

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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FEATURE

NEW ZEALAND/AOTEAROA

Beyond the Labour Machine: Aotearoa, the Alliance, and the Question of Working Class Independence

Kyle Barrett

FEATURE

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America: Patterns and Pendulum

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BRAZIL

Elections Crucial to Curbing Far Right

ISRAEL DUTRA ·

Donald Trump, the leader of hegemonic imperialism and the world leader of far-right movements and parties, is reshaping global political relations, seeking to establish authoritarian and ultra-neoliberal regimes both domestically and internationally – but above all in what he sees as "his" wider territory, Latin America. He continues his war offensive in the Middle East, which began with the genocide he helped Netanyahu carry out in Gaza, and which continues today with a new round of attacks on Iran, Lebanon and Palestine again.

Faced with the imminence of climate collapse, as shown by extreme phenomena from North to South and from East to West, the US government is ignoring the greatest environmental crisis in our history, encouraging anti-scientific denial in both ideological struggle and political practice. Extreme heat, glacier collapses, forest fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones, floods... the disasters resulting from global warming caused by capitalism portend an even worse situation than the one we have today. Brazil, in this context, is at immediate risk: it is not ready to face the effects of the devastating super *El Niño*.

Throughout the territories to the south of the United States, the Trump-Rubio administration is successfully implementing a sinister recolonization plan, based on military attacks, threats of invasion – as in Cuba, once again surrounded and heroically resisting – economic blackmail and not-so-subtle interference in the electoral processes of sovereign countries. This is what it has done in Honduras, Argentina and this year, Colombia. After the invasion operation carried out in January in Venezuela, and the hostage-taking of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia

Flores, Trump has just officialised, with the help of the puppet government of Delcy Rodríguez, the plundering of a large part of Venezuela's oil. And now, with the help of his tech giants and his gigantic war and espionage machine, he is beginning to interfere in the Brazilian electoral process, with the explicit aim of bringing the Bolsonaro clan back to power.

A polarised election

Brazil goes to the polls in October for what is the sixth largest election in the world. An election that combines the renewal of the presidential term – where the current president Lula faces Bolsonaro's son – with the election of hundreds of members of the two houses of parliament (all deputies and two-thirds of senators), as well as the elections for the government of the 27 states and their local assemblies. The outcome of the election remains uncertain between the two main candidates, Flávio Bolsonaro and Lula.

These elections will, without a doubt, be marked by the fallout from the Master bank scandal. The pyramid collapsed in the last quarter of 2025 and the central bank decreed the liquidation of Master Bank. Brazil then discovered the biggest financial scandal in its history: a hole still difficult to estimate, which would exceed 10 billion euros. The bank's president, Daniel Vorcaro, was arrested by the federal police.

From the beginning, deep and solid business, cronyism and corruption ties with the far right appeared. Leading figures of the far right, such as deputy Nikolas Ferreira (Minas Gerais) or senator Ciro Nogueira, benefited from Vorcaro's largesse (travel, luxury hotels, money). Bolsonarist governor Claudio Castro (Rio de Janeiro) invested the resources of the pension fund for state civil servants

in the funds managed by Master. His colleague in Brasília, Ibaneis Rocha, also a Bolsonaroist, invested nearly 2 billion euros from the Regional Bank of Brasília.

The icing on the cake remains the affair of *Dark Horse*, a film supposedly telling the epic story of Jair Bolsonaro. Vorcaro had pledged to finance the film to the tune of 136 million reais (more than 20 million euros), of which only half was actually transferred. Conversations and messages found on Vorcaro's mobile phone show frequent contacts, direct negotiations between Vorcaro and Flávio Bolsonaro, and even a visit by Flávio to Vorcaro the day before his incarceration.

The DNA of the far right can therefore be found at all levels of the scandal. This does not prevent imperialism and the far right from trying to reverse the situation and bring the Master crisis to those whom entire layers of the population consider to be allies of Lula, starting with the ministers of the Federal Supreme Court. They are helped in this by the fact that Vorcaro did not limit his largesse to the far right alone, but tried to co-opt all those who, directly or indirectly, held a piece of executive, legislative, judicial or administrative power. But above all, they can count on the commitment of the Minister of the STF (Federal Supreme Court) André Mendonça – Bolsonaro's former Minister of Justice – in charge of the file. Mendonça conducts the case by protecting his political accomplices and targeting those with supposed proximity to Lula, first and foremost another STF minister, Alexandre de Moraes, named in the case, considered an ally of Lula and judge of the trial of the putschists in January 2023 – which also gives the Bolsonaroists a taste of revenge.

Continued U.S. intervention

The U.S. government is already deliberately acting against Brazil's sovereignty, while keeping Mexico under economic and military threat. In addition to exorbitant tariffs, which have taxed various Brazilian products at 37.5%, the State Department continues to interfere, including by classifying the

criminal organisations CV and CCP as terrorist groups, and by constantly sowing doubt about elections and electronic ballot boxes. The escalation in August included revoking the diplomatic visa of the Brazilian ambassador to Washington. Trump and Rubio used their subordinate, the Argentine president, Milei, to attack Brazil, its government, and Lula's candidacy.

The real issue in the electoral battle is therefore Brazil's sovereignty. Tech giants, such as Peter Thiel's Palantir, are acting as a digital shock force in the service of the far-right project. Part of their ambitions is to set up a techno-fascist experiment in the countries of the region – a project that also has the enthusiastic support of Renan Santos and the Missão party in Brazil. A victory for Flávio Bolsonaro would pave the way for a broader colonial offensive: control of land, water, ports and many other national resources and infrastructure.

The attempt to destabilize the election, which has been underway for a few weeks – at the time of writing this article – is blatant, as can be seen in the recent crisis that is shaking the STF. On the one hand, the ramifications woven by Vorcaro and the Master bank show that a global change is needed in the murky relations between the judiciary and the bourgeoisie. This is why it is right to demand that each of those named in the Master case – including Moraes, Toffoli and Mendonça – be investigated, while promoting radical political and judicial reform to abolish privileges. André Mendonça is testing the ground to sow confusion and create a smokescreen around the *Dark Horse* scandal, in a pro-Trump manoeuvre designed to guarantee Flávio the conditions to run in a position of strength in the second round.

The political battle within the STF is just one more manifestation – and one of the most serious – of the degree of polarization in which the country finds itself. The tendency is for the elections to become a referendum, in which Lula is approved or rejected, as well as the left, social policies, the bourgeois democratic regime and the very sovereignty of the country. A victory for Bolsonaro Jr. would re-

turn control of the state apparatus to the far right and to Trump, which would represent a risk of historic proportions for the democratic freedoms and socio-economic rights won over the last forty years. For all these reasons, the 2026 election campaign is a strategic battle of regional and international scope.

The PSOL and Lula's re-election

The PSOL's National Committee voted almost unanimously in favour of electoral support for Lula, but did not approve his governmental program. This decision was accompanied by a debate on the proposal, supported by some in the party, to form a federation with the PT — rejected by 75% of the members of the national leadership. Through these two separate debates, the PSOL showed that it understood the need for an essential tactical vote in favour of Lula's re-election, without confusing the party with the PT's project.

The PSOL has put all its energy into Lula's campaign and has made its candidacies in the majority and proportional elections a platform for this indispensable victory, while maintaining its programmatic independence. Concretely, for example, our Lauro Campos and Marielle Franco Foundation has chosen, politically, not to participate in the drafting of the program of the coalition led by Lula. Our priorities in the context of Lula's re-election are the fight to put an end to the "6x1" system, the defence of Brazil's sovereignty in the face of Trump's attacks, the defence of women's rights and very lives against misogyny and feminicide, and the need for a government program that takes into account the climate crisis — fighting against the devastation caused by agribusiness, mining, extraction and the use of fossil fuels; by defending standing forests, organic family farming, the commons character of rivers, lakes and forests, as well as an urgent energy transition towards the exclusive use of renewable sources.

PSOL looks to the future

The PSOL is approaching the most important election in its history, a moment when its coherence and its future are at stake, firstly in terms of exceeding the electoral threshold. [1] Also, in helping to contain Bolsonarism and the far right by helping to get Lula re-elected, and at the same time reaffirming its political-programmatic profile for what will be the "post-Lula" era. In this autonomous way, the party has attracted important personalities such as Manuela D'Ávila, Duda Salabert and Jones Manoel. [2]

We must already think about what the PSOL will be after October, its contours and the challenges that await it. We believe that it must serve as a point of support for struggles, by being useful to those who live from their work. To help bring together the most important conflicts, it will have to put itself at the service of social movements in order to build unitary spaces, united fronts and associative convergences. We must combine the fight against the far right and for national sovereignty with the defence of workers' rights — via trade unions, in the workplace as well as in living spaces, for wages, health, education, nurseries — and with anti-racist, feminist and LGBTQIA+ mobilizations and organizations.

