement for civil and political rights was the participation of women who came in thousands every day at the sit in outside Rawalkot for over a month. They brought food for the

Participants of the sit in and did all efforts that could help to continue the sit in.

Never ever such a brave mass movement is witnessed by this region as this one from Pakistani controlled Kashmir. Over 50 have been killed by the state forces since the movement started a month ago. Now around 20 more last night.

The long march will start again today from Rawlakot where despite the bloodshed, the participants were able to enter the city and break the barriers of the state to stop them.

This is to demand solidarity from the international labour and civil movements. Please condemn the death and direct firing and send protest letters to Pakistan embassies. Please raise the issue where ever possible. The death on innocent barre Kashmiris should not go unheard.

*28 July 2026*

## INDIA

# The Cockroach Protests Are Reviving India's Ailing Democracy

KOMAL MOHITE ·

**The student protests in India trace their origins to a satirical social media page called the "Cockroach Janta Party" (CJP). Activist Abhijeet Dipke created the page in response to a disparaging remark from the chief justice of India, who likened youth activists to "cockroaches" for questioning the government.**

What began as an online campaign soon evolved into a nationwide protest movement against the irregularities in examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), especially the leakage of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) question papers that triggered many aspiring students to commit suicide across the country.

The agitation gained significant momentum when Sonam Wangchuk, veteran educationist and social activist from Ladakh, joined the campaign and launched an indefinite hunger strike demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. On Saturday, July 25, the campaign could claim the credit for forcing Pradhan to step down.

## ***From Social Media to the Streets***

Although the initial agitation focused on a single-point agenda, it has now snowballed into a wider anti-corruption movement spearheaded by the CJP and young people to seek accountability from the ruling right-wing authoritarian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. With tens of thousands of students responding to the CJP's call for a march to Parliament in New Delhi on July 20, 2026, the agitation has emerged as one of the largest social movements in India during recent years.

It has garnered support from a broad spectrum of opposition parties, including those of the Left, as well as prominent public figures and celebrities. The movement has also attracted significant international attention through viral social media campaigns and extensive coverage by independent media outlets and the foreign press, on a scale not witnessed since the 2020–21 farmers' protests.

The BJP and its supporters responded in their usual heavy-handed manner with a chorus of slander, calling the protesters "anti-national," "foreign-funded," "anti-Hindu," "terrorists," etc. When all these efforts to vilify the protests failed, the BJP resorted to police violence by forcibly picking up Sonam Wangchuk from the protest site at Jantar Mantar Road. Wangchuk was confined in a state-run hospital, isolated from family and political allies.

Following the CJP's July 20 call for a march to the Parliament, the home affairs ministry run by Amit Shah deployed police and paramilitary forces to violently disperse the students gathered in and around Jantar Mantar Road. This involved jamming internet services near the protest site and using tear gas against those on the streets, as well as beating them with police batons, pelting them with stones, and subjecting them to arbitrary detentions.

Several female students also experienced sexual violence by the police. The use of pellet guns by the anti-riot force was reported: although the Delhi police deny using such weapons, at least two protesters were hospitalized with pellet wounds. Scores of students were grievously injured.

## ***Dissent in the Modi Era***

The crackdown was part of a familiar playbook that the BJP government has repeatedly deployed against dissent, most notably during the protests against the citizenship amendment bills in 2019–20 that sought to disenfranchise a significant section of the Muslim community in India.

This playbook involves outright refusal to engage in dialogue, sustained smear campaigns against protesters (amplified by the BJP's IT cell), and the use of excessive police force to quell demonstrations, with the eventual arrest of activists under draconian anti-terror laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

However, the BJP's aggressive approach has spectacularly backfired this time around. The crowds kept swelling after the July 20 crackdown, and the CJP leadership is now demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The BJP's difficulty in controlling the narrative stems in part from the fact that the student movement has mobilized concerns shared by Indian youth across class, caste, and religious divides. A significant proportion of the protesters come from Hindu middle-class families that have vehemently supported Modi's Hindutva politics.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to dismiss the current agitation as either a fleeting "Gen Z" phenomenon or a movement driven solely by middle-class anxieties. Although it shares certain features with recent youth-led mobilizations in neighboring countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh, the movement is firmly grounded in its opposition to the sweeping neoliberal reforms of the education system carried out by the BJP government.

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### ***Dismantling Public Education***

While the CJP leadership has limited its demands over education to seeking accountability from the authorities, the grievances stem from the wider neoliberal policies that the BJP has pursued. The National Education Policy (NEP), rolled out by the BJP in 2020, has accelerated the commercialization as well as the centralization of education. The

policy marks a significant retreat of the state from its commitment to public education, allowing corporations and large IT firms to restructure the education system.

The increasing reliance on computer-based testing and the expansion of multiple-choice examinations — including in disciplines within the humanities and social sciences that emphasize critical reasoning and analytical writing — exemplify the broader drive toward the standardization and digitization of educational assessment. NEP 2020 has also strengthened the central government's control over educational institutions and regulatory bodies, diminishing their institutional autonomy and facilitating greater political influence over appointments and decision-making.

These developments have assisted the BJP's attempts to revise the curriculum to perpetuate its Hindu supremacist ideology. Overall, the policy has deepened existing class and caste inequalities by making access to quality education increasingly dependent on private resources, thereby weakening its historic role as a pathway for social mobility among lower- and middle-income groups.

The union government recently published a report, after much delay, as has been the norm under BJP rule, based on the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). It states that India witnessed a sharp decline in undergraduate enrollment across the country in major streams such as arts, science, and commerce between 2022 and 2024. This is particularly stark given that undergraduate enrollment constitutes 75 percent of the total enrollment in higher education, which also includes postgraduate studies, diplomas, and other certificate courses.

This period has also seen an significant increase in the number of higher education institutions participating in the AISHE survey, which indicates that there has been an expansion of private universities. At the same time, we have witnessed systematic dismantling of public institutions that not only provided subsidized education to the poor and the middle classes but were also constitutionally bound

to reserve seats for the historically oppressed Dalit and backward caste groups. Combined with the rising unemployment rate in the country, these developments signal an acute crisis within the Indian economy, fueling mass resentment against the government.

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### ***Indian Economy in Crisis***

The rate of unemployment is particularly high among the college-educated and postgraduate demographic. Approximately twelve million candidates applied for 8,868 job openings in the state-owned Indian Railways company in 2025. Significantly, the candidates applying for these jobs tend to be overqualified in relation to the job requirements. Of the 2.5 million applicants for the 53,000 vacancies for the position of peon in Jaipur, many were college graduates and some even had PhDs.

The unemployment crisis is further compounded by the high cost of living, hikes in gas and petrol prices, and extreme weather conditions such as heatwaves and air pollution that has made life particularly unbearable for working people. Many working-class Indians have joined the CJP protest to demand a better future for their children, so they will not have to go through the same hardships as the generations before them.

The dilution of social security programs such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the implementation of highly exclusionary labor codes by the BJP have left many workers, especially in the informal sector, in an acutely precarious condition and vulnerable to workplace exploitation. The government responded to recent labor unrest in the industrial townships of northern India with a similar crack-down to that faced by the CJP protest, and several youth activists and students who stood in support of the struggling laborers were arrested.

Another important factor that is driving public anger against the government and its wealthy backers is the fact that many of its leading figures have

their children studying and settled abroad. The daughter of the education minister is currently a student at Tufts University, while her father is overseeing the crumbling education system at home. The Indian elite remain insulated from the harsh realities facing the country's working people.

This is also a reflection of the larger trend of elites "exiting" the Indian economy, whether by moving abroad or through the heavy consumption of imported luxury goods that do not contribute to domestic growth and employment. The Indian government is bolstering these trends by cutting tariffs on imports of foreign goods.

For instance, the proposed Indo-US Trade Deal could result in further relaxation of tariffs on American goods by India, which are already low at 14.6 percent. The lowering of tariffs could adversely impact scores of marginal farmers and small businesses, with farmers' groups preparing to intensify their agitation against the deal, further putting the government under pressure.

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### ***More Than a Single-Issue Protest***

The CJP protests have captured the national imagination precisely because they have been successful in tapping into the simmering resentment against the BJP among youth, farmers, and the working classes, as well as indigenous communities that are facing widespread destruction of their homes and habitats due to the government's extractivist policies. This appears to be the first time that a single-issue movement has transformed into an anti-BJP, anti-Modi agitation.

"This appears to be the first time that a single-issue movement has transformed into an anti-BJP, anti-Modi agitation."

The earlier movements included the nationwide protests against the exclusionary citizenship amendments. They spread widely across the country, but could never become a full-blown anti-BJP movement. The most spectacular agitation in recent times was the mobilization by farmers against a set of proposed Farm Bills in 2020. Though they

were able to broaden the mobilization by including the demands of women and Dalit workers, the agitation of the farmers did not broaden into opposition to the government itself, which the CJP movement seems to have managed.

The crushing weight of the economic distress blighting the country, with no respite in sight, appears to have brought together a large group of people whose concerns go far beyond the education sector alone. This has transformed the CJP protest into a mobilization against Modi and the BJP, severely denting the prime minister's cult of personality. Significantly, the young participants in the movement are championing secularism by firmly rejecting the BJP's divisive anti-Muslim politics.

The Modi government is using all the tools in its arsenal to crush the student movement. It is authorizing the police to use invasive AI-enabled surveillance for facial recognition, and threatening to cancel the passports of identified activists and detain them arbitrarily for a prolonged period.

It is incumbent upon the Indian left to unite and mobilize their cadres and trade unions to join the agitation in large numbers. It is noteworthy that the student wings of India's major communist parties have been participants from the very inception of the movement. Only the Left can take the student movement further from its single-point agenda toward realizing its radical, transformative potential.

It is quite uncertain whether these protests can translate into tangible electoral outcomes, as was evidenced even in the farmers' protests of 2020. Nevertheless, this presents the Left with an opportunity to embed itself more deeply in these movements, and expand their scope by pushing the struggles against the neoliberal restructuring of the education system toward an anti-capitalist horizon.

*26 July 2026*

Source **Jacobin**.

## USA

# AOC for President? Will She Run? Could She Win?

DAN LA BOTZ ·

**The national mood makes such considerations possible. President Donald Trump is losing the war on Iran and doesn't seem able to win or get out. He is once again imposing tariffs that act as a tax on American consumers. Gas prices are up again. Food is costly. Homes remain expensive. Trump's popularity is at an all-time low. Even his base is turning against him. The Republican Party could lose the midterm elections this November and there is fear Trump might attempt to steal them, even launch a coup.**

Yet the Democratic Party's popularity is about the same as Trump's. Democrats and independents are uninspired by Democratic Party leaders like House Minority Leader Hakim Jeffries and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer who seem to have no new ideas and no fighting spirit. Most Americans seem to be increasingly alienated from the parties, from the establishment, and from the whole political system. Yet, DSA candidates have been winning elections and gaining some power in the Democratic Party. It is this that makes an AOC campaign seem both attractive and plausible.

Yet an AOC presidential campaign would be difficult. Even many of her supporters think that she should run first for the Senate seat now held by Schumer. DSA itself is divided on AOC. While New York City DSA supports her, national DSA withdrew its endorsement of her in July 2024, believing she was insufficiently pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist, but if that was true in the past, it is not now. She is strongly pro-Palestinian, calls the

Israeli war on Gaza genocide, and opposes military aid to Israel. Still the division in DSA itself is less important than other factors.

The Democratic Party leadership, which acted forcefully to quash Sanders' presidential bid, loathes the party's progressives and socialists and would surely use its power to try to crush AOC. Whether or not they could is an open question.

AOC is a woman and the United States has never elected a woman to the presidency, despite several strong candidates in the past. And she would have to overcome a strong anti-Latino prejudice whipped up by Trump and his followers. While AOC was born in the United States, and while all people from Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, have been U.S. citizens since 1917, given the long history of U.S. racism and xenophobia and the recent growth of white Christian nationalism, she would still face a barrier of racial animus. AOC has experienced harassment, vandalism, and death threats from both right and left.

Things in America are changing. A poll last year found 37% of Americans are favorable to socialism, while among young people the figure is about 60%. Still, a socialist for president would be a big leap.

AOC has not yet said whether she will run for senator or president. She says this, "They assume that my ambition is a title or a seat. And my ambition is way bigger than that. My ambition is to change this country." She added, "Presidents come and go... but single-payer healthcare is forever, a living wage is forever, workers' rights are forever."

*26 July 2026*



## ARGENTINA

# The Malvinas and the National Question

MARTÍN MOSQUERA ·

**The World Cup semi-final between Argentina and England produced an unexpected scene. At the final whistle, several Argentine players unfurled a banner on the pitch that read "Las Malvinas son argentinas (The Falkland Islands are Argentine.)" The gesture was surprising coming from a team that, in recent years, had at best shown apathy towards politics and, in the few public statements made by some of its members, had often been openly right-wing.**

This time, however, the players defied an explicit FIFA ban, which had prevented the entry of flags and symbols linked to the Malvinas, a measure supported by the far-right Argentine government itself. Milei, who like any president hoped to benefit from the atmosphere of optimism created by a sporting victory of that magnitude, suddenly found himself uncomfortable with the political turn the celebrations had taken. After the display of the flag, he went so far as to call the players "one-track minded," in a reaction typical of his excessive nature.

The players knew they could face sanctions, as FIFA indeed began to consider after the match. But they grasped something fundamental: against England, the Malvinas resonated with a popular sentiment that predated the game and extended far beyond football.

Upon seeing this image, Bhaskar Sunkara, founder of *Jacobin* in the United States, observed that "The Malvinas are Argentine" had been the slogan of a military dictatorship that murdered thousands of activists and sought to save itself through an irredeemable adventure. He argued that there had never been a displaced native population and that, in any

case, it was a matter of two equally colonial states disputing a territory. He added that the will of the islanders should be respected and that the left should not get lost in an unnecessarily nationalistic stage of the political struggle.

The Argentine responses were immediate, massive, and often aggressive. Many went beyond questioning their interpretation of the Malvinas/Falklands issue. They denied the existence of a left wing in the United States or Europe that is not, ultimately, an instrument of imperialism. In the relatively moderate version, the American left would be merely an appendage of the Democratic Party; in the most rudimentary, an extension of the CIA. I will return to this reaction later, as it reveals a different, though complementary, problem to Bhaskar's error. First, it is necessary to establish the basic elements of the Argentine claim.

## A colonial issue

Bhaskar's position stems from a misinterpretation of the Argentine claim. In 1833, the United Kingdom occupied the islands by force, expelled the authorities and the core population of gauchos, Creoles, [2] and workers established under the jurisdiction of Buenos Aires, and instituted a colonial administration that Argentina never recognised. Since 1965, the UN itself has considered this to be an outstanding case of decolonisation and does not recognise the kelpers (islanders) [3] as a people with the right to settle the dispute through self-determination.

The kelpers are not an indigenous population, but a community formed under the occupying power and whose composition was shaped by it. To make the demographic outcome of colonisation the foundation of sovereignty would be tantamount to recognising the completed colonial act as a source of law.

The criminal war of 1982 neither created nor nullified Argentina's claim; it merely allowed the dictatorship to attempt to appropriate a cause that predated it.

Nor are we dealing with a mere cartographic relic. The Malvinas Islands are a British military enclave in the South Atlantic. The Mount Pleasant complex houses air, naval, and land infrastructure and forms part of the overseas military apparatus of one of NATO's major powers. Its position facilitates British power projection in the South Atlantic and access to Antarctica.

Territorial control also allows for the management of fishing, maritime, and hydrocarbon resources. The Falklands/Malvinas issue thus encompasses territory, military force, resources, and strategic position. It is not merely a dispute inherited from the 19th century, but a still-active colonial relationship.

None of this alone explains the unique place the Malvinas occupy in Argentine political culture. While numerous territorial disputes survive only in diplomatic archives, the Falklands/Malvinas issue has transcended governments, generations, and very diverse political cleavages. It has long since ceased to be merely an occupied territory, becoming instead the focal point of multiple unmet demands, articulated around the aspiration for a still incomplete national sovereignty.

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### ***Socialism and the national question***

The issue of the Malvinas, therefore, transcends the territorial dispute. It compels us to revisit a question that socialist politics has still insufficiently explored: what meaning does the nation and national demands have today for an emancipatory project?

For much of the 20th century, the nation occupied a central place in Marxist thought. The controversies between Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Austro-Marxism, Gramsci's elaboration on the national-popular, or anti-colonial theories all stemmed from a shared assumption: the nation constituted a polit-

ical reality that could not be ignored. This debate, however, gradually faded over the decades.

The nation does not have a political content fixed in advance. Nations do not act or speak. There are always social forces that speak on their behalf, dispute their representation and try to identify their own interests with those of the group. The nation does not constitute a homogeneous subject. It is the terrain on which a struggle to define the general interest is waged.

The Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer defined the nation as a "community of character" historically formed by a "community of destiny." The emphasis was on material history, not on nature. The nation is not a race, a language, or an immutable essence, but the sediment of a shared experience. Bauer understood the nation as the historical space in which profoundly different groups, united by the material conditions of their common life, forge an intertwined culture and destiny.

In this sense, the nation should not be understood primarily as a cultural identity. It is, above all, the historical form that the aspiration to democratic self-government takes. Globalisation has not altered this fact. Rights, citizenship, political representation, taxation, public goods, and distributive conflicts continue to be organised, in essence, within national communities. The nation is not the ultimate horizon of emancipation, but it remains the primary scale at which societies attempt to govern themselves.

In a similar vein, Gramsci shifted the discussion from national identity to hegemony. The crucial question is not what the nation expresses, as if it possessed a voice of its own, but rather what force manages to construct a collective will capable of presenting itself as national. The term "national-popular" designates the process by which initially particular interests are transformed into a project for organising the entire society. The nation ceases to be a static tradition and becomes a political construct.

That is why it is wrong to hand over patriotism to the right, as Jacopo Custodi has pointed out. Withdrawing from the national sphere allows others to occupy one of the most resilient sentiments of modern societies and define common belonging in ethnic, authoritarian, or exclusionary terms. The risk is even greater in a context of crisis of partisan and ideological identities, when the nation retains a capacity to engage that other forms of belonging have lost.

The Malvinas then take on a different meaning. They do not merely represent the return of some islands. They embody the aspiration of a political community to collective self-determination. Its persistence stems from a historical experience: the widespread perception that fundamental decisions about the country are too often made outside of it. "In" Gramscian terms, this perception contains a kernel of common sense, even if it appears imperfectly formulated. Unpopular decisions are not made solely by external powers, but also by a local ruling class that actively participates in these relations of subordination. But this kernel still offers a point of reference within the realm of common sense for a socialist policy.

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### ***Imperialism after Lenin***

The importance of the Malvinas/Falklands issue thus points to the unequal relationship between a military and colonial power and a peripheral society. Classical theory on imperialism (Hilferding, Bukharin, Lenin) correctly demonstrated that capitalism does not produce a homogeneous world market, but rather a hierarchy of states with highly unequal economic, political, and military capabilities. But that theory is insufficient today. Concentration and monopolies did not eliminate competition; the export of capital does not in itself imply stagnation in the periphery; capitalism did not enter a phase of definitive exhaustion; and rivalry between powers does not inevitably lead to direct wars, as shown by a postwar period without inter-imperialist conflagrations comparable to those of the first half of the 20th century. Many of these

weaknesses led some Marxists (from Hardt and Negri to William I. Robinson) to consider the very category of imperialism outdated. But the limitations of classical theory do not imply that imperialism has disappeared; rather, it must be understood differently. Although this would be a topic for another article, I will limit myself to clarifying a few points.

David Harvey proposed a useful distinction between the logic of capitalist accumulation and the territorial logic of states. The former seeks profits, markets, and resources; the latter, strategic control, security, and geopolitical position. Imperialism can be understood as the always unstable point of intersection between the two. An updated theory must retain Lenin's insight, but recognise that these logics are not identical and have distinct origins: the territorial expansion of states predates capitalism, while bourgeois accumulation responds to competition for profitability. It must also abandon any notion of the definitive exhaustion of capitalism. Imperialism thus designates the variable interplay between the global expansion of capital and competition within an unequal system of states.

The Malvinas make this connection visible. The British military enclave, its projection over the South Atlantic and Antarctica, respond to a geopolitical logic; the control of fishing, maritime, and hydrocarbon resources, to a logic of accumulation. The occupation persists because both dimensions reinforce each other.

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### ***Fake anti-imperialism***

The reactions to Bhaskar's comment highlighted a reverse problem. An old idea within Argentine conservative nationalism holds that in the core countries there is no true left, but only different political variants of imperialism.

The thesis, of course, lacks historical support. Since the 19th century, the working classes of Europe and the United States have built trade unions, socialist parties, communist organisations, and movements against war and colonialism. Some of the largest

contemporary campaigns of international solidarity have also emerged from within these societies and against their own governments - from the mobilisations against the invasion of Iraq to the current movement in support of Palestine.

Behind this supposedly anti-imperialist denial, a familiar topic reappears: left and right are foreign categories, incapable of capturing Argentina's uniqueness. This "exceptionalism" often recycles the anti-communist clichés of right-wing nationalism: Marxism as an imported doctrine and the conviction that all left-wing movements in core countries ultimately end up being a political expression of their own imperialism. The journey is undeniably paradoxical. It begins by denying the existence of a left wing in the United States or Europe and ends by questioning the very distinction between left and right. Those who deny the existence of a genuine left in developed countries end up denying the left itself, even in their own country, and emptying anti-imperialism of its meaning, which requires internationalism and solidarity among the struggles of different peoples. As Alain Touraine ironically observed, when someone claims that left and right no longer exist, they are most likely right-wing.

The political effect is clear. If the nation constitutes a homogeneous unit facing external enemies, an alliance with some faction of the local bourgeoisie or with a right wing that proclaims itself patriotic appears as a natural consequence. Outside, everyone is an imperialist; inside, everyone is a brother. The most simplistic nationalism replaces the class struggle.

It is very common in these debates to invoke the name of José Carlos Mariátegui [4] against Marxism originating from developed countries. His formula "neither imitation nor copy" is often repeated like a mantra to distrust any category produced outside of Latin America. But Mariátegui, an author far more often cited than read, as Martín Bergel insists, was the exact opposite of a thinker confined to Peruvian particularity. He analysed his country in dialogue with the best of Marxism and

European culture of his time. His originality did not arise from isolation, but from a cosmopolitan and creative appropriation. "Neither a copy nor an imitation" meant critical translation, not confining oneself to Latin American particularity.

Anti-imperialism and class struggle are not mutually exclusive. Some erase the former and reduce the world to an abstract opposition between capitalists and workers. Others erase the latter and transform the nation into a unified entity devoid of antagonisms. The former fail to distinguish between an imperial power and a subordinate society. The latter erase the class struggle in the name of anti-imperialism and subordinate the popular classes to the local bourgeoisie or a nationalist right wing in the name of national interest.

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### ***Sovereignty as a democratic undertaking***

The Malvinas matter because, in a peripheral country, they embody deeply rooted aspirations for national and popular sovereignty. That undertaking goes beyond territorial restitution. It includes control of resources, the capacity to resist external pressures, and the possibility of organising collective life without imperial tutelage. These are precisely the dimensions that a far-right government, unconditionally aligned with the United States, jeopardises.

This does not make every national claim progressive. The national question is always a terrain of dispute. It can take militaristic, xenophobic, or authoritarian forms. It can be instrumentalised for reactionary ends, as happened when the dictatorship tried to appropriate the Malvinas banner in 1982. But it can also become the political language of a demand for democratic emancipation.

That is precisely the political significance of the Malvinas in contemporary Argentina. It expresses the deeply rooted perception that the country's sovereignty remains incomplete. That is why the flag unfurled by the players after the match against England found a much broader consensus than any government or political force. It represented a shared historical experience.

The Malvinas survived the dictatorship because they never truly belonged to it. The Junta attempted to appropriate a cause that predated it, but failed to definitively define its meaning. Reducing the claim to the 1982 military adventure is, paradoxically, tantamount to accepting that the dictatorship was able to transform the Malvinas into the exclusive domain of its reactionary nationalism.

The task of an internationalist left is not to abandon this terrain, but to contest it. It must link na-

tional sovereignty with popular sovereignty, anti-imperialism with the class struggle, and democratic patriotism with solidarity among peoples. As long as imperialist relations exist, the national question will remain one of the fundamental forms that the struggle for democracy and socialism takes.

*19 July 2026*

*Translated and annotated by David Fagan for  
**International Viewpoint** from **Jacobin  
América Latina**.*

## CLIMATE

# Heatwaves & strategy

DANIEL TANURO ·

**Whilst ecosocialism has made great strides in its ability to offer a comprehensive alternative for society, its supporters must still prove that they are capable of engaging in politics – that is, of fighting for power.**

This is no small challenge, because it is clearly not a question of gaining power within the bourgeois institutional framework. It is a question of fighting for a class-based break that involves redefining power to serve the exploited and the oppressed, whilst respecting ecological limits.

A major difficulty in this endeavour stems from the fact that most of the planet's ecological limits have been exceeded. Consequently, an anti-capitalist break must necessarily involve a reduction in global energy consumption, material production and transport. However, this constraint is unpopular amongst workers because, under capitalism, growth determines employment, wages, social benefits, etc.

The heatwaves of 2026 could be a game-changer. Large sections of the population have recognised the danger of climate change. Yet the threat posed by climate change, by its very existential nature, transcends socio-economic concerns and tends to reveal the absurdity of the capitalist logic that dispossesses workers of their labour and their lives.

This awareness may wane. But any such lull would be temporary because 1) capitalism is incapable of stabilising the climate and 2) with a 3°C rise in temperature, Western Europe is particularly threatened by heatwaves and other extreme weather events.

There is therefore a chance that the world of work will join the fight against the climate catastrophe

on a much larger scale, on the basis of its own demands and from an anti-systemic perspective. This is a major challenge, as workers make up the majority of the population and can bring the capitalist economy to a standstill.

In this context, eco-socialists cannot be content with merely spreading propaganda: they must also campaign for an emergency plan comprising demands that bridge the gap between the issues perceived as most pressing by the working classes and the maximum programme.

In this plan, it is of paramount importance not to neglect adaptation measures. The catastrophe is upon us, and is partly irreversible. Action must be taken. The task of protecting the most vulnerable must not be left to the demagoguery of the climate-denying far right!

We obviously do not view adaptation in the same way as neoliberal governments. We link it to the redistribution of wealth, give it a democratic and social dimension, and combine it with the reduction of emissions (in housing, transport, agricultural policy, etc.).

The comprehensive eco-socialist programme is an irreplaceable propaganda tool because it presents an alternative vision of society. Engaging in practical politics involves selecting those proposals which, in each specific situation, are likely to set in motion the momentum needed to advance towards the strategic objective: the expropriation of the fossil fuel industry and the financial sector by a government as loyal to the oppressed as current governments are to the employers.

23 July 2026

Translated by *International Viewpoint* from *SolidaritéS*.



BRITAIN

# King of north crowned Prime Minister

DAVE KELLAWAY ·

**Burnham is a bit like the actor using masks in a Shakespeare or Commedia dell'Arte play – he has to appear and communicate differently to the various political and class forces that surround him:**

To the general public and the working class who have been deserting Labour for the Reform/Restore parties he has to convince them that he will do something quickly about the cost of living, housing and jobs. Hence Burnham has signalled he will carry out some urgent cost of living measures. More negatively he has shown no signs of breaking with Labour's reactionary policy on migrants and refugees which, despite the new leader rejecting this tactic in his victory speech, is actually all about 'out reforming Reform'.

To soft left labour MPs and the membership who backed his challenge to Starmer and new Green voters he has to convince them that he is a break with Starmer's government and he is challenging '40 years of neo-liberalism'. Already before the takeover he has announced a shift in policy on Palestine while not accepting there is genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank. Digital identity cards,, a key Starmer policy, have already been dumped. A clear signal has been given that Thames Water will be taken under public control and that this could apply to other utilities like energy. Quick action on the cost of living such as social tariffs for energy, capping bus fares and raising the lower tax threshold has been signalled. Other progressive policies, like a wealth tax have been floated but nothing specific has been announced.

To the Labour right and its apparatus he has to show them that it is a reset and not a fundamental break with the Starmer regime. So the cabinet will probably include heavyweights from Labour

Together, right wing, of the Labour leadership like Streeter, McFadden and Mahmood. It will be interesting to see how wide his broad church will be; surely some Labour Together leaders will be sidelined. He is reassuring the Labour establishment that his turn on Palestine only goes so far, he will not imitate fellow Social Democrat, Pedro Sanchez in the Spanish state. Burnham voted for Shabana Mahmood's racist and reactionary tightening of conditions for refugees. He has shown no inclination at all to change the general line on migrants and on the general repression of democratic rights. It would be a surprise if he loosened the noose around Palestine Action or weakened the general onslaught on protest and direct action. We have already seen a U turn on trans rights where Burnham, who previously defended trans people, now accepts the Supreme Court ruling preventing Trans women using the women's toilets.

To the bosses and the capitalist class he wants to assure them that he is pro-business growth and he wants a new partnership, albeit with more public control over utilities and some industries. Hence in his Times interview he emphasises his pro-business views and accurately describes how the capitalist growth in Manchester was based on a partnership with property developers. They did very well and not much social housing was built. Not appointing Ed Miliband as chancellor and giving the job to Shabana Mahmood would be another clear signal that the capitalist economy would be safe in his hands. In any case he has already said he will respect the fiscal rules and not let borrowing rip. The new leader has not questioned at all the NATO/Trump imposed targets on warfare spending which will please the military/industrial complex. His reindustrialisation agenda has defence spending as a key element despite the evidence that

boosting welfare or education would create many, many more jobs.

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### ***A contradictory project***

Despite the honeymoon period he is enjoying both within the Labour Party and worker's movement as well as in the mass media it will not be easy to keep this complex and contradictory project together.

Social care is correctly one of his priorities and if he were to come up with a fair, workable scheme it could win him a lot of support. His own father has Alzheimers and is unaware his son is the new PM. This is an issue that affects everyone. Even people with a reasonable income know the expense of paying for your own care or for your loved ones. Private equity, which now controls significant parts of social care both for young and old people will not give up their stakes without a fight.

Welfare spending, including disability payments, will be on the agenda very soon as the right wing inside Labour, the mass media and the establishment generally are in favour of big cuts. The Timms review on Personal Independence Payments and other issues will come out this Autumn. A key part of Burnham's base that launched his leadership bid were key players in stopping the Starmer government's attempt to cut back disability payments. Will those MPs sit on their hands if Burnham comes back with a similar programme?

The essential dilemma that, along with Brexit, has produced the incredible volatility of seven prime ministers in ten years is the fact that capital can no longer afford to give significant concessions in terms of environmental measures wages or social spending for the working class. We are no longer in the post war boom nor even the Blair years where the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Chinese boom provided a different context. Some reforms to guarantee political stability and to head off the risks of a Reform government or coalition would be acceptable but anything that seriously began to challenge capitalist interests would not be acceptable and there would be a relentless counteroffensive.

Corbyn was treated to this even when he was still in opposition.

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### ***Will he tax business and the rich?***

Even to carry out the limited project he has outlined so far would require a lot of resources. So far he has not set out where he will get the money from. Will he really stand up to the bosses and the mass media who will oppose any significant increase in taxes on their wealth?

As we can see you have to be a quite a political gymnast to wear a different mask to each of these groups. Some masks are more dominant than others so the role he plays for the capitalist class takes precedence over all the others. At the end of the day he is a Labour politician committed to managing capitalism, with some mitigation for working people, rather than organising a movement rooted outside parliament but intervening in it to break with a system that produces inequality, oppression and the destruction of our planet. He is said to be in favour of allowing more drilling of oil and gas in the North Sea which will bring very few new jobs but lead to further catastrophic global warming.

On the day of his inauguration the markets are up reflecting the confidence of the ruling class that Burnham is not a direct threat even if they may have concerns about some of his policies if they are pushed too far.

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### ***Same as the old boss?***

For the left we need to accept that this is not the same as Starmer's government. He might be a Labourist boss but he is not the same as the old boss – except in the sense that all Labour leaders manage capitalism and will not challenge its interests.

The difference lies in the political effects we can already discern. Farage is looking very fragile with the exposure of his money grabbing and the Clacton by election farce. Burnham's success in comprehensively defeating Reform in Makerfield and the fact that he is not Starmer and has an-

nounced some more progressive policies, has helped bring Labour back to level pegging with Reform. Farage's party was already reaching the ceiling of around 30 % that we have seen in other European countries where the hard right is in the ascendant. If the threat of a Farage government or coalition is no longer so strongly on the agenda then it puts us in a different political context.

It is too early to say but if Burnham does carry through a soft left set of policies then it will also have an effect on his left flank where the Greens have been gaining many Labour voters. However the mask Burnham wears to appeal to the Labour right and to appeal to Reform voters on migration, democratic rights, North Sea drilling and Palestine will make it more difficult to win back particularly those younger voters that today reject Labour.

Nevertheless this break with Starmer will possibly keep many activists inside the Labour Party. The catastrophic failure of Your Party further feeds this tendency. We need to retain links with these socialists and involve them and as many other activists as possible in campaigns on the ground that have been working on some of the areas Burnham is talking about changing. For instance we should support any caps on bus fares but work with the various fare free campaigns such as in London and Manchester to intervene with our policies.

Burnham's project is about a Labour government managing reforms on behalf of the people. He is not going to organise any sort of mass base that can defend progressive measures against opposition and push them further.

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### ***Engaging with new debates***

Consequently there will be new interventions and debates for the socialist left. We will need to not just denounce Labour complicity with austerity or

on repression of democratic rights but to engage with some real but limited reforms that will be proposed. Devolution, housing, social care and public control of the utilities will become central to political debate. For example how do we respond to the idea of regional division and inequality? What do we say about his pledge to end rough sleeping.? We need to work out our responses, what we support and what needs to go much further and how such reforms will always be limited by the constraints of the capitalist system. Proportional representation is also apparently part of Burnham's project. The radical left has been disgracefully absent from this debate.

It is silly to look at Burnham's rise as just a capitalist conspiracy – Starmer was unpopular, the Tories and Reform are not reliable enough so let's find another puppet we can manipulate. In a distorted way his shifts have resulted partially from our struggles and campaigns. The rebellion on disability payments was a staging post for the soft left breaking with Starmer. Without the mass Palestine campaign we probably would not have seen Burnham saying Labour got it wrong and war crimes need to be looked at.

If Burnham does not hit the ground running and make a difference at least on the experience of the cost of living then his support could erode very quickly. Then the Tories, Reform/Restore could come back strongly. Socialists have to maintain their independence and build a broader more effective movement that can support any progressive measures, show how they should go further and work together with activists inside and outside the Labour Party to prevent a far right/Tory resurgence.

*20 July 2026*

*Source: AntiCapitalist Resistance.*

## UKRAINE

# The Streets Are Asking Questions the Leaders Cannot Answer in Ukraine

ADAM NOVAK ·

**In Zaporizhzhia, protesters re-enacted the famous Repin painting of Zaporizhzhian Cossacks writing a defiant letter to a foreign ruler, then drafted their own open letter to Zelensky: reinstate Fedorov, dismiss Syrskiy. In Ivano-Frankivsk, the placards read: "Fedorov is Defence Minister!", "Syrskiy, out!", "The government is the people!" In Lviv, demands included a full independent audit of the Commander-in-Chief's activities and the restoration of parliament's role in forming the government. In Rivne: fight corruption.**

As Oksana Kozlova of the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU, Belgium) puts it: "I would dare to say that they are standing up not so much in support of Fedorov, and even not that much against Syrskiy. They are protesting against an army with 'Skelia', post-Soviet-style generals such as the 155th Brigade former commander, the criminal 'negligence' in Vyshneve, the old guard apparatchiki enriching themselves through arms procurement, the absence of transparent digitalised reporting on military budget use, mobilisation squads that resemble mafia gangs, the persecution of independent media." [2]

This is not a protest *for* a minister. It is a protest *against* a system.

The cardboard sign has become the symbol of Ukrainian wartime civic life — low-threshold, undeniable, effective. It appeared in July 2025 when the government tried to dismantle the independence of the anti-corruption agencies NABU (National Anti-Corruption Bureau) and SAPO (Spe-

cialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office), and parliament was forced to reverse course within nine days. [3] The cardboard sign is back now, in greater numbers and with a longer list of demands.

Two days before Fedorov's dismissal, activists from Sotsialnyi Rukh (Social Movement), the Pryama Diya (Direct Action) student union and the Pasyazhery Kyiva (Kyiv Passengers) civic group were already outside city hall protesting a near-fourfold rise in public transport fares. [4]

Families of soldiers have been on the streets since October 2023 demanding defined demobilisation terms and rotation after eighteen months of service. [5]

Each wave has been distinct. Each has forced a retreat or a concession.

## A crisis with a military logic

The confrontation that produced Fedorov's dismissal did not begin with the cabinet reshuffle. It began with a Telegram post. [6] On 10 July, Oleksandr Syrskiy — Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces since February 2024 — published a text on Telegram claiming the situation was "far from a turning point in the war" and warning against underestimating the adversary. Nobody disputes the second point. But the first — the denial that anything has fundamentally shifted — is simply false.

Since the summer of 2025, Ukrainian drones have destroyed a significant share of Russia's refinery and hydrocarbon export capacity, striking targets deep into Russian territory. Russian advances at the front have slowed and, in several sectors, reversed. The Crimean peninsula is increasingly isolated. Putin's demonstration of fear at the 9 May

2026 parade has become a political fact that the Russian ruler cannot undo. Ukraine's 40-day operation, announced by Zelensky on 25 June, combines targeted strikes in Russian territory, front pressure and the continuing isolation of Crimea. Zelensky chose Syrskyi over Fedorov. The streets have responded.