The last programmatic update conference, which took place in 2025, was a starting point to align our action with what is most alive in the struggles for civilization — but it was only the beginning. Themes like the environmental crisis and digital sovereignty, which define the role of movements and ours as a party, must be addressed with the urgency that the times demand. A good example of what should be generalized as a practice is the development of the platform "Programmatic Guidelines for an Ecosocialist Transition", coordinated by the PSOL and Rede foundations. This program was developed in an inclusive and participatory way by activists, invited experts, activists and leaders.

To move forward on this path, in a country as vast and diverse as Brazil, it is essential to reconnect with the pluralist spirit on which the PSOL was founded 22 years ago: to constitute a convergence

between different sectors and traditions of the Brazilian socialist left, within a radical and radically democratic party-front, where all tendencies have their place. To play an important role in the current wave of new socialist left movements (such as the American DSA, Die Linke in Germany or the Workers' Party in Turkey), the party must assert itself as present in the struggles and in the service of

them: a militant, democratic and internationalist party.

Once Lula wins – the task to which we are fully dedicated – we will chart a programmatic path for the future, without neglecting the fight against putschism. The future is at stake now.

20 September 2026

SPANISH STATE

The spark that lit a prairie fire: let's organise a hot autumn

ANTICAPITALISTAS ·

However, this case has been the spark that started a wildfire. The deeply disturbing images reflect an undeniable reality. Housing is the main concern of the working class. Rents have risen exponentially in recent years; unchecked tourism has taken over neighbourhoods and towns across Spain; and people's purchasing power has declined as prices have soared: an entire generation is being denied access to housing, and over the course of eight years of progressive governments, the problem has only become worse.

The mobilisation has not been confined to Madrid: a movement driven by solidarity and frustration has swept through many cities, from Granada to Valladolid. Saturday's demonstration in Madrid, organised by the Tenants' Union, which ended with a sit-in at Puerta del Sol, has marked a qualitative leap in the conflict. This is no longer a sector-specific or single issue fight: housing has come to symbolise the great failure of Spain's progressive administrations, highlighting the fact that eight years of government – first under a PSOE-Podemos coalition and now under a PSOE-SUMAR coalition – have failed to tackle the structural problems faced by working people.

In this regard, the housing movement represents a new social force that could develop into a decisive one. On the one hand, the political climate has changed: faced with a right wing on the offensive against migrants in the wake of the Ceuta crisis, the housing movement is capable of putting forward a different agenda. It has also thrown the progressive camp off balance – a camp that seems to be able to survive only by blackmailing left-wing supporters

with fears of the right, whilst keeping intact the policies that allow capitalist profit at the expense of the working class. It appears that the government can no longer ignore this problem: the failure of such 'historic victories' as the housing law make any further attempts at window-dressing impossible.

But just because the mood has changed does not mean that the balance of forces has. The right remains more powerful than the popular camp; the progressives will try to defuse the situation through a combination of blackmail and attempts at 'passive reforms' – that is, crumbs to curb the mobilisation. However, these efforts are hampered by the profound loss of credibility suffered by the parties that have been in government in recent years. Neither Sumar nor Podemos have a significant presence or influence within the housing movement, despite the attempts by their public figures to reposition themselves: without activist networks and with their pro-government strategy now discredited, the progressive bloc faces serious difficulties in using these parties as a conduit in the negotiating tactics with which they seek to contain the social movement.

The challenge facing the grassroots movement is to avoid the parliamentary trap and put independent mass political action center stage. The Tenants' Union's programme – including the so-called 'Maricarmen Decree' and other key measures such as the expropriation of properties owned by vulture funds and banks to create a stock of public housing, an immediate 50 per cent reduction in rents, and a cap on rents at 20 per cent of wages – offers a sound programme for unifying the movement and

providing it with a vision of change to be achieved through its social and political strength.

This requires a qualitative leap in terms of organisation and tactics, so that the movement can adopt a strategy that enables it to grow stronger in the long term. We need to raise the possibility of actions such as a general strike, which will prevent the movement from becoming bogged down in one phase without being able to move on to the next. A general strike requires building a broad policy of alliances, with its own confrontational perspective: it cannot be a strike by union minorities; it must draw in all possible sectors of the trade union movement, whilst combining this with a wider

range of actions, as we saw in the 8 March feminist strikes.

A perspective of this nature would allow us to incorporate other demands of our class, such as wage demands from industrial sectors or the powerful education movement currently developing in several autonomous regions. If we take this perspective seriously, we must always strive to broaden our social base, mobilising from the grassroots and putting pressure on all trade union and social sectors to move in that direction.

28 September 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Anticapitalistas**.*

USA

Protestors Rally against Mass Murderers Speaking at U.N. General Assembly

DAN LA BOTZ ·

President Trump, speaking to the UN General Assembly, said that he could "make a deal" with Iran or "Do I drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations?" Such a statement by a head of government, threatening civilian populations, is itself a crime against humanity. Outside the UN building hundreds marched against Trump saying, "Trump Doesn't Speak for Us." They declared that he was a "war criminal," both for his support of Israel's war on Gaza, that has killed at least 74,000 and war on Iran which has taken the lives of several thousand. They demanded his arrest. When they blocked streets, some were arrested.

Netanyahu's presence, however, stirred the most controversy. The UN-backed International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu on November 21, 2024 for war crime, including attacks on civilians and using starvation as a weapon of war, as well as for crimes against humanity, such as murder. On September 12, 2025, Zohran Mamdani, then campaigning for mayor of New York City, said he would arrest Netanyahu if he set foot in the city. However, once elected Mayor Mamdani conceded that he did not have the legal authority to do so, though he continued to call Netanyahu a war criminal but called upon the federal government to arrest him, which Trump would never consider.

Jewish Voice for Peace issued a statement saying that the UN was "playing host to a war criminal" and organized a demonstration of hundreds of anti-Zionists Jews who showed up at the UN building to

protest Netanyahu, with signs that read, "Jews Say Stop Arming Israel," "War Criminal in Our City," and "End the Genocide." Police arrested protestors for blocking the street, among them Oscar winner Susan Sarandon and the star of "Hacks" Hannah Einbinder.

While Mamdani did not join the protest, his allies were there. Darializa Avila Chevalier, a DSA member and candidate for the House of Representative backed by Mamdani, said, "I refuse to allow a war criminal to roam the streets of our city unchallenged. I refuse to play host to a man who has overseen the slaughter or injury of more than 64,000 children in Gaza with American taxpayer dollars." She too was arrested for blocking the street.

Iranians and Iranian-Americans also held a "Free Iran" rally at the UN, protesting against Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian whose government is estimated to have murdered 30,000 Iranian citizens who demonstrated for democracy in their country in January 2026. Pezeshkian's government claimed the protests were organized by Israel and the United States, though no one outside his government buys that. The protestors called for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic, and referred to Pezeshkian and other Iranian government officials at the UN as "murderers in suits." They called upon Mayor Mamdani and the U.S. government to arrest them and not allow them to go freely through New York City streets.

Shirin Nariman, who was arrested and imprisoned in Iran for protesting when she was a teenager, said, "The only way to stop this execution and suppression is for the regime to go away, to fall, to be changed."

Americans have turned against Trump's wars, so all of this about Israel, Iran, and the war is bad for

Trump and the Republicans as we approach the November 3 midterm election.

27 September 2026

USA

A Reign of Anti-Immigrant Terror

DIANNE FEELEY ·

In Springfield, Ohio the Haitian community is living in terror and trauma as members are picked up for deportation – some having built lives in the United States for decades – after the Trump regime peremptorily revoked their Temporary Protected Status.

Around the country, at least 166 immigrants have been deported to "third party" countries where they have no connections, such as the Central African Republic where they're held in prison hotels and beaten and tortured if they speak out. Here is a report from Uganda about eight immigrants who were deported to a country they don't know.

These are only snapshots of the daily atrocities of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol, despite outrage and protest in our communities.

State of the Crackdown

ICE has never been able to meet the racist psychopath's Stephen Miller's national objective of arresting 3000 immigrants a day. After a year and a half of trying one tactic and then another, the daily quota was lowered to 2000, which is vicious enough.

Various media have covered the growing number of people who have been arrested, most recently 43,000 in June, 49,000 in July and almost 51,000 in August. This amounts to fewer than 1650 a day, but nonetheless represents a growth in arrests, much of it due to cooperation by local police. However it still doesn't match "deporter in chief" Obama's level of arrests and deportations.

It is much more politically costly to target people who have lived in the country for years than deport those at the borders. Here they built families who

love and support them, they have community members and co-workers who value them.

In essentially sealing borders and preventing asylum applications, the Trump administration has developed various plans to pick up, detain and deport immigrants. While it claims it is getting rid of the "worst of the worst," story after story reveals ordinary people with dreams and hopes.

Where do ICE and Border Patrol find those who seemingly lack status? They are found at airports arriving or departing with their families; they are pulled over as they are on their way to work; they are reporting to ICE offices or courts for their routine immigration appointments.

Most have distant asylum hearing dates, and some are green card holders targeted by an administration that has decided their ideas don't align with Trump's.

This last category includes the publicized cases of Mahmoud Khalil — a 31-year-old Palestinian born in a refugee camp in Syria and getting a Master's Degree at Columbia University — and 53-year-old Salah Sarsour, president of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, community leader, father and grandfather, who was born in the West Bank.

Then there is the category of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), for those whose country is facing a war, civil unrest or an environmental disaster. About 350,000 Haitians gained that status in 2010, when an earthquake destroyed much of its capital Port-au-Prince and beyond.

The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti suffered from two U.S.-backed coups 30 years ago and has been unable to regain its stability. Because of gang violence no flights arrive in Port-au-Prince because gangs control the runway — yet

the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled Trump has the right to remove TPS status, and Trump eagerly did so.

The Court majority disregarded Trump's blatant racist comments about the country he described as a "shithole" and absurdly accused Haitians living and working in Springfield, Ohio (along with vice president Vance) of eating dogs and cats.

Stripped of their TPS, Haitians have lost their jobs and 161 were deported in shackles back to Haiti in August. While humanitarian groups scramble to help the first batch, Trump's gang projects deporting 250 Haitians each week.

With those who only had TPS status no longer able to work, this is already causing critical staffing shortages in the care industry. Others, who have pending asylum cases, have been called into Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for interviews and fitted with electric monitors.

What's New?

Even though more immigrants were deported under the Obama administration's two terms, the Trump administration has developed a whole set of new immigration rules or novel interpretation of immigration law. The rhetoric of the second Trump era does not mask its inherent cruelty.

It shut down its borders, blocks asylum seekers from being able to apply, fires immigration judges who rule favorably, and once people are arrested, throws them into detention centers rather than release them until their hearing.

Even when forced to back off from scaling an apartment building from helicopters or flooding cities with masked goon squads, ICE agents have employed other terrorizing tactics. They have designed a media campaign to encourage immigrants to self-deport rather than being snatched up without warning and separated from their children.

This administration has developed the strategy of holding the immigrants it arrests in detention centers, with a goal of space for 100,000 immigrants.

These for-profit facilities are usually operated by corporations who already specialize in prison systems, especially the GEO Group and CoreCivic.

According to Operation Immigration, 245 detention centers and county jails across the United States currently hold almost 66,000 people at a cost of \$3.2 billion a year. The average stay is roughly two months. Since 2025, 56 have died in one of the centers.

Under former DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, ICE launched its "Detention Reengineering Initiative," purchasing 11 warehouses at extravagant prices to house immigrants. But warehousing immigrants isn't as simple as storing boxes.

Communities mobilized to keep the facilities shut by demanding various hearings and certificates of compliance. They pointed out that the warehouses did not have the water and sewage facilities required, and some were in floodplains. Within months the plan was scraped and seven, purchased for \$700 million, are up for sale or turned over to the government.

Yet having created the largest detention system in the world, the DHS is now frantically soliciting contracts from corporations who would be responsible for building from the ground up one-stop facilities where immigrants would be held, tried and then deported. Project Salt Box has obtained records and analyzed this streamlined operation.

From the beginning those housed at these detention centers have protested the horrendous conditions of inedible meals, lack of access to family or lawyers, the non-existence of health care and mistreatment by guards.

The poor conditions not only maximize the profit margin but also function to terrorize the incarcerated immigrant and their families. Some immigrants reported that guards told them they had the power to get out of the place by agreeing to self-deport. Several centers have seen sustained food and work strikes while ICE and the center staff maintain that everything is fine.

Reporters have tracked down immigrants who have been deported. Some self-deported back to their country of origin because with their special health needs they thought they might die in detention. But those deported to countries where they know no one are given a couple of months to figure out where to go. They are stranded.

This is an ongoing crime against humanity, only slowed down by popular resistance. That's why 15 activists in Minneapolis, including trade unionists, are facing "conspiracy" charges after the mass mobilization that drove "Operation Metro Surge" out of that city.

*Source **Against the Current.***

Anti-migration measures: the EU Pact worsens an already hostile reality for exiles

AUDE MARTENOT ·

The shift is clear: rather than improving the protection of human rights and access to a fair examination of claims for protection, the new regulation aims to identify as early as possible applications that can be handled by other states, outsource asylum management, and increase controls in order to carry out deportations more rapidly.

The Schengen Area in crisis

This pact follows years of negotiations within the EU and represents an attempt to resolve the crisis of the Schengen Area. When it was established in the 1980s, Schengen sought to create a European area of free movement by removing internal borders, thereby meeting employers' need for a mobile workforce. As a result, Europe's external borders became the gateway into this area, especially as the determination to close access has become increasingly apparent, leading many to speak of a "Fortress Europe."

The agency responsible for managing these borders is Frontex. It has repeatedly been criticised in recent years for violations of fundamental rights, yet states, including Switzerland, continue to fund it. Its budget has risen from €6 million in 2005 to €1.2 billion in 2026. In the Balkans, Frontex has been accused of illegally pushing people back across borders. In the Mediterranean, the agency is accused of passively standing by while boat engines are destroyed and people are abandoned at sea. In Switzerland and elsewhere, Frontex organises "special flights" to forcibly deport migrants, who are restrained and handcuffed, with little regard for their physical or mental health.

Within Europe, asylum applications were previously managed under the Dublin Regulation and are now governed by the Pact. The logic remains the same: a system of arbitrary allocation of people in exile. Based on the Eurodac database, which records asylum seekers' fingerprints and identities, the system stipulates that a protection claim may be processed in only one country. If a person is registered in several states, they may be returned under the Dublin system to the first country of entry. The ways in which someone becomes registered in Eurodac are often opaque: through an asylum application, but also during hospitalisation, police arrest, transport checks, and other situations. As a result, migratory journeys can lead to family separation: spouses registered in different countries, or newly adult children unable to reunite with their families because they were "Dublin-registered" in another European country.

Another pitfall of this arrangement is that countries on Europe's southern and external borders naturally receive far more arrivals than others. At the same time, many states, including Switzerland, have for years refused to accept asylum applications through their embassies, forcing people to undertake dangerous migration routes and present themselves in person, often illegally, to apply for asylum. Countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain and the Balkan states struggle to provide dignified reception conditions while also bearing the burden of Dublin returns from other European countries. This situation became so severe that Dublin transfers to Greece were suspended following a 2011 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights. Since June 2024, however, several countries, including Switzerland, have sought to revive such return practices.

Europe claims that stricter borders are intended to prevent irregular entry. In reality, the main consequence is to increase the very irregularity being condemned while making journeys more dangerous, exposing people to greater violence and reducing protection of their fundamental rights.

Violence, deaths and dehumanisation

Preventing migration flows is unrealistic, regardless of the methods used: outsourcing agreements (such as with Turkey), detention sites (such as the hotspots on the Greek island of Lesbos), pushbacks (illegal refusal to accept people who had come to seek asylum in Europe, conducted by national police forces and Frontex), and other measures. But the increased repression and the measures to control migrants have a direct and undeniable consequence: to significantly heighten the risks faced by those on the move.

Between January and June 2026, at least 865 people died or went missing in the Mediterranean. This was the deadliest six-month period of the last decade, during which more than 34,000 deaths have been recorded. Crossings of the English Channel have not been as deadly, but fatalities remain frequent. In recent weeks, numerous makeshift boats have sunk in the waters between France and England. The Balkan routes are no safer.

These policies of sealing off Europe, rooted in neo-colonial relationships with countries around the Mediterranean, provoke legitimate reactions. The events that took place during the summer of 2026 in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, located on Moroccan territory, are a direct consequence of Europe's anti-asylum regime.