The connection is not accidental. As French APLUTSOC and ENSU member Vincent Pr  sumey writes, citing the journal *Diplomatie*: drone warfare requires "a disseminated, not centralised, and democratic, cooperative framework" — the opposite of what Syrskyi represents. The revolution in drone, AI and robotics technology, which has been accumulating since the mass uprising of February 2022, crossed a qualitative threshold at roughly the same moment as the July 2025 cardboard revolution — as Pr  sumey insists, "in no way a coincidence." Democratic civic mobilisation and distributed technological warfare share a structural logic. Both require initiative from below. Both are weakened by the apparatus of centralised command.

This also explains what is at stake economically. As Jean Batou and I recently argued, the Western arms industry covets Ukraine's drone expertise "exactly as they would a deposit of qualified labour or rare earths." [7] The push for centralised procurement and large defence contractors serves not only Syrskyi's military doctrine but the strategic interests of western firms like Rheinmetall. The two logics — authoritarian military command and oligarchic capture of the defence economy — reinforce each other.

The political consequences of that reinforcement are already visible in the streets. By the second day of protests in Kyiv, a far-right current had appeared within the broader movement. Placards named Andrii Biletsky — founder of Azov, member of Tryzub (the Bandera organisation), commander of the 3rd Army Corps, and leader of the National Corps party — as the preferred Commander-in-Chief. "Syrskyi is Soviet-era deadweight. Fedorov is digital. Biletsky is results." "Fedorov makes deep

strikes. Biletsky holds the front." [8] These slogans do not represent the protest as a whole, but they document an organised far-right presence attempting to hegemonise a crisis that began elsewhere.

The question of who replaces Syrskyi, on what criteria, chosen by whom, is not a secondary personnel matter. It is the political content of the crisis. The left might not yet be contesting the question of military command, but the far right is stepping in with an answer of its own.

### **The demands that could win**

The protests are already raising demands that go beyond personalities. In Lviv, protesters called for the restoration of parliament's role in forming the government. In Rivne, the demand was to fight corruption. These connect directly to the programme that Sotsialnyi Rukh and the Pryama Diya student union formulated during the July 2025 anti-corruption protests: "We demand the abolition of everything that allows those close to power to steal with impunity, both at the rear and at the front" — an independent anti-corruption investigation, real labour inspection, comprehensive social protection financed by taxation of the rich, financial transparency in times of war, "a fair state, not a state for corporations." [9] The cardboard sign connects July 2025 to July 2026. The same forces are on the street. The demands have deepened.

The street protests reflect majority feeling that Syrskyi should be dismissed and his conduct investigated. Fedorov himself said at his 16 July press conference that Ukraine cannot "win asymmetricaly, with minimum losses" under the current command structure, and called for replacing both Syrskyi and the Chief of the General Staff. [10] He is right. The same hierarchical doctrine that drove Syrskyi to suppress Fedorov's initiatives produced the failures that soldiers have been publicly documenting for two years. Under Syrskyi, the 36-month service rotation limit was stripped from the mobilisation law before its April 2024 passage. Mobilisation has operated through methods — street round-ups, coercion, the suppression of com-

plaints — that corrode the democratic culture on which Ukrainian resistance depends. Soldiers from the 125th Brigade's repair battalion — drone repairers, welders, excavator operators — were sent to assault positions with no relevant training; two died. Their collective statement was not a refusal to fight: it was an indictment of command decisions that wasted specialised capacity and killed people unnecessarily. Soldiers of the 48th Separate Assault Battalion publicly opposed their commander's replacement at a critical combat moment. Patrick Le Tréhondat, translator and ENSU solidarity activist, who brought the 125th Brigade case to international attention, was correct: "Protests within the ranks of the Ukrainian army are not signs of weakness but indices of strength." [11] Public challenges to military hierarchy that would result in summary punishment in Russia's armed forces are, in Ukraine, expressions of the democratic vitality that distinguishes this resistance.

Many feel that Fedorov should be reinstated — not as a personality beyond criticism, but because what his ministry was building must not be defeated by the right and far right. He championed the asymmetric strategy Ukraine needs. An audit of 7.2 billion dollars in defence overpayments was under way on his watch. His neoliberal failings are real, and Sotsialnyi Rukh has documented them consistently — most recently on the Labour Code his government was simultaneously advancing. [12] A critique of his record must be paired with concrete proposals for organising the defence economy in a democratic, cooperative way rather than through Silicon Valley entrepreneurship, deals with the western arms industry and untransparent oligarchic procurement. State coordination, transparency, worker representation, taxation of superprofits: these are the conditions for an efficient defence sector that serves society.

The soldiers fighting this war have not waited for civilians to articulate their demands. They have been building their own. Veteranka — Ukraine's first organisation of women veterans, now with over 3,000 members — spent years filling a gap the

state refused to fill: producing free women's uniform sets because the Ministry of Defence issued none until February 2024. Their legislative work has been equally concrete. Their campaign for Bill 13037, adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 25 February 2026 with 276 deputies voting unanimously on Ukrainian Women's Day, obliges commanders to investigate every case of discrimination and violence in the armed forces and formally defines sexual harassment as a disciplinary offence requiring emergency response within fifteen minutes. Their head Kateryna Pryimak states plainly what underlies all of this: "The army is the group in society with the fewest rights, and women in the army face the greatest restrictions." [13]

LGBT Military for Equal Rights, representing more than 700 openly serving LGBT+ personnel across 59 units, is fighting a different but structurally identical battle: the right to exist legally as the person you are while risking your life for the state. Their core demand is civil partnership rights that would allow soldiers' partners to visit them in hospital, make medical decisions, inherit property, receive military pensions and arrange funerals. The case of Maria Zaitseva illustrates what the absence of these rights costs in practice. Killed in service, her partner Anna Honcharova could only see her body because "a comrade made arrangements." When Maria received the Order of Courage posthumously, Anna was not notified — the award went to "next of kin," a legal category that did not include her. Parliament has not passed the civil partnerships bill. The Parliamentary Speaker has stated it "is not a priority." [14]

In June 2026, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) announced the creation of the All-Ukrainian Union of Combatants, Military Personnel and Veterans. Mykhailo Volynets, KVPU president, described the new union's purpose: veterans and military personnel "must not only enjoy society's respect, but also have effective mechanisms to influence state policy and defend their civil rights." [15] This is the first organisational link between the labour movement and the soldiers'



movement. Workers and soldiers share an interest in accountability, transparency, and protection against arbitrary power.

Taken together, Veteranka, LGBT Military, and the KVPU soldiers' union represent something the Ukrainian state has consistently failed to ensure: democratic infrastructure within the military. They are not lobbying for abstractions. They are naming specific failures, winning specific legislative changes, and building institutions to defend rights the state denies. They are doing, within the armed forces, what the left needs to do politically in these protests: not just demanding that the system change, but showing what the change looks like in practice.

The defence sector as a whole needs democratic restructuring that goes further still. Sotsialnyi Rukh's March 2025 statement "For a Ukraine Without Oligarchs and Occupiers" specifies: 50 per cent worker representation on supervisory boards of infrastructure, defence and mineral extraction enterprises; nationalisation of strategic enterprises under workers' control; progressive taxation reaching 90 per cent on top incomes; confiscation of oligarch assets for the war effort. [16] Their October 2024 conference resolution insisted that "the unwillingness to nationalize production capacities, tax large

businesses, and direct the budget towards rearmament makes it possible to prolong the war at the cost of significant human losses and constant mobilization." [17]

Ukraine's domestic tax revenues currently cover only defence spending. Everything else — pensions, hospitals, schools — depends on foreign loans. This is a political choice, not an economic necessity. And it is the same choice that keeps the labour inspection toothless, the anti-corruption agencies under threat, and the soldiers' demands unanswered.

The protests have not yet fused these threads into a single programme. As Kozlova writes, the people on the streets "will not allow an arrogant mob to treat them as cattle born to obey. Not even under the pretext of military discipline." That refusal is the foundation. But refusal alone does not decide who takes command, how the defence economy is structured, or whether the legal invisibility of women and LGBT+ soldiers outlasts the war. Sotsialnyi Rukh, Pryama Diya, Veteranka, LGBT Military and the KVPU soldiers' union already have some answers to those questions. The challenge now is to make those answers the content of the protest — before someone else fills the gap.

*18 July 2026*

Source: ESSF.

## CHINA

# China Hit by "Deadly Weather Events"

PIERRE ROUSSET ·

**Natural disasters are common in China, particularly in the summer, when some regions experience heavy rainfall while others are plagued by extreme heat. However, the frequency and scale of these events are increasing as global warming accelerates—driven, in particular, by the use of fossil fuels. Among the affected regions are Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan in the south and center of the country, home to a population of over 150 million—more than in Russia.**

In fact, a significant portion of the country is affected by this series of weather events. Maysak, the first typhoon of the season, made landfall on July 6 in the southern island province of Hainan, having originated in Vietnam. In Nanning, the capital of the Guangxi region, and its surrounding areas, floodwaters breached the dams of three reservoirs, according to local authorities. The city of Nanning and its surrounding areas were flooded, forcing many residents to take refuge on rooftops, with some 55,000 people evacuated. On the same day, a tornado struck the city of Ezhou in Hubei Province (central-east). In fact, two destructive tornadoes swept through central China that evening, when warm air from the south, driven by Typhoon Maysak, collided with cold air from the north.

On July 9, a landslide in Gansu (northwest) occurred following violent thunderstorms and torrential rains, leaving 39 dead, 9 missing, and hundreds injured, according to press reports. It was caused by "a severe episode of atmospheric convection" (i.e., a temperature contrast) that triggered "thunderstorms and strong winds" which swept through cities such as Huangshi and Huanggang, according to state media.

In the city of Guigang, a metropolitan area in the Guangxi Autonomous Region (in the south), floodwaters turned a major road into a lake, submerging cars and rushing down a hillside as muddy torrents before pouring onto a construction site.

On July 11, Typhoon Bavi, originating in the Philippines and Taiwan, struck the coast further east, prompting the evacuation of nearly 2 million people. Shortly before that, torrential rains in the capital Beijing (in the northeast) led authorities to evacuate more than 100,000 people.

A typhoon was also expected over the weekend on the east coast, south of Shanghai, bringing with it violent gusts of wind.

In southern and central China, violent thunderstorms and torrential rains have left about 17 people dead and hundreds injured. The central province of Hubei was also affected. Tens of thousands of people were evacuated in the southern region of Guangxi, where some 40 rivers and streams burst their banks and torrents of water poured out after the dam walls of a reservoir broke, according to state television CCTV.

In an exotic twist, some 800 to 900 snakes (including cobras) escaped after a snake farm was destroyed by the floodwaters in the city of Hangzhou.

According to government authorities, torrential rains were expected in mid-July to reach certain coastal and eastern areas of Guangxi, as well as the southwest of the neighboring province of Guangdong—home to a major manufacturing hub—putting the integrity of reservoirs and dikes to the test and potentially triggering further population evacuations.

The Chinese press reports on effective prevention and relief efforts. The alerts certainly enabled pre-

ventive evacuations in some areas, but not in all, as evidenced by these accounts gathered by an Agence France-Presse correspondent who was able to visit the town of Liulan (Guangxi), where floods destroyed homes, swept away livestock, and caused the collapse of a major dam (and another, smaller one near the town of Gantang). The dam's walls collapsed, unleashing torrents of muddy water downstream, with a preliminary death toll of 26 and seven people missing.

Many of the affected residents in this town had not fully grasped the gravity of the situation. According to Mr. Huang, "it has never been this bad before." "We didn't receive any warning. If we had, we wouldn't have suffered so many losses." Even belongings on the upper floor of his house were destroyed by the floodwaters. "In several hundred years, this is the first time the floodwaters have reached the first floor," Bi Yunchun, another resident of Gantang, told AFP.

China's compensation system for flood victims was expanded in 2025 to include storage areas where authorities deliberately divert floodwaters to reduce flooding downstream. The scope of compensation for people living or working in these storage areas has been expanded. Previously limited to draft animals, it now includes livestock and poultry that could not be evacuated, with the central gov-

ernment covering 70% of the costs and local governments covering 30%. Compensation remains conditional and does not cover all risks.

Furthermore, there can be a wide gap between the law and reality. The selection of storage zones obviously involves a political dimension (affluent residential neighborhoods or business districts related to those in power will be spared). Corruption is endemic at all levels of the administration, and repression is commonplace. In the absence of more or less independent social organizations, it is very difficult to ensure the collective defense of the rights of working-class, peasant and popular communities over the long term. Under these conditions, with every extreme weather event, new segments of the population are plunged into poverty—a situation from which they will find it all the more difficult to escape as climate disasters follow one after another.

More generally, climate-related disasters threaten to wipe out the equivalent of tens of billions of dollars in commercial activity each year due to urban flooding, halted industrial activity, submerged crops, and livestock swept away by the floodwaters—all while the Chinese economy is already sluggish.

*18 July 2026*

Source: ESSF.

## BRAZIL

# Super El Niño: Chronicle of a Tragedy Foretold

ISRAEL DUTRA ·

**According to data from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), part of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there is an 81% probability that El Niño will fall into the "very strong" category. In other words, scientifically speaking, the conditions are in place for one of the century's largest climate events, with significant repercussions for Brazil.**

It seems strange that, in a scenario where the pre-election debate already dominates the agenda, little or nothing is being discussed regarding how to respond to this situation.

We are facing extremely serious climate events around the globe. A more serious debate is needed on the centrality of the environmental agenda in general—and within the left—regarding an ecosocialist solution in light of the upcoming programmatic and electoral debates.

## *Warnings and an Emergency Brake*

The front page of *Folha de São Paulo* on Sunday, July 12, caught my attention. The headline warned of major difficulties in livestock farming and a likely delay in grain planting, which would disrupt and reduce the harvest. The threat combines excessive rainfall in the southern region—which is jeopardizing wheat planting—with heat waves in the Midwest, which are damaging soybean crops, whose planting is scheduled for the period between September and December.

The warnings from key sectors of the press, governments, and the scientific community cannot be downplayed. The effects on Europe are devastating. The greatest heat wave in the European continent's recent history is causing deaths and disasters, such

as the wildfire that claimed 13 lives in southern Spain. Brazil experienced the climate disaster that ravaged Rio Grande do Sul in 2024. Only two years separate us from the true trauma endured by the people of Rio Grande do Sul, with hundreds of fatalities, tens of thousands affected, and entire cities destroyed.

What is most concerning is that the far right continues to advocate a denialist agenda, which not only prevents the ability to forecast and adapt to such events but also ends up amplifying their impacts, especially on the poorest. This debate will be unavoidable in the October election, given the mass support enjoyed by Bolsonarism and its various candidates across Brazil.

## *The Super El Niño and the Elections*

The key issue is the role that agribusiness plays in the national economy. On the one hand, it is one of the main culprits behind the devastation that causes profound environmental imbalance; on the other hand, in the face of El Niño, it will seek compensation through heavy public investments.

As a base of support for the most reactionary sectors of politics, agribusiness thrives at the expense of the environment and the interests of the majority of the population. Therefore, there is no other way out but to break with the agro-export model that has led us to our current dead end.

In the elections, both Bolsonaro's denialism and the auxiliary wing of the "centrão"—mobilized by the BBB (Cattle, Bible, and Bullets) caucus coalition—will faithfully defend the interests of agribusiness. On the other hand, the PT and parties that are part of the government are caving in and watering down their agendas in a supposed quest for greater electoral gains.

We must transform the food production system and build a new paradigm as an economic model that guarantees food sovereignty for the entire Brazilian population. The best way to address El Niño is to combine adaptation measures—both in rural areas and, above all, in cities—with the struggle for a fundamental shift in the economic model.

Take the defense of water, for example. While dozens of data centers are being installed, driven by the logic of mining and "data extractivism," the state of São Paulo—to cite just one example—risks facing new water rationing in light of the climate events forecast for the second half of the year.

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### ***A Program for the Present and the Future***

The PSOL faces an enormous challenge. Together with its alliance with Rede Sustentabilidade, it is viewed by hundreds of thousands of people as the party capable of fearlessly tackling environmental issues, bringing the need for profound change to the center of the political agenda. This challenge will play out in the upcoming elections.

A change that challenges the "development" model, advocating for the need to resume agrarian reform and reverse the direction of current food production. Thus, the PSOL platform, updated last year, incorporated parts of the MST's platform regarding the transition to an agroecological model.

Furthermore, the renationalization of companies such as SABESP, the need for a national climate emergency plan, and the uncompromising defense of rivers are fundamental parts of the immediate platform of our candidates and leaders.

The recent discussion between the PSOL Foundations (the Lauro Campos and Marielle Franco Foundations) and the Rede Foundation regarding an ecosocialist program for Brazil was a major step in this direction. To confront the climate catastrophe—accelerated by neo-fascist denialism—the emergency brake lies in the struggle and mobilization of the social majority.

*16 July 2026*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Revista Movimento**.*

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**PUERTO RICO**

# Some Reflections on the Water Crisis in Puerto Rico

MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ BANCHS ·

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**The water crisis in Puerto Rico has been predictable, and we see its effects repeatedly. Each time the water situation worsened, proposals emerged and solutions were presented through large-scale projects involving the construction of new infrastructure, including various forms of privatisation and the diversion of public funds to private companies. A prime example is the super-aqueduct, a project that was unnecessary, environmentally damaging, and a source of corruption. Furthermore, it was warned that a pipe six feet in diameter and over 50 kilometers long would cause ruptures and breakdowns that would be difficult to repair and would present access problems. The proposed solutions have generally arisen as reactions to critical situations and have not been the product of the necessary reflection on the root causes of the problems that they are intended to solve. Planning and maintenance have been absent from water management as a vital resource and from the administration of the Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority or AAA). Although the privatisation of the AAA was a failure, this policy has persisted through outsourcing.**

Government policies over the past 50 years have been aimed at ensuring the conditions for the pursuit and capture of private profit. They have promoted a reduction in the size of government, but contrary to the stated objective of this reduction, the announced savings have not been achieved, and

public spending has not been reduced. Instead, neo-liberal programmes have been adopted that have facilitated the diversion of public funds into private pockets.

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## *Social Crisis*

Every day, large areas of the country face the problem of a lack of drinking water. Tens of thousands of people are deprived of this vital resource daily. According to official data, the most recent crisis deprived more than 110,000 subscribers of this resource, which—according to census figures—affected more than 250,000 people. This situation was not adequately resolved due to the deep fragmentation, divisions, and power struggles within the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party or PNP). These struggles have spread to all branches of government. The inadequate response to this crisis is also related to the ineptitude of the people that the PNP places in management positions in government agencies and departments. According to the most recent corruption scandal revealed by Sebastián Negrón Reichard, former Secretary of Economic Development, this situation is a consequence of the only criterion used for the selection of these people: their affiliation and activism in PNP campaigns, regardless of their ineptitude. According to messages released by Negrón Reichard, sent by Francisco Domenech, the governor's secretary, the criterion for these appointments is that they be people "who screwed up" in the governor's primary campaign and the general election. According to some of these messages, the governor's secretary—who is also the governor's spokesperson—does not tolerate the appointment of people "who are not members of the New Progressive Party to positions of trust."



However, the country's water supply problems pre-date the most recent breakdowns in the super-aqueduct and have two main sources. On the one hand, they stem from the deterioration of infrastructure, a lack of planning and maintenance, a lack of understanding of the system by managers and contractors, and the reduced supply capacity of the reservoirs and problems at the filtration plants. It is estimated that the AAA loses approximately 65% of water produced due to leaks, breakdowns, and overflows. Infrastructure deterioration can be mitigated through planning and preventive and corrective maintenance programmes. The lack of knowledge of the system is limited to senior management and AAA contractors, as AAA workers are very familiar with the complexity of the system. They have the experience, knowledge, and ability to identify pipes, leaks, and other problems. However, neither the AAA management nor the government takes them into account or allows them the necessary participation to address the serious problems we face.

On the other hand, water supply problems are also due to the reduction in storage capacity. Sedimentation of reservoirs seriously affects their storage capacity and limits water availability, according to the final draft of the Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience Plan for Puerto Rico [2] of the Committee of Experts and Advisors on Climate Change (CEACC) revised in 2024. [3] The reduction in reservoir capacity and the problems at filtration plants are a consequence of sediment buildup in both reservoirs and filters. This sedimentation, which reduces storage capacity and impairs filtration, originates from two main sources: a) erosion and b) particulate matter from construction projects. Deforestation of the forests that protect the watersheds that feed reservoirs causes soil erosion. This erosion increases sedimentation in lakes through rainwater runoff, which contributes to weathering, carries away decomposing material, and transports rocks and soil eroded from the surface into the reservoirs. But currently, environmental destruction—which also includes

cases of deforestation—is primarily due to construction projects that affect forests and areas near rivers and streams, many of which feed into lakes that store water. This situation is exacerbated by the waste from these same construction projects, which is also carried by the water and contributes to increased sedimentation.

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### ***Crisis of Nature***

Puerto Rico is one of the 10 countries in the world most affected by the climate crisis, according to the Climate Risk Index (CRI) published in February 2025 by the international body Germanwatch. [4] The sedimentation situation worsened with Hurricane Maria, which struck Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017, exacerbating sediment accumulation. Rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and the intensification of phenomena such as hurricanes and droughts directly impact ecosystems and infrastructure, and, as we have experienced in recent years, disrupt daily life.

The climate crisis is in turn accelerating the water supply crisis in Puerto Rico. Some forecasts indicate that there will be changes in rainfall patterns. [5] Between 1950 and 1980, severe droughts that led to rationing occurred every 20 to 25 years. It is important to note that under normal conditions, Puerto Rico receives enough rainfall to meet its needs if it had sufficient storage capacity. However, it's important to recognise that the climate crisis has led to changes in the intensity and frequency of droughts, which now occur every five years. This means we will face more droughts requiring rationing, which demands planning and preparation.

The Puerto Rico Comprehensive Water Resources Plan - which has not been updated since 2016 - of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources indicates that, historically, droughts begin with a reduction in rainfall in April and May, and when they are severe, reservoirs do not fill up sufficiently. [6] According to the document, periods of lower-than-normal rainfall in the Caribbean region coincide with variations in the El Niño phenomenon, which in turn reduces the number and

intensity of hurricanes. Experts have confirmed that this meteorological phenomenon is already present, so drought conditions can be expected in the Caribbean. [7] The extreme drought of 2015 required severe restrictions that affected more than one million people and resulted in millions of dollars in agricultural losses, according to data from the U.S. Geological Survey. Another drought, in 2020, forced water rationing measures and led to the declaration of a drought emergency for all of Puerto Rico. In 2024, the most severe drought category observed in Puerto Rico was "moderate drought," which was present in the southwest and northwest corners of the island, as well as in the eastern interior, covering between 40% and 55% of the territory between January and March, according to the National Weather Service's annual report published in January 2025.

Another factor affecting water availability on the island is rising sea levels. Rising sea levels increase the influx of seawater into aquifers. As sea levels continue to rise, this intrusion will increase, reducing the availability of groundwater. It is essential to consider all these factors when planning and preparing to mitigate the impact on this vital resource.

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### ***A new threat***

In addition to the problems with the development model adopted in the country, which prioritises the interests of capital and drives the construction of environmentally destructive projects like Esencia in Cabo Rojo, there is a new threat that also has irreversible consequences for water resources. I am referring to the data centres promoted by Big Tech. Specifically, I am referring to the demand for a new type of these structures that arises as a consequence of the massive use of generative artificial intelligence.

Data centres are not new. [8] These buildings have existed for decades and house the servers and other hardware necessary for the internet to function. However, since ChatGPT's public launch in late 2022, generative artificial intelligence has experienced a dramatic boom, requiring a large amount

of new, much more energy-intensive equipment. According to a Consumer Reports report [9] (CR), to meet the increased energy demand of these data centres, electric companies are investing billions of dollars in building new transmission lines and new power generation plants. [10] This is one of the main reasons why new data centres can increase electricity bills. Residential electricity costs are also rising due to the proliferation of new, larger-scale data centres that draw power from the same residential grids, increasing demand. In places where electricity generation and transmission are privately owned and therefore subject to market forces, this increased demand also leads to higher electricity prices.

The rise of generative artificial intelligence requires these large data centres to operate 24 hours a day, generating a lot of heat whilst causing them to overheat considerably. To prevent overheating, these facilities use constant water circulation systems to cool their equipment. According to estimates by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a data centre can consume up to 5 million gallons of water per day. [11] This only includes direct consumption for cooling the centre. Generating the electricity to keep data centres running requires millions of additional gallons of water—even more than is needed for cooling.

The increasing and widespread use of generative artificial intelligence comes at a growing environmental cost. In addition to the energy consumed by technology companies to operate their data centres, they also use enormous quantities of water for cooling due to the excessive heat they generate. A report published by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health warns that by 2030, water consumption for the operation of artificial intelligence will equal the annual needs of 1.3 billion people. [12] Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the threats to water posed by new technologies in order to organise an effective resistance.

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### ***The ecosocialist alternative***

The government of Puerto Rico serves colonial capitalism, which in turn is subservient to foreign capital. It responds to interests that prioritise short-term private profit over the well-being of the country and the survival of humanity. This is confirmed by the passage of Law 82-2026, which eliminated the absolute prohibition on construction in specially protected rural areas. This legislation authorises the approval of building permits on these lands if the central government, municipalities, or the Fiscal Control Board determine that the project is strategic. Two other bills have also been introduced to further deregulate the granting of building permits, accelerating environmental vandalism. The country's current development model is unsustainable. Addressing the crisis we face and averting climate catastrophe will only be possible if we abandon the prevailing concept of development. Instead of facilitating environmental vandalism, we must take measures to protect the environment.

It is estimated that Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused the loss of approximately 10% of the country's forest cover. This does not include the daily deforestation caused by construction projects in areas that should be protected. Therefore, it is urgent to reforest the country, particularly the areas surrounding water basins. It is necessary to prohibit construction on the coasts while simultaneously planting dunes and mangroves. Dredging reservoirs to increase storage capacity is critical. This must be combined with a coherent programme for water conservation and consumption reduction. Adopting a permanent preventive and corrective maintenance plan for the Water and Sewer Authority's infrastructure is essential. We need to accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources.

But to achieve these advances, a reform of the public service is essential—one that includes the recovery of privatised services—through a democratic process with the participation of workers, who have firsthand knowledge of the system's problems and needs and how to solve them, and with the participation of users who directly face the consequences of government mismanagement. We must take all urgent and necessary measures to mitigate the social and environmental problems that afflict us and the effects of the climate crisis.

Overcoming the social and environmental problems that afflict us and reversing the reversible effects of the climate crisis is impossible under the rules of this economic system. The climate crisis is perhaps the most dramatic example. It is not possible to address the climate crisis without making the energy sector—as well as water management—public property and administering it democratically with the dual objective of satisfying our needs and reducing environmental impact. We must also reduce unnecessary, nonessential, or harmful production. But this, in turn, requires placing broad sectors of productive activity under the same social and democratic control. This demands overcoming capitalism. Therefore, we support all struggles for immediate demands that allow us to improve our situation within capitalism, while simultaneously highlighting the need to change this system and continuing to fight for a truly democratic, solidarity-based, and ecological society.

27 June 2026

*Translated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from **Prensasinprisa**.*

## USA

# Trump Says U.S. Elections Rife with Fraud, Demands New Election Law, May Send Troops to Polling Places. Is He Preparing a Coup?

DAN LA BOTZ ·

**The central features of the act require that would-be first-time voters must produce valid photo identification and proof of citizenship, and that states must restrict mail in ballots. It also calls for regular purges of the voter rolls to eliminate non-legal voters. In fact, there is very little non-citizen voting and no indication of any problem with mail ballots.**

In the United States, state laws, not federal laws, govern elections. At present, most Americans can register to vote by showing a driver's license or social security number. On election day, they simply have to sign in. The SAVE Act requirements threaten to make it impossible for millions of voters to participate in the November 2026 and future elections. According to research by the Brennan Center for Justice and the Campaign Legal Center, more than 21 million eligible American citizens do not have immediate access to proof of citizenship. Many of these are Black, Latino and poor. Trump also wants to eliminate mail-in voting, but eight states will millions of voters have an all-mail election, or universal mail-in voting system.

In addition to the proposed SAVE Act, in several states Trump and the Republicans have redrawn electoral districts to give themselves more seats in Congress and for years they have purged election rolls to eliminate likely Democratic voters.

Even with all of these measures, Republicans may lose both houses of Congress because of Trump's unpopular war Iran, rising prices, and the immigration police (ICE) murder of both immigrants and

citizens. Only 37% support Trump and his war. Desperate, Trump may turn to force.

Trump's speech was intended to create a sense that elections are fraudulent and to justify greater federal control over them. He has stated that he is prepared to send troops or immigration police (ICE) to polling places, supposedly to protect the election process, though he has no legal power to do so. It is a federal crime for the military to interfere in elections and some states ban guns in polling places, though others permit them.

His claims of fraud lay the basis for Trump to invoke the National Emergency Act and deploy troops and other federal agencies to polling places, a development which would intimidate voters and possibly keep them from the polls. The American Civil Liberties Union and other such group are preparing for such an eventuality as are local poll-watcher organizations. Trump has been preparing the American people to accept soldiers on their streets. He has in this term sent troops to California, Oregon, Illinois, Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. The next step would be sending them to all states.

If Trump does declare a national emergency and send in troops, he could have them seize the ballots or take over the vote counting process. The deployment of troops could thus even be the beginning of a coup: ignoring the actual election outcomes, declaring the Republicans the victors in the Congressional elections, and then ruling by fiat. This possibility has been widely debated in liberal journals and by intellectuals such as historian Timothy Snyder.

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We on the left will have to be vigilant and active in the movement to protect voters' rights. And ready to join protests against the presence of troops or

ICE at the polling places. We will need mass, peaceful but militant resistance.

19 July 2026

## BELGIUM

# "This mobilization has awakened something in the youth"

EVELYNE WYNS ·

**In recent weeks, French-speaking education has taken the lead in the sectors in struggle in Belgium. But this struggle does not come out of nowhere: the country has already been plagued by major struggles against the governments in place for two years.**

Two years ago, Belgium had elections at all levels of government. Wallonia, a region historically dominated by the Socialist Party, swung to the right; and more generally, the whole country has gone in the same direction, with regional and federal governments particularly radicalized. As soon as these governments were set up, many sectors began to resist, particularly on the issues of pensions and social protection. Some have led hard struggles: ten consecutive days of strike by railway workers, four weeks at the Post Office and so on. And impressive interprofessional days, in particular on 14 October 2025 when more than 140,000 people demonstrated, which was unprecedented since the 1990s. In this context, governments have taken a hard line, saying that there will be no backsliding on their part.

**But from the beginning, education was a key sector, at least on the French-speaking side.**

The government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, i.e. of the French-speaking part of the country, has put forward proposals for reforms by "programme decrees" as soon as it was appointed, including programme decree 2, which has just been voted through. Among the measures planned is the end of the appointment of teachers, who will therefore be recruited on permanent contracts rather than with civil servant status – which makes it much easier to dismiss them, and exposes them to

pressure from the political regime. But there are also many austerity measures, including the reduction of teachers' coverage in the event of illness, controls that reach an absurd aggressiveness, as well as attacks on the support system for precarious students – we are talking about 55,000 children who will lose their right to a free meal in the canteen. But what really set off the powder keg was the addition of two hours of work to all teachers in the last three years of high school, without a salary increase. It is two hours in front of the class, so in practice, half a day of work. This also means, in the long term, the elimination of 1,300 to 1,500 jobs.

Teachers have therefore been on the front lines almost since the formation of governments: sometimes in sectoral strikes, sometimes in interprofessional strikes, and sometimes with other sectors, such as early childhood, childcare, culture.

**With, as the first culmination, the strike of 14 October?**

14 October really lit something up in our country, with this massive demonstration that brought together all sectors of society. The month of November was very intense, with a one-day strike for teachers, then a sequence of three consecutive days of interprofessional strike, which was again quite unprecedented in Belgium. But at that time, one could sense a yawning gap between the determination of the workers, ready to increase in intensity, and the timidity of the union leaderships, which refused to seize the opportunity. This caused a temporary cooling of the situation, from January to March.

**How do you explain this attitude of the union leadership?**



Belgium's institutional model is traditionally based on consultation and compromise. But for the first time in a long while, the unions found themselves in a situation where the space for negotiation no longer existed. When the government invited them, it was to present them with laws that had already been finalized, without any margin to modify them. And they haven't found a strategy to deal with this.

At each demonstration, throughout this first phase of the social movement, the union leaders took the floor to demand a return to the negotiating table, as if that were the only desirable horizon – to return to a table where, in any case, it was agreed that they would not be listened to. They have never really become aware of the fact that the model of Belgian-style consultation, in hushed meetings and stuffy restaurants, no longer exists.

### **But the social movement abhors a vacuum...**

Yes, and this situation has encouraged the emergence of self-organized collectives. Some, such as *École en lutte*, already existed, but have taken on a new dynamic in this context, by criticizing this model of "drop by drop" strikes and demonstrations that were repeated identically from the Gare du Nord to the Gare du Midi. They used slightly more radical modes of resistance, including sabotaging examination procedures. Tension mounted, until delegates were expelled from their union for "dual membership".

At the CSC, I asked the question openly: I am an activist, an anti-fascist, I am a member of *École en lutte*. [1]. How secure am I in this organization? Should I expect to be excluded? These questions raised a great deal of unease, and the watchword of the principals was clearly to distance themselves.

What really changed the situation was that a group of teachers, in a particularly active school in Brussels, decided to set up a collective on a larger scale. They have shown themselves to be quite skilful in their communication and relations with the press, preparing the ground well, and making the founding of this organization an event in itself. Their idea was to have a group with an easily recog-

nizable aesthetic, that everyone could make their own: so they called it *Mars Attacks*, because the launch took place in March, and they used the imagery from Tim Burton's film to create their visuals, videos and costumes.

At the launch, the collective brought together ten schools. But in the aftermath, it organized a general meeting to which everyone was invited: teachers, families, friends, spouses and so on. The snowball effect followed, helped quite strongly by the effectiveness of the communication which was able to attract good coverage by the press. Schools were added one after the other, and at the demonstration that followed, on 9 April, the size of the *Mars Attacks* bloc rivalled that of the unions.

Tensions did not reduce immediately, far from it. From the point of view of many union leaders, *Mars Attacks* remained a collective of anarchic Brussels residents, doomed to disappear quickly. And what added fuel to the fire was that the minister contacted *Mars Attacks* directly, rubbing salt in the wound of the union leaderships who lost their historic place as negotiators. During the day of mobilization on 9 April, these tensions almost took an even more acute turn, with many members of *Mars Attacks* pushing for the collective to take the lead in the procession and start the demonstration without waiting for the union to speak. This did not happen, but the episode illustrates the paradoxical nature of this collective: a mix of unionized and non-unionized teachers, many of whom are participating in a social movement for the first time, with an offbeat and good-natured aesthetic as teachers like it, a broader and more consensual political identity than very left-wing collectives such as *École en lutte*... but at the same time, a strong desire to break out of the habits of the conventional social movement, through disobedience. And it's all the more interesting that on the other side, the unions, who look down on these activists, nevertheless shared the images of the *Mars Attacks* cortege on their social networks – especially the CSC, which played on the fact that the Martian costumes populating the bloc

were mostly green, like the traditional vests of the confederation.

From there, together with a number of activists, we pushed for the CSC to honestly acknowledge the situation: if the unions always had the masses with them, they lacked ideas, and that's precisely what collectives like this brought to the table. This internal pressure bore fruit: quickly, the *CSC Enseignement* published a statement stating that it supported all actions in the direction of its demands, and implying that it would cover for its affiliates who participated. The CGSP was forced to follow suit, but more timidly. But this new context allowed for a rapid escalation, and *Mars Attacks* grew week by week.

### **To the point of calling for a strike to the finish?**

The first announcements on the timetable for the reform, which was then announced to be voted on 27 May, served as an alarm signal: from that moment on, it was known that all forces had to be thrown into the battle. So, *Mars Attacks* short-circuited the unions a little, by calling for what we had been waiting for months: a renewable strike, until the withdrawal of the programme decree. The unions were faced with an ultimatum – and they decided to follow. They filed a strike notice for every day until 27 May, and when the parliamentary opposition obtained a postponement of the vote, it was extended until the holidays, and even to the beginning of the school year.

This is where we could see a new form of complementarity emerge between *Mars Attacks* and the unions. The latter cover the movement with their financial resources (daily allowances, transport reimbursement and so on) and continue to try to negotiate with the government. *Mars Attacks* gladly lets them do this work, and is content to build the mobilization, around a simple demand: the withdrawal of the reform, and with it the resignation of the ministers who support it, Valérie Glatigny (Minister of Compulsory Education) and Élisabeth Degryse (Minister-President of the Wallonia-

Brussels Federation, and Minister of Higher Education). But in concrete terms, it is *Mars Attacks* that sets the agenda.