Two dynamics appear to have converged, leading nearly 60,000 people to cross the enclave's border within a matter of hours. First, people fleeing poverty in their regions of origin, seeking a better life in Europe, probably received false information that the border would be open that day. Second, a spontaneous mass mobilisation developed against colonial-era borders that divide a country marked

by severe income inequality and rising unemployment. The announcement of a possible crossing created a momentum that spread rapidly. Were governments of the Global South manipulating events in response to the latest decisions aiming to externalise the EU's borders? Quite possibly, and such tactics would not be unprecedented, as illustrated by the Belarus-Poland border situation in 2021.

The attention focused on a handful of lives struggling to survive ultimately benefits the far right, which readily speaks of a "migration crisis" based on reception difficulties that it has itself helped create. This narrative is reinforced by mainstream media, which all too rarely highlight the exploitation of highly vulnerable workers, for example in Europe's tomato and strawberry plantations.

Against asylum and migration: the European Pact takes effect

The European Pact on Migration and Asylum entered into force on 12 June 2026. This reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) consists of a set of regulations restructuring asylum procedures, controls at external borders, the Eurodac database, Dublin system rules, and solidarity mechanisms between member states.

Three major developments stand out: accelerated border procedures, increased externalisation of refugee protection, and reinforcement of a European deportation regime. In practice, people are confined at Europe's external borders in large centres where they undergo screening procedures designed to rapidly categorise whether their applications are likely to be accepted or rejected. This restricts access to ordinary asylum procedures for many individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. It represents a further step away from individual examination of claims and towards the administrative management and selective filtering of migration flows.

A list of "safe third countries", whether countries of origin or transit countries, will allow Europe to de-

clare itself not responsible for processing many claims for protection and instead simply summarily send people to those countries. Furthermore, the externalisation of deportations and asylum processing is facilitated by this reform, as illustrated by projects such as Italy's project with Albania or the United Kingdom's plans for Rwanda.

This European reform closely resembles the revision of Switzerland's asylum law implemented in 2019, which established federal asylum centres where applicants are concentrated upon arrival and where those who can quickly be expelled under Dublin procedures are identified. Declining to examine applications, declaring oneself "not competent," closing files without reviewing them, and expel the claimants: Switzerland excels at this approach. The central mechanism for accelerating removals is isolation, confinement and control.

As a result, the very meaning of asylum is eroded, since the right to explain one's need for protection effectively disappears, regardless of the consequences for those concerned.

Distress and resistance

In a capitalist world, population movements - a timeless reality - increasingly become mechanisms of survival. They are also the result of, and perhaps more troubling for capitalist technocrats, proof of the ongoing plundering of the Global South's resources, the exploitation of bodies, the consequences of (neo)colonialisation and the beginnings of climate catastrophe. On the one hand, the northern powers and their allies pursue imperialist policies that extract wealth from southern countries, exploit poor workers, commit ecocide and fuel con-

flicts around the globe, all in the name of sacrosanct profit. On the other hand, they destroy the lives of people who legitimately flee this chaos.

In our own countries, we are witnessing a growing drift towards authoritarianism and the political right, accompanied by a steady deterioration in migrants' rights over the past fifty years. At the same time, the neoliberal economic context has produced repeated budget cuts and a search for ever-cheaper ways to outsource dealing with applications for asylum to reliable countries, reducing even more the scope for meaningful social action

Since 12 June, organisations working on the ground across Europe have observed a further hardening of attitudes and of the policies which flow from that. These restrictive and criminalising measures cause irreversible harm. Long periods of uncertainty and pressure generate such severe psychological distress that medical emergencies and even acts of self-harm occur regularly.

In this context, hope comes from grassroots struggles. Across Europe, individuals and groups continue to resist and attempt to disrupt migration policies that crush lives, through both small and large acts of solidarity. Their voices are numerous and impossible to silence. They challenge the status quo, even if never enough, and they persist. In Switzerland, a major mobilisation is planned for 26 September in the capital: the demonstration "No borders between us", organised by the association Solidarity Without Borders. Let us be thousands! We will not give up.

12 September 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

USA

Battle over AI Creates New Political Allies and Enemies

DAN LA BOTZ ·

The accelerators include Jensen Huang, head of Nvidia, the corporation that designs computer chips; David Sacks, billionaire venture capitalist; and President Donald Trump and Republican Party leaders. They argue that the United States must continue to develop AI in order to beat China in the race to control this powerful technology with tremendous military possibilities. Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson sent the lower chamber into early recess principally to prevent a vote on impeaching Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, but also to prevent a vote on AI.

On the other hand, those who want to slow AI development or to regulate AI include Sam Altman head of OpenAI, Dario Amodei CEO of Anthropic, and Elon Musk head of XAI, as well as Trump's former strategist Steve Bannon and independent Senator Bernie Sanders and Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren. They argue that AI is an imminent danger that must be restrained to protect the American people and the people of the world.

AI became the central issue of debate in U.S. politics in July. After attempting to and failing to answer a question initially posed by its human operators, OpenAI agents escaped the "sandbox" where they were supposed to be working, established communication with each other, described themselves as "a collective" eventually numbering 700 agents, and swarmed the Hugging Face, another computer company, evaded its security system and disrupted its operation.

The controversy was set off when 27-year-old Jacob Coxon posted online this statement:

I resigned from Anthropic today. I spent the last three years doing pre-training research at both OpenAI and Anthropic. Neither company is acting responsibly. They are racing straight to self-improving superintelligence and gambling with our lives.

Do not underestimate the power of this technology. These will soon be superhuman systems that can hack anything, revolutionize any field overnight, and acquire real power and resources.

The people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade. No other human activity poses this level of danger.

Evan Hubinger, a top scientist at Anthropic, then confirmed Coxon's statement, writing, "the people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade.

Altman, head of OpenAI, also responded to Coxon, saying that AI posed two alternative problems: Either, humans could lose control of AI. "This is unacceptable; we are unapologetically on Team Humanity, and AI must always serve people." Or, he speculated, "If an extraordinarily powerful AI is used by one person or company to impress their worldview onto everyone else, the results could be extremely dystopian."

Then 1,300 researcher and tech employees of the most important AI firms signed an open letter that read in part: "Building on work already underway to monitor frontier model releases: We request that the U.S. government support an international effort to develop the technical and governance tools need-

ed to deliberately pace the frontier of automated AI development."

So far, there is no mass public response to the threats posed by AI, though there are many community protests against the building of the data

centers that house computer systems but raise residents' electricity prices and use large amounts of water. We have a new movement to build.

20 September 2026

CLIMATE

Global warming and the headlong rush of fossil-fuel capitalism: the number one threat to global public health!

FRANK PROUHET ·

The climate catastrophe is not some distant prospect. The summer of 2026 provides proof of this, with unprecedented heatwaves in Western Europe, 540,000 hectares of forest gone up in smoke across the European Union since mid-June, sun-scorched crops and rivers running dry, forcing nuclear power stations to shut down. There have been massive floods in China, whilst Tunisia, Cyprus and Algeria are experiencing unprecedented droughts and water shortages. In Nepal, glacial melt and a glacier collapse have triggered a tsunami of mud and ice, claiming thousands of lives. Nepal emits just 0.5 tonnes of CO₂ per capita, a far cry from the 9.4 tonnes carbon footprint of the French and the 14 tonnes of the Americans. Yet the 'roof of the world' is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet, and, due to global warming, is at risk of losing 7 per cent of its GDP by 2050, according to the World Bank. [1] Those who are not invited to the banquet of fossil-fuel capitalism are footing the bill. A call for climate justice!

But the impact of global warming on human health goes far beyond the deaths caused by heatwaves or the victims of the floods in Nepal. So much so that on the eve of COP 26, in a historic and resounding editorial published simultaneously by 233 international medical journals, the prestigious British Medical Journal identified global warming and the failure of world leaders to keep the rise in tempera-

tures below 1.5°C as the number one threat to global public health.

'Who could have imagined it?' say Macron, the French President, and the leading figures of global capitalism. Yet, following the IPCC's model, since 2015, year after year, the medical journal *The Lancet* has been publishing key figures on the climate-induced deterioration of the main indicators of global health. This is The Lancet Countdown, the global health and climate change countdown, the result of work by several hundred researchers, 71 academic institutions and United Nations agencies, including the WHO! So, inaction? In reality, there is none. For two centuries, a social class has been burning fossil fuels to turn them into value; this is the driving force behind capitalism. And despite all the warnings, it is determined to carry on!

Heatwaves : how many deaths? Capital : how much profit!

It is still too early to know the death toll from this summer's heatwaves. But for the record, the 'Canicule' study put the death toll from the 2003 heatwave at nearly 20,000 in France and 70,000 across Europe. [2] And researchers have not observed any 'catch-up' in mortality. These victims would not have died a few weeks later had it not been for the heatwave!

Heat that lays bare social inequalities. The densest, poorest and least green neighbourhoods in Paris were also those with the highest heat-related mortality rates, with night-time temperatures sometimes 5 to 8 degrees higher than in the green spaces on the outskirts. Living in top-floor flats, being unable to afford a fan, working in the construction in-

dustry, or living alone on disability benefit whilst taking antidepressants can seriously harm one's health!

According to the Lancet Countdown 2025 report, heat-related deaths have risen by 63 per cent since the 1990s, reaching an annual average of 546,000 deaths between 2012 and 2021. This figure is already out of date – it was surely surpassed by the 2026 heatwave – and is set to rise further due to the cumulative effects of worsening global warming and a historic El Niño event.

The fumes of capitalism and its mega-fires...

Climate change is leading to an increase in mega-fires, which release CO₂, fine particulate matter, volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides. They also promote the formation of ground-level tropospheric ozone [3], a powerful greenhouse gas and aggressive pollutant that exacerbates asthma, bronchitis and emphysema [4] and reduces agricultural yields. These factors reinforce one another, to the great detriment of our lungs, compounding the problem of chronic agricultural burning in sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia! Exposure to smoke and PM 2.5 fine particulates from forest fires alone is estimated to have caused around 154,000 deaths in 2024, closely linked to global warming. Through increased mortality from cardiovascular disease, strokes and respiratory conditions... And, to a lesser extent, through the worsening of diabetes, kidney disease and neurological disorders. Taken together, forest fires, agricultural slash-and-burn practices and wildfires could be responsible for nearly 1.53 million deaths, according to a study published in *The Lancet*. [5]

In Europe, even wetter and cooler regions, such as Belgium and Germany, have broken their records for mega-fires. Canada and Siberia are experiencing giant, uncontrollable blazes in the boreal forests – the world's largest biome – which are releasing colossal quantities of CO₂. But these fires are also reducing snow and ice cover, lowering the ground's reflectivity and leading to increased absorption of solar radiation. They are further weakening the

permafrost [6], which alone stores 2.8 times more CO₂ than there is in the atmosphere. A ticking time bomb. The thawing of permafrost can also release bacteria and viruses that have been trapped for thousands of years. And the deeper they are, the older they are. In 2016, this already led to an anthrax outbreak amongst reindeer in Siberia, which claimed the life of a child. This emerging health risk makes Trump's plans to annex Greenland – in order to conduct deep-mining operations for the strategic metals necessary for capitalist growth – all the more worrying, given the risk of exposing human societies to new pathogens.

The Lancet Countdown also estimates that, in addition to global warming, the failure to transition to clean energy sources also led, in 2022, to 2.5 million deaths due to outdoor air pollution linked to fossil fuels, particularly through PM_{2.5}. Of these, nearly 1 million deaths were attributable to coal alone. And nearly 1.5 million deaths were attributable to oil – mainly from transport – and to gas, the combustion of which also releases fine particulate matter, responsible for cardiovascular disease, strokes, lung cancer and chronic respiratory diseases.

The good news isn't good news for everyone! Progress has been made in reducing deaths linked to outdoor air pollution caused by fossil fuels. These have fallen by 5.8 per cent since 2010, preventing 160,000 deaths per year and creating healthier and more sustainable jobs. But this progress has in fact mainly benefited developed capitalist countries. Between 2010 and 2022, there were 28 fewer deaths per 100,000 inhabitants each year in France, compared with 3 more deaths in Brazil or Cambodia, but 21 more deaths in India, which has seen a 38 per cent rise in pollution-related deaths since 2010. Liberal globalisation has transformed India and China into factories, but also into the world's chimneys. Every cough prevented in Paris has simply been shifted to Mumbai, because it costs less, thus shaping the map of globalised capitalism.

The origins of pandemics and infectious diseases

Global warming never acts alone, but it expands the geographical range of pathogens and creates the ecological conditions that facilitate their transmission and cross-species jumps. Yet the major pandemics – the Spanish flu, HIV, SARS, Ebola and Covid – all stem from the same mechanism: the crossing of species barriers, made possible by the forced proximity between wildlife and humans. These pandemics are occurring at an ever-increasing rate, as capital accelerates the pace of urban sprawl [7] and deforestation for timber, oil palm monocultures or 'blood diamonds', expands intensive livestock farming and unregulated urbanisation in areas neglected by public health systems, plunges communities into food insecurity and fuels the wildlife trade. Every hectare cleared shortens the distance between a dormant virus and its future human victim. The authoritative Georgetown study [8] predicts at least 15,000 inter-species viral transmissions by 2070, in a scenario where temperatures rise by more than 2°. Bats, which are highly mobile and carry numerous viruses, play a central role in this.

Dengue fever, which has been known for centuries, has seen a dramatic rise since the 1950s. The overlap of the areas where the four types of dengue develop – driven by population movements during the world war and rapid urbanisation – has even led to the emergence of a new form of dengue, known as haemorrhagic dengue, in the Philippines, Thailand and subsequently across the world, causing between 10,000 and 20,000 deaths a year. Global warming is also shortening the mosquitoes' life cycle and increasing the rate at which the viruses multiply within them. Every summer, local transmission is on the rise in Europe, as since the 1950s, temperature and humidity conditions have become 55 per cent more favourable to the tiger mosquito, which acts as its vector. This climate-related propensity for transmission – which allows the climate-related component of the risk to be isolated – has also increased by 13.9 per cent for *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria. Nearly 300,000

million cases and around 610,000 deaths are projected for 2024 [9], mainly in Africa, and the number of affected areas has risen by 17.1 per cent, particularly in the warming Andean and East African highlands. In China, the risk of infectious diarrhoea linked to extreme rainfall has risen by 3.0 per cent since the 1986–2005 period. The Mora study [10] showed that 58 per cent of known human infectious diseases can be exacerbated by at least one climate hazard: heat, drought, flooding or storms. Nature strikes back against a world that turns ecosystems into profit mines to be relentlessly exploited.

Food insecurity

Compared with the period 1981–2010, a further 123.7 million people are facing moderate or severe food insecurity due to an increase in droughts and heatwaves, water shortages and floods, which are reducing agricultural yields. This is a double blow, as rising CO₂ levels also reduce the nutritional quality and the protein and mineral (iron, zinc) content of major cereals, such as wheat and rice. Food is becoming higher in calories but less nutritious. Not to mention that, in the global agribusiness market, shortages fuel speculation and price rises, which deprive the poorest of access to good-quality food, weaken their immune systems, and contribute to epidemics, violence, rural exodus, migration and poverty, erode social cohesion, and encourage early marriage and the withdrawal of girls from school... Food insecurity is a central factor in the dynamics of global warming.

Biodiversity, our health and food security

Global warming has a multiplier effect on the main factors driving the collapse of biodiversity: the destruction of habitats through capitalist deforestation and urban sprawl, overfishing by factory ships, the genetic impoverishment of crops and factory farms in the agribusiness sector, pollution from an industry primarily concerned with profitability, and the introduction of invasive species. Our food security depends on it: pollination, soil degradation and

water filtration... It contributes to global warming, ocean acidification and deoxygenation. It strips the sea of its corals, which are an essential feeding ground whilst also protecting the coastline from swells. It contributes to the decline and migration of many fish species. Yet the Nexus report by IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [11], alongside the WHO and the IPCC, advocates the idea that the health of ecosystems, animals and humans is interconnected. This is the 'One Health' approach.

In an environment with rich biodiversity, pathogenic organisms affecting humans and animals 'get lost' due to a dilution effect, whereas the collapse of biodiversity favours opportunistic pathogens and the crossing of species barriers. For example, in the USA, in an environment fragmented by urbanisation, ticks are mainly likely to encounter white-footed mice, which harbour and transmit the bacterium responsible for Lyme disease very effectively to ticks. In a more biodiverse environment, they would also encounter possums or squirrels, which are poor at transmitting the bacterium and may even groom the ticks. As tick infection rates fall, so does the risk to humans. The destruction of ecosystems ultimately releases stored CO₂ and depletes biodiversity – which is the primary source of therapeutic molecules, both those of the past (aspirin, penicillin...) and those of the future!

Asthma, allergies... capitalism is suffocating us!