The collective also showed intelligent flexibility and attention to the new control techniques that were emerging here and there. For example, it is in the region of Verviers and Liège that the strike has started best, thanks to a very effective model of mutual aid between schools, with daily calls to reinforce this or that picket; *Mars Attacks* quickly analysed this operation and generalized it. The strike has taken on a rotating model to last in the long term: every day, the teachers who have the most hours go on strike, while those who have only a few hours give them quickly, before joining the picket line. And in schools where the management has a repressive attitude, teachers from other schools are called in to organize actions while protecting themselves from reprisals. Soon enough, the mobilization spread to students and even parents, with the founding of *Students Attacks* and *Parents Attacks*. The students have begun to play a role in the organisation of pickets – which is very rare in Belgium, which does not have the tradition of blockades that can be found, for example, in France.

### **And we come to this famous week of June 1st...**

As we have said, the vote on the programme decree was initially scheduled for 27 May, then was postponed following an appeal by the opposition. On Monday 1 June, the government announced a forced passage, setting the date for the vote on Thursday 4 June – freeing itself from the deadlines provided for by parliamentary rules in a completely unprecedented way. Clearly, the objective was to short-circuit any protest, since this delay did not even leave us time to ask for permission for a demonstration.

On the union side, the tactic initially chosen was to call on teachers to join a march that was already planned (and therefore authorized) that Thursday, in the morning, for the health sector – and whose

message was in fact broadened. For its part, *Mars Attacks* called for an afternoon rally around the Parliament, despite the lack of authorisation and the fact that, in any case, the streets concerned are part of the "neutral zone", the part of Brussels where all demonstrations are banned. Quite quickly, several union leaders relayed this call with bated breath, inviting the affiliates to "determine where [their] conscience dictates [them] to go" and other cryptic phrases, without however taking the risk of explicit support.

We knew there would be a lot of people. What we did not expect was the exceptional mobilization of young people, who completely overwhelmed the movement in the early morning. Very early on, clashes took place. In many ways, this day represented an unprecedented acceleration of the politicization of the movement, in the face of the shock of a particularly savage repression, which primarily targeted young people of colour. But it was also a day with sublime images, especially when the teachers made cordons in front of the police to protect their students. A powerful solidarity has been put in place, with the emergency opening of care places to take care of injured or shocked people.

Parliamentary debates continued throughout the night, and the vote took place in the early hours of the morning. Many of us didn't sleep. Personally, I had a union meeting scheduled for the next day at 9:30 a.m., and some people had come more than an hour early, without even a little nap, out of a need to be together. While a few union leaders vaguely tried to maintain the items on the agenda, which had been set 15 days before, the meeting quickly became a space for exchange between people deeply shocked by the events – including bureaucrats. I used this space to call on the CSC to put its apparatus at the service of supporting the hundreds of young people arrested, which was done without encountering opposition.

But during the meeting, we started receiving messages, warning us that the riots were starting again. And not only in Brussels: in Namur, the mobilization had grown to such an extent that all schools

were closed as a preventive measure. And if young people were now clearly leading the movement, collectives such as *Mars Attacks*, *École en lutte*, *la Gauche anticapitaliste* and even the unions quickly put their forces into organizing solidarity in the face of repression – with, of course, nuances between some adults who support young people in their autonomy and others who have adopted a more paternalistic attitude. But who all converged in the condemnation of police brutality. On Friday and throughout the weekend, then more sparsely since then, we have seen the same images, with quasi-scenes of war in Brussels and in several cities in Wallonia.

### **How has the arrival of youth in the foreground change the nature of the movement?**

The narrative has broadened. The students were already in solidarity with the teachers' demands: my own daughter, in her school, has known for several months that several of her teachers will probably be forced to leave the school next year. For the elderly and for higher education students, the anger is also obviously crystallizing over the increase in the tuition fee (university registration fees), which goes from €300 to €1,200 for some studies. But what also attracts attention is the contrast between this access to education, which is becoming clogged, and militarization, which is now the path in which young people from the popular classes are invited to throw themselves with enthusiasm. Since last year, all teenagers at 17 have been receiving a letter inviting them to join the army, with promises of high pay and job security. In some schools, students are now prepared for military careers as early as 15 years old. These themes came up very often in the slogans, showing that the movement was now asking a much deeper question: what kind of society are we offering to our children?

Until 4 June, we were quite worried that the vote on the programme decree would lead to the movement running out of steam. But, clearly, after that day, it took on a new dimension, and only got bigger.

**From your point of view, what are the perspectives that the mobilization must give itself at this stage?**

Today, my main fear is that we will rely on young people to lead the fight. The scheme adopted from 4 June, where they go to the front and adults support them in the second line, cannot be viable for very long.

Then there is the question of revitalizing the fight in other sectors. The next two dates of mobilization planned, excluding education, are 22 June, at the initiative of public services, and 23 June, for commerce. These are two areas with which convergences are easy: public services, obviously because the intersection is wide, even if not all schools depend on them, and commerce because the trade union federations concerned are very militant, and already very supportive of our struggle. Teachers will therefore be present, and our struggle will probably also be highlighted. But ideally, transport, for example, should go on strike in solidarity: if classes can't take place because children can't get there, then teachers can earn a day where their salaries are not taken away, which can greatly help us to hold on.

Finally, the crucial issue today is that of exams. In addition to the pressure to return to the classrooms, these cannot be held in an equitable way anyway, since many students have had almost no

classes for weeks. The watchword of *Mars Attacks* is disobedience, with a refusal to encode grades. Some schools have already announced that they are cancelling all tests; and in recent days, the unions have issued a statement calling on all schools to follow their example.

For the future, we have planned to be mobilized throughout the summer, even if the holidays will necessarily imply a temporary slowdown. The unions have already filed strike notices as soon as classes resume, and if the reform is not withdrawn by then, the objective is clearly that the start of the school year does not take place. This situation is clearly a game changer compared to everything that the social mobilizations have shown since the elections. Until now, our great weakness was the absence of a plan of struggle and concrete perspectives: we went into action for a big day of strike, then we waited for the union leaderships to announce a new date, one or two months later. Now, as far as teaching is concerned, there is a plan, at least until September, and the determination to follow it. I am confident: teachers will not accept another defeat, and this mobilization has awakened something in the youth – an ardent, and more than legitimate, desire to win another future.

*15 June 2026*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

## GEOPOLITICS

# Latin America: A hostage to Trump's United States

ANA C. CARVALHAES ·

## *Trump's failures*

**Not only has his popularity declined in his country with the outbreak of war against Iran, in collaboration with his sidekick Netanyahu, but he is also losing the external conflict itself. Right now, the White House is trying to cover up this humiliating defeat. On the economic front, the tariff war it is waging against the entire world has yet to achieve favourable macroeconomic results – in particular the fall in prices and the utopian return of industries that the United States has relocated over the past 35 years. It may not prove to be a winner at all.**

On the level, which is fundamental for Trump, of technological competition with China, the situation seems to be at an impasse, despite the large-scale protectionist measures targeting its electronic chips and AI – to which Beijing responds with a conciliatory discourse that does not mask the retaliatory measures put in place "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

## *Progress in Latin America*

The only region on the planet where Trump, his billionaire friends and the global far right can rejoice in their progress is, without a doubt, that large region of the world that stretches south of Mexico's Rio Bravo, which the Yankees insist on calling Rio Grande. Latin America is besieged, so far successfully, by the colonialist and authoritarian attacks of the world leader. Hegemonic imperialism is launching a series of offensives, with the aim of building the Shield of the Americas. [1] This situation would not be possible without the more or less

enthusiastic support of large sectors of the bourgeois oligarchies in Latin American countries, which are making a visible turn towards neofascism.

These far-right governments open their territories to US companies and troops, apply ultra-neoliberal adjustment plans at the service of the most retrograde local bourgeoisies and suppress democratic and social gains. The objective is to eradicate all memory of progressives, of regimes that have put in place, even in a limited way, social policies, respect for human rights and defence of national sovereignty. In June alone, Trump and the far right won three important victories in the region. Or, seen from another angle, the social movements and the left suffered three consecutive defeats, two electoral failures – in Peru and Colombia – and a direct social confrontation lost in Bolivia.

## *The shadow is spreading*

Hegemonic imperialism has already invaded Central America and the Caribbean with an unprecedented military contingent, thanks to which it maintains, together with allies such as Bukele in El Salvador and Mulino in Panama, total domination in the region. It is also trying to suffocate Cuba and advance capitalist restoration—a direction that the latest economic plan announced by the Cuban Communist Party seems to conform to.

Trump's strategists include, in the Greater Caribbean, Colombia and Venezuela – currently rocked by devastating earthquakes which Rodríguez's puppet regime is not competent to deal with. [2] Since January, the land of the Bolivarian revolution has become a colonial protectorate and Colombia will soon be ruled by an extremist who came from nowhere, inspired by Bolsonaro and Milei. With the narrow election victory of Keiko

Fujimori in Peru, the right and the far right are casting a shadow over South America of governments that will only aggravate overexploitation, corruption, privatization, land transfers, environmental degradation, resource plunder, and intense repression.

### ***Growing polarization***

Without minimizing this difficult reality and the setback that these governments represent for the peoples of the region, we must take a closer look at the contradictions. And to answer the question: do these recent victories guarantee imperialism a pacified, stable and submissive "Western hemisphere" (according to the formula of the neo-fascist in power in the White House)? What is happening in Peru and Colombia seems to show that this is not the most likely hypothesis: in these two countries, the left and social movements have created a surprise. In Peru, one would not have imagined, before the election campaign, that a progressive representative from the provinces would make it to the second round. This confrontation ended in a near draw that heralds the continuation of the regime crisis that this Andean country has been going through for decades. In Colombia, in addition to the likely fraud and brazen intervention of imperialism in the electoral campaign – with financial and technological support for the wave of disinformation – everything has been facilitated by a privatized political system. But never has a left-wing pole been so united behind the same candidacy and obtained such a high score, which suggests difficult consequences for the government of La Espriella.

In Bolivia, the result is more difficult: we witnessed the defeat of a peasant, indigenous and worker-popular uprising, led for the first time in decades by (divided) forces different from the former Movement Towards Socialism (MAS). It is too early to draw definitive conclusions, but this fragmentation – engendered by the self-destruction of the leaders of the former party-movement – and the immeasurable difficulty of overthrowing an elected government in a very unfavourable regional con-

text, will force the protagonists of the uprising to ask themselves whether it would not have been more prudent to back down in an organized way, after the movement had achieved the precious victory of having blocked the neoliberal decrees on the price and land ownership.

### ***The Brazilian battle***

The next big battle has already begun in Brazil. The latter, Mexico and Uruguay are currently the three Latin American countries whose governments are, in one way or another, on the left. It is crucial for the global far right, and for Trump in particular, to defeat Lula in the October elections.

There is no doubt that Trump and the tech giants will replicate in Brazil the disinformation war they waged in Colombia. The leader of Yankee imperialism has already declared his support – with photos and publications to back it up – for Flávio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of the former putschist president, who is the only viable candidate on the right. But there is more: the United States is trying to interfere directly in the vote of Brazilians. This is the case on the issue of public safety, with Trump having labelled two Brazil-based criminal organizations as "terrorist organizations" and having stepped up, under U.S. trade law, the tariff war against the country's products.

Direct U.S. interference in Brazil's affairs is frowned upon in the country, even among some sectors of Bolsonaro's son's electorate. But the weaknesses and limitations of the PT governments, and of Lula in particular, will have a cost in the electoral campaign. In particular, it supported President Rodrigo Paz at the height of the Bolivian popular revolt and is procrastinating instead of quickly and ruthlessly getting rid of its members who are involved in financial scandals.

None of this, however, should prevent the entire left, progressives and democratic sectors in Latin America and around the world from supporting Lula's candidacy. For a new mandate, against the return of green-yellow and international neo-fas-



cism. Just as the Cuban government's steps towards capitalist restoration do not prevent us from being unconditionally at Cuba's side in its struggle for sovereignty against the giant of the north.

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***Unity against imperialism and the far right***

In Latin America, more than in any other corner of the world at the moment, the question of national sovereignty in the face of imperialism is a central axis of the program of resistance to neofascism. From the historic Colombian Pact, now legalized

and with the support of half the country, to the broad left-wing coalitions in Peru, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, to the resistance fighters of heroic Venezuela and Central America, we need unity and mutual support in this new period of struggle that is opening up against the far-right governments (or any other government under Trump's thumb) already in power, while hoping for an electoral reverse for Trump in the US midterm elections in November.

*2 July 2026*

## CLIMATE

# Record-breaking heatwave in Europe: Does the continent have a new climate?

EDWARD CHEN ·

**Scientists who spoke to Nature say that a European heatwave lasting four or five days, with London approaching 40°C, is an anomaly. "It's simply phenomenal," says Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick, a climate scientist at the Australian National University in Canberra. But researchers also say that people in Europe can expect to see more of these phenomena in the future as global warming continues.**

"Heat waves are here to stay, until we turn off the tap of global emissions," says Samantha Burgess, deputy director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts in Reading, UK. "They are more frequent, more intense, and last longer."

The risks are serious. In France – which this week recorded its hottest day ever, with 44.3 °C in the town of Pissos – at least 54 people have died from heat or from drowning in water flows while trying to cool off.

What researchers do not necessarily agree on is the speed with which Europe's climate has gone from cool and pleasant summers, in which residents could leave their windows open, to one dominated by extreme heat and doubts as to whether to buy an air conditioner.

## ***New maximums***

An study published on June 26 examined temperatures in 854 cities across Europe – home to 30% of the population – and revealed that almost half of them have broken or will break their historical heat stress records this month. According to the analysis, conducted by the World Weather Attribution group (an international organisation that studies

extreme weather phenomena), all the cities analysed in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Luxembourg have recorded unprecedented highs.

"What was once rare has become a common occurrence," says Erich Fischer, a climate scientist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Temperature records "are being broken constantly, everywhere, and in fact are being surpassed by wide margins." According to him, these records in Europe would be unthinkable in the sporting field: it would be like a high jumper "under the effects of steroids" breaking a record by half a metre, instead of by one or two centimetres.

So what is causing the current heat wave? Like the previous ones, it has been triggered by air circulation patterns that carry heat from the equator to the icy North Pole, explains Lara Wallberg, a climate modeller at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg (Germany). Although this air circulation is not fully understood, some scientists believe that when sea surface temperatures in the North Atlantic drop, as is happening now, warm air from North Africa and the Sahara Desert can become temporarily trapped over Europe, explains Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate scientist at the University of Potsdam in Germany.

## ***"Obvious beyond belief"***

According to researchers, climate change is also influencing the intensity of this particular heat wave. Furthermore, the high temperatures caused by global warming have dried out the soil and reduced evaporative cooling in Europe, says Clair Barnes, a researcher at Imperial College London, specialising in extreme weather events. Cloud cover, which would normally reflect the sun's heat back into

space, has also decreased in Europe, due to a combination of drought conditions and stricter air quality laws since the 1980s, which have reduced aerosol pollution, Barnes adds. (Aerosols can act as scaffolding for cloud formation.)

In fact, some scientists believe that Europe began its transition to a different climate in the 1980s. "In Europe, especially since 1980, there has been a huge uptick in global temperatures," says Zeke Hausfather, a climate scientist at Berkeley Earth, a California-based nonprofit organisation that tracks global temperatures. "It's pretty clear in the data."

*Source: Ref. 1/World Weather Attribution*

*June 26 2026*

*Translated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from **vientosur**.*

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## SYRIA

# Frustration and anger rise in the streets in Syria

JOSEPH DAHER ·

**Since the beginning of 2026, discontent with socio-economic problems has increased. According to the *Syria in Transition* website, opinions of the current government had deteriorated as early as April 2026. The most notable deterioration was in the perception of the economy and the state's ability to manage it: "In the face of rising costs and worsening economic pressures, confidence in the government's response remains low. Only 13% of respondents believe that the government is doing enough to fight inflation, while 66% believe that the current efforts are insufficient." [1]**

The Damascus authorities have reinforced an economic orientation already in place under the Assad regime: instead of privileging the productive sectors of the economy, especially the industrial and agricultural sectors, they are prioritizing commercial and other low-productivity activities focused on short-term profit. The majority of investment opportunities offered to foreign investors since December 2024 are in tourism, real estate and financial services. Promises were also made on critical infrastructure, but they remained relatively few.

At the same time, there has been no protection for local production – including manufacturing and agriculture – against foreign competition. Quite the contrary: the government has pursued trade liberalization policies that threaten their very existence. In January 2025, Damascus reduced tariffs on more than 260 Turkish products, bringing Syria's trade deficit with Turkey to a record US\$3.26 billion by the end of the year, an increase of 87% compared to 2024. [2]

The authorities have also advanced legislation that prioritizes investment by large foreign companies and high-net-worth individuals, while encouraging consumer dynamics within the economy, rather than strengthening the country's productive capacities.

The proposed new tax system, which is expected to come into force in 2027, provides for a maximum tax rate of 15% for corporations, regardless of size. The new system risks weakening the state's ability to broaden its tax base, in addition to being profoundly unequal.

Similarly, the new investment law, enacted last year, grants important concessions to investors, such as a permanent income tax exemption for agricultural and educational projects, income tax cuts of up to 80 percent in priority and export-oriented industrial sectors, and broad customs exemptions. In addition, state officials have made repeated statements regarding their intention to privatize state-owned businesses and assets, including essential social services in the areas of education and health.

In parallel with these policies favouring economic liberalisation and big capital, the authorities have taken a series of measures aimed at concentrating their power over the Syrian economy, and at the creation of new networks of businessmen linked to the new ruling class.

## ***Strikes and popular demonstrations***

The protests mobilized various segments of society, including transport workers, workers, farmers, teachers, students, lawyers, and bakers, reflecting growing discontent across the country over the continued erosion of purchasing power and the degradation of public services. They also targeted corrup-

tion, nepotism, and lack of transparency and participation in decision-making processes.

The protests erupted in mid-May, first in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor and Daraa, and then spread to other parts of the country, after the Syrian Ministry of Economy and Industry set the price of a ton of wheat for the 2026 season at 4,600,000 Syrian pounds (about \$333.30 at the unofficial exchange rate of May 27, 2026, or 13,800 Syrian pounds for \$1). This decision has caused great discontent among a large part of farmers, as the cost of producing a tonne of wheat currently ranges from \$340 to more than \$530. Following the protests, Interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa issued Legislative Decree No. 120, granting a bonus of 900,000 Syrian pounds per tonne of wheat delivered by farmers to the Syrian Grain Company. Thanks to this increase, the price of a ton of wheat has reached about 5,500,000 Syrian pounds (about \$398.60), a price still lower than the protesters' demands.

Other protests took place during the same period, including in Hasakah governorate against the reduction of diesel allocations for agricultural projects, and in the Tarhin region, in a rural area near Aleppo, where owners and employees of oil refineries protested against the decision to close them permanently. The protesters also demanded fair compensation to ensure a minimum standard of living, pointing out that thousands of families depend on this sector.

In June, strikes broke out at the private company Zenobia ceramic and at the factories of Madar Detergent in the Al-Kisweh area near Damascus, employing 4,000 and 4,500 people respectively. The protesters were demanding higher wages and better working conditions. After a week-long strike, Zenobia workers have won several of their main demands, including an increase in their wages (which includes a 500,000 Syrian pound increase, in addition to 200,000 Syrian pounds in cost-of-living allowances, for a total of 700,000 Syrian pounds (equivalent to \$51.2 at the end of June) and health coverage guarantees, including health insurance,

the presence of a doctor in the factory, the provision of an ambulance and safety equipment at work. [3]

Workers at the Bab al-Hawa border crossing north of Idlib protested in late June against the administration's imposition of a 24-hour shift system and unfair working conditions. Despite threats of mass layoffs and replacements by the administration to break the strike, the workers – some of whom have 14 years of seniority – have maintained their demands for an adjustment of working time. According to the al-Hal Net website, "the administration has already recruited new employees, but about 90% of them resigned immediately, unable to continue due to the harsh working conditions and long hours." [4]

The city of Qamishli also witnessed several days of protests at the end of June denouncing rising prices and poor living conditions, as well as power cuts due to fuel shortages. For example, the demonstrators staged a sit-in to protest against the increase in the price of diesel, demanding the reversal of this decision and an improvement in their living conditions, while the region is experiencing a surge in the prices of goods and services, as well as an increase in transport and production costs. Dozens of pensioners staged a sit-in in front of the city's Social Security office, at the invitation of the Pensioners' Solidarity Group, to demand an acceleration of the payment of their monthly pensions and an end to the delays and procrastination that affect their rights. After these protests by retirees, the Retirees' Rally was officially created at the end of June, with the aim of defending the rights of retirees to a decent life, in particular by resolving problems related to their salaries and delays in disbursement.

The sit-ins and protests come amid soaring inflation in Syria's northeastern Jazira region, with rising transport costs, agricultural production and commodity prices, as well as persistent complaints of deteriorating services and frequent power cuts. For example, in mid-June, social movements erupted in Raqqa governorate due to salary delays and

the blocking of the regularization of the status of thousands of service workers. These protests have led to new strikes that have affected the sanitation sector in several areas of the governorate.

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### ***Unfair dismissals and persistent austerity measures***

At the same time, layoffs continued in several ministries throughout 2026, provoking new protests. In mid-June, dismissed workers at the Compagnie Générale du Fil de Coton in Idlib staged a sit-in to demand justice and reinstatement.

The Syrian government has yet to establish clear, legal and precise standards and procedures for dismissals or suspensions, fuelling accusations of arbitrary dismissals. The human rights organization Syrians for Truth and Justice is deeply concerned about the compliance of these procedures with the legal guarantees provided for in the Unified Basic Law for Workers No. 50 of 2004 (Articles 132 to 139 ). In addition, the organization published a report in June 2026 describing cases of arbitrary dismissals and forced transfers based on "sectarian, political or gender criteria, or on criteria related to position on the 2011 Syrian uprising or regional and social belonging", raising serious concerns about the use of the state restructuring process as a tool for excluding and reshaping the public sector on non-professional bases. [5]

At the same time, the government has recently increased salaries for some jobs, usually at the top of management or in positions considered more "skilled" or "functional elite", while the vast majority of employees have not benefited from similar measures. In addition, wage disparities persist within the same ministries for similar jobs, with employees appointed by the new authorities receiving higher salaries (often in US dollars).

The Damascus authorities have continued to reduce the number of loaves of bread distributed from ten to eight, while maintaining the price at 4,000 Syrian pounds. The ministry has set the weight of a packet of bread at 1,000 g, compared to 1,050 g previously. As a reminder, in December

2024, the price of subsidized bread was 400 Syrian pounds (for 1,100 grams). These measures have worsened food insecurity among the most vulnerable populations.

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### ***Opposition to luxury projects and population displacement***

At the same time, several protests have erupted against housing projects that have led to the displacement of local populations and the loss or erosion of their property rights. In Homs, residents of the al-Qarabis neighbourhood managed to pressure the Kuwaiti real estate development company Al-Omran to cancel part of the "al-Nasr Street" project that allegedly impacted the neighbourhood, threatening their property and forcing them to leave their homes. In early May 2026, a protest took place in Damascus, organised by residents of the al-Mazzeah, Kafr Souseh and Basatin al-Razi neighbourhoods, which were affected by Decree No. 66 of 2012, and two of the organisers were arrested a few days later. This is a testament to the ongoing social and legal tensions related to major urban development projects, including the Marota City project. At the same time, in the countryside of Aleppo, the residents of Jabal Aqil demonstrated against the seizure of their land by the Turkish military base.

In the same month, a demonstration took place in northern Raqqa to protest against the local authorities' plan to demolish homes north of the railway tracks, under the pretext of "reconstruction and investment". This situation is all the more worrying as rumours are circulating about a Saudi investment and the construction of housing by a Chinese company on this land. Official statements claim that the land is "state property", which residents dispute, claiming to have official transfer documents and legal supporting documents. At the demonstration, protesters chanted slogans demanding the resignation of the governor, who refused to cancel the reconstruction plan affecting about 3,000 families, most of them low-income and living in poverty. They reaffirmed their deter-



mination to find a just solution that guarantees their rights to housing and puts an end to evictions and demolitions.

In general, these real estate projects are often aimed at an elite capable of affording new luxury housing and accumulating capital, rather than developing housing and infrastructure projects that meet the needs of a large part of the population faced with deteriorating living conditions and declining purchasing power. in a context of soaring rents and property prices. For example, one of the most emblematic real estate projects is Yaafour 963, launched by Overseas Investment Group, owned by Syrian-Emirati businessman Muwaffaq al-Qaddah, where apartments are offered from \$300,000. Similarly, the Abyat Hills project, launched by the Saudi Abyat Real Estate Investment and Development Company in the suburbs of Qudsi and al-Bajaa in Damascus, is estimated to cost more than \$2 billion and provides for the construction of 22,000 housing units in secure residences equipped with modern equipment.

In addition, the country continues to suffer from a severe and worsening shortage of housing and infrastructure, threatening stabilization and recovery efforts, as well as the aspirations of displaced persons and refugees for safe and dignified living conditions and prospects for return. According to the 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan, a third of the country's housing stock has been damaged or destroyed, while critical infrastructure, including roads, water, electricity and sanitation networks, remains largely out of service. [6]

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### ***Cost of living continues to rise***

The growing anger of the population testifies to the disastrous socio-economic situation of the country. The poverty rate in Syria hovers between 80 and 90 percent, and 16 million people need emergency assistance to survive. More than 7 million people face severe food insecurity. In addition, following a significant funding gap, the United Nations World Food Programme announced in mid-May 2026 that it would reduce its operations in Syria by halv-

ing its emergency food aid from 1.3 million to 650,000 people, and ending its national bread subsidy program which supported millions of people on a daily basis.

The labour market remains unstable and the unemployment rate is rising, especially among young people. Due to the lack of accurate statistics on unemployment in Syria, due to the lack of regular and systematic labour force surveys, estimates for 2025 range between 14% and 60% for youth unemployment. In addition, reports indicate that 83% of Syria's labour market is informal, lacking social and legal protections, leaving millions of workers vulnerable to exploitation or sudden loss of income. [7]

The cessation or reduction of subsidies has led to a spike in the prices of basic goods and services, contributing to increased inflation and a rise in the cost of living for Syrians. Although the government increased public sector salaries and pensions by 200% in July 2025 and a further 50% in March 2026, bringing the minimum wage to 1,256,000 Syrian pounds per month (about \$114), this amount remains insufficient to ensure a decent standard of living. According to the Syrian Center for Policy Research, the extreme poverty line for a family was 3.34 million Syrian pounds per month in April 2026 (about \$252 according to the exchange rate at the end of April), while the lower poverty line was 5.26 million Syrian pounds (\$397) and the upper poverty line was 7.26 million Syrian pounds (\$548). [8] From this point of view, what the Syrian people lack are not only job opportunities, but jobs that allow them to live with dignity and meet their daily needs. In this context, the reduction of subsidies and the increase in the prices of basic necessities will only aggravate the situation and cancel out the effect of wage increases.

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### ***Limits of protest movements***

Protest movements and attempts at self-organisation by workers are positive developments, especially after years of war and dictatorship. For example, workers at the Zenobia company have set up a

strike committee, made up of four members elected by the strikers to negotiate on their behalf.

Despite the positive aspects of these events, their impact remains limited. First, these protests remain geographically circumscribed, with no coordination between regions, with the partial exception of demonstrations related to the price of wheat. There is no close cooperation between workers in the same sector, for example between public sector teachers protesting in different governorates. This allows the Damascus authorities to manage each movement separately and limit its influence on the political landscape.

Second, protest movements lack political channels and means of expression, mainly due to the absence of political parties or mass political networks capable of relaying their demands and calls to action. Moreover, with the exception of a few left-wing parties that observe these protests without playing an influential role, political actors and civil society do not give them the attention they deserve. In this context, it is important to emphasize that workers' self-organization and the struggle for democratic, independent and mass trade unions – in order to foster coordination between workers and autonomous unions of power – are essential to improving the living and working conditions of the population and, more broadly, to the defence of democratic rights.

In addition, it is essential to build and rebuild people's organizations, from trade unions to feminist and women's rights organizations, local associations, progressive political parties and national structures, in order to unify them.

The collective and democratic organization of the popular and working classes is also the best way to face and oppose the religious and ethnic tensions that continue to impact society. These tensions are often encouraged or inflamed – or at least not radically combated – by the central government and/or its political allies to divert attention from the social, economic and political problems affecting the population. For example, recently, protests that "de-

manded justice for the crimes of the Assad era in Syria" coincided with an escalation of attacks by civilian groups and incitement to hatred based on sectarian identity between 13-17 June 2026. The Syrian authorities have so far failed to establish a mechanism to promote a comprehensive transitional justice process to bring to justice all individuals and groups implicated in war crimes. Such an approach could have played a crucial role in curbing reprisals and mitigating the escalation of sectarian and ethnic tensions.

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### Conclusion

Any political force that came to power after the fall of Assad would have inherited a multitude of political, social, and economic challenges. However, the policies of the Syrian authorities in place have exacerbated these difficulties instead of solving them. On the economic level, the approach of the new ruling classes has not improved the living conditions of a large part of the population and has had a negative impact on the recovery of the productive sectors of the economy.

The increase in protests since the beginning of the year, fuelled by deteriorating living and working conditions as well as socio-economic problems, testifies to the shortcomings of current economic policies and could serve as a warning to Damascus.

Any successful economic recovery and reconstruction process must be based on a democratic and comprehensive political transition that gives the different sectors of society – political parties, social actors such as trade unions, professional associations, the Farmers' Union, human rights and feminist organizations, local associations, etc. – the means to participate in decision-making processes, including in the economic field. This would create the necessary conditions for the integration of their collective interests and the establishment of the political stability essential for the sustainability of these policies. Therefore, free and transparent elections must be held within trade unions, professional associations and agricultural federations so that

these sectors can choose their representatives and defend the interests of their members.

Finally, the processes of capital accumulation and distribution, as well as economic policies, should be the subject of collective debate within society, not be the preserve of a small ruling elite.

## SWITZERLAND

# 60,000 in Geneva against the G7, imperialism and fascism

JUAN TORTOSA ·

**The route of the demonstration had been negotiated with the authorities since November. We have come up against an intransigence on the part of the Minister of Police, a member of the Socialist Party, and the authorities of the city of Geneva.**

The path requested by our coalition was not accepted. They didn't want us to get close to the streets where multinationals and luxury boutiques are located. The city centre looked like a barricaded city, most of the windows and some windows were protected by planks. We have witnessed a political and media bludgeon on the part of the authorities and the right against possible violence.

The number of participants in the protest exceeded all the most optimistic forecasts of the NOG7 Coalition. We were counting on a range of 10,000 people; we were about 60,000!

The feminist strike remains the most powerful, socially anchored and most capable of mobilizing. Its cortege was undoubtedly the most numerous. Its demands are radical and anti-capitalist.

Solidarity with the Palestinian people was shown by a large group. The Kurds, in all their diversity, also played a very important role in the demonstration.

The "Living Defends" bloc brought together all the environmental movements. However, we can regret the weak presence of Swiss trade unions, as well as the limited and rather symbolic presence of French trade unions.

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***Repression and bludgeoning***

A few days before the big demonstration, the city of Geneva was under siege: thousands of police and military personnel from other regions of Switzerland had been deployed in the city of Calvin, supported by the French police who could intervene in the canton. According to the newspapers, people were stopped up to five times a day, police vans in large numbers, German-speaking Swiss who did not speak French.

All along the route, grids were provided in "sensitive points" that the demonstrators had to channel. Once the protest ended, in the same park where it had started, the police intervened brutally and surrounded some of the protesters. More than 300 people were trapped until dawn, then about twenty of them were taken to the police station, before being released.

The Geneva and French NOG7 Coalition issued several statements hailing the success of the huge demonstration, but also the "serious security abuses" observed on Sunday. The coalition condemned "the very numerous tear gas shots, especially on the part of the procession reserved for families and children. Similarly, the coalition castigates the scandalous kettling of 549 people implemented for nearly 10 hours."

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***The joy of having succeeded!***

Despite the repression, we are very satisfied with the massive size, conviviality, diversity and radicalism of the demonstration. This feeling of victory is an excellent springboard for the mobilizations and challenges that await us.

*23 June 2026*

## IRAN

# A (temporary) calm before the storm in Iran

HOUSHANG SEPEHR ·

**The recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States is a complex and multidimensional event. A careful examination of the text reveals the extent of the internal crises that both sides are experiencing. Far from reflecting a genuine desire for peace or marking a substantive settlement of their historical differences, this agreement appears more as the product of a political impasse, structural blockages and short-term constraints weighing on each of the two camps. Faced with growing internal and external difficulties, the leaders of the two countries opted for a limited de-escalation, in the form of a temporary truce and a temporary suspension of their confrontation, without eliminating the root causes.**

## *Memorandum of Understanding: U.S. perspectives*

An analysis of the official and unofficial statements of the leaders of the two countries clearly highlights the fragility and precariousness of this memorandum of understanding. It also highlights the significant differences between the parties as to its interpretation and how it is applied. Under these conditions, the prospects for its sustainable implementation remain shrouded in great uncertainty and its future appears more than ever to depend on the evolution of the political, regional and international balance of power.

On the US side of the equation, Donald Trump tried to present this memorandum of understanding as the consecration of an undeniable strategic success. In an interview with the media outlet

*Axios*, published on 18 June, he stated bluntly that the acceptance of this agreement by the Islamic Republic was tantamount to an "unconditional surrender". He elaborated on this claim by stating, "Well, it really probably is unconditional surrender... I think so... Look, they have no army left. All their ships are at the bottom of the sea, 159 ships. That's all they had." Through this deliberately hyperbolic and martial rhetoric, he strives to impose a reading of the balance of power as definitively decided in favour of the United States.

This triumphalist discourse appears in reality as an attempt to mask the management of strong internal pressures. By presenting the agreement as a total and unilateral victory, he helped to consolidate an image of power and political mastery, intended as much for the international scene as for stabilizing the domestic political field. This narrative of diplomatic success is thus part of a logic of strategic communication aimed at transforming a dynamic of compromise and constraint into a show of force.

After the publication of the text of this memorandum of understanding, in the United States a wave of virulent criticism was raised among many Republican officials as well as among Donald Trump's traditional supporters. Several conservative voices have considered this document particularly weak, going so far as to compare it to previous agreements such as the JCPOA. [2] This internal contestation reveals the persistent tensions within the Republican camp around the strategy to adopt vis-à-vis Iran, and highlights the American president's difficulties in stabilizing a lasting political consensus on this issue.

In the face of these attacks, Donald Trump's defence has been based on a strictly pragmatic logic, centred on an assessment of costs and benefits. In the same interview with *Axios*, he said: "The only

way I could have been tougher was to go there for another two or three weeks and keep bombing them, right? But what does that get us? The Strait of Hormuz will not reopen."

With this argument, he justifies the signing of the memorandum not as an ideological concession, but as a strategic arbitration aimed at avoiding an escalation with potentially uncontrollable economic and geopolitical consequences. He had previously declared, on Wednesday, 17 June, in an ironic and sarcastic tone: "If it works out, I'm going to take the credit. If it doesn't work out, I'm blaming JD [Vance]."

These statements have been interpreted by some observers as revealing the fault lines likely to develop within the presidential entourage in the event of unfavourable developments in the situation. In this reading, the emphasis placed on "pragmatic" arbitrations and on the prevention of uncontrolled escalation could, in the long term, serve as a basis for a redistribution of political responsibilities in the event of the failure of the process.

In this context, J.D. Vance's role is sometimes evoked in the public and media debate as that of a figure potentially exposed to internal criticism from the Republican camp, if the implementation of the memorandum were to produce results deemed insufficient. Some analysts believe that such dynamics could, in a scenario of prolonged political crisis, weaken his position in the internal balances of the Republican Party and indirectly influence his prospects in the 2028 presidential race, although these developments cannot be considered as taken for granted or determined at this stage.

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### ***Recomposition of the theocratic regime***

In Iran too, the signing of this memorandum seems to reflect a paradigm shift and recompositions within the power bloc. It appears that the hard core of the regime is now facing structural tensions, as a result of the gradual erosion of its ability to ensure its legitimacy and governmental effectiveness, in a

context of continuous aggravation of economic, social and political crises.

The acceptance of this agreement would thus have contributed to reviving internal fault lines and accentuating already latent divergences between different sensitivities of the government and its traditional social base. Rather than a homogeneous adherence, it is a more contrasting dynamic that is emerging, made up of reservations, readjustments and various forms of disillusionment, revealing the fragility of the balances on which the current political architecture is based.

In the nights following the announcement of the agreement, some fringes of the Islamic Republic's supporters, as well as forces within its ideological base, who had held nightly rallies in the streets and public squares, expressed deep anger at what they perceived as an abandonment of basic slogans. These mobilizations have resulted in virulent speeches and slogans.

In particular, the participants accused government officials of compromising and overstepping ideological red lines, thus reflecting a break between part of the activist base and the political choices made at the top of the state. This reaction highlights the internal tensions caused by the agreement and the difficulty for the government in maintaining narrative and political cohesion around it.

At the same time, certain factions within the regime itself, especially among the most hardline currents, have multiplied their harsh criticism of the negotiating team. These positions reflect a desire to distance themselves from the content and implications of the agreement, in a context where the distribution of political responsibilities is also at stake.

By seeking to dissociate themselves from the consequences perceived as a retreat, these segments of power try to avoid assuming the political cost, thus revealing internal logics of disengagement and redefinition of the lines of cleavage within the state apparatus.



In response to this tense and disorderly climate, the dissemination of a singular message widely interpreted as disempowering attributed to Mojtaba Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, testifies to a perception of instability and confusion at the highest level of decision-making. This message, while implicitly validating the need to resolve to this compromise, also seems to aim to redistribute its political and symbolic costs.