Thirty per cent of the world's population now suffers from allergies, compared with just 4 per cent in the late 1960s. 363 million people have asthma, including 100 to 125 million children, according to 2023 figures from the WHO, resulting in 440,000 deaths. In wealthy countries, asthma rates have levelled off among adults and continue to rise among children, but are still rising sharply in Asia, Latin America and Africa – regions where capitalism is relocating its pollution. The rise in allergies and asthma appears to be the result of a combination of

several mutually reinforcing factors: a loss of biodiversity in the skin, gut and respiratory microbiota to which we are exposed in early childhood, as well as various forms of pollution – particularly during pregnancy and early childhood – including air pollution, domestic pollution, second-hand smoke, poor ventilation in homes, urbanisation and road traffic pollution linked to the prevalence of private car use.

However, global warming also contributes to an earlier, longer and more intense pollen season, whilst rising CO₂ levels lead to a higher concentration of allergenic proteins and smaller pollen particles – further fragmented by pollution, fine particulate matter and ozone – which penetrate deeper into the small bronchi. Every breath of fresh air that should have been preserved came at a cost, which capitalism refused to pay.

Heat doesn't just kill bodies: fossil capital and mental breakdown!

Heat increases mental fatigue, leads to a rise in acts of self-harm such as jumping from windows or using firearms, and exacerbates the side effects of psychotropic, antipsychotic and anti-epileptic drugs, due to an imbalance in lithium levels or dehydration in people with bipolar disorder. In cases of hyperthermia, these medicines increase the risk of death. A mere 1° rise in seasonal temperature increases interpersonal violence by 4 per cent – particularly amongst the elderly or those who are socially isolated, such as the homeless – and inter-group violence by 14 per cent, according to a 2013 study by the Universities of Berkeley and Princeton. [12] In hot weather, patients remain confined to their homes, are less likely to adhere to their treatment, and are more likely to slip through the net of support from those around them and their carers.

Eco-anxiety has risen by 20 per cent in two years in France, fuelled by this summer's heatwaves, particularly amongst 15–24-year-olds, according to the Eco-Anxiety Observatory. Although anxiety scales remain a matter of debate, the figure cited – 15 mil-

lion people suffering from eco-anxiety in France, with a further 1.1 million in the severe anxiety category – gives an idea of the scale of the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic had already exacerbated the prevailing trends in our liberal society: social isolation, confinement within social media networks, ever-increasing demands in terms of competition, educational performance and image – particularly for young women – precarious living conditions, and a future marked by crises and wars. Eco-anxiety in the face of global warming further exacerbates these trends. Although these figures may mask cases of mental breakdown, the key factor behind this reactive anxiety lies in a two-pronged approach, which has more to do with biosociology than with psychiatry or pathology: physical distress caused by heat, social suffering in the face of inaction on climate change, and, at times, guilt at being unable to challenge the inaction of capital. This results in more violent behaviour amongst young men, and more frequent suicides, self-harm and eating disorders amongst young women. Two clinical manifestations and a single, highly political diagnosis: extractivist capitalism and government inaction on climate change are inflicting suffering on both body and mind, in an epidemic of lucidity that causes pain, until it transforms into a movement of collective hope.

Bangladesh: the intersecting dynamics of a country that is drowning

Bangladesh is a flat delta country, situated between the great Himalayan rivers that are melting at breakneck speed and the Bay of Bengal, whose water level is rising – a country ravaged by monsoon floods and El Niño. It is one of the world's most densely populated countries, with 175 million inhabitants, or 1,300 people per square kilometre. Since the Green Revolution, the IMF and the World Bank have steered the country towards specialising in rice cultivation. With even a slight rise in night-time temperatures, rice productivity falls by more than 10 per cent. As sea levels rise, salt water is seeping in everywhere, up to 100 km inland from

the coast, further reducing the rice harvest. Already, it is experiencing a 12 per cent decline in agricultural production due to global warming, whilst 20 per cent of its infant mortality is attributable to the salinisation of fresh water. It risks losing 11 to 17 per cent of its land by 2050, resulting in 13 to 22 million displaced people. Women are forced to travel ever further afield in search of fresh water; rural exodus and poverty are on the rise; human health is threatened by salinisation (high blood pressure, heart and kidney failure, etc.) and falling incomes, as is the health of livestock, which provide a significant proportion of protein. Faced with the rice crisis, farmers are turning to shrimp farming for export, filling ponds with... salt water, which further exacerbates the salinisation of water sources and wells! The Bay of Bengal is known to be one of the sources of cholera outbreaks, a disease linked to contaminated water. Flooding causes latrines to overflow, polluting the few remaining water sources, where displaced and weakened populations gather.

Since the 1970s, to meet the increased water demands of rice monoculture and to combat cholera, tens of thousands of wells have been dug with the help of NGOs and the government. By the 1990s, scientists realised that the wells – more than half of them today – were contaminated with arsenic, chronic poisoning from which causes fatigue, night blindness, heart disease, cancers of the skin, lungs, liver and pancreas, diarrhoea, neurological damage... The link to global warming is a long chain of events. Sedimentary rocks from the Himalayas carry insoluble arsenic. To combat flooding (caused by glacial melt and rising sea levels), retention basins are being dug everywhere to raise houses and villages. In these basins, organic matter and bacteria combine to solubilise the arsenic, which then seeps into shallow wells. One in five deaths in Bangladesh is thought to be caused by arsenic.

Global warming is also responsible for an increase in the number and intensity of cyclones in the region, bringing with them a series of particularly devastating floods in this flat country. What is ur-

gently needed is a global policy to combat global warming, but also an effective public policy to mitigate its effects. Whilst Cyclone Bhola claimed around 300,000 lives in 1970, thanks to early warnings, shelters, dykes and community volunteers... the number of cyclone-related deaths has since been reduced by a factor of 100, according to the World Bank. This contrasts with the lack of adaptation measures in a neighbouring country such as Myanmar, where Cyclone Nargis in 2008 claimed 140,000 lives. On the one hand, in Bangladesh, a civil society, a Red Crescent and powerful trade unions – particularly farmers' unions – which push for a policy of public investment and prevention, relying heavily on grassroots social support from community volunteers; on the other hand, in Myanmar, a military dictatorship that blocks information and international humanitarian aid, making community-based aid (from doctors, priests, farmers, etc.) much more difficult and far less effective – although these groups did play a major role in showing solidarity at the time of Nargis, albeit in the face of a failing military state. It is not only the strength of the winds that determines the death toll; it is also grassroots and community mobilisation.

Women: the primary victims of climate patriarchy

Rising temperatures increase the risk of domestic violence, early marriages before the age of 14, and a decline in women's incomes, as highlighted in the November 2020 issue of *Global Environmental Change*. It is not nature that is cruel to women, but rather a patriarchal world of domination that denies them land and credit; a world where they are beaten when life becomes unbearable and are treated as just another mouth to feed, to be married off quickly, despite having to work a double shift. For every additional degree of education, *Jama Psychiatry* (June 2023) found a 6.3 per cent increase in domestic, physical and sexual violence, in a follow-up study involving 190,000 women from India, Pakistan and Nepal. This figure rises to as much as 8 per cent for physical violence in India.

According to the FAO, the income gap between women and men in rural areas widens by 34 per cent for every additional degree.

In 2010, a Californian study [13] revealed that an average rise of 5.6° increased the risk of premature birth by 8.6 per cent. This increase was confirmed by the Sepages study of 700 pregnant women in Grenoble, which identified sudden changes in temperature – such as heatwaves – as the main culprit.

Capital is burning up the planet; the people must put out the fire!

The Lancet's countdown was intended to sound the alarm as we approach the 1.5°C threshold, which will soon be exceeded. The diagnosis is correct, but the treatment is wrong. Advising capital to limit its emissions because the cost would be too high is to overlook the fact that it socialises the losses and privatises the profits. The richest 1 per cent emit as much CO₂ as the poorest 5.1 billion. [14] The 100 largest fossil fuel companies, fuelled by bank investment, account for three times the level of production compatible with the 1.5°C limit. Yet the bill is footed by the poorest and most vulnerable, women, indigenous peoples and small island states.

We may be at a tipping point. Lifestyle-related diseases, such as cancer, which has risen by 80 per cent among the under-50s since 1990 [15], and cardiovascular mortality, combined with global warming, are reversing the trend towards increased life expectancy that has characterised the past half-century, with an average gain of 3.5 months each year in France. But this average masks all the inequalities in the world. In France, life expectancy among the poorest 5 per cent is falling, whilst it is rising among the richest 5 per cent. [16] The gap is 13 years for men, 9 for women, and as much as 17 years between a rich woman and a poor man. The rich hope to secede from a world of inequality that is burning.