In this perspective, the responsibility for the retreat is attributed, in a logic of distancing, to Masoud Pezeshkian, in his capacity as president and head of the Supreme National Security Council. This reading is part of a discursive style often associated with Ali Khamenei, where the preservation of the centre of authority is accompanied by an externalization of operational responsibilities, thus revealing the internal tensions and mechanisms of political management of disagreements within the state apparatus.

This political manoeuvre would thus aim to constitute a symbolic protection mechanism, intended to contain the anger of the ideological base while preserving the internal balances of power. By proceeding to an early redistribution of responsibilities, it would also make it possible to designate, in the event of the failure of the agreement scenario, a figure likely to bear the political and institutional cost of its consequences.

In this logic, the distancing of the operational responsibilities associated with Masoud Pezeshkian would appear as an instrument for managing internal tensions, aimed at protecting the central decision-making core while absorbing the criticism emanating from the various components of the regime. It would thus be less a question of a clarification of responsibilities than of a strategy of political stabilization through the construction of a space of differentiated responsibility. In this case, Mojtaba Khamenei is adopting the same strategy as Trump.

Behind these political and media stagings, some analysts believe that a deeper turning point could

be underway within the state apparatus. The military-security bloc in power, embodied in particular by figures such as Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, seems to be gradually coming to the conviction that the system has entered a form of structural impasse.

In this reading, its leaders would have taken note of the growing limits of the reproduction of the old ideological registers, in which certain historical slogans such as "Death to America" or "Destruction of Israel" would no longer make it possible, on their own, to meet the material and institutional requirements facing the state. Beyond their symbolic dimension, these transformations reflect a broader constraint: that of the economic and administrative sustainability of a particularly extensive bureaucratic and security apparatus.

The survival and continuity of this architecture of power, often described as sprawling and bloated, would now depend on access to substantial financial resources. However, in a context marked by international isolation and the persistence of strong geopolitical tensions, the ability to secure these resources appears increasingly constrained, contributing to redefining the regime's strategic room for manoeuvre.

This is why, according to this reading, the political struggle and internal recompositions that could unfold in Tehran over the next sixty days would mainly revolve around an increased rivalry between different power networks for access to post-conflict resources and rents. The issues at stake would include the sharing of economic dividends potentially linked to sanctions relief, the control of the main national economic circuits, as well as the modalities of a possible reintegration of the country into the international financial markets.

In this context, the various factions of the regime would be engaged in a dynamic of repositioning aimed at strengthening their capacity for influence and securing the most favourable share of the benefits expected from an easing of tensions and a reduction in external constraints. These develop-



ments reflect less a brutal break than a gradual re-composition of internal power relations, where economic, security and political considerations tend to be closely intertwined.

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### ***Frustration of monarchists***

One of the most important indirect effects — and perceived by some observers as potentially significant — of this memorandum may lie in the re-composition, or even the weakening, of certain factions of the right-wing opposition established abroad. Currents such as the monarchists, as well as the supporters of Reza Pahlavi, have, in recent years, structured a significant part of their political strategy on the assumption of maximum external pressure on the Islamic Republic. This combined the intensification of economic sanctions, the continuation of a policy of diplomatic isolation and, for some segments, the hope of more direct support from foreign powers, notably the United States and Israel.

The petty and criminal bargaining attributed to Reza Pahlavi, combined with the growing frustration of monarchist circles, is part of an increasingly visible dynamic of political radicalization. Once again, their slogan remains unchanged and unambiguously claimed: "Thank you Trump, thank you Bibi", in celebration of the bombing of Iran. History has rarely seen a pretender to the throne associated with a crime of such gravity

Indeed, the conclusion of this agreement highlights the fragility of this strategic approach to currents that take advantage of the figure of Reza Pahlavi. The external powers on which these currents based part of their hopes have, in the end, privileged their own geopolitical, economic and security interests, rather than an explicit logic of regime change in Iran.

This development has contributed to weakening the political prospects of these segments of the opposition in exile, by revealing the limits of a strategy mainly based on international dynamics. It has also highlighted, according to some analyses, the weak-

ness of their social anchoring within the country, as well as their structural dependence on external conditions that are difficult to control or anticipate.

Distanced for reasons specific to their social roots from any approach involving the construction of political influence based on social dynamics and the mobilizations of workers, women, students and other protesting forces within the country, these currents have largely favoured, in recent years, a strategy based on diplomatic action, lobbying and seeking support from foreign decision-making centres, particularly in Washington and Tel Aviv.

For some of their most radical representatives or supporters, this orientation has sometimes been accompanied by an attitude in favour of intensifying external pressure, or even military escalation, in the hope that the weakening of the regime could pave the way for its overthrow. This stance has sparked fierce controversy, including among the Iranian opposition, with many of its critics accusing it of subordinating the prospects for political change to the interventions and strategic calculations of foreign powers, to the detriment of internal social and popular dynamics.

The Islamabad agreement also highlighted the limits of this strategy of externalizing political change. It has shown that, from the point of view of the great powers, figures such as Reza Pahlavi are not necessarily central actors in a sustainable political project, but can be mobilised in a conjunctural way as part of diplomatic and media pressure strategies. As soon as the evolution of regional and international power relations led Washington to favour the path of negotiation, this form of "opposition under external tutelage" has been largely marginalized and deprived of part of its political function.

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### ***A breath of fresh air for social and civic movements in Iran***

Therefore, in the light of the available evidence and past experience, there is no evidence that this memorandum will enjoy lasting stability. The deep-

rooted mistrust that has structured relations between the two countries for decades, combined with the essentially pragmatic, cyclical and often opportunistic nature of the motivations that led to its conclusion, considerably limits its strategic scope.

More than a step towards a lasting normalization of bilateral relations, this agreement appears to be the product of a provisional balance of power and immediate needs specific to both parties. In this sense, it is not based on the political, institutional and diplomatic foundations generally associated with lasting peace. It is more like a tactical truce, intended to manage a crisis situation and offer a temporary respite to the protagonists, than a substantive settlement of the antagonisms that continue to oppose Washington and Tehran.

However, even this fragile and precarious agreement has had the effect of temporarily removing the heavy, paralyzing and destructive shadow of war from Iranian society. This is probably its most important consequence. For Iranian civil society, the suspension of hostilities is not only a respite from the material and human destruction of a protracted open conflict; it also leads to the weakening of one of the main instruments of legitimation and political control of the regime.

For decades, the authorities have regularly invoked the threat of war, foreign aggression or national insecurity to justify the strengthening of the repressive apparatus, to restrict the space for public freedoms and to postpone any substantive response to the economic, social and democratic demands of the population. In such a context, the temporary mitigation of this threat deprives the government of a central argument that allows it to mobilize public opinion around "national unity" and to relegate internal crises to the background.

From then on, the structural difficulties of Iranian society — inflation, poverty, unemployment, corruption, social inequalities, discrimination against women, political repression and the absence of fundamental freedoms — reappear with greater acuity

at the centre of public debate. The relative disappearance of the war factor could thus open up a new space for expression for the social demands accumulated in recent years and help to bring to the fore the conflicts between society and the state rather than those opposing it to external adversaries.

Now, with the temporary mitigation of this external threat, one of the main political protection mechanisms of the system seems to be weakening. The security shield that justified the permanent state of emergency and the priority given to national security imperatives appears less solid than before. The political and social space, long subject to the constraints of an environment marked by the prospect of war, could thus experience a certain relative openness, even if limited and reversible.

The reduction in psychological and security pressures associated with a context of military confrontation creates a new breathing space for society. It favours conditions that are more conducive to the reorganisation of social actors and to the re-emergence of civil demands. In this context, workers, employees, pensioners, teachers, women, students and other sectors of society potentially have an opportunity to make their demands heard outside the atmosphere of urgency and mobilization imposed by the war.

After years marked by the accumulation of economic, social and political frustrations, this period could allow long-repressed, postponed or marginalized demands to reinvest in the public space with greater visibility, coherence and strength. Without prejudging the scale or form that these mobilizations will take, the suspension of hostilities is likely to shift the centre of gravity of the political debate: from external threats to the structural problems of Iranian society itself.

The end of the bombing in no way means the disappearance of the structural crises that are affecting the Iranian economy. Extreme poverty, persistent inflation, massive unemployment, the continued deterioration of household living conditions, as

well as systemic discrimination based on gender or ethnicity, remain fully present and continue to produce their effects on a daily basis.

From this perspective, the suspension of external hostilities does not constitute a resolution of internal contradictions, but rather a displacement of the field of conflict. It marks the beginning of a phase in which social and political tensions manifest themselves in a more direct way, less mediated by the logic of war. The relationship between society and the regime is revealed in a more naked, more immediate, and potentially more acute way.

In this context, the authorities' priorities seem to remain focused on preserving the foundations of their authority and protecting the networks and interests that support the regime's architecture. This orientation contributes to maintaining a high level of structural tension between the social demands of the population and the imperatives of maintaining power.

In this perspective, while the power clans and the networks of clientelist or mafia-type interests within the state apparatus are reorganizing and repositioning themselves with a view to competing for access to resources and rents in the new environment, the different components of society as well as progressive forces are also confronted with the need to adapt to this new conjuncture.

For the latter, the challenge lies in the ability to take advantage of the transformations underway in order to initiate a social recomposition and a more effective reorganization of their forces. It is less a spontaneous dynamic than a process constrained by the evolution of the balance of forces, which imposes new forms of structuring, coordination and intervention in the social and political space.

Today's Iranian society is on the verge of potentially decisive transformations. The weight of economic failures has had a direct impact on the working classes, pushing the living conditions of millions of people to increasingly difficult, if not unsustainable, levels.

Faced with this situation, the political system in place, which is authoritarian in nature and highly centralised, tends to favour control and policing mechanisms based on the strengthening of the repressive apparatus. In this context, the management of social tensions is mainly carried out through coercive measures and an intensification of sanctioning practices, which contribute to aggravating the climate of confrontation between the state and a part of society.

When a population perceives that the legal and peaceful channels for expressing its fundamental demands are gradually closing, it is likely that its political commitment will take a more determined and intense form than in previous phases, with a greater charge of anger and demands in the face of the structures in place.

In such a dynamic, the experiences accumulated during previous cycles of mobilization constitute an important political and social achievement. Over the course of a succession of events and confrontations, Iranian society has gradually been transformed, having become more hardened, socially and politically, while developing a more lucid reading of its internal power relations and power mechanisms.

The series of strikes in key sectors of industry, the national mobilizations of pensioners, the large-scale uprising under the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom", as well as the notable perseverance of teachers, health workers and families of victims, have been major social and political experiences.

These ongoing struggles have contributed to the accumulation of significant gains in terms of collective consciousness, the structuring of demands and the capacity for organisation. They have also participated in the formation of a generation that is bolder and more aware of the social and political challenges it faces, as well as of its own role in the dynamics of future transformation.

These achievements resulting from field experiences are now inscribed in the collective memory of

society and constitute one of the main springs of future forms of social and political organization.

Citizens today have a more detailed knowledge of the mechanisms by which security and administrative institutions tend to frame, neutralize or divert social and professional demands. This accumulated experience contributes to a more lucid understanding of power relations and institutional constraints.

In this context, any significant progress in demands, whether professional, social or political, seems to depend more and more on the ability to build forms of sustainable solidarity, to develop networked organisations and to articulate the different social movements more coherently. This dynamic refers to a gradual maturation of modes of collective action and structures of mobilization.

The linking of workers' networks with teachers' organisations, the convergence of women's rights defenders with student movements, as well as forms of mutual support between different categories of employees, are likely to considerably strengthen the capacity for social pressure.

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### ***Societal transformations***

These developments are part of a set of profound demographic, social and cultural changes that have taken place in recent decades. Over the past forty-seven years, the Iranian social fabric has undergone significant and often irreversible transformations, affecting modes of socialization, political expectations, and forms of collective expression.

In this context, the regime's capacity for control and ideological framing appears more limited than before. The development of Internet access, the rise of social networks and the diversification of information channels have contributed to weakening the traditional mechanisms of censorship and state monopoly on the public narrative. Moreover, the new generations seem to be inscribed, in their daily lives and their social representations, in increasingly diversified reference frameworks of values, which partly go beyond the framework of official ideology.

The increasingly assertive presence of women in the social, educational and professional spheres, despite legal obstacles and constraints on the public sphere, is a major factor of transformation. It puts patriarchal structures in tension with the traditional frameworks of the organization of power, by introducing social dynamics that gradually question their foundations.

In this context, women's greater access to education, work and social life contributes to redefining existing social relations and to changing the cultural balances on which certain forms of authority are based. This evolution is part of a broader process of recomposition of social norms and collective expectations.

In parallel with these transformations, the human geography of the country has also undergone significant changes. The creation of vast areas of precarious housing on the outskirts of major cities, with a population estimated at more than twenty million people, is part of the continuation of profound economic changes, linked in particular to policies of unequal redistribution of resources, to rent dynamics, as well as to processes of environmental fragility and unbalanced urban development.

These peri-urban areas concentrate a high proportion of precarious workers, the unemployed and populations excluded from the formal circuits of the economy. Often characterized by limited access to public services and infrastructure, they reflect marked forms of territorial inequalities. These areas are also perceived as areas of high social tension, where economic frustrations and feelings of exclusion accumulate, thus contributing to the reconfiguration of the relationship between centre and periphery within Iranian society.

Assuming that it manages to articulate itself with independent organisations, to develop class consciousness and to be part of structured forms of organisation, this vast population could constitute a determining factor in the dynamics of social and political transformation.

Such a development would however depend on the ability to build sustainable mobilisation frameworks, capable of transforming situations of social fragmentation into an organised collective force, likely to significantly influence the existing social balances.

The organisation of this part of society could profoundly modify its place in social relations, by making it move from a condition of victims of the dynamics of unequal development to that of a structured collective actor, likely to weigh significantly in political relations.

In such a configuration, and in articulation with the industrial working class, it could constitute a decisive social force capable of bending the existing balances of power and calling into question the mechanisms of domination and control of the state apparatus. However, this perspective depends closely on the concrete conditions of organisation, coordination and convergence of the different components of the social field.

In the absence of a sufficiently developed class consciousness (which refers to multiple factors) and in the absence of independent organisational structures, the social energy accumulated in these peripheral spaces can be directed towards unstable and potentially dangerous trajectories.

This intensity of frustration, if not channelled into structured collective perspectives and progressive goals, can be co-opted by reactionary, populist or opportunist currents. In such configurations, different political or ideological forces seek to exploit situations of social distress and economic precariousness, mobilizing simplistic discourses and demagogic slogans in order to capitalize on discontent.

This type of dynamic can thus divert a broad-rooted social anger from its main structural causes — linked to the mechanisms of exploitation and systemic inequality — to redirect it towards objectives that distort its initial meaning. In some cases, this recomposition can encourage the emergence of new forms of authoritarianism, the exacerbation of so-

cial divisions or the consolidation of exclusive and anti-democratic political projects.

From this perspective, the organized presence of civic and worker activists in these social spaces appears, according to this analysis, to be a determining factor for the structuring of mobilizations. It would help to avoid the dispersion of collective energies and to strengthen the capacity of social movements to formulate coherent demands, while limiting the risks of political recuperation by forces hostile to democratic and social dynamics.

The demands of the different social strata can be understood as interdependent components of the same social whole. The demands for housing, health, free and quality education, as well as universal social protection systems, are closely linked to fundamental civil and political rights.

From this perspective, economic and social rights cannot be dissociated from fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, freedom of independent organisation and individual freedom of choice, including dress. All of these demands thus form a coherent continuum, where the social, economic and political dimensions reinforce each other within the same logic of emancipation.

The repressive policy adopted by the regime in the face of even the most basic union demands tends to accelerate the politicization of these social movements. In this configuration, the government appears to be reluctant to any form of reform, perceiving the slightest concession or flexibility as a risk likely to weaken, or even destabilize, the entire political edifice.

This institutional lock-in contributes to broadening the scope of demands, which are no longer limited to sectoral demands but tend, progressively, to question the overall structure of the system. Initial demands, made in a professional or social context, can thus be transformed into a broader challenge to the mechanisms of governance and distribution of resources.

In this context, the Iranian workers' movement occupies a particularly central place in contemporary social dynamics. Workers in the industrial, service and petrochemical sectors, by mobilizing tools such as strikes and production stoppages, have a potential capacity to have a significant impact on the functioning of the economy. This strategic position makes it a major player in social power relations, without, however, prejudging the concrete conditions of their organization and coordination.

The blossoming of this social potential depends largely on its ability to converge with other components of the social and progressive movement. A closer articulation with women's mobilizations, national teachers' organizations, pensioners' associations, student movements, environmental activists as well as the different peoples confronted with forms of national oppression could strengthen the coherence and scope of these dynamics.

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#### ***For strategic thinking***

In this perspective, the central question lies in the construction of forms of coordination and convergence that make it possible to overcome the fragmentation of sectoral struggles, in order to promote the emergence of a common space of demands and collective action. Such a dynamic would constitute a determining factor in the ability of social forces to influence the existing balance of power.

The formation of a united front of the forces of labour and the working classes is often presented, in some analyses, as a major strategic condition for a lasting change in the balance of forces in favour of the popular classes. Such convergence would aim to strengthen the capacity for collective action and to increase the political and social weight of the demands coming from the different segments of the world of work.

Finally, the re-examination of recent developments and the analysis of the nature of the agreements concluded between power blocs highlight a historical reality that is difficult to dispute, from this perspective: the cost of the main strategic decisions

taken by the ruling classes — whether it be military adventurism, engagement in proxy wars, sanctions policies and economic blockades, and so on, or the signing of compromises and tactical ceasefires — tends to be disproportionately supported by the working classes.

The working population appears to be the first to be exposed to the social, economic and material consequences of political choices that are made at institutional and state levels that are largely disconnected from their daily experience. This asymmetry feeds, in turn, lasting structural tensions between the spheres of decision-making and the social realities on which they are exercised.

From this perspective, the different components of the system of power — whether military-security structures or other decision-making centres — as well as the actors who face them, tend to externalize the costs of their strategies of survival, compromise and preservation of interests. These costs then disproportionately affect the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations, affecting their access to essential resources, their health and, more broadly, their social security.

A precise understanding of the internal contradictions of power and the adoption of tactics of struggle adapted to the historical and social context constitute, in this perspective, an important prerequisite for overcoming the current crises. The strategic challenge of such organizational cohesion and a more structured class consciousness is often formulated as the possibility of modifying the existing balance of forces to the benefit of the majority social strata.

From this perspective, it would be a question of limiting the hold of networks of power and wealth accumulation considered to be concentrated in the hands of organized minorities, while opening the way to a more profound transformation of the social and political order. The objective thus envisaged refers to the construction of an institutional and social framework perceived as more equitable,

more democratic and more respectful of the fundamental rights of individuals.

*30 June 2026*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **A l'encontre**.*



## CLIMATE

# There's a class struggle under the sun; the heat is eating away at wages

LUIGI PANDOLFI ·

**It's hot. For some, it's just a matter of temperature. For the working class, however, it's already a matter of health and finances: less income, higher prices, greater vulnerability. "The severe heat wave sweeping across Europe threatens people's health, their livelihoods, and their ability to work," Jessie Ruth Schleyen, a climate economist at Climate Analytics, told Bloomberg.**

What appears to be a current emergency is actually a trend that has been underway for years now. A study published last Wednesday in the international journal *Global Environmental Change* shows that between 2004 and 2022, droughts and heat waves have already eroded nearly 3% of the average annual income of European households and pushed another 5.6 million citizens into poverty. And looking ahead, if the 1.5 °C limit set by the Paris Agreement is not met, household income could plummet by more than 21 percentage points by the end of the century.

## Most at risk

The group most at risk is the poorest 20% of the population. Construction and logistics workers, farmhands, and manual laborers who bear the brunt of the climate's impact. It's a matter of class. Those in air-conditioned offices are protected, to some extent; those who work outdoors are not. Madrid is a prime example: according to the study, the Spanish capital has seen an income decline of nearly 10% in recent years, solely due to the effect of heat on productivity.

There are major problems for agriculture and livestock farming. In France and Spain, crops are pay-

ing the price for record-breaking temperatures, water shortages, and rising production costs. The situation in France is the most critical: 72 departments are on red alert, and hundreds of thousands of farm animals—especially poultry—have died due to the extreme conditions. In Spain and the United Kingdom as well, the heat is reducing productivity in livestock farming and fruit and vegetable production, putting pressure on entire supply chains. Among the hardest-hit crops is corn, which is suffering from reduced water resources and uncertainty about yields. The consequences are already visible in the markets: according to Euronext, corn futures have risen by 9% since mid-month, fueling fears of greater instability in global agricultural prices. Speculators could have a field day.

Meanwhile, demand for electricity is skyrocketing in cities. On Tuesday, June 23, European energy prices hit record highs: air conditioners running everywhere, the grid under strain, and insufficient supply. In Belgium, prices reached a staggering peak of 1,038 euros per megawatt-hour.

## Food and energy

Food and energy becoming more expensive means higher inflation. And for low-income households—which allocate the largest share of their household budget to food and utility bills, with no ability to cut back on other expenses—rising prices have an immediate and disproportionate impact. According to economists, climate change could add between 0.3 and 1.2% per year to global inflation starting in 2035.

"We're starting to see a situation where a new shock occurs every year," argues Maximilian Kotz, a researcher at the Barcelona Supercomputing

Center. And these shocks no longer affect only specific products: they impact entire supply chains, from energy to transportation, including insurance, water, and food.

But that's not all. The climate crisis has also become a new source of financial instability. For some sectors of the economy, extreme events are taking on a significance comparable to that of geopolitical crises. Some market participants are already developing financial instruments to speculate on the frequency and intensity of phenomena linked to El Niño and climate anomalies. Les Finemore, chief investment officer at Moreton Capital Partners, has announced, in this vein, a new fund dedicated to trading on climate risks: "We've been focused on the war in Iran. The next event will be El Niño."

A clear paradox: while extreme heat reduces workers' incomes, increases the cost of living, and makes those with fewer resources more vulnerable, a segment of the financial sector is turning the very same phenomenon into an opportunity for profit.

### ***And in Italy?***

And in Italy? Things aren't any better. According to a stress scenario developed by Allianz, between 2026 and 2030 the country risks a cumulative loss of nearly 150 billion euros in GDP. The hardest hit would be investment, which could plummet by 12.8% due to shrinking corporate profit margins. This combination opens the door to a stagflationary spiral: rising prices, falling productivity, and rising unemployment. The fiscal deficit is estimated to worsen by another 1.9 percentage points of GDP.

In this way, the climate crisis also functions as a social tax. But it is not a progressive tax. It hits those who have the least, with steep utility bills, more expensive food and mortgages, lost workdays, and growing health risks. The bottom line: temperatures are rising for everyone, but the cost of the heat continues to be distributed in a deeply unequal manner.

*27 June 2026*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Il Manifesto**.*

USA

# Progressives Strategic Failure: A Warning

DAN LA BOTZ ·

**So progressive Democratic Party operatives decided they needed to find candidates with a populist message speaking to voters concerns about the cost of living who also resembled the working-class voters to whom they wished to appeal. A couple of young political scouts went to Maine where the Democrats would challenge Republican senator Susan Collins who has served five terms in a Democratic majority state. Talking to local activists these two scouts identified Graham Platner as the candidate who could and would defeat Collins. Defeating Collins, would be key to the Democrats taking control of the Senate.**

Platner had served eight years in the U.S. Marines, two tours of duty in Iraq and one with the Maryland National Guard in Afghanistan where he stayed on as a military contractor. Then he returned to his home state of Maine and became an oyster farmer. He married Amy Gertner, a school teacher who became the business manager of his oyster farm.

Platner had progressive politics. He opposed the corporations and supported Medicare for all, he talked about genocide in Gaza and opposed AIPAC, the Israeli lobby. Moreover, he looked the part; he was a brawny guy with of a mustache and beard, tattoos, and a charismatic speaking style. With support from progressives like Senator Bernie Sanders, Platner quickly gained an enthusiastic following and won the Democratic Party primary.

But Platner was not what he appeared to be. He wasn't from the working class; his father was a lawyer and his mother a business woman. And

Platner the oyster farmer was himself a small businessman.

Then the revelations began. Platner had a Nazi tattoo, a Totenkopf (a death's head), though he denied knowing what it was when he got it. Platner, who suffered from PTSD, also had a lot of emotional problems. Investigations by the media revealed that he sent sexually explicit emails to several women, some of them married. Former girlfriends described him as volatile and one said physically threatening. Then in July a former girlfriend accused him of rape, his prominent supporters such as Sanders abandoned him, and Platner was forced to withdraw from the campaign. Now Democrats will have to find a replacement for him at a special convention with only a few months left until the November election.

Critics have blamed the Democrats' mistaken choice of Graham Platner on insufficient vetting. There are, however, bigger issues. Unlike candidates of the Democratic Socialists of America who have won in New York and Colorado, Platner was not a member of a left organization and so had no experience of common study, planning, and work as a socialist. He was active in Acadia Action, a local aquaculture and fishing advocacy group in Sullivan, Maine, and—more civic involvement than actual activism—he served as the town harbormaster and chair of the planning board. He did not have the kind of experience that comes from being a labor union activist or being involved in militant confrontations with authorities.

Chosen by young, self-proclaimed political scouts, Platner did not have a proven record of activism, which would have given people a better understanding of who he really was. A friend in Maine wrote, "It was a great ride while it lasted," But with-

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| out an experienced activist candidate, it couldn't last long. | <i>12 July 2024</i> |
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## GERMANY

# Forcing Refugees To Return to Syria is a Bad Idea

JOSEPH DAHER ·

**After his statement was criticised, Merz clarified that he was not expressing a refugee policy but merely repeating the opinion of interim President al-Sharaa and those, "who wish to remain in Germany and are well integrated will be able to remain in Germany." Al-Sharaa rejected Merz' claim, characterizing it as "somewhat exaggerated". He insisted that returns would depend on economic reconstruction and improved living conditions. Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul endorsed Merz' statement, while pointing out that "what the Chancellor says is, of course, the goal of the federal government" — and was not motivated by the interim President of Syria.**

Regardless of the "clarifications" of the German chancellor, and the practical impossibility such a plan faces, these declarations reflect a wider political trend in Europe calling for the return and deportation of Syrians. The European Parliament's support of the Return Regulation, at the end of March 2026, expanding "the EU's punitive and restrictive detention and deportation plans", demonstrates this continuously hostile dynamic regarding migrants and the collaboration of conservative and the far right. This contributes to the ongoing and expanding racist and islamophobic atmosphere in Europe. But the plans of mass returns must not only be rejected for the racism that underpins it. These attempts are directed against the interests of Syrian working classes, be it in Germany or in Syria.

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*Is Syria Ready to Receive 1.6 Million Returnees*

A large majority of Syrians in Germany, and Europe do not want to return to Syria under current conditions of wartime destruction, political instability, economic crisis and ongoing human rights violations. At the same time, the labor market remains disrupted, and unemployment is high, particularly among the youth. While there are no clear rates for the size of unemployment in Syria, due to the absence of periodic and regular labor force surveys, estimates for 2025 range from 14% to 60% youth unemployment. In addition, 83% of the Syrian labor market is reportedly informal, which does not guarantee access to social security and legal protection, leaving millions of workers vulnerable to exploitation or sudden income loss.

The returns of Syrians have also further strained the labor market, which does not have the capacity to absorb them. Most of the Syrians who came back to Syria since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, an estimated 1.6 million, had taken refuge in neighboring countries, especially Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. In addition, an estimated 1.9 million Internally Displaced People (IDP) returned to their areas of origin, while approximately 5.54 million IDP remained displaced nationwide.

According to the UNHCR "these movements continued to place pressure on already overstretched services and infrastructure, particularly in areas hosting displaced populations and high numbers of returnees". According to the UN, only 57% of public hospitals are fully functional, and only around a third of the primary health care centers are operational, while more than a third of the schools are damaged or destroyed. Similarly the International Organization for Migration in May 2025 underlined that the "lack of economic opportunities and

essential services pose the greatest challenge for Syrians returning to their communities".

Syria's needs are acute: the cost of reconstruction is estimated to range between \$140 billion and \$345 billion, according to the World Bank, which is equivalent to 7 to 17.5 times the current estimated GDP in Syria. More than half of Syrians remain displaced, either internally or abroad. Nine out of ten live below the poverty line, nearly 17 million people require urgent assistance to survive; and more than nine million face acute food insecurity.

Although the Syrian ruling authorities raised public-sector salaries and pensions by 200% in July 2025 and by 50% in March 2026, most of the population, whether employed in the public or the private sector, still cannot cover their monthly expenses with their salaries. While the minimum wage was increased to around \$114 a month, this is far from enough to sustain an average person's livelihood, with the minimum cost of living for a family of five in Damascus exceeding this fourfold and the average cost of living being almost ten times higher at the beginning of the year 2026. Under these conditions, mass return of Syrian refugees would increase the pressure on the labor market, which is already characterized by low salaries and a very low level of social protection. In addition, it would cut the flow of remittances to the country.

#### How Syrian Diaspora Remittances Keep Families Alive

Large segments of society rely on money transfer from relatives abroad amounting to around \$4 billion annually, according to estimates from earlier this year, with Europe and Gulf countries as the main sources since 2011. Germany constitutes the main source for remittances from Europe, between 300 and 400 million of Euro on a yearly basis. This is connected to the progressive and ongoing integration of Syrians in the German labor market.

The role of remittances in Syria evolved in the past decade from a supplemental resource into a primary structural requirement for household survival. These flows played an increasingly critical role in

sustaining livelihoods, often becoming the main source of income for many households as their purchasing powers were continuously reduced as a result of the depreciation of the national currency and rising inflation. In certain cases and more particularly after the fall of the Assad's regime, remittances have been used by families to rebuild their households, and collective initiatives in some areas have emerged benefitting from diaspora remittances to rehabilitate specific infrastructures or buildings. These examples remain quite rare however.

#### Real Estate Projects During Syria's Housing Crisis

The country continues to suffer a deep and combined housing and infrastructure shortfall. According to the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), "one-third of the country's housing stock has been damaged or destroyed, while critical infrastructure, including roads, water networks, electricity, and sanitation systems, remains largely non-functional". In this context and in the absence of any reconstruction plan, several local communities have protested against real estate projects seeking profit rather than housing for people in need. In Homs, residents of the Qarabis neighbourhood pressured the Kuwait-based al-Omran Real Estate Development Company to part of its "Boulevard of Victory" plan, which would have threatened their properties and displaced them from their homes. Similarly, Damascus residents successfully opposed a project that sought to transform Al-Jahiz Park – one of Damascus's last remaining public green spaces – into a commercial space with cafés and parking facilities. In the beginning of May 2026, a demonstration was organized in Damascus by residents of the Mezzeh, Kfar Souseh, and Basateen al-Razi neighborhoods affected by Decree 66, which was enacted in 2012 and allows the "redesigning of unauthorized or illegal housing areas" and their replacement with "modern" real estate projects with quality services.

Large segments of the population suffering from worsening living conditions and low purchasing power face very high rents and expensive property

prices. Instead of building housing schemes and infrastructures for the broader population, these real estate projects serve an elite class able to afford new and expensive housing projects and accumulate capital. Alongside these dynamics, these housing policies reflect a larger political economic strategy, responding to a crisis-ridden economy with austerity measures.

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### ***Austerity in Post-Assad Syria: Who Pays the Price?***

Household stability has become increasingly contingent on remittances rather than local economic dynamics, particularly as the former Assad's regime engaged in austerity measures and cut back on social support to the population. The share of spending on public subsidies and other support programmes diminished significantly in the state's budget after 2011, representing 15.5% in 2010 compared to just 5.6% in 2024. In addition, continuously rising inflation resulted in diminishing purchasing power for large sectors of the population.

The new Syrian ruling authorities' economic policies have not challenged this reality, quite the opposite. Following the declared reduction of state spending, the Syrian ruling authorities quickly announced plans to dismiss up to one third of the state workforce, targeting employees allegedly receiving salaries without fulfilling their duties. Dismissals have continued across multiple ministries in 2026. Damascus' austerity measures have had a significant impact on the population's purchasing power. The price of subsidized bread was raised in December 2024 from 400 Syrian Pounds (SYP) (for 1,500 grams) to SYP 4,000 (for 1,200 grams and then 1,050 grams since May 2026), representing an increase of around 1365% and exacerbating food insecurity among the most vulnerable. At the same time, the government suspended subsidies on fuel and oil derivatives, increasing production costs across the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. In October 2025, the Syrian government announced a significant increase in electricity prices. In January 2026, tariffs increased from an average of \$0.85-\$4 to bills ranging from \$50 and

\$169. Some families even saw their bills reach between \$423 and \$508. This has also severely affected key productive economic sectors, particularly manufacturing and agriculture.

The political-economic orientation of the new ruling authorities has entrenched the economic dynamics present in the former regime. Syria is facing structural economic challenges, including the instability of the Syrian pound, a weakened financial system, the destruction infrastructure, low purchasing power, high cost of production, a dearth of skilled workers, and more. Yet, the new government is pushing a commercial model focused on short-term profit and primarily on the service sector to the detriment of Syria's productive sectors, which is not conducive to developmental dynamics. Meanwhile, no protection against foreign competitive products has been provided to national production, particularly manufacturing industry and agriculture. Accelerated trade liberalization is threatening production even more. In late January 2025, Damascus reduced customs duties on over 260 Turkish products. At the end of 2025, Syria's trade deficit with Turkey reached an all-time high of \$3.26 billion in 2025. This represents an 86.5% rise in comparison to 2024, when the deficit stood at \$1.74 billion.

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### ***Workers' Unrest and Protests Across Syria in 2026***

Increasing frustration among workers in the public, private and informal sectors with the government's economic policies has led to popular protests and strikes, particularly since the beginning of the year. In the Idlib and Aleppo countryside governorates, teachers engaged in a large-scale strike in late January 2026 demanding permanent employment, the swift reinstatement of those dismissed, and salary increases that commensurate with the soaring cost of living. More than 1,700 schools closed in these areas for the "Strike for Dignity," in response to the authorities' failure to honor commitments regarding salary increases and improved working conditions. Other sectors have also mobilized protests – including transport workers, industrial



workers, students, lawyers and bakery owners – demonstrating deepening grievances across the country over the continued erosion of purchasing power and the deterioration of public services. But the protests were also directed against corruption, nepotism, and a lack of transparency and participation in decision making processes.

Multiple protests on various socio-economic issues are ongoing throughout the country. New demonstrations erupted in mid-May, initially in Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, and Daraa and then spread to further regions, after the Syrian Ministry of Economy and Industry had fixed a price of wheat widely considered too low. This sparked widespread frustration among wide sectors of farmers and peasants, as the cost of production exceeds this price.

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#### ***The Case for Legal Settlement Over Mass Deportation***

Not only are the conditions for a safe and dignified return to Syria not given. Without economic recovery and the reconstruction of critical state infrastructure a mass return of refugees to Syria would only worsen socio-economic conditions within the country and threaten large sectors of society dependent on remittances to survive. While this transfer of money by the Syrian diaspora re-

mains essential for consumption of basic goods and services, they can't sustain any recovery of the productive sectors of the economy. Remittances fuel consumption rather than productive investment within the national economy. In other words, they are a tool for survival, but they are no substitute for sustainable economic development.

Instead of threats to return Syrians to Syria, Germany and the EU should consolidate the legal settlement of Syrian refugees. This would enable them to stabilize their living conditions and move freely between their host country and Syria. Thereby, they could play a more active role in Syria's reconstruction, and participate in its economic, social and political life. Rather than unfeasible announcements of mass returns, German and European officials should seek to encourage an inclusive reconstruction process and a wider democratic participation within Syria. Otherwise, the current challenges may result in deepened authoritarian dynamics and entrenched forms of exclusion, both political and economic. This would rather create new incentives for Syrians to seek better opportunities and living conditions abroad.

*Source: **Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.***

## PALESTINE

# Israel targets and kills children

ÉDOUARD SOULIER ·

**At the end of June, the UN Human Rights Council's office [2] and B'Tselem [3], an Israeli NGO, each published a report: one on children killed in Gaza, the other on children killed in the West Bank. These two reports – lengthy and detailed, yet difficult to read due to the violence they describe – document Israel's deliberate intent to target and kill Palestinian children.**

## *Are children a protected group?*

International law grants children special protection in armed conflicts: priority access to humanitarian aid, guarantees regarding evacuation and family reunification, and so on.

Israel is therefore expected to treat Palestinian children as a group entitled to special protection. Their detention should only be an exceptional measure, justified by demonstrable and immediate security reasons, and not a tool for control, blackmail or collective punishment. Vague criteria such as 'security concerns', behaviour deemed suspicious or family ties do not fall within this category.

Clearly, nothing in international law authorises the killing of a child with a bullet to the head by a sniper positioned several hundred metres away. Yet this is the reality in Gaza.

## *In Gaza, 30 per cent of those killed are children*

The UN report notes that between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2025, at least 20,179 children were killed and 44,143 injured in Gaza. They account for 30 per cent of those killed and 26 per cent of those injured during this period. By way of 'comparison', children accounted for around 24 per cent of the deaths during the 2008–2009 and 2014 bombings.

Since 7 October 2023, at least 5,031 children under the age of five have been killed, of whom 1,029 were under one year old and around 420 were newborns. These figures are likely to be an underestimate, as a significant number of victims remain buried under the rubble.