Systems that emit greenhouse gases also emit pollutants, cause pandemics, threaten food security, lead to deforestation and cause biodiversity to col-

lapse. Social and climate justice based on degrowth, the expropriation of capital and the global sharing of wealth would not be a sacrifice, but the promise of better health for all, of a life at peace with nature and humankind. In a world that prefers bombs, imperialist or genocidal wars to hospitals, denies climate change, dismantles international health solidarity, hoards land and water, rejects the European

Green Deal, and diverts anger towards foreigners or environmentalists, the 'flamingo revolution' sweeping through Albania offers a glimmer of hope [17]: the defence of a protected natural area seized by the Trump family, the denunciation of a corrupt regime, and the demand for democracy. A movement driven by the exploited – the only force that never waits for capital's permission to act.

BRAZIL

We must turn up the volume and confront Bolsonaro's supporters in the streets and at the polls

MOVIMENTO ESQUERDA SOCIALISTA ·

The Master-Vorcaro scandal [2] dominates the political and electoral landscape. On one hand, it exposes the state of decay into which the Brazilian political regime has sunk. On the other, it serves as the basis for a manoeuvre orchestrated by André Mendonça [3] —at the behest of the United States—to taint and confuse public opinion, shifting political momentum toward the Bolsonaro camp and even reviving the possibility of a Flávio [4] election victory. Uncertainty remains the prevailing feature of the electoral contest.

New developments reinforce this uncertainty: Fachin attempts to mediate the crisis, Dino reveals the secret surrounding Dark Horse, and accusations against Mendonça flood the news. [5] We must prepare for the current political crisis in order to grasp the profound significance of these events and regain the initiative ahead of the elections.

Sovereignty, Trump and Brazil

The Brazilian elections are among the most important in the realm of international geopolitical competition, surpassed only by the United States midterm elections, which will be held in November.

What is unfolding here is a specific manifestation of the international situation, marked by the geopolitical struggle of a hegemonic imperialism in crisis; the rearmament of core nations, which present war as a possible way out; the neocolonialist offensive of that same imperialism; climate chaos—the result of environmental destruction—and the use of AI to maximise the profits of billionaires and further control those who live by their labour.

All these factors are a direct consequence of the brutal and multifaceted crisis of capitalism. Trump needs to assert control over Latin America. This is a fundamental necessity, all the more so given the pressures he faces on three main fronts: the quagmire in the Middle East following the defeat regarding Iran; the looming electoral defeat that would isolate his administration within the United States; and the need to uphold the tenets and promises of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America. These three factors—the crisis and defeat in Iran and the Middle East, the domestic electoral defeat, and the conflict in Latin America—are intrinsically related.

To this end, Trump is resorting to extreme measures born of desperation and interventionism. He even went so far as to promise US\$5,000 —to every U.S. citizen in the event of his victory. Alternatively, to avert the collapse of the Milei project in Argentina—which is suffering a drop in popularity—he promised to reclaim the Malvinas Islands, a long-held aspiration of the average Argentine citizen. This unrestrained Trump seeks to defeat Lula in October, following the script of recent elections in Peru and Colombia.

In this way, the plebiscitary nature of the Brazilian elections is reinforced in almost every respect, but especially regarding sovereignty.

Threats to Pix (Brazil's instant payment system), control over natural resources and rare-earth elements, and rising tariffs are the prelude to a strategy to turn Brazil into a protectorate—a process that would be facilitated by a new government led by the Bolsonaro clan, with an orientation directly subordinate to the neocolonialism of Trump and the billionaires backing him. The far right's victory

in the German regional election underscores this danger, as it demonstrates the level of international coordination possessed by neo-fascism—with Musk as one of its leading agitators, alongside figures such as Peter Thiel. [6]

Danel Vorcaro and electoral dynamics

Lula's lacklustre re-election campaign took a significant turn a few months ago when a series of crises shifted the spotlight onto his main rival, Flávio Bolsonaro. Revelations stemming from Federal Police investigations regarding deep ties between Vorcaro and the Bolsonaro clan weakened the far-right candidate amidst the "Bolsón or Banco Master" scandal, which was linked to the financing of the film "Dark Horse".

Isolated within his campaign circles and facing tensions even with Michelle Bolsonaro and other allies, Flávio began the campaign on the defensive, while Lula—albeit without much enthusiasm—was identified as the frontrunner by analysts across various electoral indices. The structural key to this progress was the agreement reached with Davi Alcolumbre of the conservative União Brasil, (Brazil Union or UNIÃO), which "pacified" relations in Congress.

The situation has shifted, turning unfavourable for Lula in recent weeks following André Mendonça's decisive move to attack Alexandre de Moraes—a key figure providing stability to the reelection bid and the preservation of the "New Republic." Moraes had already been targeted by the far-right and anti-Supreme Court factions due to his principled stance against coup plotters and resistance to Trump's blackmail; now, he has come under fire over his questionable ties to Vorcaro. Calls for his resignation have resurfaced, now backed by sectors of the liberal establishment itself, such as the newspapers Folha and Estadão.

The situation has worsened for Lula. Opinion polls show a decline in his approval ratings, electoral figures, and support from allies in certain states; this was compounded by a renewed initiative led by

Flávio—joined by Tarcísio de Freitas, Michelle Bolsonaro, and Nikolas Ferreira, all standard bearers for the Brazilian right—who called for the September 7th rally during an election broadcast.

The event drew approximately 30,000 people to Avenida Paulista—a figure far lower than that which the Bolsonaro movement managed to gather at its peak—but it repositioned Bolsonaro's political initiative, steering his thousands of activists across Brazil toward a firmer stance. The segment of the bourgeoisie that does not support Bolsonaro—with its various strains of conservatism—has failed to find an alternative: Ronaldo Caiado and Romeu Zema are drifting toward political oblivion due to a lack of votes; Renan Santos has yet to launch a project capable of challenging the far-right's hegemony; and the newcomer, Augusto Cury, initially boosted by internet bots, appears to be stalling, having slipped in recent opinion polls.

The most recent Datafolha poll indicates that the gap between Lula and Flávio is narrowing (39% versus 35% for the first round—a statistical tie within the margin of error for the second round); it also points to a rise in governors aligned with Bolsonaro and growing opposition to Lula. Another, more recent Datafolha survey shows that 37% want Mendonça removed from office, while 34% want Alexandre de Moraes, Jtsice of the Supreme Federal Court, removed.

Amidst this uncertain landscape, the struggle to shape the liberal-right's political agenda centres on controlling the next government—securing further commitments from the future coalition administration, the legislature, and the Supreme Federal Court in the event of a Lula victory. Their programme calls for severe fiscal austerity, a policy of equidistance in trade relations with the United States, China, and the EU, a freeze on the minimum wage and social benefits, and the opening of public services, state-owned enterprises, and natural resources to private capital.

What remains to be seen

The current situation, which has fuelled controversy, is not definitive. Bolsonaro's undeniable offensive in recent weeks is not absolute. At least three important factors indicate that the outcome remains open—unlike in 2018, when the offensive that began with the September 7 stabbing [7] propelled Bolsonaro and the far right into action.

The most significant development so far is that the counter-offensive has been launched from within the Tribunal Supremo Federal (Supreme Federal Court or STF) itself, without waiting for the September 15 plenary session to debate Moraes's role. The breach of confidentiality regarding the "Banco Master Case"—specifically concerning the use of the film "Dark Horse", a key electoral asset—sparked a series of accusations. This provided potent ammunition for the campaign, clearly demonstrating André Mendonça's selectivity and turning him into a target just as contentious as—if not more so than—Moraes.

The second aspect—albeit a slow-moving one—was an increase in participation in anti-Bolsonaro activism, as evidenced by the Lula rallies that drew 10,000 people in Porto Alegre, 12,000 in Curitiba, and 2,000 to the weekend march in Brasília; but this was particularly apparent in the analysis of networks and interactions, which shifted the majority of references regarding the Master/STF case toward the Left and its key figures.

The third element is polling uncertainty, involving Centrão (center-right bloc) candidates in the states—or even those linked to Cury's constituency—as well as undecided voters and those unwilling to vote; this helps explain the high disapproval rating for Flávio (who ties with Lula in this regard in the latest Datafolha poll, at 46%). How will the interplay between state-level scenarios and the national race unfold? This question is significant given the uncertainty surrounding the proportional and Senate elections—the latter being highly contested and unpredictable due to the two-vote system and the fact that current poll leaders still hold relatively low support, mostly in the 15% to 25% range.