The report details the brutality of the treatment inflicted on children and the lack of consideration shown to injured children. It documents several cases in which the Israeli army killed entire families in full view of the children, before leaving them to their fate. According to a doctor at the scene: "Given the concentration of injuries and the body parts targeted, I believe that Israeli soldiers deliberately shot at teenagers as if it were a shooting gallery – targeting a different part of the body each day... There is a very clear pattern suggesting that this involves deliberately targeting different parts of the body [of the children]." Shooting at children for fun...

The report could be cited on these pages: it brings together dozens of testimonies supporting this view, specifying in each instance which brigades were involved.

## *This is genocide*

Regarding the West Bank, B'Tselem reports that over a period of two years and eight months, from 7 October 2023 to 7 June 2026, Israeli forces killed 235 Palestinian children and teenagers. Five others were killed by settlers. In 2025 alone, Israel killed 54 children in the West Bank.

This significant increase predates 2023: as early as 2022, the number of children killed in the West Bank rose from an average of 13 to 36 per year. In 2021, the rules of engagement were relaxed: throwing stones is now sufficient to justify opening fire,

without there being any need for the forces to be in danger. The context of the war in Gaza has multiplied the opportunities to target and kill children, but this behaviour has long been documented and also occurs in the West Bank.

The targeting of children is a key element in establishing genocidal intent. Israel is indeed aiming to

destroy the Palestinian people as a whole, both in Gaza and in the West Bank.

Israel is deliberately killing children. This is genocide.

*8 July 2026*

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

## G7 SUMMIT

# The G7: the imperialist order under Trump's leadership

WILLIAM DONAURA ·

**'I am the boss,' declared Donald Trump at the opening of the G7. He might well have repeated it at the closing session, such was the extent to which this summit was aligned with US strategic and energy interests.**

## *Soothing declarations and deafening silences*

In addition to the central, geopolitical declaration, the G7 resulted in the signing of eight declarations of principle on: the fight against cancer, the necessary 'coordinated response to the Ebola epidemic', 'mutually beneficial international partnerships', 'supply chains for critical minerals' (read: the 'decoupling' of industrialised economies from China), 'more balanced, sustainable and resilient growth', 'smuggling of migrants', 'drug trafficking' and 'a safer digital space for minors'. Climate change and the decline in biodiversity are conspicuously absent from this soothing litany of the ruling elite's 'wonderful world'. Naturally, there is no mention anywhere of lifting private ownership of medicines, phasing out fossil fuels or meeting social needs...

The geopolitical declaration summarises the key issues discussed at this G7 summit: Ukraine, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific region, for which it endorses the US military presence and reiterates the usual clichés about North Korea and its nuclear weapons.

## *Geopolitical agreement at the expense of the people*

On Ukraine, it states: 'We, the G7 leaders, stand united in our unwavering support for Ukraine in the defence of its freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity', and promises both to increase deliveries — and local production — of air defence systems

and long-range missiles, and to reinstate sanctions against Russia concerning gas and oil, which had been lifted during the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The countries also reached an agreement on the reconstruction of energy infrastructure...

The summit provided an opportunity to endorse Trump's narrative regarding the 'magnificent' agreement signed with Iran: 'The announcement of an agreement between the United States and Iran, secured under the strong leadership of President Donald Trump (...) offers a historic opportunity to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. " This support has been given even though the details of the agreement have not yet been finalised and, by already marking numerous setbacks for the US administration, it signals the failure of the war waged by the United States.

Whatever the outcome of the negotiations on the US-Iran agreement, it will be necessary to secure a role in the country's reconstruction and therefore to nurture relations with US imperialism today. This is what France has attempted to do by highlighting the 'Operation Ormuz', which it co-leads with the United Kingdom.

On Lebanon, the text affirms its support — wishful thinking — for Lebanon's territorial integrity (sic), for a 'robust' ceasefire (re-sic), but only as a means to enable the disarmament of Hezbollah... It condemns the 'violence' in the West Bank and promises more humanitarian aid to Gaza. Of course, the text never mentions the State of Israel...

Thus, according to Macron, this summit "was a moment of unity, of high-quality discussion and of genuine cooperation between the leaders gathered here. This summit, indeed, enabled us to coordi-

nate very closely in order to respond to crises and to work on the major challenges of our time".

Such a fine display of harmony can only send a shiver down our spines, for it is always achieved at

the expense of the people...

*2 July 2026*

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

## KENYA

# Resisting "green capitalism" in Kenya

PAUL MARTIAL ·

**Carbon credits enable multinationals to offset their carbon dioxide emissions by funding environmental projects. In Kenya, the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) specialises in this type of activity. It manages 'conservancies', i.e. areas set aside for this purpose.**

## *A dubious project, but...*

The NRT has launched the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NKCP). The aim is to sell carbon credits – generated by carbon sequestration in the soil through a reorganisation of grazing practices – to companies such as Netflix and Meta.

The project covers two million hectares, comprising more than a dozen 'conservancies', and affects nearly 100,000 people from various communities, notably the Rendille, the Maasai, the Borana and the Samburu. These communities graze their livestock using pastoral practices that blend cultural traditions and ancestral know-how, following local and regional rainfall patterns, which are becoming increasingly scarce due to global warming.

This is precisely what the NRT aims to change by introducing planned rotational grazing, which it claims would enable 1.5 million tonnes of carbon to be stored in the soil each year. However, the scientific evidence put forward by the NRT to demonstrate that this system would increase carbon storage is, to say the least, questionable. The main argument is that the free-range grazing practised by local communities degrades soil quality. This argument echoes the colonial view that indigenous peoples are incapable of preserving their environment.

The Wall Street Journal reports that the NRT has already sold nearly six million carbon credits, with

an estimated value of between 42 and 90 million dollars depending on market prices.

## *... lucrative*

This project strips pastoralist communities of control over their livestock in favour of centralised external management, which would decide where the herds are to graze and for how long. Traditional livestock farming would thus be transformed into a more industrial and commercial system.

However, community protests, supported by NGOs such as Survival International, have succeeded in halting the project. The certification body Verra has suspended its verification procedures on two occasions. In particular, it was established that the free and informed consent of the affected communities had not been obtained.

Furthermore, the NRT is usurping authority over the land by creating conservancies in breach of Kenyan legislation, notably the Community Land Act of 2016, which recognises collective land ownership by communities.

The NRT is exerting heavy pressure on local people to accept its project. Bus transport is organised to take residents to meetings at which they are asked to sign contracts, even though many of them cannot read or write. Financial blackmail has also been reported, whilst, in the past, the sums paid and their recipients have remained particularly opaque.

Kenya's pastoralist communities are thus suffering a double blow. They are bearing the brunt of climate change—for which they are not responsible—which is undermining their livestock farming, whilst at the same time being forced to change their way of life in order to offset the greenhouse gas emissions of Western multinationals.

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8 July 2026

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



## ECOSOCIALISM

# Many Fronts, One Struggle: A Report on the 7th International Ecosocialist Encounters

WILLIAM VAN DEN HEUVEL ·

**In the buildings of the Université libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels), more than two hundred and fifty people from some forty countries gathered in mid-May for the seventh International Ecosocialist Encounters. For three days, discussions ranged across trade union struggle and degrowth, care work and the defence of indigenous land, debt, artificial intelligence, Ukraine, and Palestine. A glance at the programme might give the impression of a loosely assembled sequence of disconnected themes. The opposite proved true. It was precisely the breadth that made visible what the organisers were after: demonstrating that all these apparently separate fronts flow from the same crisis, and that this crisis can only be reversed collectively, across borders.**

The International Ecosocialist Encounters have been held since 2014 — the initiative arose around a German-language book on an ecosocialist international — and have grown into a recurring gathering of activists, trade unionists, academics, and social movements from several continents. [1] Ecosocialism holds that the ecological crisis cannot be separated from capitalism. An economy driven by profit maximisation and unceasing growth inevitably collides with planetary limits; only a society that produces to meet human needs rather than to generate profit can sustain a good life within those limits. That premise was the common denominator running beneath all the conversations in Brussels.

## *A sombre backdrop*

The gathering took place against a sombre backdrop, and participants made no secret of it. Climate disruption is accelerating, while the European Green Deal — once heralded as the definitive response to warming — is being systematically hollowed out in Berlin, Paris, and Brussels. At the same time, wars, rearmament, and the far-right bloc are all growing. An opening debate on geopolitics drew the connection sharply: the Green Deal had been left largely to capital and had offered working people, and the poorest layers in particular, very little. It is precisely into that gap that the far right thrusts. It frames environmental policy as an assault on ordinary people and wins terrain the left has long vacated.

## *The labour movement at the centre*

That is also the first reason why the labour movement occupied such a central place in Brussels. Trade union engagement has been part of these encounters from the start, and the opening session made clear why. A trade union member from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Hervé Kambiniam of the CDT (Confédération Démocratique du Travail — Democratic Confederation of Labour), [2] described how the war in the east of his country has produced a war economy in which money flows to weapons rather than education or healthcare, while foreign companies and armed groups plunder raw materials and drive the population from its land. From Colombia came the account of trade unionists who, against opposition from part of their own base, have turned against fracking and allied themselves with environmental and rural movements.

From the Basque Country, Ainhara Plazaola of the ELA (Euskal Langileen Alkartasuna — Basque Workers' Solidarity) confederation showed how things can be done differently: she described how her confederation has brought demands on emissions, energy and water use, and sustainable business plans directly into collective bargaining, and how it secures commitments that workers affected by the closure or downsizing of polluting enterprises can move into other employment or receive a decent income and retraining. [3] The thread running through these discussions was that the opposition between labour and the environment — on which the far right plays so deftly — is not a law of nature but a political choice. Winning the trust of workers requires connecting the ecological transition to the fight for their jobs and income.

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### ***Degrowth and ecosocialism***

A second thread ran through the debate on degrowth. Ten years ago, that concept would scarcely have been placed alongside socialism; degrowth and socialism were treated as alternatives between which one had to choose. Increasingly, degrowth is now seen as a component of the socialist programme. Daniel Tanuro, one of the driving forces behind the Ecosocialist Manifesto of the Fourth International (IVe Internationale — Fourth International), set out the necessity soberly. [4] Of the nine planetary boundaries identified by science, seven have already been breached. A reduction in energy and raw material consumption is therefore no longer a choice but a given; the only question is whether that reduction happens in a planned and humane way, or as a catastrophic collapse.

In this understanding, degrowth does not mean poverty or austerity, but the abolition of useless production and the restoration of what genuinely matters: time, care, and community. It was telling that a representative of the academic degrowth current and the Marxist ecosocialists explicitly sought each other out in Brussels. There are multiple paths to the same destination, and the willingness to

bring those paths together was one of the gains of the conference.

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### ***Not without feminism***

That degrowth cannot proceed without feminism was a third insight that recurred throughout. Reducing production alone, without redistributing care work, simply shifts the bill on to women, who already perform the largest share of that unpaid labour. Speakers from the ecofeminist tradition argued that care — for people, but also for land, water, and communities — belongs at the heart of an ecosocialist project, not at its margins. In Brazil, as several interventions noted, landless and indigenous women have long put this principle into practice, in their resistance to agribusiness, mining, and dam construction. The idea of radical abundance that emerges from the degrowth movement breaks both with the artificial scarcity of capitalism and with the capitalist image of abundance as endless possession.

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### ***Latin America at the front line***

Nowhere did the coherence of all these struggles come together as concretely as in Latin America, which commanded a large share of the attention. Michael Löwy, the French-Brazilian Marxist sociologist who was present at all previous encounters and received a personal tribute in Brussels, identified indigenous peoples and peasant movements there as the vanguard of the ecological struggle: they are in the front line of the defence of nature and life, and at the same time the first victims of capitalism. [5] From Ecuador, Leonidas Iza, president of Ecuvarunari (Confederación Kichwa del Ecuador — Kichwa Confederation of Ecuador), described how his communities have lived with the land for thousands of years and are now resisting oil extraction in the Amazon region. [6]

From Brazil came a victory from which to draw courage: following a 33-day occupation of the terminals of the US multinational Cargill and a series of actions during the COP30 climate summit, a largely indigenous movement forced the Lula gov-

ernment to reverse the privatisation of three Amazonian rivers — the Madeira, Tocantins, and Tapajós. [7] Mariana Riscalli, a member of the national executive of Brazil's PSOL (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade — Socialism and Freedom Party), held up that struggle as evidence that social movements must remain independent from the government, even from a progressive government. At the same time, a warning was sounded against what participants called green colonialism: an energy transition that replaces fossil fuels but perpetuates the same plunder of raw materials, the same dispossession and repression, now in the name of clean energy.

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### ***Internationalism, not campism***

The wars also received their place, and it was precisely here that the political maturity of the gathering asserted itself. Over Russia's invasion of Ukraine and over European rearmament, a deep dividing line runs through the left, and the Ecosocialist Encounters did not avoid it. Ukrainian ecosocialists from Sotsialnyi Rukh (Соціальний рух — Social Movement), [8] including the trade unionist Artem Tidva and the degrowth specialist Vitaliia Kilinkarova, described the enormous ecological devastation that Putin's war has wreaked on the country and called for international solidarity from below, on the model of Swedish dock workers who refused to unload Russian ships.

The Syrian researcher Joseph Daher extended the analysis to Gaza and southern Lebanon. What connected the speakers was their rejection of campism — the tendency to stand uncritically behind every adversary of the West, out of opposition to Western imperialism. Solidarity, as the repeated formulation had it, is owed to the attacked peoples and to working people, not to the repressive regimes that oppress their own populations. Rearmament itself was assessed not only as a war threat but as a massive shift of resources away from the ecological transition and social services.

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### ***The danger of the far right***

What ultimately connects all these fronts is the rise of the far right. Löwy preferred the term neo-fascism: it shares much with classical fascism but is radically neoliberal rather than corporatist, and it uses religion without itself being religious. At the conference the phenomenon was also given a new name: fossil fascism. The far right is less and less openly denying climate change; instead it turns against climate policy, as an ally of the fossil industry, and sometimes even presents immigration as an ecological threat. A workshop on artificial intelligence gave this reaction a further technological face. The power of a handful of tech companies over information, communication, and surveillance, and the quasi-religious visions of the future held by figures such as Elon Musk, constitute a distinct front in the same struggle — one on which resistance, from tech workers to people living near data centres, is only just beginning.

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### ***A convergence of movements***

Here lies the core of what the encounters sought to convey. The women's movement, the indigenous struggle, the struggle of working people, the fight against debt and extractivism, resistance to war and to the far right: these are not separate campaigns but expressions of a single crisis of capitalism. Tanuro named this a convergence of movements — of women, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI+ people, peasants, and workers — and Löwy described ecology not as a chapter but as a red thread. Breaking with productivism does not mean abandoning the class struggle; it means broadening it. The gathering itself, with its forty countries and its difficult but real conversations between academics and activists, between North and South, was an exercise in precisely that broadening.

That raises the question of what ultimately matters: how to give that convergence a form capable of compelling concrete change. The answer that was most concretely formulated in Brussels was organisational. Alongside the encounters themselves, the Global Ecosocialist Network presented itself — a worldwide collaboration with a small secretariat, a

low threshold for participation, and online debates in which organisations from several continents exchange experiences and strategies. The network and the encounters are complementary and will seek closer collaboration in future.

From the Netherlands, activists from LinksBoven (the ecosocialist member movement within PRO – Progressief Nederland, the recently formed merger of GroenLinks and PvdA) and from the new initiative Democratisch Ecosocialisten (Democratic Ecosocialists) [9] were present. The next edition of the Encounters, the 3rd Latin American and Caribbean Ecosocialist Encounter, will take place next year in Colombia, possibly followed a year later by the 8th International Ecosocialist Encounters in Ecuador — a telling shift towards the continent where the struggle is waged most fiercely and most boldly.

Whether that will be enough, no one knows. An Argentine speaker reminded the gathering that debates must remain rooted in concrete struggle and independent of governments, including supposedly progressive ones. Löwy cited Brecht: those who fight can lose, but those who do not fight have already lost. That is not reassurance, and it was not intended as such. What the 7th Ecosocialist Encounters showed is that the individual movements are each too weak for the task on their own, and that coordination among them — across sectors, movements, and borders — is no longer a luxury but the precondition for achieving anything. The building blocks are there. They only need to be stacked.

*3 July 2026*

*Translated and annotated by Adam Novak for ESSF from Grenzeloos.*

USA

# Trump Campaigns on Anti-Communism as Left Opponents Are Indicted

DAN LA BOTZ ·

**At the same time, Trump's Justice Department has indicted and convicted several leftist activists—opponents of ICE or supporters of Palestine— on felony charges resulting in them being sentenced to years and even decades in prison. The combination of the new anti-communist rhetoric and the increased repression of the left, under the guise that the government is fighting a domestic terrorist organization called antifa, suggest that we may be entering a new anti-communist era of repression such as those of the 1920s and 1950s. If so, the entire left will be in danger. And of course, it suggests we may be witnessing another step from authoritarianism to neofascism.**

In his speeches, Trump stated more than once that the United States "is the greatest civilization in human history." And communism, he said, "is the greatest threat to our country," a greater threat than the two world wars and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on New York and Washington, D.C.

*There is now a resurgence of the communist menace in our land, including from newcomers to our country who embrace ideas totally opposed to our way of life and our great success... Communism is a mortal threat to American liberty.*

Trump didn't mention DSA, the left group actually winning elections but said instead that the problem was the Communist Party, "made up of illegal immigrants, criminals and everybody that doesn't want to work." In response, CPUSA Co-chair

Rossana Cambron said, "MAGA [Trump's Make America Great Again movement] is going to lose the midterms, and Trump's getting desperate."

Trump alleged that the Democratic Party had become Communist. "They are becoming a Communist party – not social democrats. They are core communists."

There have been two previous Red Scares in the United States, one in the 1920s and the other in the 1950s. The first Red Scare was a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917 that brought the Communists to power, a wave of industrial strikes, and in 1919 a series of anarchist bombings. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer organized raids that led to the arrest of 3,000 people and the deportation of hundreds. The movement was devastating to the Industrial Workers of the World, the Socialist Party, and the newly formed Communist Party.

The second Red Scare in the 1950 was driven in large part by Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy who made claims of widespread Communist Party spies' penetration of the U.S. State Department. McCarthy, who was chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations launched highly publicized investigations into alleged Communist infiltration of federal agencies, universities, and the U.S. Army. Some 500 people were called to testify and another several hundred before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Many people called before these committees lost their jobs or were evicted from their homes and were blacklisted. The Communist Party was virtually outlawed and CP leaders were imprisoned.

The previous two Red Scares strengthened right-wingers in both the Democratic and Republican Parties and drove many leftists underground or out of the movement. While we don't know what

Trump's Red Scare will do, it has to be seen as a serious threat to the left, to the unions, and to the social movements.

*5 July 2026*

 VENEZUELA

# 215 years after Venezuela's Declaration of Independence: Long live the republic

COLLECTIVE ·

**Amid the current tribulation, we do not forget that the cracking of the earth was preceded by the roar of missiles and shrapnel, which also brought destruction, death, and pain. On January 3 of this year—exactly six months ago—Venezuela was attacked militarily by the U.S. armed forces, under orders from its current government, in an act of war that was undeclared, unprovoked, unjustified, disproportionate, and illegal, in open violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter. This military aggression, which resulted in a regrettable and reprehensible toll of victims, also constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law, as documented in United Nations reports at the time.**

Since that day, Venezuela has experienced a systematic escalation of grievances. A nation with a tradition of fighting for freedom and independence, and of peaceful coexistence and integration with other peoples, an attempt is being made to impose a plan for colonial administration of the State under the threat of new military attacks. This plan takes the form of control over the sale of oil, gold, and other strategic minerals, and—even more gravely—through direct control of the revenues these generate, which are deposited into a budget line item of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which administers them at its discretion.

Added to this is the imposition of foreign investment plans—preceded by forced legislative reforms—that favor the interests of the aggressor country and contravene the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, particularly in the areas of

hydrocarbons and mining. Similarly, the U.S. government has arrogated to itself the right to decide on political and institutional processes that fall exclusively within the competence of Venezuelan popular sovereignty and to impose conditions on the foreign policy of peace and integration that we have promoted as a nation.

Furthermore, the illegal presence and operations of agents and troops from the aggressor country within our territory constitute another blatant violation of our Constitution and international law, a situation that has been exacerbated following the earthquakes of June 24: We hereby denounce and express our strongest rejection of any decision leading to the establishment of U.S. military bases or installations on our territory under the pretext of humanitarian assistance, out of basic patriotic dignity and because it is expressly prohibited by our National Constitution.

This entire situation constitutes an extremely serious and unprecedented violation of the 1965 United Nations Declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention in the internal affairs of States and the protection of their independence and sovereignty.

Faced with this ignominious situation that undermines the sovereign rights to which we are entitled as a nation, as a state, and as a republic, those of us who love and honor our homeland are called upon to prevent the normalization or concealment of this foreign intervention. Therefore, we are compelled to denounce this violation of our sovereign rights before the international community. Historical circumstances call upon us to unite in the struggle to regain our national independence.

A national agreement is urgently needed—one that includes all patriotic political and social organiza-



tions and actors—to present us to the world as a united nation and to raise awareness among the peoples, governments, and democratic movements of the United States itself regarding the unacceptability of a situation that harms not only Venezuela but also the paradigm of the international community that has been sought to be built since World War II.

We consider the immediate cessation of all coercive and unity measures against Venezuela to be non-negotiable, and we demand our right to access and manage the national assets and resources illegally administered by the occupying power. Amid the emergency the nation is facing as a result of the June 24 earthquakes, both the meager humanitarian aid announced by the U.S. government and the decision to partially lift, and for a brief period, some of the "sanctions" imposed on the country, are not only insufficient but also constitute an affront to the entire Venezuelan people and yet another demonstration of the occupying force's profound insensitivity in the face of a tragedy that has plunged tens of thousands of families into mourning.

Likewise, we consider it appropriate for the institutions of the Venezuelan State to file a formal complaint with the United Nations General Assembly regarding the violation of our national sovereignty and with the United Nations Human Rights Council regarding the violations of international humanitarian law that have been committed, and that a formal complaint be filed with the International Court of Justice seeking the restoration of control over our national revenues and our full political self-determination as a sovereign State in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, in accordance with the Social Pact that we democratically ratified in a constitutional referendum on December 15, 1999.

Preserving national dignity today requires reaching an agreement among all patriotic forces willing to reaffirm their unwavering commitment to the Declaration of Independence issued by our forefa-

thers on July 5, 1811, which they set forth in the following words:

"We, therefore, in the name and by the will and authority we hold from the virtuous people of Venezuela, solemnly declare to the world that its united Provinces are, and shall be from this day forward, in fact and in law, free, sovereign, and independent States, and that they are absolved from all submission and dependence on the Crown of Spain or on those who are or may be called its agents or representatives, and that, as such a free and independent State, it has full power to adopt the form of government that is in accordance with the general will of its peoples, to declare war, to make peace, to form alliances, to conclude treaties of commerce, boundaries, and navigation, and to perform and execute all other acts that free and independent nations perform and execute... Despite our protests, our moderation, our generosity, and the inviolability of our principles... we are blockaded, we are harassed, agents are sent to incite us to revolt against one another, and attempts are made to discredit us among the nations... in order to oppress us... Without giving the slightest consideration to our reasons, without presenting them to the impartial judgment of the world, and with no judges other than our enemies, we are condemned to a painful isolation from our brothers; and to add contempt to slander, representatives are appointed against our express will, so that in their courts they may arbitrarily dispose of our interests under the influence and coercion of our enemies."

People of Venezuela: Stability, peace, and the very possibility of building a just society on Venezuelan soil today depend on the restoration of the full exercise of our sovereignty.

People of Venezuela: The peoples of the world must know that we will never renounce our status as a Republic to merge with any other State, nor will we accept being administered by those who are currently oppressing us.

Now that we have overcome these initial moments of anguish, mourning, rescue efforts, and providing

primary care to the victims of the earthquakes, the patriotic people must promote unified initiatives of civic and democratic struggle—within the framework of political diversity—to recover our independence and, with it, the full legal effectiveness of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

We proclaim, with our heads held high and with the voice of the Liberating People, that we will exercise our inalienable right to remain a nation free from all domination, and we call for the broadest international solidarity with our struggle.

People of Venezuela: Today more than ever, Bolívar's words before the Patriotic Society on July 3, 1811, compel us:

"...what we want is for that union to be effective and to inspire us in the glorious undertaking of our freedom; to unite merely to rest, to sleep in the arms of apathy—yesterday it was a shortcoming, today it is a betrayal... Let us lay, without fear, the cornerstone of South American freedom; to waver is to lose ourselves."

***People of Venezuela: Let us fight without hesitation for the restoration of our sovereignty and our independence!***

Long live Venezuela! Long live the Republic!

*Caracas, 3 July 2026*

1. Reinaldo Iturriza López
2. Carlos Ojeda Falcón
3. Jorge Giordani
4. Juan Contreras
5. Ignacio Ramírez
6. Carlos Mendoza Pottellá
7. Elías Jaua Milano
8. Leonardo Bracamonte
9. Óscar Figuera
10. Luis Bonilla Molina
11. Eduardo Sánchez

12. Yul Jabour
13. Aurora Morales
14. Michel Mujica Ricardo
15. Óscar Feo
16. Gerardo Rojas
17. José Félix Varela
18. María Elena Lovera
19. Pedro Eusse
20. Amílcar Figueroa
21. Bruno Zanardo
22. Juan Carlos Dugarte
23. Christian Medina Macero
24. Braulio Álvarez
25. Alexis Ramírez
26. María Alejandra Castillo
27. Julio Millán
28. Manuel Villalba
29. Enrique Maestre
30. Gaudy María García García
31. Manuel Azuaje Reverón
32. Héctor Navarro
33. Gustavo Márquez
34. Juan Ramón Guzmán
35. Nidia Cárdenas
36. Enrique Vila
37. Lorenzo Angiolillo
38. Eleazar Mujica
39. Humberto Rojas
40. Luis Marín
41. Sergio Rodríguez Adam
42. Henry Arrollo Clemente
43. Ramón Yáñez
44. Diógenes Andrade
45. Thaís Rodríguez Gómez
46. Miguel Mora
47. Carlos Carles
48. Heddy Ramírez
49. Juan Carlos Rodríguez
50. Carlos Hernández
51. Vladimira Moreno
52. Carlos Lazo García

## MIDDLE EAST

# The framework agreement Lebanon-Israel, a capitulation to multiple threats

JOSEPH DAHER ·

## *The submission of the Lebanese state*

**The framework agreement between Beirut and Tel Aviv follows direct negotiations between the two governments, under the sponsorship of Washington. Criticized for pursuing direct negotiations with Israeli officials, perceived as a free concession and without any real strategy for an Israeli quid pro quo, Lebanese officials justified this choice as the only way to stop the Israeli war against Lebanon. However, this is far from the case, as the Israeli army continues its occupation and military actions in Lebanon in total violation of the ceasefire, with deaths, injuries and destruction.**

In addition to having as its horizon "a complete and lasting peace, bringing security, stability and prosperity to the peoples of Israel and Lebanon", the content of the framework agreement and its security annex – mentioned three times in the text – are centred on the disarmament of Hezbollah. Moreover, the military actions of the Israeli occupation army in Lebanon are described as resulting "exclusively from attacks, threats and hostile intentions emanating from non-state armed groups, in particular Hezbollah", in total contradiction with the historical dynamics of Tel Aviv's repeated wars against Lebanon and occupations of Lebanese territory with destruction in all directions.

In this spirit, it is stated that the "gradual redeployment" of the Israeli occupation army from southern Lebanon is dependent on the "disarmament of Hezbollah and all other non-state armed groups"

by the Lebanese army. The security annex also lists the mechanism for the so-called "pilot areas" south of the Litani River, where the Lebanese army is to gradually replace the Israeli occupation army. [2] In this context, it is envisaged that the Israeli and Lebanese governments will set up "a military coordination group, with the support and participation of the United States, to ensure the full implementation of this Framework". [3]

In this framework, there is no deadline for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from the occupied Lebanese territories, while leaving it to the Israeli government to assess according to its own considerations whether Hezbollah – or any other non-state armed group in Lebanon – constitutes a threat to be eradicated in the chosen area. Moreover, during a tour of a "security zone" delimited by the "yellow line" and equivalent to more than 600 km<sup>2</sup> occupied in South Lebanon, which extends up to ten kilometres deep in the territory, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu affirmed in front of his troops that "we will not leave southern Lebanon until the threat is eliminated. As long as Hezbollah, armed, is present and threatens us, we will stay". [4] The day before, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz had also stressed that the Israeli occupation forces will not withdraw "one millimetre" from southern Lebanon until Hezbollah surrenders its weapons. He added that he did not believe that the Lebanese army "will suddenly become composed of lions charging at Hezbollah," and that the Israeli occupation of the south will be "therefore long-term," and that the "Shia" villages in the border strip "must go." [5]

Prior to that, on 15 June, the same minister had declared, after the announcement that the United

States and Iran had reached a ceasefire encompassing Lebanon, that the Israeli occupation forces would remain "in the safe zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza for an indefinite period" and that these areas would be "cleared of their inhabitants, and that all terrorist infrastructure [...] including the houses of the villages on the line of contact that were used as terrorist strongholds, would be destroyed". [6]

Moreover, any future reconstruction process in Lebanon must take place under the full control of the Lebanese state and above all aim to "prevent funds from being disbursed to any entity, organization or person affiliated with non-state armed groups and to take available legal measures to prohibit the activities of any entity, organization or person of that type." This provision signals a willingness to continue attacks on civilian organizations linked to Hezbollah, such as the *Qard al-Hassan* institution or others such as the *Jihad al-Binaa* party's construction company, and goes far beyond the military component. Moreover, on 30 June, the member states of the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), founded in 2017 and bringing together the United States and the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait), announced a series of sanctions targeting several "key Hezbollah infrastructures", such as *al-Qard al-Hassan* and *Bayt al-Mal* (which had already been under US sanctions since 2007 and 2006 respectively). [7] Again, as was the case after the 2024 Israeli war against Lebanon, a potential future reconstruction process and an influx of financial aid to Lebanon is linked to the disarmament of Hezbollah and normalization with Israel.

Finally, the agreement stipulates that both parties "undertake to take measures in good faith showing positive intent, including the cessation of any hostile or prejudicial action within international political or legal bodies". In other words, it amounts to the renunciation of the Lebanese state – but not of its citizens or associations – to sue the Israeli government for the war crimes committed in Lebanon,

which cost the lives of thousands of civilians between the wars of 2024 and 2026 (more than 4,000 deaths in the 2024 war and, since the beginning of March 2026, more than 4,200 people have been killed and more than one million people have been forced to leave their homes), and have caused the destruction of tens of thousands of homes and dozens of localities. According to a study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Conseil national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) published in June 2026, southern Lebanon has suffered damage estimated at more than \$1 billion as of April 29, 2026, with more than 11,000 buildings totally destroyed for a total bill of about \$1.38 billion<sup>12</sup> while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has published an assessment of the damage to buildings in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, covering the period from 1 February to 14 April 2026, amounting to 146 buildings destroyed and 264 partially damaged, at an estimated cost of \$365 million.<sup>13</sup> This is in addition to the multiple destructions of the 2024 war, estimated at more than \$7 billion in direct damage, not including economic losses estimated at \$13 billion.

The objective of this framework agreement is clear: to ensure that the Lebanese army, under the leadership of its government, leads the disarmament of Hezbollah and marginalizes the Lebanese party in any future reconstruction process, all for the benefit of US and Israeli security and political interests.

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### **Submission to US and Israeli interests**

The content of the framework agreement reflects the deepening of the political orientation of a fraction of the Lebanese ruling class, represented by Lebanese president Joseph Aoun, his prime minister Nawaf Salam, and some other parties of the traditional Maronite right in favour of normalization with the state of Israel. Among them, the Lebanese Forces and *Kataeb*. This orientation consists of allying with Western and regional powers, in order to consolidate their power and reduce the influence of Hezbollah and its Iranian ally in Lebanon, seeking to disarm it, and to fight against its informal finan-

cial circuits and networks and even to weaken its network of civil organizations.

Supporting this orientation, the head of the Lebanese Forces (LF), Samir Geagea, hailed "the most important political initiative of the Lebanese state in half a century", judging that the agreement will allow Israeli withdrawal from the south and "get rid of the existence of armed organisations outside the state, first and foremost Hezbollah". [8]

The political orientation of this faction of the Lebanese ruling class, led by the president and prime minister, was strengthened following the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran and the latest Israeli war against Lebanon, counting in particular on a weakening of these two actors, or even a defeat for Tehran. However, the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran has dashed these hopes. This protocol stipulated, among other things, "the immediate and definitive cessation of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon", between the two countries and their allies and the creation of a "deconfliction cell" to consolidate the so-called ceasefire in the country.

Instead of seeking potential tactical and temporary coordination with Iran and other states in the region such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, to strengthen the Lebanese position in its negotiations with Israel under the sponsorship of the U.S. government, the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States and the inclusion of Lebanon in it were perceived as a threat by the Lebanese president and prime minister in their desire to consolidate their power against Hezbollah and its Iranian ally. Throughout the last Israeli war against Lebanon and the negotiations between the two actors, the Lebanese government has therefore worked to cut all ties with the negotiations between Iran and the United States.

Indeed, this faction of the Lebanese ruling class preferred to bet on a US-sponsored security and political agreement with Israel seeking to disarm Hezbollah without any real serious Israeli counter-

parts and guarantees, except for symbolic words about Lebanese sovereignty. All this in order to prevent Iran from including Lebanon in these negotiations, with the aim of protecting its main ally and agent of influence in Lebanon, Hezbollah, even in disregard of the rights of the Lebanese state and its sovereignty, as explained above. Taking advantage of this situation, the United States pressured the Lebanese authorities to obtain even more concessions for its Israeli ally and to serve its political interests.

Thus, while affirming since taking office in January 2025 that they want to achieve and ensure Lebanon's "sovereignty", and despite the limits to achieving such an objective<sup>16</sup>, the Lebanese president and his ruling allies have reinforced their political dependence on the United States. Not to mention that this strategy neglects the fact that Washington is not a neutral intermediary between Lebanon and Israel, quite the contrary. The occupations and wars of the Israeli occupation army against Lebanon are only possible with the support of Washington, as is the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. The US government, for example, did not put pressure on Israel during the previous ceasefire in November 2024. The Israeli occupation army has continued almost daily attacks on Lebanon, resulting in hundreds of deaths, dozens of abductions, thousands of injuries, and more than 15,000 ceasefire violations by the Israeli occupation forces, both by land, air and sea. In addition, Tel Aviv, with US support, has blocked any reconstruction in the south, including that of several border villages razed to the ground.

Moreover, the opposite is true: it was the US president who imposed the ceasefire with Iran, however fragile, and the reduction of Israeli violence in Lebanon, to which Netanyahu had to submit, not without reluctance. This is reflected in the statements of Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, who regretted the "link established between the Lebanese and Iranian fronts by Trump", following the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States announced in mid-June and

signed on 17 June, and which provides in its first article for a ceasefire in Lebanon. He added that "when President Trump linked the Iranian and Lebanese files, we stopped destroying buildings in Beirut. The link between the two fronts responds to an American interest, and it is one of the constraints of our partnership with the United States". [9]

In addition, the Lebanese government faces many obstacles and challenges in implementing the points of the framework agreement. Beyond the limits of the Lebanese army's capabilities and infrastructure, many military officials do not look favourably on this agreement and the process of disarming Hezbollah in the current political conditions, characterized by ongoing wars and occupations against Lebanon. The Lebanese army has not been spared from the Israeli occupying army's bombings and attacks, including the death of its members. Moreover, such a process against Hezbollah would also risk compromising the unity of the army, which is composed of more than a third of Shiites, and creating sectarian tensions and violence in the country. Its commander-in-chief, Rodolphe Haykal, has already made statements in the past opposing the use of force against Hezbollah, fearing a bloodbath and the division of the army.

Similarly, such an agreement, to go further, for example to become a real peace agreement as mentioned in the text, would need the approval of parliament, which would meet with the opposition of Hezbollah and Amal, but also probably with other groups concerned about the significant concessions made to Israel. Indeed, this framework agreement also meets with opposition within Lebanese society, which goes beyond Hezbollah and its ally Amal.

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#### ***Opposition to agreement goes beyond Hezbollah***

Hezbollah denounced the agreement, describing it as a "serious mistake", and its secretary general Naim Kassem deemed as "extremely dangerous" the condition of the complete disarmament of the party throughout Lebanese territory prior to any

Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. It "crosses all red lines and makes Lebanon a plaything in the hands of the Israeli enemy". He added that this agreement was "null and void". [10] The deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political bureau, Mahmoud Comati, assured that the party "will not allow its implementation" and would deal with it "by all possible means and methods". [11]

The Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and leader of the Amal movement, Nabih Berry, said that the Lebanon-Israel agreement was "contradictory and impossible to implement" because, in his view, it was contrary to all logic and out of step with Arab and international positions, and did not meet any of the conditions necessary for its success or implementation. [12] He added that "the main thing now is to restore the unity of the home front and to restore the unity of the home front. to reach a consensus among the Lebanese in order to prevent Israel from achieving its objectives, whether through war, division or internal confrontation".

Both parties welcomed the Iranian-American memorandum of understanding, and Iran's achievement of a ceasefire for Lebanon, which, while reducing the intensity of Tel Aviv's attacks, was regularly violated by the Israeli occupation army in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah representatives continue to insist that Tehran has "levers of pressure" on Washington, which in turn could pressure Israel to withdraw from Lebanon.

However, the agreement is not only opposed by Hezbollah and its ally Amal, but by other Lebanese political sectors. Druze leader and former PSP leader Walid Jumblatt described the agreement as "a capitulation to Israel" and regretted the "total omission" of the 1949 armistice agreement between Lebanon and Israel in the text of the framework agreement, as well as the use of the term "occupation." He concluded by calling for the formation of "a front of political opposition to this agreement". [13]

However, he qualified these remarks a few days later by declaring "we are not going to be part of a political coalition to bring down the text. We are not



going to support it either". [14] Other political actors have already voiced criticism of the agreement, such as the Free Patriotic Movement – and its leader Gebran Bassil has already spoken with Nabih Berri – the Armenian *Tashnag* party, and MPs from the Sunni community, including relatives of former prime minister Saad Hariri and others identified with the popular protests of 2019.

The faction of the Lebanese ruling class opposed to this framework agreement hopes to count on the support of several regional actors such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey, who do not wish to see an extension of US hegemony based mainly on the alliance with Israel and the United Arab Emirates in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region to the detriment of their interests. Some of these countries played a significant role in the negotiations to conclude the memorandum of understanding, or supported it, because the leaders of these states understood that a total defeat of Iran and a strengthening of Israeli influence in the region did not serve their interests. These leaders, who are also close allies of the United States and do not seek to challenge US hegemony in the region or to oppose a regional normalization of the state of Israel, with which they have official or unofficial relations, perceive Israel's warlike and expansionist policies as a source of instability and threats to their own national interests and regional influences. In the absence of communication on the subject, Saudi Arabia's position is still unclear regarding the framework agreement or how the kingdom wishes to approach it, unlike that of the United Arab Emirates, which has welcomed it. Similarly, the Gulf Cooperation Council, of which Riyadh is the most important player, issued a statement the day before the agreement welcoming the continuation of negotiations between Beirut and Tel Aviv and the possibility of a peace agreement.

The Lebanese Communist Party, for its part, said in a statement entitled "Uniting efforts to bring down the shameful Lebanese-Israeli agreement" that "the agreement signed in Washington between the Lebanese government delegation and Israel consti-

tutes a dangerous precedent of submission and capitulation, given the major concessions made by the Lebanese delegation. This agreement effectively endorses the continuation of the Zionist occupation of large parts of southern Lebanon, without any mention of a withdrawal or even a timetable." Moreover, the party also adds that the framework agreement "transforms the Zionist enemy into an ally with which to cooperate, and Hezbollah into an enemy to be attacked," which could lead to "an unacceptable internal conflict that only serves the interests of the Zionist enemy." [15]

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### ***Internal discord***

Following the conclusion of the framework agreement, some political tension was expressed by a modest demonstration in Beirut by Hezbollah and Amal supporters rejecting the agreement, or by the burning on the road leading to Beirut International Airport of signs supporting the government's position displaying "Lebanon First" and "Lebanon brings us together" with a Lebanese flag on a red background, which had replaced signs thanking Iran. These tensions are compounded by those accumulated during this last war, particularly among the Shiite populations against the Lebanese government.

In the following days, the various factions of the Lebanese ruling class appealed for civil peace in Lebanon not to be jeopardised. Nawaf Salam and Nabih Berry affirmed their rejection of "any form of discord" between the Lebanese and any "attempt at national division".

These remarks were followed by those of the deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political bureau, Mahmoud Comati, who considered that the agreement did not "merit" a mobilization in the streets of Hezbollah supporters. He also added that the party did not envisage, "in the near future", the resignation of its two ministers from Nawaf Salam's government. According to him, this decision aims to preserve "a thin thread" of communication and to show that Hezbollah "does not want a break or a total separation". [16]



However, these calls cannot hide the persistent tensions in the country that could erupt in the future. The deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political bureau, Comati, warned that "We continue to give them a chance and try to make them reconsider their mistake... If they persist in this path, as seems to be the case, and if they want to lead the country towards discord, destruction and instability, we know how to deal with it," without elaborating. [17]

This political and sectarian tension in the country of course serves the interests of Israel, which has a long history of exploiting these tensions, and would not mind the outbreak of sectarian clashes.

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### **Conclusion**

Many Lebanese politicians mentioned that this framework agreement reminded them of the 17 May 1983 agreement, signed between the Lebanese government chaired by Amine Gemayel and Israel and supposed to officially end the state of belligerence between the two countries, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and above all to entrench Lebanon in the pro-US and Israeli camp. However, this agreement was never implemented and was cancelled in February 1984, when the Israeli occupation never ended.

But even more dangerously, the content of this framework agreement is in many ways reminiscent of the relationship that governs the genocidal Israeli state and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Following the Oslo Accords in 1993, the PA gradually acted as a form of police for the benefit of Washington and Tel Aviv. So instead of leading to Palestinian liberation, this agreement represented a real capitulation and endorsed Israeli colonialism in historic Palestine, while betraying the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their land. On the other hand, this has allowed the occupation authorities to maintain their control over the entire Occupied Palestinian Territories and to develop

settlements. Moreover, Palestinian divisions are linked in particular to the consequences of the Oslo Accords and PA policies.

With each advance of Israeli expansionist colonial policies, supported by the United States and other Western powers, Tel Aviv deploys even more its murderous violence against the regional populations and extends its occupation of Lebanese and Syrian Palestinian territories, accompanied by policies of ethnic cleansing by transforming its territories into "no man's land". For example, shortly after the signing of the Lebanese-Israeli framework agreement, Tel Aviv intensified its attacks in southern Syria, specifically in Daraa province and the Yarmuk Basin, through incursion operations and expanding its occupation of Syrian territory. In Gaza, the genocide continues and the Israeli occupying forces have extended their occupation inside Palestinian territory, from 53% to 60% at the end of May, after the so-called truce reached in October 2025, while in the rest of the remaining territory, 90% of the inhabitants live in overcrowded and destitute IDP camps. On 28 May 2026, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had ordered the Israeli occupation army to take control of 70 percent of the enclave, while the next day, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said Israel was ready to set up three settlements in northern Gaza and should take over the rest of Gaza. All this is taking place with total impunity granted by the United States and the major Western powers.

In conclusion, neither in Lebanon, nor in Palestine, nor in Syria, nor in Iran, nor anywhere else, is the United States and its Israeli ally seeking democracy or the well-being of the local populations. Their goal is to impose mainly through violence a regional order dominated by Washington and Tel Aviv.

*1 July 2026*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Inprecor**.*

## COLOMBIA

# Colombia: in the eye of the storm

JEAN BATOU ·

**How do you analyse the surprising success of the far-right candidate Abelardo De la Espriella in the first round of the Colombian presidential election, which was held on 31 May? How can we explain the crisis of *Uribismo*, the low score of its candidate and the ongoing recomposition of the Colombian far right?**

Almost no one in Colombia expected a victory for the candidate Abelardo de la Espriella in the first round, on May 31. He was able to capture the political zeitgeist within large sectors that were bitter enemies of the peace process and opposed the policy of change proposed by President Petro. Similarly, some of these sectors have felt "aggrieved" — and I say this in quotation marks — by his policies of change. It is mainly the petty and middle bourgeoisie and, of course, the large groups of economic power in Colombia.

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In addition, De la Espriella has been financed, supported and aided by mafia groups. Let us remember that he has always been linked to these circles and, to top it all off, is supported by the Latin American and global far right, including the United States government.

This individual is a citizen of the United States; he also has Italian nationality, and has benefited from considerable funding for his campaign, as well as from the openness of the mass media, made available to him. In this way, he has managed to channel discontent with what they see as the continuation and deepening of the policy of reforms and changes defended by Iván Cepeda. They also resorted to

fear, lies and anti-communism, which continues to exert great influence in Colombia.

**What is your assessment of Gustavo Petro's years in office, the successes and failures of his policies?**

Gustavo Petro has succeeded in generating a great surge of motivation among the Colombian people, who have seen the arrival of a citizen who is able to interpret the needs for change of the moment. He came to power, also buoyed by the wave of the Havana peace agreement, which, if fully implemented, could have definitively changed the face of Colombia and restored dignity to life in the countryside, as well as to the poor and needy population of the country.

Gustavo Petro has managed to allocate more land to the poorest than the previous two presidents. We are talking about one and a half million hectares of land distributed during his term of office, mainly to indigenous and peasant organizations and, to a lesser extent, to ethnic organizations and female heads of households.

He has also managed to allocate 20,000 hectares of land to the signatories of the peace agreement, as well as to launch some free housing projects in some territorial zones, including 125 homes that will be handed over to their recipients on 24 June in the Georgina Ortiz territorial zone, in San Juan de Arama, in the department of Meta. These are some of the successes of his presidential term.

We can also add the regularization of the ownership of 2 million hectares of land and the progress made in the framework of a modern multipurpose cadastre. Similarly, in the area of social investment, we can note progress in the areas of education, the elderly (increase in pensions) and the minimum

wage, which is due to increase by 23% from January 2026.

Similarly, and despite all the difficulties that persist in the field of health, he has succeeded in gradually removing those who, for many years, had taken over the system for private purposes, and in establishing a return to public management, beneficial to the disadvantaged.

In addition, Gustavo Petro has managed to change Colombia's image in the world and to highlight issues as important as global warming, the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, the preservation of the environment and respect for human rights.

He has condemned Israel's aggression against the people of Gaza, opposed American foreign policy on many issues, and worked tirelessly for Latin American and Caribbean unity.

These are important aspects, to which we could add the fact that the country's economy has grown, especially in the food production sector. In rural areas, it grew by 15%. He has also created a new climate in terms of the relationship with social movements.

The incidence of enforced disappearances and torture has also decreased; There has been an overall decrease in crimes and massacres, which does not mean that all regions of the country have benefited from this respite. There are regions where we cannot deny that violence persists and is spreading, but we obviously cannot ignore the progress of this government.

### **And what is your assessment of the failures of his policy?**

Mistakes were made in the management of certain aspects, especially with regard to President Petro's "total peace" policy, which was perceived by many as a failure on all fronts, because a large part of the funds obtained to finance the final Havana agreement was allocated to the policy of dialogue that the government wanted to carry out with other armed groups. groups that had not yet expressly signed a peace commitment.

In addition, the population has felt deeply aggrieved in these territories due to the upsurge in violence and the growing presence of groups that economically control large areas of the national territory. There is pressure, fear, a feeling of failure. All these situations have therefore allowed the far right to reorganise itself and De la Espriella to gain supporters.

This momentum has also been fostered by the global recomposition of the new order established following the operation against Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. Then, by the intervention, the bombings and the assassination of the Iranian president. All these situations mean that the far right is experiencing a new boom in these sectors, and this was expressed in this direct vote in favour of the candidate De la Espriella.

### **To what extent has Petro been able to rely on popular mobilizations?**

Gustavo Petro was able to rely very much on the support of the trade union movement, the indigenous movement and the popular movement to defend a large part of the reforms he carried out, because he had to face a hostile parliament. It should not be forgotten that he came to power also on the basis of alliances with part of the centre and even with certain sectors of the right, to whom he initially gave a place in the government, but this was an almost unavoidable step at the beginning of his term. Later, he realized that within the government itself, some people were working to sabotage the various development projects and achievements of his administration, a situation that still persists today, especially in the regions, in some ministries and in agencies of the Colombian state. In some of these areas, there has been a lack of people loyal to the government line.

The other element that has affected him a lot is the internal factors of corruption. He complained about it himself, because many of the people he trusted betrayed him. These are factors that, in one way or another, have also influenced the results of his term in office.

**How do you explain the result of his successor, Iván Cepeda, who came second in the first round of the elections?**

Iván Cepeda undoubtedly ran an admirable campaign, but unfortunately the team around him functioned as a kind of iron circle, almost impenetrable and too exclusive, which prevented a large number of people, especially those linked to the centre and certain sectors of the right, from voting for him.

He was accused of everything, resorting to defamation, slander and lies, fear, disinformation, and waging a counter-campaign focused on presenting him as a guerrilla, as a man who combines all forms of struggle, as a man who, if he came to power, could lead Colombia to communism and "Castro-Chavismo". All this in a country that is deeply conservative and fearful of change.

**To what do you attribute the climate of violence that reigns in the country, ten years after the signing of the 2016 agreements that led to the abandonment of the armed struggle by the FARC-EP fighters and the launch of a peace process?**

Petro has always criticized the Havana peace agreement. He never appreciated it at its true value. He described it as a "little peace". However, the truth is that in Havana, those of us who were there had pleaded for all the different guerrillas to be involved in the process, with the possibility of including several negotiating tables within the same process; in other words, we argued that simultaneous discussion tables could be opened with the ELN in order to reach agreements, but this idea did not come to fruition. The same was true for those who had been extradited to the United States and who still exercised, or exercise, influence over vast sectors linked to paramilitarism and illegal economies in our country.

In addition, in this context, Iván Cepeda went to the United States, with the authorization of the Colombian and American governments, to meet with the groups that held real power in Colombia

from there, as is the case with Salvatore Mancuso and other paramilitary leaders. Cepeda was accompanied, at that time, by the former senator, now deceased, Piedad Córdoba, two people who fought for peace in this country. This peace was not achieved with them. In the end, it was with us that peace was concluded.

Petro then spoke of the demobilization of the ELN in three months. For example, Danilo Rueda, the High Commissioner for Peace at the time, even proposed to start talks, not only with the ELN, but also with ordinary criminals and other armed actors; This proposal turned out to be a real imbroglio, because discussions were initiated without each of these groups having been previously characterized: what did they represent? What did they have? What was their human composition? Their territorial influence? What strength did they have? And what was their political-ideological orientation?

As a result, these armed groups, strengthened by the status granted to them by the authorities, reorganized themselves on the ground, which was not difficult given the weakness of the state in these territories, places where it had never managed to establish itself through social investment, nor to implement the Havana Peace Agreement. And since some changes had already occurred since the time of the Duque government, this trend continued; the president then had the idea of dismantling the High Council for Peace in the country, and replaced it with an Implementation Unit, which had neither its own resources, nor specific political weight, nor functions with a real link to the whole process under way. Of course, this has weakened the entire architecture of the peace process.

Three years ago, during a visit to the Mesetas region of the Meta department, the president promised to re-establish the High Council for Peace, but this has not been possible so far, and it will not be possible in the short time he has left. [2]

**Has the peace process been seriously compromised?**

Of course, we can mention the non-compliance with the six points of the peace agreement, because this agreement can only work in its entirety. For example, the fight against drugs or illicit crops is directly linked to point 1, which refers to comprehensive rural reform; In other words, no point can be dissociated from the others.

Similarly, there are delays, among other things, in the implementation of territorial development plans, the initial structure of which envisaged that these investments would benefit entire regions through high-impact development plans aimed at bringing about change: creation of new communication routes, bridges, establishment of health, education and housing services. High-impact social investment plans that promote regional integration, benefiting Black, Indigenous and peasant communities, as well as female heads of households. And that, unfortunately, has not been realized.

This does not mean that everything has been a failure, but the objectives have not been achieved, the indicators have not been respected and the monitoring has been lacking; In addition, there is the rise in corruption and the pressure exerted by the groups that persist and have developed in Colombia in rural areas, which has led large sections of the population of these regions to live in a climate of uncertainty and disillusionment.

To take another example, in many areas, a thousand, two thousand, three thousand hectares of land were handed over to the communities, but no economic investment came to support their productive projects, because many of these investments exceeded 20,000 or 35,000 million pesos, and there was supposedly no money for these types of investments. These are situations that are still waiting for a response and that will certainly continue under the next government, whatever it may be.

It must be understood that the Havana peace agreement was not just a government policy, but a state policy, which also has legal repercussions, be-

cause Colombia has enshrined it in the constitutional body and, moreover, in a unilateral statement by Dr. Juan Manuel Santos before the United Nations.

This agreement also has the support of the international community and the original documents are kept in Switzerland as a special agreement, which means that the agreement must be respected; otherwise, it would have repercussions at the international level, particularly with regard to its application.

Unfortunately, at present, on a global scale, respect for treaties, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of peoples is experiencing a total deterioration, a perverse reversal due to the fact that those who are strong impose their conditions.

**How do you explain the existence of FARC dissidents who have resumed the armed struggle? What do they represent? What does the ELN represent? What is your assessment of the transformation of the FARC into a political party under the name of *Comunes*?**

I would say that there was no real dissent within the FARC to resume the armed struggle. Before the signing of the agreement, in 2016, we organized the national conference of guerrillas in the department of Meta, also in the Llanos del Yarí. All the former fronts, columns, companies and urban structures of the guerrilla organization were represented, and the draft agreement that we had reached in Havana with the government was unanimously adopted. Once this document was approved, it was signed between us as an agreement that the entire guerrilla organization had agreed upon; There were no dissenters, that is, no one stood up to express their disagreement. Among the guerrillas, support was unanimous.

At the end of the conference, the commanders returned to their home areas, where their camps were located, and that was where some dissented, but there were very few of them: people abandoned or betrayed the peace agreement they were signing at

this time. Others were subjected to harassment and politically motivated schemes to obtain their extradition, orchestrated and manipulated by the then Attorney General, Néstor Humberto Martínez. This is the case of Óscar Montero, known as "El Paisa", Jesús Santrich and Iván Márquez himself, who were forced to take up arms again.

It should be noted that at the moment, of the 14,000 guerrillas who signed the peace agreement, more than 95% of us are respecting the commitment made and the word given to the Colombian people. This is, let's say, the highest number of guerrillas per capita who keep their word and respect the agreements, if we refer to the various agreements concluded between states and guerrillas around the world.

Similarly, it has been shown that we were the guerrilla organization that handed over the most weapons: 2.8 weapons per demobilized man. It was then that other types of groupings appeared, which are no longer based on the ideological, political and programmatic principles of the guerrillas born in the 60s, but which are made up of people using the name "guerrilla" for economic purposes, for their personal profit, and who erect money as a god.

This phenomenon undoubtedly also affected the comrades or former comrades of the ELN; indeed, in many regions, both those who have defected from the peace process and the ELN are responsible for about 80 per cent of the assassinations committed against peace signatories.

It must be said that this experience, this transition from an armed movement to a political party, was quite interesting, even if it had already been done in El Salvador and Guatemala. In Colombia, the experience was different, since it was possible to recall the events that took place between the 1970s and the 1980s, when the political platform of the Patriotic Union was launched, which was born thanks to the agreements concluded at the time between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP. This platform had suffered the systematic elimination of its activists. This extermination has continued and

extended; in addition, there was stigmatization from the president himself as well as from senior state or government officials.

This is particularly the case with the statements of the director of the National Protection Unit, Mr. Augusto Rodríguez, who publicly states that those of us who are part of the *Comunes* political party are, in fact, people who are "holding hostage" this entity of protection. In addition, the latter is trying to unilaterally introduce changes that are totally prohibited or that are not part of the Havana Peace Agreement.

These are very complex situations. Similarly, governments — I'm talking about three governments — all of whom systematically violated the Peace Agreement in one way or another, trying to change its letter and spirit and give it the interpretation they thought was correct. [3]

However, the Constitutional Court called on the state to rectify certain unconstitutional positions and shortcomings vis-à-vis the signatories to the peace; for example, in the area of security, where it does not respect its commitments. The Court issued a series of orders and set deadlines for the Petro government to remedy this. However, this was not possible, and here, it is like in colonial times: "we obey, but we do not apply".

It has been a very unequal fight, which will continue, because we have just lost our legal status, which is a major political blow in view of the deaths, the assassinations, the lockdown, the threats and the displacement that we have suffered during these years of reintegration [4] But the important thing is that we do not lose our status as High Contracting Party to the final Havana Peace Agreement, which goes beyond the mere constitution of a political party or movement.

We reserve this status for actions of a legal nature, because there have been territories that we have not been able to enter to campaign, because we have been designated as a military target and where we have been denied the opportunity to be on an

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| equal footing with other movements and political parties that exist in Colombia. | "" |
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## MIDDLE EAST

# Palestine and Lebanon are burning

ÉDOUARD SOULIER ·

**It is very hot in Gaza, and Israel continues to bomb despite the "ceasefire". Since it came into force, the Israeli army has killed an average of one child per day. In Lebanon, since the ceasefire of 2 April, it has also killed 4,000 people. Israeli ceasefires have this particularity: Israel continues to fire, while its victims are ordered to cease.**

## ***"All of Lebanon should burn"***

"For every tear shed by an Israeli mother, a thousand Lebanese mothers should cry. All of Lebanon should burn." This was the message published by Ben Gvir, Israel's Minister of Security, after the death of several soldiers from his army in southern Lebanon. By repeatedly flouting the ceasefire, Israel has tried to establish strongholds there. But, as it has done for several years, he is struggling to maintain them in the face of Lebanese resistance. This is not limited to Hezbollah: it also involves other movements and, more broadly, displaced populations, whose families have been murdered and whose homes have been destroyed.

## ***An army unaccustomed to human losses***

Israel is not known to be an army that seeks direct combat: it prefers to rely heavily on its air force. This is also why it is not used to losing soldiers.

Nor is Israel used to opposition from the United States — especially in recent years — and the "Lebanon" clause of the ceasefire with Iran partly ties its hands.

In the same message, Ben Gvir insisted: "With all due respect to the Americans, Israel must send a clear message to the world that the blood of our sons and the safety of our citizens are not nego-

tiable. All of Lebanon should burn. Our supreme duty is to protect Israeli citizens and soldiers of the [Israeli army], and this commitment takes precedence over all other considerations." Yet he speaks of soldiers killed in a tank, on a territory that is not theirs.

The same was true at the United Nations, where the Israeli ambassador held up a plastic drone, presented as the weapon of "terrorists" against his soldiers. In fact, the use of small drones — a tactic successfully employed by Ukraine against Russian infantry — is putting the Israeli army in difficulty. The latter had to release \$700 million urgently to respond to this new guerrilla tactic.

## ***"Erase": the watchword of total domination***

Ben Gvir again: "I say to the Prime Minister, especially during our meetings: for every tear shed by an Israeli mother, a thousand Lebanese mothers should cry. Enough of this ping-pong game. In the Middle East, measured responses and restraint are not won. We have to go wild. Clear. Defeat terrorism."

"Erase", "go wild": it is difficult to find words that express a more clearly genocidal desire than those of this sinister individual. Israel has been blacklisted as a country that sexually abuses its prisoners. However, this does not prevent European states from continuing to support it. Associations can even organise a festival of Israeli music in Paris in complete tranquillity, with the slogan: "supporting Israel is an act of resistance".

But there are also other issues. According to Netanyahu: "What has to be done is to have alternative routes instead of going through the choke points of the [Strait of] Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb in order to have the flow of oil... Just have

oil pipelines, gas pipelines going west through the Arabian Peninsula right up to Israel, right up to our Mediterranean ports, and you've just done away with the choke points forever."

In other words, Israel wants to become an economic bridge to the West. But this presupposes the normalization of its relations in the region and, above

all, the absolute imposition of its domination. You don't run an oil pipeline through a permanent war zone. To allow this, we must first "erase".

*23 June 2026*

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

## BOLIVIA

# Popular revolt grows in Bolivia

PATRICK GUILLAUDAT ·

**Elected with the support of some former *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) voters, around a program of "modernization" and "efficiency", Paz, in office since 8 November 2025, quickly adopted austerity measures, betting on the sluggishness of the social movement after the collapse of the left in the elections.**

## *A plan of anti-social measures*

As of 17 December 2025, a decree abolished subsidies for petrol and diesel, causing tariffs to rise by 86% and 160% respectively, with the immediate consequence of an increase in all consumer prices. This text also facilitated the establishment of multinationals in the exploitation of mineral resources, agro-industry and infrastructure. A first mobilization allowed a partial retreat. Then the law of 10 April 2026 was adopted, which, by reversing the 1953 agrarian reform, encouraged the grabbing of small farmers' land by large landowners.

## *The largest social movement of the 21st century*

The COB trade union federation, together with the Tupac Katari federation and the indigenous women's organization Bartolina Sisa, resumed the mobilization at the end of April and called for the blocking of roads, thus isolating the country's main cities, and multiplied calls for strikes. Faced with the vigour of this second movement, Paz revived the classic rhetoric by criminalizing social organizations, calling them terrorists, denouncing a pseudo-conspiracy instigated by Evo Morales, and issuing arrest warrants for the main leaders.

This social movement, uninterrupted since the end of April, is demanding wage increases to compensate for soaring prices, and the end of the country's opening up to multinationals, under the slogan

"Bolivia is not for sale". Despite the repression, with at least seven deaths and many arrests, the movement is still holding. However, a law establishing a state of emergency has been passed, ensuring total impunity for the armed and repressive forces.

## *An uncertain outcome*

The COB is divided between an executive secretary who called for Paz's resignation while several CODs (departmental branches of the COB) rejected this slogan (such as the one in Santa Cruz). But for a few days now, the COB has presented an 8-point plan to the government as part of the opening of the "dialogue". As for the Tupac Katari federation, which is very powerful in El Alto, and the Bartolina Sisa organization, they have taken the lead in mobilizing indigenous peoples and peasants.

The Paz government, divided on what to do, with a vice-president who has condemned the measures it has taken, is wielding the carrot by demanding to negotiate while repressing, imprisoning demonstrators and forcing the lifting of roadblocks. In order to divide the movement, it has succeeded in signing a number of separate agreements with a few local unions, such as on 18 June with the Colquiri miners' union, or with transport companies in La Paz two days before.

The traditional right, taking advantage of the crisis, is raising the ante. Former president Jorge Quiroga called for the arrest of the movement's leaders and activists, who were described as terrorists and even drug traffickers, and demanded the effective and immediate establishment of a state of emergency to "free the Bolivian people taken hostage".

## *Solidarity is urgent*

If the government is staking its survival on this social struggle, it benefits from a favourable international environment, supported by Trump and the far-right leaders of the continent who are pushing Paz to put down the revolt in order to turn the page on the years of the MAS. Moreover, as a sign of the United States' interference, an agreement to combat delinquency and drug trafficking was signed between Bolivia and the United States on 16 April.

Our solidarity is all the more important because a social victory in Bolivia would be an encouragement to the struggle for the peoples and workers of the Latin American states, especially the neighbouring ones, plunged into the "libertarian" night.

*23 June 2026*

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

# FEATURES

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



## IMPERIALISM

# The imperialism of our time

BENJAMIN BÜRBAUMER · 27 July 2026

## How would you define imperialism?

Generally, the best-known characterization of imperialism is as a specific stage of capitalism, as found in Lenin's pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Today, it has the drawback of being too precise, too influenced by the particular features of capitalism a hundred years ago. That was a strength for the political analysis of the time, but it is difficult to transpose to the contemporary period. For although the fundamental traits of capitalism remain the same, the mode of production has nevertheless undergone a series of transformations—especially the development of global value chains, the formation of a world market under American supervision, the emergence of a pro-American fraction of the bourgeoisie in Western Europe, and the end of formal colonial empires—which make Lenin's text difficult to use for contemporary analysis.

This is why a more abstract, more general definition of imperialism seems preferable to me. It can be found in Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital*, another classic text on imperialism. Luxemburg defines imperialism there as "the political expression of the process of capitalist accumulation manifesting itself through competition among national capitalisms." She thus sets out the fundamental dynamic of imperialism: in any country, the ordinary functioning of capitalism regularly generates tensions. If, instead of overcoming these contradictions within national borders, the government of the country in question projects them onto the world stage through coercive actions, then we are dealing with an imperialist dynamic.

Bringing to light this mechanism that runs from capital accumulation to international conflict is the crucial contribution of the classical theorists of imperialism. It is not unique to Luxemburg; Lenin,

Hilferding, and Bukharin applied the same reasoning, but Luxemburg succeeded in synthesizing the approach into a concise definition that is abstract enough to remain fully relevant today.

Understanding this mechanism triggered by capital accumulation is crucial because it gives analysis a clear compass. In the event of an international conflict, the first question should concern the tensions manifesting themselves in the capitalism of the aggressor country. By taking social relations into account in the genesis of international tensions, the theory of imperialism differs from mainstream, state-centred approaches to international relations. These approaches reduce social movements to impotence in the face of war, which they treat as the exclusive affair of states. By contrast, the theory of imperialism takes as its starting point the contradictions of capitalism in the aggressor country, and thus also emphasizes that every coercive action is preceded by a particular relationship of forces. And that relationship can be changed. This observation shows that war is not only a matter of gigantic war machines and general staffs. The labour movement, and civil society more broadly, have leverage over the phenomenon.

## Are there different conceptions of imperialism?

Since the first wave of debates on imperialism at the beginning of the twentieth century, several conceptions of imperialism have coexisted. Typically, the inter-imperialist conception of Lenin, Luxemburg, and Bukharin entails a strong critique of Kautsky's post-imperialist approach. Kautsky believed that the capitalists of each great power could overcome their conflicts in order to form a great worldwide alliance of bourgeoisies capable of exploiting workers more effectively. Conversely, the work of Lenin and especially that of Luxemburg



and Bukharin shows that the capitalists of each country resemble one another—they chase after profit—and that precisely this similarity leads them to oppose their counterparts on the other side of the border.

During the second wave of debates in the 1960s and 1970s, similar dividing lines can be observed, with Kautsky's heirs—for example Richard Sklar—emphasizing the transnational aspects of capitalism, and the heirs of the inter-imperialist approach, such as Jacques Valier and Ernest Mandel, highlighting tensions among great powers. Nevertheless, a new approach, which may be described as super-imperialist, also emerged in the writings of Nicos Poulantzas, who at the time had read a great deal of dependency theory in its Marxist and structuralist variants. Poulantzas's central argument was to stress the singularity of the U.S. state, which emerged from the two world wars as an unrivalled superpower. It is unique in terms of economic performance and military power, but also because American capitalism succeeded in reproducing itself and enriching itself within other capitalist social formations, especially in Western Europe, while disorganizing the national bourgeoisies of the countries concerned. As a result, Western Europe has become increasingly integrated into American capitalism and has lost its capacity for independent action. The potential for violent confrontation between the United States and Western European countries is thus drastically reduced. This does not mean that imperialist wars disappear, but they are mainly waged on the periphery of world capitalism.

During the most recent wave of debates, which took place in the 2000s following the invasion of Iraq, the three positions—inter-imperialist, super-imperialist, and post-imperialist—reappeared. Through Toni Negri and Michael Hardt's book *Empire*, the post-imperialist current then enjoyed surprising popularity. Surprising because their claim that imperialism had ended collided with the reality of the invasion. Since then, the multiplication of imperialist wars has definitively discredited the post-impe-

rialist approach. The contemporary debate therefore focuses above all on the persistent singularity of U.S. imperialism—emphasized in particular by authors such as Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin—and on the importance of tensions between the United States and other powers such as France, Germany, Russia, and China; here one may think of contributions by Claude Serfati or Alex Callinicos.

Finally, I would add that there is a difference between the theory of imperialism and dependency theory that is often ignored. The former emphasizes how the functioning of capitalism leads the great powers to resort to coercion against other countries, while the latter highlights how, despite their formal independence, former colonies remain underdeveloped precisely because of their insertion into world capitalism. In other words, imperialism traces the conflict among great powers; dependency highlights the economic mechanisms that lead to the underdevelopment of peripheral countries and therefore to the persistence of inequalities among countries. The two theories complement each other, and the phenomena they study may succeed and complement one another, but each concerns a different object: one concerns the consequences of capital accumulation for countries of the centre, the other the consequences of the same process for peripheral countries.

### **What are the characteristics of imperialism today?**

It seems to me that the super-imperialist approach finely traces the particular role of the United States in the global configuration since 1945, and even more specifically since the 1970s. It also shows that the formation of globalization is a process under U.S. supervision. The argument that foreign direct investment by U.S. firms in Western Europe largely disorganized national bourgeoisies and promoted the emergence of an internal pro-American bourgeoisie is convincing. It helps explain why European countries submit to Washington's policies, even when Trump imposes a highly unequal trade treaty—as was the case in July 2025—that directly weakens the externally oriented accumula-

tion regimes of a number of European countries. It also helps explain why European countries are firmly on the side of the United States in its rivalry with China.

In China, by contrast, such an internal pro-American bourgeoisie was never able to emerge, because since the full return to capitalism, carried out under the aegis of the liberal fraction of the Chinese Communist Party at the end of the 1970s, foreign capital has been subject to tight control and the links between Chinese capitalists and the CCP remain powerful. Thus, a rival to the United States has formed within globalisation. This is the illustration par excellence of the uneven and combined nature of capitalist development, and this fact lends credibility to the inter-imperialist approach. Indeed, like any capitalist country, China faces contradictions. Unlike most countries, China has the means to try to externalise these contradictions through the massive export of goods and capital, which places it on the path toward confrontation with the United States. In the inter-imperialist rivalry between China and the United States, we therefore find the dynamic already identified by Luxemburg.

Nevertheless, the antagonism between Washington and Beijing is not only about flows—of capital and goods—but more broadly about the physical, digital, monetary, technical, and military infrastructures of the world market. It is in all these domains that their antagonism can be observed and its depth measured. Thus we can see that the central stake of their antagonism is simple: control of global capitalism. At present, the United States supervises it, but China aims to replace it with a Sino-centred capitalism. Finally, I would add that the China/U.S. rivalry is highly asymmetrical. The only domain in which China is seriously catching up with the United States is the digital sphere. In the other infrastructures, the United States remains far ahead.

**What are sub-imperialisms or regional imperialisms?**

First of all, I would point out that the Kautskyian idea that there is a pact between Putin and Trump, or a Trump-Xi-Putin mafia-like complicity to better exploit workers and nature on a world scale, overlooks the real functioning of global capitalism. This ultra-imperialist reading regularly returns to the debate at the time of meetings among these heads of state. It relies on the announcements that come out of such summits. By giving crucial importance to decision-makers' statements, instead of reading their positions through the contradictions of their respective social formations, these analyses prioritize form over substance. It is an attempt to understand international relations through the façade of the great-power leaders' momentary self-representation.

That is a dead end. For this reading ignores that, fundamentally, capital accumulation drives them toward confrontation. And even without knowing precisely the political-economic dynamics at work, anyone can see that China provides intelligence to Iran enabling it to target the military equipment of the United States and its allies, and that the United States imposes large-scale technological sanctions on China and cuts Russia off from the dollar's monetary infrastructure. Thus, even without mastering the contradictions of capitalism that explain these hostile acts, one can easily see that accomplices would not treat one another in this way. There is therefore no complicity.

This clarification allows us to move on to the question of secondary imperialisms—secondary insofar as, in terms of power, the United States remains today an unrivalled imperialism. This fact must be the starting point of any analysis of the world situation. Then, given that imperialism—beyond representing an abstract and general dynamic—is a practice aimed at externalising the contradictions of a given country's capitalism, every capitalist country is a latent imperialist country. Yet only a handful of countries actually have the means to make other countries pay for the tensions of their capitalism. That is how imperialist powers can be identified. One may think, for example, of France, the United

Kingdom, China, and Russia; and with its massive remilitarization, Germany is once again joining this very exclusive club.

The concept of sub-imperialism is difficult to handle. It may be understood as a synonym for secondary imperialism, but that is not the meaning Ruy Mauro Marini gave it in his excellent study of Brazil in the 1960s. What he calls sub-imperialism is the strategy of a fraction of the bourgeoisie of an underdeveloped country that consists in placing that country's economy at the service of large foreign monopolies by helping them sell their production on the world market. Strictly speaking, this concept belongs more to dependency theory than to the theory of imperialism.

**Does Trump's return to power, with his bellicose and interventionist policy, redefine the concept and nature of U.S. imperialism?**

Trump must first be situated within the long history of U.S. imperialism. He faces the same contradictions as his predecessors and largely pursues the same policies. True, during Trump's second term, the United States has already dropped more bombs on other countries than during Joe Biden's term, but Biden bombed more than Trump did during his first term. We are therefore witnessing a radicalizing continuity. Nevertheless, Trump's singularity must be acknowledged. He is more aggressive than his predecessors, but this is not so much a question of the individual, or even of pathology—the idea that "Trump is crazy"—as it is the result of the intensification of the contradictions of capital accumulation in the United States.

This intensification materializes through a double contradiction that already existed under Biden. But the longer it remains unresolved, the more it calls for drastic measures. First, the economic policies driven by Donald Trump have greatly exacerbated inequalities and brought the crisis of purchasing power to the forefront of political debate—a crisis that already existed under Biden and ultimately caused Kamala Harris's defeat in the last presidential election. The problem is now all the more acute

for U.S. workers because their real wages are still below the level of January 2021. The cost-of-living problem is accelerating Trump's decline in popularity, and Zoran Mamdani's election as mayor of New York is the first sign of the politically explosive character of this contradiction. The second contradiction facing the Trump administration concerns globalisation. The U.S.-led drive toward globalisation made it possible to reverse the decline in the profit rate of American companies in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, however, globalisation is becoming less and less profitable for U.S. capital, notably because of the technological upgrading of Chinese capital. From the standpoint of the United States, globalisation thus appears less and less functional.

To overcome this double contradiction, Trump relies on imperialist aggression. The bombings of Caracas and the kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro, followed by a profound reorganization of Venezuela's economic policy around Delcy Rodríguez in favour of foreign capital, were intended to overcome the double contradiction. That was the Trumpist strategy. By gaining access to the country's rich oil resources, a significant increase in oil supply was supposed to occur in the short term. For U.S. consumers, this mechanism was supposed to translate immediately into lower prices at the pump. In the absence of wage increases, the reduction of a compulsory expense for tens of millions of Americans was meant to dissipate the issue of the high cost of living—at least until the midterm elections in the fall. For U.S. capital, the aggression against Venezuela promised nothing less than access to the world's largest oil reserves and a weakening of China. Strengthened by complete success in Venezuela, the United States is reproducing the same approach toward Iran. Yet the latter's political and military stability had been underestimated, to the point of producing a war with global repercussions that amounts to an attack on the purchasing power of workers around the world.

**Do you think U.S. imperialism is in decline?**

The weakening of the United States is obvious. In my book *China/United States*, I sketched the idea

of a hegemony trap, which corresponds to a situation in which the hegemon, weakened, alters the previously carefully balanced mix of consent and coercion in favour of the latter. The militarization of international practices reassures the hegemon because it produces immediate effects—it impresses others—which, moreover, are entirely at the discretion of the power implementing it. By contrast, reinvesting in relations with foreign governments and populations through a charm offensive can prove laborious and certainly takes much more time, with no guarantee of success. The American military escalation is precisely the reflection of this trap. As the United States finds it increasingly difficult to elicit the spontaneous adherence of the rest of the world to its global supervision, it is engaging in a headlong rush.

Under Trump, the decline in the United States' popularity around the world has accelerated. Moreover, his openly predatory approach—threats, unequal trade treaties, forced investments—indicates that he cares little about his country's reputation. Under these conditions, it is difficult to claim to embody a desirable world order within which subordinate countries have prospects for stability and development. In 2025, this approach led to a series of bombings in Iran, Yemen, Somalia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Nigeria, but a threshold was crossed with the kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro. American hegemony has metamorphosed into American domination.

Why distinguish, following Gramsci, between domination and hegemony? From an operational standpoint, domination is a sign of weakness, but it does not signal the imminent decline of the United States. It shows that the American superpower is becoming more fragile. American global domination can last as long as it is not contested, but the day it is contested, it will collapse quickly. By contrast, global hegemony, precisely because it is firmly anchored in governments and civil societies around the world, is immunised against the risk of abrupt collapse. Before such a collapse, the world risks sinking into an intensification of violent con-

flicts, and the United States is clearly preparing for this.

At present, the United States alone accounts for 37 per cent of global military spending. Trump has announced a gigantic 50 per cent increase, which he can rapidly deploy around the world thanks to a dense network of military bases. In this respect, it should be noted that the war against Iran mobilizes a quantity of U.S. forces far smaller than other operations in the region. The United States therefore still has significant room for escalation. In addition, Trump has obtained an explosion in military spending from his allies in Europe. As multipliers of American power, these allies, by hastening to attribute primary responsibility for the war to Iran, lend credibility to the Trumpist claim that Europeans are free riders on U.S. military protection. This legitimizes future imperialist adventures in support of the United States. Thus, despite the failure of the war in Iran, imperialist aggressions appear increasingly attractive.

**For part of the international left, the only imperialism is that of the United States. What do you think?**

Insofar as imperialism is an outgrowth of capitalism, no capitalist country can be considered anti-imperialist by nature. In the cases of China and Russia, moreover, one can easily trace how their governments seek to externalise the contradictions of their domestic capitalism by engaging in coercive international actions. Thus, an imperialism can be detected and denounced. As for the peripheral countries mentioned, I would simply point out that opposition to the United States is not a marker of progressivism; but it is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that such opposition can often help explain why these countries fail to establish genuine progressivism over the long term. This is, in fact, one of the major insights of dependency theory.

In addition, the question of orders of magnitude seems crucial to me. The destructive capacity of the United States is incomparably greater than that of

all other imperialisms. This observation resonates with an idea Rosa Luxemburg expressed in her critique of Jean Jaurès's *The New Army*. She stresses that the first task of anti-imperialism is to block the material power of the development of world capitalism. Insofar as the United States supervises globalisation, a particular critique must be directed at this imperialism. At the present moment, when the imperialist aggression against Iran is producing an inflation crisis worldwide and preparing an agricultural crisis, the situation seems particularly conducive to stressing that imperialism is costly for workers. The high cost of living caused by the United States and supported by its allies in Europe and elsewhere can be a lever for mass anti-war mobilization that speaks directly to populations. Insofar as imperialism has immediate negative consequences for the wallets of populations around the world, there is a unique and concrete opportunity for mobilization here.

Finally, I would mention that Luxemburg also criticizes the opposition between offensive war and defensive war promoted by Jaurès. Rather than asking only which country is the aggressor, she invites us—in full consistency with the fundamental approach of the Marxist theory of imperialism—to analyse the overall conflict dynamic by taking as a starting point the tensions underlying accumulation. This dynamic does not always follow a Manichaeian pattern. One need only think of the prehistory of the war in Ukraine: both Russia and the European Union were trying to emerge from crisis through external orientation. They therefore both launched mutually exclusive free-trade treaty projects, which aimed, among other things, to exploit workers and resources in Ukraine. This in no way erases the imperative of specifically denouncing Russian aggression—for the question of aggression obviously matters—but it makes it possible to understand that the European Union also bears re-

sponsibility for the conflict. Behind these observations by Luxemburg lies, in fact, what Henri Lefebvre later formalised, drawing on Lenin's political theory, as a distinction between cause and reason. Causes are objective and blind, whereas reasons belong to conscious action. In other words, Luxemburg invites us to move beyond an exclusive focus on the reasons for international conflict—which lies at the heart of the liberal representation of wars—and also to take into account political-economic dynamics that lie outside the self-representation or clear consciousness of political decision-makers.

A practical implication of these considerations is to recognize that the immense remilitarisation of European countries is in no way defensive. This can be observed superficially by noting that, according to the latest data (2024), only the United States has military spending higher than that of the European NATO countries. The military spending of these European countries is three times higher than Russia's, even though Russia has been militarizing heavily since the invasion of Ukraine. Conversely, before that invasion, Russia's military spending was ten times that of Ukraine, and yet Russia is struggling to advance. But the theory of imperialism offers a deeper analysis: mired in a profound economic slowdown rooted both in the perpetual austerity inscribed in the treaties and in the generalised exhaustion of capitalism's dynamic, European countries want to give themselves the means to seize by force the meagre remaining profits to be made on a global scale. Militarisation does not prepare peace; it prepares war. Demilitarisation can prevent it while opening broader prospects for social transformation.

24 May 2026

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Inprecor**. This interview was prepared for **Viento Sur**, **solidarités** and **Inprecor**.

USA

# Fourth of July at 250: The On-Going Struggle for Equality, Democracy, and Justice

DAN LA BOTZ · 20 July 2026

**The United States has been from the beginning the site of an enormous, long-drawn-out struggle between the wealthy property-owning ruling classes and the working classes. The ruling elite sought to expand its wealth and power and its control over other social classes, especially the laboring classes, and over time it built a powerful capitalist state and a vast empire. The laboring classes sought to gain economic and political power to improve their well-being and the prospects for their families. The conflict has been long, uneven, and intermittent, with periodic outbursts of struggle from below and episodes of reactionary repression from above. On July 4, our 250th birthday as a nation, we should celebrate the underdogs, the dissidents, the rebellious who fought and continue to fight against exploitation and oppression, and stand for equality, democracy, and justice.**

## *Why the American Revolution?*

The wealthy classes in the British North American colonies decided in the late eighteenth century that they no longer wished to share with Great Britain's monarch, nobility, and capitalist class the wealth that the colonial elites accrued from the exploitation of slaves and wage laborers and from the seizure of indigenous lands. The wealthy colonists objected to British political control of the colonies, to paying British taxes, and to British prohibition of colonial expansion into Indian territories to the West. The colonial ruling classes wanted to exploit the land and working peoples for their own benefit

and didn't want to have to share that wealth with the British elite any longer. The time had come, the American wealthy classes believed to take it all for themselves. It was that avaricious desire that led to the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They couched their demands in terms of freedom, of liberty, rhetoric that appealed to many people in the colonies, but those words meant freedom for themselves and their enterprises, the freedom to exploit and accrue profit.

The United States was born as twins that grew to be rivals like Cain and Abel. In the North, the rulers were capitalist farmers employing wage labor, commercial classes of merchants and traders, and already the very first industrial enterprises, textile mills employing women, children, and immigrants. In the South the rulers were the owners of plantations and slaves, a seigneurial class that dominated the system of plantation slavery dependent on English and American bankers and merchants both for investment and the sale of their product and the realization of a profit, but a distinct economic and social system. The two wealthy elites, representing the two systems, capitalism and slavery, struggled for control of the state from 1789 to 1861, when the Civil War broke out to determine who could control North America. Capitalism proved victorious and slavery was abolished. But we have gotten ahead of our story.

The colonial elites before the Revolution and while still under British rule had the experience in their respective colonies of republican forms of government, local assemblies and legislatures dominated by wealthy farmers and businessmen or slave owners, so it was relatively easy for them to envision a

post-revolutionary government that would have similar characteristics. The revolutionaries, dominated by the wealthy property owners and their lieutenants, lawyers and journalists, created a series of such a national republican government, first the As the Continental Congress (1776-1761), then the Confederation (1781-1789) and finally the United States government established by the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, a federal republic, representing a compromise between the capitalists and the slaveocracy.

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### ***The Founders' Struggle against Democracy***

The American "Founding Fathers" worked to prevent the rise of democracy which they feared and loathed. Alexander Hamilton argued that democracy meant "mob rule;" it was "a disease." He wrote that, "The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right." Elbridge Thomas Gerry, a merchant who was one of the Founding Fathers, stated that, "democracy was the worst of all political evils." James Madison, one of the key intellectuals and political leaders, wrote in the Federalist, No. 10 that pure democracies have historically been "spectacles of turbulence and contention," so a form of government to be avoided at all cost.

The anti-democratic views of the founders were embodied in the U.S. Constitution which ignored or excluded more than half the population. Women, who made up almost half of the population (48.8%) were politically non-existent, with virtually no rights whatsoever. The Black slaves who comprised almost one-fifth of the population (18.8%) had no rights either. Nor did the Indians who made up 7% of the population. That is, the vast majority of the population were not really citizens. At the time of the establishment of the United States, he states, which determined who would be allowed to vote, generally established property requirements based either on landownership or wealth. Only Vermont had no such requirements. The wealthy white men who founded the country not surprisingly made it a wealthy, white man's republic.

The Constitution theoretically established three co-equal branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—from the beginning the presidents played a dominant role. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk and others in the early republic usurped power in the interests of expanding the authority of their class and the power of the state. Andrew Jackson, for example, defied the Supreme Court and supported Georgia in expelling the Cherokee Indians. In the legislative branch, the Senate was not initially democratically elected by the people but rather senators were chosen by state legislatures. The Supreme Court, whose members were appointed for life by the president and confirmed by the Senate, wielded enormous power. Only the House of Representatives was directly elected by "the people," which at the time meant by white men who had property.

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### ***The People's Fight for Equality, Democracy and Justice***

While the capitalist and slavocracy ruling classes strove to keep all power in their own hands, from the beginning working people, and those oppressed because of their race or because of their female sex, fought for equality, democracy, and justice. We cannot even begin to mention all of the battles between the country's founding and today, but it is worth mentioning one of the first because it set the pattern. In its first years, the U.S. government imposed a tax on whiskey to pay the costs of the revolutionary war. In 1791-94, farmers in Western Pennsylvania refused to pay the tax and some 500 of them armed themselves and revolted against the tax collectors. President George Washington and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, to make clear the power and the purpose of the new government, personally lead an army of 2,000 troops to crush the farmers' rebellion. In the South, slave rebellions, Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy of 1800, Denmark Vesey's Conspiracy (1822), Nat Turner's Rebellion (1831), were violently suppressed, their leaders and many participants executed.



American history subsequently became a history of petitions, protests, and rebellions to which we owe whatever limited equality, democracy, and justice that we have achieved. The first wave feminists of Seneca Falls (1848) and the women's suffrage movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, won political and economic rights for women, including the right to vote in 1920. The abolitionist movement and the Civil War (1862-65), the brief period of Black Reconstruction (1867-77), and the civil rights movement of the 1950s-60 finally won political rights in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And the great labor strike wave of the 1930s won for workers the rights to union recognition, to bargain collectively, to negotiate labor union contracts in the National Labor Relations Act (1935). None of these rights were won fully, completely, or permanently, but the passage of laws embodying them represented a step forward. The persistence of the capitalist system, entwined with racism and sexism, prevented us from fully achieving those goals of equality, democracy and justice. So, we must also struggle for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of democratic socialism.

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### ***The Struggle Continues Today***

On July 4, 2026 working people and the oppressed still face a capitalist ruling class, but one that evolved, posing new threats. Our country has be-

come an oligarchy with an authoritarian political system. Fascism, some sort of neofascism, has become a real possibility.

Today's leading capitalists come from the high-tech industries developed in Silicon Valley and now spread throughout the country. The latest development, Artificial Intelligence (AI), threatens to reorganize our economy, our military, and our political system. Climate change, particularly global warming, driven by the coal and petroleum industries, threaten both agriculture and industry, and the lives of millions on this hottest Fourth of July ever. And America's imperial adventures in Iran may lead to other conflicts, which could bring about the use of nuclear weapons by nuclear powers such as Israel, Russia, China or the United States. All of this on top of the continuing exploitation of working people and the oppression of people of color and women in our own country.

We should on this July Fourth be proud of the No Kings demonstrations, of the Fighting Oligarchy rallies, but also of every small civic protest, every little strike, every group small or large that stands up against the corporations, against the government, and thus fights for themselves and for all of us below. If we see things this way, then I think we can say, Happy Fourth of July.

*4 July 2026*

Source: **New Politics.**

USA

# "Against Trump we have to defend our neighbors, defend our democratic rights and our labor rights"

ANTOINE LARRACHE & JANETTE ZAHIA CORCELIUS & PENELOPE DUGGAN & RAPHAËL ALBERTO · 16 July 2026

**Raphaël Alberto:** Hello Janette. Thanks for being with us today. So we wanted to talk to you about what happened in Minneapolis and about the metro surge, the operation by ICE in the US. So what was Metro Surge? Why did it happen in Minneapolis and what were the consequences for the people over there?

**Janette Zahia Corcelius:** Operation Metro Surge started on 1 December 2025 but back in June of that year ICE and other federal agents staged a raid on Lake and Bloomington to see how we would react. They also were conducting raids and abductions and deportations prior to that as well. But the height of it was in November. And from January to February and ways that we resisted were plentiful.

We had mutual aid networks. We had frontline protests and direct action. We had general strikes. And we also utilized this rapid response, what we called commuting network which harkens back to the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters Truckers strike where the strikers used flying pickets to go after scabs. So in this case we used our cars to not go after scabs but to go after federal agents who were abducting our neighbors.

## **Organizing in Minneapolis**

**How did this movement start and how was it organized? From the beginning? And maybe who was involved in this movement?**

So labor unions, nonprofit organizations, grassroots led organizations, socialist organizations all of them in concert in a united front were preparing for this because there were people who were close

to the workers in the community who felt that a second Trump term was inevitable.

So one of the things the labor movement did to prepare was conduct a series of anti authoritarianism training prior to Trump's election and after. And what we talked about and discussed and prepared for was how we would react during his second term. We were well aware that he could continue disintegrating our labor rights and our unions through cutting positions.

We also knew that he was going to ramp up deportations and attack our electoral system in terms of elections and the voting that would occur at the midterm elections as well as the next presidential election.

One of the things we discussed was utilizing the general strike which is a part of our history in the United States and also more specifically in Minnesota. The Minneapolis Teamsters Truckers strike in 1934 was a pivotal moment in the US labor movement. It happened the same year as two other strikes and that strike was led by Trotskyists, members of the Fourth International, and that strike along with the Toledo auto strike in Ohio with the UAW and Longshoreman strike in San Francisco were galvanizing events for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt presidency and Labor Secretary Frances Perkins to create the National Labor Relations Act and the board, because workers were being killed by the police and self-deputized Citizens Alliance and the bosses. The workers wanted to have collective bargaining rights and the right to strike but also the bosses wanted labor peace.

We realized that Trump is most likely going to get rid of the National Labor Relations Act and the board and he's also going to continue this techno

fascist feudalistic manifesto that the artificial intelligence executives are pushing.

We also knew that he was going to betray his base who were for America first. So we knew that we could get a broad movement of workers, whether they were unionized or not, to take action. So on 23 January we had a one-day strike. No work, no school, no shopping : where one out of four Minnesotans participated. That means around 2 million people were not working. And we had a march in downtown Minneapolis of 100 000 people in -20 degree Fahrenheit (-29°C) weather. It was so powerful and beautiful. And we're getting ready for the May Day International Workers Day general strike happening on 1 May where we will also be doing another day of no work, no school, no shopping.

But this is nationwide and this comes on the heels of this Operation Metro Surge that's still occurring. But it also comes from Shawn Fein, president of the United Auto Workers, who called for a general strike for May Day 2028. Obviously, that's too far away. We need to be having a series of strikes leading up to the midterms and the presidential election.

And we also need to protect our neighbors. We need to protect our democracy and our labor rights. And we also need to show the bosses that they can't continue to hurt us economically. The cost of living in the United States is skyrocketing. So this is something that has broad support and we're excited to see what it's going to look like when we return on Friday.

Maybe before talking about how it changed the way Trump is seen now, how do you organize such a broad movement? We've seen like the protests you've had in the cold and the like with priests with people like who are not unionized. How do you organize such a broad and diverse movement in Minneapolis and elsewhere. ?

So socialist organizations in the Twin Cities door-knocked small businesses, specifically ones that were owned by immigrants, the impacted commu-

nity. And we also canvassed and flyeried in public spaces. We held a series of trainings, there were legal observer trainings that were occurring almost every day for months to teach people about their rights.

In those trainings where we're teaching people about their rights we also taught them about their rights in the workplace, in their home, on the street, you name it. And we also would keep lists. We would list buildings so that we could contact them about other trainings and events.

Also, it's important to note that the 23 January General strike had the backing of the faith community. There's a strong Lutheran community in Minnesota, and also there's a large Muslim population because the largest Somali community outside of Somalia is in Minnesota. So, we build those relationships in our churches or mosques or synagogues. And we also were able to connect with parents through our public schools and the educators union. With this we had people from all sectors of the economy in Minnesota, all kinds of people, from all backgrounds: racial, ethnic, religious and political.

So, that's how we were able to do this. We also had to talk to our neighbors. There's already a history of this in Minnesota. It's so cold, your survival relies on the kindness of strangers and your neighbors. You could get stuck in the snow or in a deep freeze where someone might have to get you out of your car, shovel you out or push your car. So that's a part of the reason why Minnesota is the way it is.

Also, during the George Floyd uprising in 2022 so many mutual aid networks were built and because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the crisis that was created by that, and the crisis of police brutality and anti-Blackness and white supremacy in our society, people were fed up. They had enough and they rioted to ensure that there was justice.

So there's a long history of resistance. It even goes back farther with the Dakota peoples whose land it is that we live on Minnesota, Minnesota Makoche. The Dakota peoples have been resisting for hun-

dreds of years against the U.S. government and they're still resisting. So are the Anishinaabe and the Ojibwe peoples. There's a very strong movement called the American Indian Movement that started in south Minneapolis in the 60s and 70s that was also fighting against police brutality. So these networks and these relationships have been in existence for a long time.

**And do you have the feeling that's maybe one of the reasons why Trump targeted Minnesota and Minneapolis?**

There's a few different reasons why. Definitely the history of resistance from the Native American indigenous First Nations people, the black community who are descendants of slavery as well as the strong labor movement, militant trade unionists who have been organizing for the last century or more. Also Minnesota has been a blue state for presidential elections for over 50 years even when the rest of the country went red to the Republicans.

For example, when Ronald Reagan had his presidential win, Minnesota was the only Democratic state where all the other states went Republican. So Trump knows that the state, this is a mostly white state, actually a lot of the settlers are Germans who came from the 1848 revolution, a lot of Scandinavians who were also involved in socialist and communist movements in Europe settled here.

These are more progressive socialist communist leaning white people with a strong labor background. But he is not smart enough to know that. He just thinks he can use racism to divide and conquer. And it's important to note that there are only 130 000 undocumented immigrants in Minnesota compared to red states like Texas. There are millions of undocumented immigrants. This is not about immigration. It's about fear, retaliation and ethnic cleansing. We know that it's political and we know it's about the uprising that happened in 2020 because George Floyd was murdered. We know that because that happened during his first term and how malicious he is.

He's so narcissistic that he takes anything as a slight and he will retaliate. We also have a governor who ran for vice president during the last election. Governor Tim Walz was a vice presidential candidate while Kamala Harris was the presidential candidate. So there is also tension there. And I would be remiss not to say this as well.

What led up to Operation Metro Surge was the hatred against Somali peoples. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar is one of the strongest voices in our federal government. She has been resisting Trump unabashedly and in an unwavering manner. So he wanted to attack our Somali community because they're black, they're immigrant. So there's anti-Blackness, and because they're Muslim there's Islamophobia. And it's important to know that Immigration Customs Enforcement started after 9/11 as a measure to root out terrorism that they felt was happening in the Muslim community. So the right have long memories and they have a long term plan. It's important we know our history and that we are proactive and we have a plan.

So there are multiple reasons why Trump is targeting Minnesota. But I need people to understand it's not about immigration.

**How do you see the future in Minnesota and the US and do you have the feeling that this powerful movements in Minnesota changed the way Trump and his racist and anti immigration laws are perceived in the population?**

It's important to note that Operation Surge is not over. There are 3000 agents who came to Minnesota, specifically the seven-county metro of the Twin Cities. And 500 agents remain which is the same amount of agents that were in Chicago and Chicago's a huge city. It's a major city in the United States.

They essentially got rid of Greg Bovino who was the border czar because he was so flashy and fascistic. His style was very remnants reminiscent of Nazis and Naziism. And so they realized okay we need to do things differently. We're going to go back to how

things were done in the Obama years because Obama did deport more immigrants than anybody.

And Trump wants to outdo that. Obama's border czar was Tom Homan. So they brought in Tom Homan to bring things back into the dark and do things in a more competent way. So now ICE agents are wearing plain clothes, they're infiltrating spaces, they're pretending to be activists. Now they're in major U.S. city airports.

Regardless of their change of tactic, Trump is deeply unpopular right now and there are many ways people in the United States are getting activated. No Kings is one way and No Kings is a part of the coalition, a strong coalition that's getting ready for May Day: no work no school no shopping. I also think that people should know that the genocide of Palestinian people and the war in Iran is deeply unpopular not just on the left but now on the right, especially these rightwing talking heads and social media influencers who have a lot of power and notoriety in the party.

They're talking and going against Trump because Trump promised to be America first and he's not. And people in the United States are, as they are in most places I think, self-interested. So once that hurts your pocketbook that's when people who are apolitical or even on the right are going to wake up. So this is a good moment for the left to get serious, get organized and to convince people of our program.

I am worried that the Democratic Party will mess it up. They're already capitulating to the Israeli lobby. AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) knows that they're deeply unpopular. That and that people are researching which candidates are supported by them. So, they're using new names and new PACs to support Democrats and Republicans. What I believe is that we need more socialists in office.

But I also believe that the socialists in office that we have often capitulate to Zionism and that can't stand at this moment. It won't work. It won't work for the left and it won't work for the right, and it

won't even work for people in the middle. So it remains to be seen what will happen at the midterms in the presidential election.

But I know people here in France and all over Europe are wondering will a third party emerge? It's very difficult to make that happen but we'll see. The sky is the limit.

So thank you very much.

*30 April 2026*

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### **Labor Notes**

**Penelope Duggan So, Janette, you're going to be going to the Labor Notes conference, which starts next week. So can you tell us what is Labor Notes and what's the importance of this conference? [2]**

Janette Zahia Corcelius: Yes. Labor Notes is an organization and a publication that helps labor unionists who are militants and radicals who want to start a reform movement, a caucus within their union to transform and to democratize their unions. This organization has helped thousands of workers around the United States and around the world to make their union more radical, militant, democratic and more strike ready. It has helped even workers in new unions try to find their footing and figure out what it is they're trying to make happen within their union.

But that's not the main focus of Labor Notes. And of course, members of different unions sometimes write articles for Labor Notes, but they have their own staff that's very small, that reports on the labor movement, mostly in the United States.

**PD: And how long has Labor Notes existed? Can you tell us about its history?**

JC.I believe since the seventies. But I know that Teamsters for Democratic Union (TDU) was one of the first, if not the first reform caucuses within our labor movement here in the United States. Pete Cammarata was one of the founding members, and TDU has made considerable gains within the

Teamsters. [3] But there's a lot left to be desired because the president, Sean O'Brien, has aligned himself with Trump and other fascist elements of United States politics. But TDU is still an important caucus and organization. I have a lot of friends and comrades that are a part of it, and they've done really important work there. And since the formation of their caucus, they've faced violence and different kinds of political threats within their union. And it just shows how important it is to change your union even when faced with violence and intimidation and retaliation.

**Antoine Larrache: And what are the relationships between Labor Notes and the left?**

JC: So there's a very important relationship, although I think there could be a stronger, more defined relationship. Labor Notes is very broad. They don't explicitly espouse anti-capitalist beliefs, though it's implicit. I understand that when they first started the organization, they felt that they had to be careful about how they aligned themselves politically with different parts of the left.

But I think in this moment, when we are faced with the threat of fascism and more and more working class people are looking for an alternative away from capitalism, we could be more explicit about our politics. I will say that Labor Notes is one of the organizations that has helped me and other comrades find their way as anti-capitalists, as revolutionary socialists, communists. But I think there could be more of an explicit relationship.

But there are some problems within the Reform caucus movement, specifically with what happened with the United Auto Workers (UAW) and TDU. There was a caucus called Unite All Workers for democracy in the UAW, which was a very crucial caucus that helped Shawn Fain become president and help lead the stand up strike that happened a few years ago. And it is true, both the UAW and the Teamsters had severe issues with democracy. Democracy is the foundation of a union. And if you don't even have that, then you don't really have anything. But they're some of my comrades on the

left. Well, so they've won democracy, or gotten closer to a democratic model. They want more than that. They want social justice, unionism, class struggle, unionism that reflects the politics of militants, such as ending the genocide of the Palestinian people, protecting queer and transgender peoples in the workplace and outside of the workplace, fighting against police brutality that Black Americans face and protecting workers against ICE, Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Homeland Security and other types of immigration enforcement. So there's they they want to go outside of that. And I think that's okay but I know that there are some parts of the left who just want to focus only on democracy.

**AL: Would you say that the unions in the United States are clear on the point of the ICE and immigration and so on?**

JC: I don't think that our labor movement is clear enough on its stance against ICE. I think that it'll be interesting to see next week what happens at the American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) convention, which I will be at, I'll be working there. And every so often, the AFL-CIO convention and Labor Notes happen to be right next to each other, one after the other.

There's a big, big difference between the two. So even though there are critiques on the left about Labor Notes, they pale in comparison to the problems we have at the AFL-CIO, so it'll be interesting to see what what what is the AFL-CIO's stance going to be on ICE, or is it going to be unequivocally against this fascist regime, or is it going to waffle, depending on the construction unions and their stances? And also the police, law enforcement unions as well. It's important to note that ICE is represented by a union, The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). The ICE agents who shot and killed, who murdered Alex Pretty were members of the same union as Alex. So we need to contend with this. We need to discuss this, and I hope it is discussed at the AFL-CIO. We also need to discuss at the AFL-CIO convention labor's

complicity in terms of the genocide of Palestinian people. So I have a feeling that not much will be determined at this event. And I might end up being disappointed, but I remain hopeful.

Minneapolis is going to be hosting the AFL-CIO convention. They're very proud of all the work that we've done in Minnesota, specifically the January 23 one day general strike. They want to learn from us, and they want to continue that resistance throughout the country right now against ICE. In Newark, New Jersey, at Delaney Hall, it's getting very violent. There's a lot of repression against the protesters. [4] And so it's going to be a very interesting summer.

**PD: Which happens first, AFL-CIO or Labor Notes.**

JC: AFL-CIO. And usually that's what happens. That one's first, then Labor Notes.

**PD: Labor Notes conference itself, how many people are you expecting and how is it organized? Do people meet on the basis of belonging to the same union, or is it cross-sectoral? What actually happens in during the conference? It's three days, I think.**

JC: Yes, it's three days. It's always been or it's been in Chicago for a very long time. It usually has 4000 workers who attend and it's sold out. It's been sold out, I think, the last few times. And that is a, that's a good thing because it shows that our labor movement is on the upswing. It's vibrant, it's exciting, it's invigorating.

And it shows that it really shows what is happening in our United States political movement is that seventy per cent of workers want a labor union. They want to be represented by a union.

And Labor Notes has many different tracks that you can take. They have meetings that are specific to sectors of work and types of work. When I was a rank and file public school music educator, I went to the educators meet up and that was specifically for educators who are rank and file, who are not elected leadership and not staff. I'm currently a

staffer, so I'll be at the staff meeting. Union staff meet up. I know that they have other meet ups for nurses for the logistical sector, people who are doing new organizing, It's really hard to say every single thing that's happening because there's a lot of different things, but I'm really excited to see that our comrades from the N PA-A like Ariel N who's a nurse is going to be speaking on a panel with one of the members of the Minneapolis Federation of Educators who was on the bargaining team, Mary Manner. I'm very glad that they'll be sitting together speaking on a panel.

I wanted to also mention that one of the big hosts and organizers of the conference is the Chicago Teachers Union Caucus, the caucus of Rank and File educators has always been an inspiration to me. Jackson Potter specifically has been a great mentor ever since I was a rank and file teacher. [5] So I think that their model of unionism is one to follow because they were able to lead supermajority strikes several within the span of a decade. And now they have one of their own educators who is the mayor of Chicago, and he's doing really great work, despite all of the hate that is thrown at him, especially at the federal level.

So I think that that Labor Notes is a very important place for militants all across the world who were passionate and focused in the labour movement. Those who can't attend this year, they should look towards 2028. And hopefully by then in the United States, we will have led the May Day 2028 General Strike. That will be a huge flash point in our movement, thanks to Shawn Fain, who's president of the UAW.

**PD: Because Labor Notes is every two years. Is there any moment where everybody gets together? Are there plenary sessions?**

JC: There are plenary sessions and then there's going to be a dinner where the workers of the Twin Cities will be receiving an award for their resistance against ICE. They always have an award they give out every time.



I wanted to mention for those who can't attend the conference I think they record some of the sessions or there's a live stream, but also they have events that are virtual throughout the year. And there's a book coming out by Ellen David Friedman. [6] She has been a great mentor to myself and other comrades in the movement. So I'm really excited to pick up her book and read it and glean some lessons from from it. I think that her and Barbara Maddaloni are mentors in the movement who are elders in the movement Their leadership in Labor Notes has been crucial. They've done so much great work, especially in the educator sector to help us fight against privatization measures. The charter school movement has really destroyed our political movements because less people are educated.

**PD: Explain about Charter schools?**

JC: So charter schools are a private and public partnership where they take public Taxpayer dollars, but they also take foundation money from the wealthy, the elite who put their money in these charities to not pay taxes and to also shape their politics. Charter schools are not held to the same standards as public schools through local, state and federal laws and standards. And they also are not held accountable by elected school boards. They are governed by appointed nonprofit boards. And they are a union busting tactic as well. And it's also a way to further segregate our society racially and socio-economically, and it has been disastrous for our students and our society because people are becoming less and less prepared for the future and disconnected from the realities that we face in the United States.

**PD: So at Labor Notes, there are plenary sessions, there are all these meet ups by sector and so on. Does the conference take any decisions? Does it make any sort of statements**

JC: No, it's a place to learn and to network and to grow. It's not a political conference There isn't no one's elected to be there. Pretty much anyone can go unless they've been banned. And if they were

banned, it's because they're the caucus that they used to be affiliated with banned them. But at the AfL-CIO convention, they should be making statements and voting on resolutions and budgets and things like that.

**PD: So, so Labor Notes has no sort of editorial. I mean, the journal or the website has no sort of editorial line. It never. All its material is simply reporting on struggles. I mean, it publishes books.**

JC: They publish books and they report. I think they probably do have a mission statement. But we don't make decisions at Labor Notes. I just know that.

**PD: No concluding statement or anything.**

JC: They do have a closing plenary and where they have people speak but we don't vote. It's very different than different conventions. At union conventions you're elected to go. I went to the NEA convention when I was a member. You're elected to go to make decisions on behalf of your union, and you have to submit them in advance and people work on them. And there's quite a lot of deliberation and debate. There is debate that does take place at Labor Notes, don't get me wrong. But but, um, there are it's, it is a rather safe place for different viewpoints. Um, but nothing is.

**AL: How does Labor Notes and this conference help the struggles.**

JC: The way that Labor Notes helps with the struggle for unionization in the United States. I think it's important to note that only nine percent of workers in the U.S. are unionized. and that number is dwindling more and more as Trump and AI and the billionaire destroy federal jobs. We've lost one point one million jobs within the last year or so.

So Labor Notes, they do trainings, they meet with workers who form caucuses, and they also meet with workers who are in the middle or in the midst of strikes or are getting ready to go on strike. They also report on different labor struggles and give a voice that would otherwise not exist even in the

bourgeoisie press, the capitalist press. They do report on labor, but it's not as intensive as Labor Notes. And they don't always give a fair perspective. But Labor Notes really, truly does give the workers perspective. They share the good, bad and the ugly. They share the struggles and give honest assessments, but they are also careful and deliberate when making decisions about what they report on. Because sometimes workers are wanting to trash their union in the press and that's not always helpful. You need to organize to take over your union to fix it. Because sometimes when workers want to trash their union leadership, it gives credence to anti-union, sentiment, which is already prevalent in United States media and has been prevalent for a very long time.

So unions are only as good as what we make them. And it's all about democracy. And it's important that we teach rank and file members to take ownership over their union. And we teach rank and file members how to actually organize, how to have structured one on one organizing conversations, how to run a campaign, how to do research and Labor Notes, does all sorts of these things.

And I, I can say with full confidence, had I not known about Labor Notes, I would not be the union organizer that I am today. And I have told many, many a worker that Labor Notes is a great resource for them if they need help, no matter what their situation is. So I think that, um, people should subscribe to their newsletter, they should buy their books and they should go to their trainings and they should, connect with other union militants around the world.

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### *Perspectives for the left*

**AL: How do you see the relationship between Labor Notes and the building of a Workers Party or DSA, or what are the relationship with that?**

JC: That's a good question. I don't think Labor Notes is currently looking to create a Labor Party unless they decide to change that this year. I don't

think that's their plan or I don't think it's ever been their game plan. But, um, right now this weekend is the Tony Mazzocchi centennial in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He wrote that famous book, *The man who hated work but loved labor*. He was one of the founders of the Labor Party in the U.S. and he was a militant unionist who faced a lot of repression. There's a big debate about whether or not we should have a Labour Party. There's a big debate on whether DSA should become an actual party. Right now, we can't make a decision within DSA about that because we don't have a conference, a convention coming up for another year or so. And that's where that would be deliberated again.

### **PD: You're a member of DSA?.**

JC: And I'm also a member of Tempest Collective and half of us are in DSA. Half of us are not. So I think that unfortunately, as the midterms come closer and closer, DSA doesn't have an a current answer to that because there's so much internal turmoil about whether or not to be a party. I will say that we are doing an excellent job of taking over the Democratic Party and some of these contested primaries. For example, Chris Rabb won his primary against a centrist Democrat in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and he's DSA. And so I think that if we continue with the sort of politics that helped Mamdani win the mayoral seat, we will be victorious. But I think that we also need to be cognizant of some of the mistakes Mamdani is already making this early in office.

### **PD: So what mistakes are those?**

JC: Keeping the police. The former police chief whose police force inflicted violence against the student encampments for Palestine at the universities and colleges in New York City. I think that was a big mistake. I think his apology for his wife's politics around Palestine is unhelpful. And there are even people in DSA who are already talking about him because he's not in line with our anti-Zionist resolution that we passed at the last convention. I also want to say, on another hand, He is governing in the one of the most important financial centers

of the world, and he has a hard task at hand to manage his role. The membership in New York City DSA is frustrated with him that he hasn't crossed. Endorsed the DSA candidates. That is a big problem if you are in an organization like DSA and you're not endorsing your own people against centrist Democrats. So that those are some criticisms I have and others have in DSA. But I still am proud of the work that he has done and will continue to do.

**PD: Can you cite therefore some positive things that you think he's done?**

JC: Yeah. They're fixing the roads, they're going after slumlords. The child care initiatives. The budget that they passed was really great. Um, so I think that it's going to be really exciting to visit New York City in the future. Last time I went was in December. Um, it'll be exciting to see how different things are for comrades who live there. Um, but everything remains to be seen. It's. I know it's still too early to tell.

**AL: What do you see as the, the role of Labor Notes and DSA to build an alternative**

JC: There's certainly a lot of crossover with DSA and Labor Notes. I think that DSA is where the masses are, and where the masses can, can be. It's the largest socialist organization in the United States. We have over one hundred thousand members, which doesn't sound like a lot when you hear how much La France Insoumise has. But we have a lot of other supporters who vote for our politicians and agree with our politics. They might not just actually be a member. I would like to see every member of DSA become a serious organizer actively. recruiting people into our organization because the more and more we build up, the more likely we could become an actual party in terms of revolutionary activity.

Your average American, when you talk to them, whether in the workplace or on the street, they are very fed up with the way things are. But there's somewhat of a fatalism and a nihilism and also, a hopelessness and an uncertainty about what to do. So I think for us as DSA and other revolutionaries,

we need to have honest and open conversations and be kind, caring, thoughtful and cultivate their inquisitive nature when it comes up. But even when the masses are downtrodden, we should also make sure that our movement is a joyous movement that they can be a part of. Because I think when I decided to join Tempest Collective and DSA, I felt cared for and nurtured by my comrades and it helped me find a venue and an avenue to push for change. And we've done a lot of great work in both organizations, especially in the labor movement. I think that DSA is doing a great job of working with different organizations around immigrant rights and resistance against ICE.

I am worried about the midterm elections because I am worried about the centrist Democrats and their attack on, uh, DSA elected or DSA candidates. Well, maybe I didn't probably didn't really answer your last question. I don't think I did. I guess I don't know how soon we are towards a real revolutionary moment. That's the thing. I'm not quite sure we're really there yet.

**AL: What are the main debates inside liberal nodes and also inside the revolutionary collectives that we know best: Bread and Roses, Tempest. Solidarity – and Labor Notes if its relevant. Can you explain what are the main issues?**

JC: I think that all of us who support the Fourth International feel very strongly that the conditions that workers are in right now is the main priority and has always been the main priority. The workplace is the site of struggle. We spend so much time in the United States at work. Some of us see our colleagues more than we see our families. And we need to be organizing new unions constantly. And anytime we have a contract up, we need to be gearing up for a strike but doing it in a way that is democratic, strategic and one where you can really win as much as you can. And, and it's very important to note that especially in the private sector.

All of these bosses, the owners, the CEOs, they're aligned with Trump. They're aligned with fascism.

And when we decide to have a fight against the boss, we're also having a fight, a struggle against the ultimate boss, which is the president of the United States. And I think that some on the left don't see workers or the workplace as a site of struggle. They think that workers are reactionary and we have to just forget about them. But the reality is the working class is filled with contradictions. And it's up to us to have some leadership, to guide them, to push them in the right direction so that when we can do this in the workplace, we can take it outside of the workplace. We can push for revolutionary activity outside of the workplace.

So I think we can't put the cart before the horse. A lot of the left, focus too much on the outside and not too much of what they can control. And I do think that Palestine, the liberation of Palestinian people is a huge and still a very important movement right now. I mean, I just saw last week Maryland divested sixty five million of public pensions out of Israel. More and more of the public sector unions are pushing for divestment. This is not a campaign that we can abandon. We have to see it all the way through. And then so once we divest our pensions, we can work towards ensuring that no more of our taxpayer dollars in the U.S. are going to Israel. And the hope is that once we get to the midterm and the presidential election, ultimately, hopefully, we would get to a place where Israel is not taking charge of the United States. The United States is taking charge of the United States that we are focusing on the issues that people are facing at home and with the homelessness and the unemployment crisis that we're facing and the economic. Other economic issues like affordability, crisis.

**PD: A while ago, you mentioned May Day 2028 as being the big target for mobilization. So that's in two years time. That's because it's the year of the presidential election?**

JC: Yes. That's why Shawn Fain chose it as a focal point, as a flashpoint, and especially as it would be six months before the presidential election; it could really turn the tide in the direction of where things go. We could see how different candidates react to that, who will align themselves with workers. And whoever aligns themselves with the workers should be the candidate that the working class would choose at the ballot box. That would be incredible.

I think that it could be unlikely that any of those candidates will relate to the strike in a positive way. Some might ignore or say terrible things, but either way, if it's done right, that strike could change the trajectory of what happens at the ballot box and really shine a light on workers issues when we're deciding at the ballot box. For example, when Kamala Harris was running and she said she wanted an opportunity economy - that did not resonate to the with the working class. And it was apparent by the way that she would talk. And unfortunately, because Trump - I would say he's no longer a populist, but he was a populist - resonates with the working class. The elements of the working class that voted for him. So I think if we can get back to, um, whether it's a populist like Bernie or someone like Mamdani, who has a clear affordability agenda that will be attractive to us, but we have to shape that as the working class. We can't wait for someone to do that for us, it has to come from below, not from above.

*6 June 2026*

USA

# UAW: Mixed Reform Results

DIANNE FEELEY · 13 July 2026

**The convention will also make nominations for the International Executive Board (IEB) elections that will take place in the fall. A slate, headed by current president Shawn Fain, has just been announced. It includes longtime members of the Administration Caucus (AC) and three regional directors from Fain's former slate.**

The UAW convention provides an opportunity to evaluate the state of the union since a corruption scandal (2017-2021) resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of 16 top UAW officers, including former UAW presidents Gary Jones and Dennis Williams.

This article\* outlines the UAW's subsequent path. The new leadership, the first elected directly by the membership, took office in two batches, with Fain inaugurated just hours before the 2023 Bargaining Convention opened. There the new IEB prepared delegates for the 2023 contracts at GM, Ford and Stellantis. As they rolled out their strategy over the next months, the IEB forged a new direction.

Following the 2023 Stand Up Strike, the problems confronting the UAW suggest a much bumpier road than initially contemplated as the leadership sought to double the membership with new organizing. Obstacles involved a change in the political climate following Trump's inauguration, as well as false internal accusations that split the IEB two years ago.

## *The Background to the Crisis*

Since the days of Walter Reuther, the UAW's leadership maintained its hold on the union's apparatus through the Administration Caucus.

The AC was a machine that nominated, helped fund and campaigned for its members who, when elected, appointed a bevy of union representatives. New officers were encouraged to join the AC or would find themselves frozen out of the information chain that ran through it.

In 1950 the union agreed to a five-year contract with General Motors, known as the "Treaty of Detroit." Its very length signaled the contract would focus on higher wages and benefits rather than working conditions. As Nelson Lichtenstein notes in *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, this was negotiated "quickly and in complete secrecy." (280)

Members never had a chance to consider whether this was a straitjacket or a foundational step forward. For GM, it brought stability at a time when that was its highest priority. But 30 years later, the growth of non-union and often foreign-owned plants in the South, automation and rising competition from abroad threatened that bargain.

During the 1979-83 recession, the AC took the position that concessions were the way to save jobs. Once the economy recovered, they maintained, the union would regain the ground that had been bargained away.

As the industry then moved to restructure itself, the AC deepened their cooperation with the companies. "Joint programs," beginning with the contract at GM Saturn, were touted as the way forward.

Various forms of jointness (Quality of Work Life, team concept, management-by-stress, joint education and training programs, co-management, Global Manufacturing) lured the union to reduce its independent voice by collaborating with management. Victor Reuther came out of retirement to oppose it, writing:

*The team concept is more than a mere gimmick; it is an attempt by management to control not only the worker's behavior on the job, but also the worker's feelings and thoughts. The employer plays upon the worker's desire to use his or her creativity and intellect. The team concept promises the worker that he or she will be something more than a mere factory hand, calls upon him to think, and asks him to cooperate with management.*

*"But cooperation with management ever so subtly turns into competition with one's fellow workers. In the struggle for productivity and even quality, department is pitted against department, and worker is pitted against worker. What began by appealing to the worker's idealism turns workers into informers and weakens union solidarity. (Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept by Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter with forward by Victor Reuther, Labor Notes, 1988)*

The Big Three generously funded the programs. For example, between 1982 and 2000 GM alone spent \$3 billion. With management approval, the union appointed all union-side staff, greatly expanding the AC's patronage system.

As Fiat Chrysler's vice president Alphons Iacobelli noted when he authorized personal credit cards to union staff, it was to keep them "fat, dumb and happy." According to court records, the lax financial oversight of the programs bred kickbacks and theft amounting to at least \$7 million. A culture of corruption spread. [2]

There were caucuses opposing the AC from its beginning, around both the union's democratic processes and its contractual demands. African American workers, seeking to end both the discrimination they faced from employers and a lack of respect from union officials, organized both Black-only and racially integrated caucuses to press their issues.

In opposition to the concessions of the early 1980s, the New Directions Movement developed in Region

5. As regional assistant director, Jerry Tucker trained local leaders to unleash their members to oppose concessions by clogging up production.

Reviving the "work-to-rule" tool, Tucker called this shop-floor tactic "running the plant backward." It didn't take long for employers to forgo concessions and agree to new contracts.

Tucker's decision to run for regional director after showing how to checkmate employers infuriated the AC. He was expelled from the caucus and ran as an independent reform candidate, but was narrowly defeated at the Constitutional Convention.

Able to prove illegal delegate votes had been cast, Tucker won a re-run. However, with less than a year left on his term — and amid continued AC undermining from above and below — he was unable to accomplish his goals. The AC defeated Tucker in his run for a second term and snuffed out the developing movement through a system of rewards and punishments.

But New Directions left a legacy: it demonstrated how to oppose concessions and exposed the AC's interference in elections. It called for the direct election of national officers by the membership rather than by convention delegates and for the election, not appointment, of union representatives.

Over the next 20 years, employer attacks deepened through the development of long-term temporary workers, two-tier wages, and terminating post-retirement health care and pensions.

During the 2008-09 economic crisis, UAW officials flew to Washington, DC to support GM and Chrysler in asking Congress for federal money to avert supposed bankruptcy. Autoworkers Caravan, a small group of autoworkers, drove to DC and held a press conference challenging that cooperation. They argued that since the federal government was to have a majority stake in the companies, it should use the opportunity to build a public transportation system.



Instead, UAW officials worked with the companies and Congress to renegotiate contracts and suspend the right to strike. Eventually the federal government sold their shares back at a deep discount, and corporate profits rebounded.

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### ***One Member, One Vote (1M1V)***

As the government investigation of corruption was coming to light in 2019, a new grouping, Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD), launched a campaign for a special Constitutional Convention to consider a 1M1V motion. While the resolution passed in several locals, time ran out.

The group planned to relaunch the campaign, meanwhile the scandal resulted in indictments. UAW members were stunned by the collusion between top UAW officials and management as well as by accounts of officers ordering lavish dinners, smoking thousand-dollar cigars and spending weeks playing at fancy golf clubs on the UAW's tab.

In May 2021, as former UAW officers were sentenced and imprisoned, the UAW agreed to repay \$15 million to joint programs for money incorrectly paid to the union and \$1.5 million to the IRS for taxes owed.

With the agreement of the union, the settlement in U.S. District Court assigned Neil M. Barofsky to be the UAW's independent monitor. His assignment was to investigate further corruption and oversee the union in setting up a transparent financial system.

Barofsky later mandated the IEB, still controlled by the AC, to carry out a referendum vote on whether to change the process of electing top officials. The IEB did little to publicize the mail-in ballot, but UAWD — numbering no more than 300 members and retirees in a union of more than a million — launched its 1M1V campaign, talking with coworkers and leafleting plant gates. Of those who voted, the majority supported moving to direct elections. [3]

Brodsky directed the IEB to amend the union's constitution and an election was set. After some discussion, UAWD decided to put together a slate around the slogan "No tiers! No concessions! No corruption!"

The resulting slate of seven candidates were not UAWD activists, nor a team, but rather an assortment of members with varying leadership experiences. Only three — Margaret Mock, Rich Boyer and Mike Booth — had previously worked together.

Would the UAWD-backed candidates be able to beat better-known Administration Caucus candidates? Disgust over the details of the corruption tipped the scales to the UAWD-backed candidates and, surprisingly, they all won!

Although six out of the seven others elected were AC candidates, the UAWD-backed candidates won the top two positions: Shawn Fain as president and Margaret Mock as secretary-treasurer — and the highest-ranking Black woman ever elected to the IEC. Others on the anti-concessions slate included two vice presidents, Rich Boyer (overseeing Stellantis, and the highest-ranking Latino elected to the IEB) and Mike Booth (in charge of GM), and three regional directors (two of whom were African Americans and one a Latino).

In the UAW, the president and secretary-treasurer are the officers with the greatest responsibility for the day-to-day running of the union headquarters, Solidarity House. The vice presidents and regional directors focus on particular areas.

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### ***Stand Up Strike***

In a break with tradition, Fain met and shook hands with UAW members rather than holding a formal handshake ceremony with company executives.

Traditionally, as the press snapped photos, the UAW President shook hands with the CEO of each company to open formal negotiations. As talks progressed, the UAW would select one of the three to target. If negotiations broke down by the expiration



of the old contract, the UAW workers in that corporation struck. When an agreement was reached, the UAW demanded the others accept that contract as well.

Instead, on the day bargaining began, Fain skipped the handshaking, saying he'd do that once there was a tentative agreement. He went to Metro Detroit plants and shook hands with workers. It was a very festive moment!

Launching UAW zoom meetings, Fain focused his presentations on each company's profit and CEO compensation package. Against the backdrop of this enormous wealth, the union's 10 demands seemed achievable.

Getting rid of two-tier wages was the members top issue. The tiered system had only been passed and maintained with UAW officials selling its necessity. Whether long-timers or new hires, workers saw new hires earning half wages and almost no benefits as grossly unfair.

Restoring Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA), changing the draconian absentee policy and ending mandatory overtime were also high on the list of demands. But all 10 were emphasized.

In the weeks before the contract ran out, members were urged to wear union T-shirts and hats to work, and borrowing from the Teamsters, Fain encouraged locals to organize "practice pickets" and rallies. The International also made several videos of workers telling their stories and discussing their goals for the upcoming contract.

Workers and the media both speculated that these extensive preparations signaled that once the old contract ran out, maybe the UAW would shut down all Big Three facilities. Just hours before the deadline, Fain called the strike, selecting one plant from each corporation.

This limited but growing strike kept up the pressure on all three companies. At weekly zoom meetings, Fain would update members on negotiations. In the past, bargaining sessions were highly secret; now the week's negotiations were reviewed and

workers at another set of facilities called to join the strike. However, if a company settled an issue, it might be given a week's reprieve.

In addition to maintaining 24/7 picket lines at all gates, members built food banks, set up kitchens to feed strikers and their families, organized clothing exchanges and spoke to the press. When workers at Ford Michigan Assembly organized a solidarity caravan to a Stellantis Jeep plant just across the Michigan-Ohio border, caravanning spread. Workers and their supporters were high on the energy of this constantly expanding strike.

When the strike ended abruptly six weeks later. Fain and the vice president in charge of each corporation held zoom meetings to outline the highlights: a 36% wage increase over three years, an end to wage tiers, restoration of COLA, a pledge to job security, some constraints on mandatory overtime and a one-time bonus for retirees.

Other issues — securing benefits for those who had been tiered or moving ahead on work/life balance — had been taken off the table. While some members felt the strike should continue expanding and work through the remaining issues, the contracts passed by 69.3% at Ford, 68.8% at Stellantis and 54.7% at GM.

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### ***Organizing Everywhere, Especially in the South***

Following the Stand Up Strike, the UAW leadership announced a plan to double its membership by organizing 13 non-union facilities. These included foreign-owned companies such as Volkswagen, Hyundai, Mercedes and Toyota along with electric vehicle companies Lucid, Rivian and Tesla.

Determined to break through the wall southern politicians had perfected — passing "right-to-work" laws, and delivering a business-friendly climate with hefty financial incentives for the corporations — the IEB unanimously voted to fund the project at \$40 million and outlined their goals for the local Organizing Committees (OC).

When 30% of the workers at any company signed union cards, the UAW would announce the organizing drive. On reaching 50%, the UAW would help them build a public rally; at 70% the International would demand the company recognize the union.

Volkswagen workers quickly reached the first goal; they had lost the vote for UAW recognition in 2019 by just 57 votes. With two previous campaigns under their belts, they were ready to try again. In April 2024 Volkswagen workers, 4300 strong, voted three to one for the union.

However, the momentum was cut short just a month later when workers at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Alabama voted the union down, 2642 to 2045.

The setback was particularly devastating because the Organizing Committee thought they were in the driver's seat. During the final weeks the campaign strategy shifted to relying on team leaders to keep workers updated.

True, team leaders talk with everyone on a daily basis, but team leaders also have relationship to management. With a last-minute company decision to replace the hated CEO, the newly appointed CEO walked the floor every day, urging workers to give him a chance. Team leaders swung to his side, influencing enough coworkers to sink the campaign.

That defeat, and the nearly two-year struggle of Volkswagen workers to negotiate their first contract, halted the big organizing drives. By the end of August 2025, a UAW campaign at a Huntsville, Alabama International Motors manufacturing plant had fizzled.

Of course, members are disappointed by the vote at Mercedes and the failure to even get that far at Huntsville, but there hasn't been an assessment of what problems developed. Without that evaluation, demoralization and grudges may sap the energy necessary to begin again.

It took Volkswagen workers three attempts before they won, and comments they made indicate that

they won because of what they'd learned from past defeats.

Although the UAW had hopes for union recognition at battery plants, mostly located in the South, two issues blunted that possibility. First, the Trump administration is hostile to electric vehicles and in response corporations have cut back their plans.

Second, while GM and Stellantis agreed to recognize the UAW if a majority of its workforce signed up, Ford did not. The "pattern" agreement wasn't quite a pattern.

The planned \$11.4 billion investment at Blue Oval SK joint venture (between Ford and Korean battery producer SK On) included two plants in Kentucky and one in Tennessee. Last August the UAW narrowly won the union election at the Glendale, KY plant (526-515).

But recently the joint venture was dissolved. While Ford will own the two Kentucky plants, all 1600 Glendale workers are being laid off. Repurposing the plant for energy storage, Ford announced that the laid-off workers are "eligible" to reapply to the new company.

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### ***Volkswagen Contract***

First contracts are notoriously difficult to negotiate as management hunkers down. Volkswagen insisted that they would only increase wages by 20% while the UAW demanded parity with Big Three, a 24% increase. This led to a three-month standoff with the union voting to authorize a strike but eventually agreeing to 20%.

After two previous attempts, workers at the Volkswagen plant in Tennessee won UAW representation in 2024. It took them more than another year to secure a contract. BY-NC-SA

The company also stood firm against longer breaks. But workers did win COLA, a significant reduction in their health care costs, and gained two floating holidays along with profit sharing, an attendance bonus and various bonuses, including a \$6500 signing bonus.

In view of Volkswagen's layoff last year, workers wanted and felt they won job security language. Of those voting, 96% supported ratification.

Earlier the UAW had also secured a contract covering 7500 workers at the Daimler Truck/Thomas Built Buses at four North Carolina plants and two far-flung southern distribution centers.

Organized in the 1990s, the locals had been stuck with wage differentials between the truck and bus plants. Adding to workers' worries about the future, Daimler had two truck manufacturing plants in Mexico up and running.

The UAW organized a contract campaign that included wearing union T-shirts on Wednesdays and practice pickets in front of each plant leading up to the contract deadline. It was clear that they would strike if there was no tentative agreement but an agreement came at the last moment.

The new contract, passed by 94%, puts wages in the master agreement, ends wage tiers, increases the shift premium as well as wages, and includes COLA and profit sharing. In the last contract the union won a truck quota as a job security measure. This contract upped that daily quota by two. [4]

As the result of this mobilization strategy, the leadership has been able to negotiate wage increases and bonuses along with beating back the employers' effort to saddle workers with higher health care costs. Yet the International failed to use the negotiation to aid a Daimler local in Detroit where management had fired two of their chairmen.

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### ***Implementing the Win***

In summarizing these negotiations, it's clear that employers are willing to fork over money (however reluctantly), but they aren't interested in making life for their employees more livable, on or off the job. Intensifying the workday is their bottom line.

Clearly president Fain wants contract campaigns and strikes to be well organized. On the other hand, there is little information on how to implement the

contract. It's as if once the text is signed, the company would live up to the agreement!

But from the company's point of view, they must make up what they just negotiated by squeezing more work out of the work force. Workers, on the other hand, must resist this intensification.

A variety of actions need to be considered, from the group working together to maintain their pace, filing a group grievance, marching on management, or shutting down a hazardous work area. It means organizing coworkers to spread the word and bringing the issue to the union meeting.

In the AC's long history of collaboration with management, they preached deference and acceptance. Jerry Tucker and the New Directions movement challenged that approach. They organized workers to back up their demands with action.

That's why unleashing the energy of the contract campaign was so critical. Instead, most of the energy dissipated. Rather than springing into action as soon as a problem popped up, workers reverted to griping about not being "serviced."

But now the problem has metastasized: Big Three contracts have not been vigilantly enforced and now layoffs have begun. GM laid off over 3000 workers in Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee; Ford furloughed about 1500; and the Stellantis Belvidere Assembly Plant — a five-million-square facility that closed in 2023 — has had its opening delayed until mid-2028 (after the expiration of the current contract). As the organizing drive has slowed, workers feel stuck.

Yet an energized pool of union activists is the UAW's most effective resource for new organizing campaigns. Each local could monitor parts coming into the docks and identify non-union suppliers. Then they could develop a plan to reach out to those workers. This would turn locals into beehives of new organizing.

Even when a campaign doesn't take off, the network can draw the lessons and restart. That's one of the reasons why evaluations are key. It should be

easy to see the difference between a union plant, where members are working together to push management to live up to the contract, and one not yet unionized.

With a significant portion of the union membership voting for Trump in the last election, it's the dynamism of such a project that is likely to unite members and open up a space where issues can be discussed. Understanding how "an injury to one is an injury to all" is the essential ingredient to building the UAW's power.

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### ***A Setback and Clouded Future***

The 2023 strike provided the union a running start, but the emergence of charges against the secretary-treasurer have had a devastating impact.

At the February 2024 IEB meeting, secretary-treasurer Mock was accused by the Compliance Officer, who worked out of the president's office, of using her power to stifle the southern organizing drive. Then a regional director brought a motion to accept the report and relieve Mock of a dozen of her assignments. The vote was 11-2 in favor.

One could understand a natural tension between the UAW's organizing side, represented by Fain, and the financial accountability side, represented by Mock. This might have been particularly sharp as the organizing campaign was taking off. But the reality was that in recovering from corruption that involved more than \$1.5 million of the members' dues, the UAW needed to be particularly meticulous in its accounting. [5]

(As late as March 2022 Timothy Edmunds, the treasurer of UAW Local 212 was convicted of stealing \$2.2 million of dues money from the local!) [6]

The court agreement that the UAW signed In 2021 called for hiring four additional auditors, along with more training and more centralization. Yet the charges against Mock were based on her unwillingness to allow exceptions to the three-bid rule and grant exceptions when receipts were not provided.

Immediately the motion against Mock was leaked to the UAWD Steering Committee. The committee was urged to support the disciplinary action and within days did so.

Insofar as UAWD had anything to suggest to officers it helped to elect, why did it feel the need to rush to judgment? Wouldn't it have been reasonable to encourage mediation so that the division could be overcome?

The UAWD Steering Committee, however, made the mistake not only of rushing to judgment but posting its resolution on their website for all to see. What made that decision more fraught was that Mock was the highest-ranking Black woman ever elected to the IEB. [7]

Mock challenged the charges. Then the monitor intervened to say he would review the evidence and rule before Mock's appeal went through UAW channels.

The monitor's subsequent report and supplement reveal that Fain asked Chief of Staff Chris Brooks, Administrative Communications Assistant Jonah Forman and Marni Schroeder, the UAW Compliance Officer, to craft charges against her. Several drafts later Schroeder claimed the charges as her own findings; this became the basis of the disciplinary action.

Investigating the charges, the monitor required that all emails and texts be turned over to his office. Fain refused, saying that some would reveal collective bargaining strategies that could be leaked to the corporations. He hired lawyers (on whose dime?) to challenge the monitor's access. The result was a court ruling that Fain and his staff were required to turn over all documents. [8]

After comparing the various texts, Barofsky found over 150 had been deleted. The various explanations Fain offered are embarrassing and the amount of work staff spent on crafting lies is shocking.

The monitor interviewed Fain about why he asked two African American women to make and second

the disciplinary motion. Fain answered that as a white man, he thought it would "look better" if they brought the charges against her. It is painful to read these reports and absorb the humiliation inflicted upon Mock.

After reviewing the materials, the monitor dismissed the charges against Mock, noting that her only mistake had been to assume that after she came up with the idea of having lawn signs in support of the Stand Up Strike and having the idea approved, she could design them.

Fain also charged Rich Boyer with failure as vice president to discharge his duty to Stellantis workers. The report of that investigation has not been released. However, the monitor's supplementary report concludes:

*After the events outlined in this Supplement and the Twelfth Status Report, the Union's recent commitments hopefully will come to mark a turning point in the UAW's progress toward enhancing its culture of compliance and accountability. The Union has committed to restoring Secretary-Treasurer Mock's departmental assignments, restoring the Stellantis Department to Vice President Boyer, allowing the Monitor access to the Culture Committee, and embracing structural changes to safeguard the independence of the Compliance Department so that it no longer directly reports to President Fain....*

*Ongoing vigilance will be essential, as will continued engagement with the Monitor about implementation of the Monitor's remaining compliance recommendations. But the Monitor is encouraged by the actions of the Union and is optimistic that the measures described in this Supplement signal a willingness to constructively work with the Monitor going forward as part of a collaborative effort toward installing a sustainable culture of compliance.*

Under the consent decree that the UAW signed in 2021, the monitor is to serve for six years, with a longer or shorter term dependent on the UAW's success in establishing financial transparency.

The union's annual LM-2 Labor Department filing reports that the UAW has paid the monitor's office \$25.3 million since 2021, but 2025 signaled a rise of costs by 21% last year (\$7 million) as Fain unsuccessfully challenged the monitor's access to internal communication.

Internal disunity and legal battles have significantly increased expenses, impacted leadership functioning, and delayed moving ahead on financial transparency.

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### **Larger Vision?**

Energized members are the best organizers. (Jim West)

In a November 2025 Labor Notes article, "Labor Needs an Independent Political Program, Says UAW's President," Fain outlines four priorities for a workers' political program: wages, health care, retirement and control of time.

Fain encourages the formation of a workers' movement that could campaign around such issues as raising the minimum wage, stopping mass layoffs and opposing food or drug price gouging. He is careful to say this is not a move toward an independent party.

Important issues are outlined — a shorter work week (32 hours at no loss in pay), de-privatizing health care, abolishing tuition at community colleges/vocational programs and support to civil and immigrant rights — and directed toward Congress.

There is no prioritization to the long list and no campaign to push a specific bill. Nor has the UAW leadership called for locals to mobilize their membership for "No Kings" rallies or May Day marches.

The labor program is also strangely silent on U.S. foreign policy and ignores the IEB's 2023 statement opposing Washington's support to the war on Gaza. At that time the UAW called for ending U.S. military aid to Israel until a ceasefire took place and supported, with several other national unions, the founding of the National Labor Network for Ceasefire in Gaza.



As of April 2026, the IEB has not posted a statement on the UAW website or put out a press release commenting on how the cost of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran will affect programs the UAW would like to see implemented. This is despite public opinion against the war and its enormous cost, an estimated \$1.6 billion a day.

UAW Locals 4811, 872 and 2478 have condemned the war. For their part, UAW Local 900 seems to have been the only UAW local that organized a No Kings event at their hall. Their major focus — given ICE's purchase of a nearby warehouse as a "processing center" [aka concentration camp] — is their active opposition to ICE's warehousing of immigrants, whether their fellow workers or neighbors.

The UAW's legislative program also papers over environmental problems. For example, the call for a "just transition" is an algebraic slogan presumably meaning that no manufacturing job should be lost in moving from gas-driven vehicles to EV production. Yet without examining factors that have reshaped the industry over the last 50-75 years, the assumptions that underpin the slogan ring hollow.

In 1980 the Big Three employed approximately 1.5 million workers. By the time of the 2023 strike, about 150,000 worked at the Big Three. As long as there seems to be no force behind the slogan, some members may believe Trump's America First bluster instead.

Individual vehicle production — whether powered by fossil fuels or batteries run with rare earth minerals — will never be the country's mover and shaker that cars were in the 20th century. Automation and climate change are the most obvious limiting factors.

What can replace auto production in the 21st century? The most obvious need is to build a quality and efficient public transportation system. But preparing for this monumental shift in production requires frank discussions about the role that workers and their unions can play in planning this reorganization. Shouldn't the UAW be initiating a campaign for that work?

While it's true that the UAW's membership includes nurses, office workers, librarians and graduate students, this discussion will prove valuable as these sectors face restructuring. Without a larger vision, workers and elected leaders will adapt to the interests of corporations.

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### ***The Tariff Tangle***

More than a year ago, Shawn Fain chose to put the UAW's muscle behind the tariffs that Trump slapped on passenger cars and trucks entering the U.S. market. Fain called them "a major step in the right direction for autoworkers and blue-collar communities across the country."

He suggested that thousands could be rehired in months merely by adding shifts in under-utilized plants. A year later that hasn't happened except for a third shift added at Detroit Diesel. But even if jobs "returned," would they go to union plants?

At the same time, Fain has advocated for collaboration among North American unions, he remarked that Mexican and Canadian unions would just have to accept the UAW position on tariffs. Doesn't that sound like a non-starter?

Nonetheless, the idea of a North American minimum wage has been raised. This is insufficient, but much better than supporting tariffs.

Yet it is impossible to separate Trump's tariffs from his intention to cripple the Canadian economy and destroy its auto industry, and to subjugate Mexico and Latin America as a whole. (See the box accompanying this article.)

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### ***What Could the Constitution Convention Accomplish?***

While the caucus that campaigned for 1M1V and then worked to elect the new leadership was unable to build roots at the local level and dissolved, undoubtedly rank and file members will run for delegates with the intention of furthering the UAW's revitalization.

The task of transforming a long-established culture where officials hide information from members and

members feel disrespected can be difficult under the best of circumstances, but the Constitutional Convention is an opportunity to discuss a wide range of workplace and social issues. These include:

- The UAW agreement with the federal government included greater financial accountability. The made-up charges against Mock are troubling precisely because they run counter to that agreement. It would be important to reaffirm the UAW's commitment to financial transparency with a thorough reassessment of how the UAW works. Flowing from that would come recommendations and concrete next steps.
- More than 35 years ago Victor Reuther identified "joint programs" as the company's method of reducing union's power. It has been identified as a site producing a "culture of corruption" within the UAW. This intricate system can be dismantled.

Instead of appointing union staff in carrying out the necessary functions — whether of union-side health and safety inspectors or benefits representatives — these should be elected positions. Democracy doesn't always lead to competence and an end to bureaucracy, but it does provide a tool to replace those who don't work out.

- Given the experiences of various organizing committees and delegates who have carried out campaigns to enforce their contracts, what lessons can the UAW draw going forward? Evaluating problems is the first step in seeking effective solutions, whether in organizing drives or at established locals.
- President Fain called on unions to align their contracts with those of the UAW and be prepared to strike together in 2028. That idea has been taken up by other unions, and most notably by May Day Strong and made concrete by the union and community response to ICE in Minneapolis.

Led by the more radical teachers' unions in Chicago and Los Angeles, MDS analyzed the January 23 Minneapolis sickout that involved at least a quarter

of the city's work force. MDS then projected local actions on May Day 2026 around the slogan "No Work, No School, No Shopping." The convention therefore has the opportunity to analyze the results, particularly as Region 9A region has been working with the MDS.

Other locals and regions have been opposing ICE operations, whether that means opposing "processing centers," defending coworkers or organizing mutual aid. These reportbacks are essential in preparing for May Day 2027 and 2028.

- The UAW position on tariffs seems to be at odds with the industrial conception of taking labor competition out of the equation by bringing everyone's wages up. What are the alternatives?
- How can the union develop a sophisticated understanding of capital's continued restructuring? The failure to understand the future of the industry has proven costly if we examine the last 40 years of concessions. It is not enough to point to current profitability.
- In nominating candidates for the future IEB, what criteria is most relevant? Were they leaders in their locals? What skills do they bring to the office for which they are running? How did they handle grievances? Did they work in joint programs and if so how do they propose altering this site of corruption?

In the end, passing conference resolutions means little if delegates do not represent the membership. The convention needs to be a two-way street, with delegates bringing ideas from local discussions and, after further discussion at the convention, prepared to take resolutions back to their locals for further discussion and innovative implementation.

The tasks facing the convention are multifaceted. The most positive factor remains the adoption of direct elections that began to break the dominance of the Administration Caucus and its record of corruption and concessions. Negative factors looming over the UAW include the political climate, which has disoriented the membership, combined with a



destructive and costly fight within the IEB. This combination sapped the UAW's energy at a crucial moment. Fain's insistent embrace of auto tariffs and the union's silence on Trump's threat to take a civilization back to the stone age compound the errors.

If there is a chance to move forward — to identify the errors and assess how to reignite campaigns — the convention provides a democratic space. But discussions need to lead to action, and to adopt clear perspectives on working-class solidarity at home and abroad.

In that spirit, the convention might begin by reviewing its goals as laid out by the UAW

Constitution, which starts with the following:

"To improve working conditions, create a uniform system of shorter hours, higher wages, health care and pensions; to maintain and protect the interests of workers under the jurisdiction of this International Union."

Let the Constitutional Convention be conducted in that spirit.

*Note: The author could not have written this article without the help of other UAW members, and acknowledges their valuable comments, whether or not they ultimately modified her analysis.*

*Source: May-June 2026, ATC 242.*

# NEWS

*News from around the world*



## UKRAINE

# 'The dismissal of Fedorov is not the main issue. The future of Ukraine is'

VITALIY DUDIN · 18 July 2026

**These questions may be politically relevant. But they miss the deeper issue.**

The real question is what kind of state Ukraine is becoming under the pressure of a long war.

Sotsialnyi Rukh has consistently criticized Fedorov's neoliberal agenda. His vision of the "digital state" has too often meant deregulation, outsourcing and weakening labour protections while celebrating Silicon Valley-style entrepreneurship. Workers have every reason to remain critical of this model.

Yet opposing neoliberalism does not mean supporting the growing political influence of the military command.

Reports suggesting that the Commander-in-Chief played a decisive role in determining the composition of the civilian government should concern everyone committed to democracy. Military leaders are accountable for military operations. Civilian governments must remain accountable to society.

The strategic debate goes far beyond one minister.

Ukraine faces two competing approaches to a long war.

One approach seeks to compensate for Russia's numerical superiority through ever larger mobilization, tighter centralization and procurement concentrated among a limited number of large defence producers.

The other seeks to compensate for Ukraine's demographic disadvantage through technological innovation, distributed production, competition between developers, rapid adaptation and extensive use of drones, robotics and digital systems.

For Ukraine, this is not simply a question of military doctrine.

Russia can afford enormous human losses. Ukraine cannot.

Every experienced soldier is also a worker, engineer, teacher, doctor or parent whose knowledge will be indispensable for rebuilding the country after the war. A successful defence strategy must therefore maximize Ukraine's technological advantages while minimizing unnecessary human losses.

This is not only a military necessity. It is a social necessity.

At the same time, technological modernization cannot become another excuse for neoliberal restructuring. The defence sector must serve society rather than private monopolies. Innovation should strengthen public capacity, decent working conditions and democratic accountability—not enrich a new generation of oligarchs or foreign investors.

Ukraine needs both democracy and innovation.

It needs civilian control over the armed forces.

It needs technological modernization without neoliberal dogma.

And it needs a strategy that defends not only the state's borders, but also the people who will have to rebuild the country once the war is over.

The future of Ukraine will not be decided by choosing between competing factions of the political elite. It will be decided by whether the country can defend itself while preserving the democratic and social foundations worth defending.

18 July 2026

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*Source: Ukraine Solidarity.*

## VENEZUELA

# Internationalist solidarity with the Venezuelan people

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL BUREAU · 10 July 2026

**Hundreds of aftershocks have continued to occur in recent days, and the survivors find themselves in an extremely precarious situation: sleeping in tents rather than returning to cracked buildings, whilst basic services in the affected regions (water, electricity, transport, telephone connections, etc.) have ground to a halt and hospitals are overwhelmed.**

In the face of this terrible situation, the Fourth International expresses its internationalist solidarity with the Venezuelan people. We stand with all the victims, the injured and the missing, as well as their families, friends and comrades, in their grief and their hopes for a speedy recovery.

We also wish to express our support for all those who are mobilising to help their communities, to search for survivors, to collect and distribute aid (water, food, medicines...) and to assess the damage in the affected areas.

Popular mobilisation is crucial in a country that has endured repeated crises, a blockade and the deterioration of public services in recent years, and it gives full meaning to the saying 'Only the people can save the people'.

US imperialism is exploiting the situation to strengthen its control over Venezuela, following the abduction of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores on 3 January. The US Army's Southern Command has taken control of the distribution of international aid, thereby increasing its presence in the country. We call for support for all initiatives providing direct aid to the Venezuelan people

That is why, in the face of this situation, we call for support for all initiatives providing direct aid to the Venezuelan people. In particular, the Fourth

International is mobilising to raise funds for the joint initiative by the political current Comunes and the NGO No One Out. [2]

This initiative is helping to ensure the survival of at least 150 families living as refugees in the open in Caribe, Macuto and Playa Verde. They have lost everything. They have no electricity, food, medical supplies or shelter. The initiative is supporting three refugee centres in the worst-affected areas. They collect, purchase, organise and deliver supplies.

From outside Venezuela, donations can be made to this account:

Bank: BCC di Brescia

Account name: NO ONE OUT - ETS

IBAN: IT82To869211202017000171010

Reference: Venezuela Emergency.

In Venezuela, donations can be made to this account:

Banco Venezolano de Crédito

Account name: Asociación de Empleados Administrativos UCV

No: 01040008210080301278

Tax ID: J-302406943

The situation calls for the broadest possible international aid to tackle a tragedy of this magnitude. This means that all funds must be channelled towards overcoming the current crisis and, as far as possible, towards future reconstruction.

We therefore endorse the call made by the Comunes current, considering that "a step in this direction is to suspend the negotiation process regarding Venezuela's external debt—demanded by international banks and sponsored by the US government—[to demand its cancellation] and to concentrate all efforts on addressing the tragedy and national reconstruction. All the money must be

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| channelled towards overcoming this tragedy, the scale of which is as yet unimaginable." | <i>1 July 2026</i> |
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