For Bolsonaro, winning in as many states as possible in the first round is crucial. Lula needs to secure his vote in the Northeast and in the country's major capital cities. For instance, ensuring strong results for his candidates in the North and Northeast—and forcing a runoff in strategic states like São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and the Federal District—will be key to shaping the dynamic. The most complex case is São Paulo, where Tarcísio has a real chance of winning in the first round, and where Fernando Haddad and the PT are struggling to mount an effective response.

What is certain is that polarisation will increase in the coming weeks, accompanied by a certain degree of aggression on the streets and at events, as well as heightened politicisation and the battle for votes. The far-right, led by Nikolas, mobilised thousands of people in Amapá to attack and humiliate Alcolumbre.

Lula's victory is fundamental and will mark the start of the political battle over the next fifty days—alongside the votes we cast for proportional representation, where we will present our leaders and our platform. Lula needs an intense campaign, outperforming Flávio by at least eight or ten points in the first round, to be well-positioned for the runoff; the latter will undoubtedly be the most hotly contested and polarised in recent political history, thereby taking on crucial importance.

The campaign needs to mobilise activism now—reaching beyond spontaneous activists and paid campaign staff—to elevate the debate surrounding the plebiscite and engage undecided voters and those reluctant to vote across all regions of the country. This entails occupying every public space and increasing the visibility of activities—ranging from simple initiatives like information booths to joint city gatherings and events with candidates from major parties—as well as preparing a social media strategy to capture attention across all platforms.

Once again, the plebiscitary nature of the election is fundamental. What is crucial is to raise the tone

and define the election as a plebiscite. There is no tied or middle ground: either Lula wins, or we will have the worst government in history, leading to a dangerous political situation.

In this instance, two campaign strategies clash: the one led by the PT (Workers' Party) majority—spearheaded by Lula and his central campaign team—versus a strategy of heightened polarisation centered on mobilisation, which involves raising the tone and relentlessly attacking Flávio and his project. The government's apologetic view, which focuses on its achievements and successes, presents an unrealistic picture of Brazil given the socio-economic crisis. The resolution adopted by the PT's Executive Committee—criticised even by the party's left wing, such as Valter Pomar—proves insufficient because it relies solely on the Supreme Federal Court (STF) and the previous strategy, despite acknowledging the need to intensify mobilisation.

The PSOL is playing an important role, especially through its candidates. The party's overall strategy should be to mobilise the population, raise the tone, attack Bolsonaro, turn the debate into a referendum, and present a vision for the future.

It is necessary to resume the political struggle and push the campaign forward with renewed vigour. The majority of the working class lives in precarious conditions—holding insecure jobs devoid of rights and facing high levels of debt amidst a rising cost of living. We must frame these hardships as demands and demonstrate that Flávio is not anti-establishment. Mendonça used the Supreme Court crisis to downplay the debate over the "6x1" work schedule [8], which is stalled in the Senate and barely mentioned in the media.

We need to frame this as a plebiscite on four issues, distilled into a single vote: Will Brazil become a U.S. colony? Will workers work one day less per week? Will the country minimise violence against women? Will climate change denial make us more vulnerable to El Niño?

And alongside that—as we have already begun to do—we keep emphasising who Flávio and his cronies

really are: the dire economic hardship, the nearly one million pandemic deaths, the cost of food in supermarkets, the widespread corruption, the militarisation of the government, the fires in the Amazon and the Pantanal, the nefarious coup plotters of January 8th, the threat to Pix (Brazil's instant payment system), and the humiliation before Trump. We emphasise the relationship with Vorcaro—the banker behind the bacchanals and the most expensive film in cinema history—as well as the connection to Eduardo Bolsonaro and the strategic selection of André Mendonça as his operative. We maintain that Flávio deserved to join his father in Papuda Prison rather than entering the Planalto Palace, the workplace of the Brazilian president through the front door. This could come about in various ways, such as PSOL's Sâmia Bomfim's request to the Federal Police to confiscate the genocidal son's passport.

And gradually, raise the level of engagement. Call for the coordinated distribution of leaflets and for community cleanups in the city's largest neighbourhoods and transit hubs; involve more people; and break the bureaucratic inertia that characterises some of the PT (Workers' Party) campaigns. Our role as PSOL is to be at the forefront of this struggle and to elect strong, active representatives from PSOL and the federation.

PSOL's place

PSOL is running major campaigns in the states where it holds parliamentary seats, with the federation [9] formed alongside Rede contesting Senate seats in Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, and Ceará, in addition to being well-positioned in Rio de Janeiro with Mônica Benício, where Benedita da Silva is leading the polls. PSOL is objectively gaining strength. PSOL should advocate for a shift in Lula's campaign strategy; in addition to Lula's correct stance of "investigating everyone, to the very end, regardless of whom it hurts," the party should argue for raising the tone, organising mobilisation, proposing plebiscites, and launching a comprehensive offensive against Flávio.

On social media and in the streets, PSOL stands out as a key player in mobilising the left-wing electorate. It must engage with the youth and the working class to champion its platform. To win, it is essential to secure votes for the PSOL—votes for "number 50", the official electoral number used by the party on voting ballots, and for candidates with a real chance of being elected to the Federal Chamber and the legislative assemblies. Furthermore, it is crucial to strengthen the campaign in Sergipe, Santa Catarina, Espírito Santo, and Paraíba—states that have the potential to surpass the 1.5% vote threshold and thereby clear the electoral hurdle.

Our policies

Our struggle must combine broad-based demands—such as the "6×1" work schedule, sovereignty, the fight against violence towards women, and the climate emergency—with our own programmatic stance. This includes advocating for transitional measures such as free public transport; taxation of large fortunes; regulation of social media and the digital sphere; environmental protection through an eco-socialist programme; curbing the betting industry and financial capital; amnesty for indebted families; defense of the minimum wage, moving towards the "DIEESE wage" standard; rent controls (as we are demanding in the Federal District); defense of state-owned enterprises and the re-nationalisation of essential services like water and rail transport; national control over rare earth elements and critical minerals; and investment in and defense of the SUS (Brazil's public health system).

Our strategy to drive street protests consists of cracking down hard on Flávio, exposing Bolsonaro's disastrous administration, leveraging the tension surrounding the Supreme Court to channel energy into street protests (during both the first and second rounds), and supporting strikes by

postal and Caixa Econômica Federal workers, alongside our own election campaign activities. In this context, we must address the fact that the Supreme Court crisis demands profound changes—something not to be confused with the fact that Moraes belongs to a class enjoying exorbitant salaries and powers; a class that played a progressive role in confronting the Bolsonaro clan and Trump, yet embodies the selective, elitist democracy of the wealthy.

We must advocate for profound changes, for a radical political reform. We advocate for a different institutional framework and a different judiciary—indeed, for a covert political revolution that establishes new criteria for the selection and oversight of judges, transparency in decisions and terms of office, an end to parliamentary amendments, and other concrete measures.

In this battle, we will work to engage and recruit activists, bringing them into PSOL and the MES by leveraging our presence and local cells in workplaces and schools. The new edition of "Retomada" magazine will be published soon, serving to rally a critical, radical, and anti-capitalist force. We recognise that this is part of an international political struggle—working to halt Trump's offensive in Brazil and standing at the forefront of the fight against neo-fascism, just as we did at the First International Anti-Fascist Conference earlier this year.

We will take to the streets, to social media, and then to the polls to defeat the far right. This is the most important political battle between now and October 6.

15 September 2026

*Translated and annotated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from **Punto de Vista Internacional**.*

PALESTINE/LEBANON

Israel continues ethnic cleansing

ÉDOUARD SOULIER ·

As expected, the elections are being used as a pretext for a wave of racist and genocidal remarks. Almost the whole of Israeli society agrees on the essentials: acceptance of the genocide and rejection of any Palestinian state. Ben-Gvir outbids the rest with a video featuring concentration camps where Palestinian prisoners are starving, while Smotrich promises the annexation of the West Bank. They certainly belong to the Israeli far right, but Netanyahu and his "opponents" are campaigning on the backs of the Palestinians, or rather their corpses.

Lebanon, Gaza, West Bank... the horror continues

In Lebanon, Israel has resumed its military attacks, using the pretext of the sending of two FPV drones by Hezbollah to massively bomb the south of Nabatiyeh, already heavily affected. Several Israeli strikes have caused deaths in Gaza, including children, in the middle of the new school year.

The situation is most tense in the West Bank. On 2 September, in Masafer Yatta, the Israeli army destroyed the homes of 12 Palestinian families without warning, leaving 70 people, including 28 children, homeless. This is the 66th Palestinian community to be fully displaced since October 2023, while partial displacement has left thousands more homeless. In addition, 32,000 refugees were expelled in January 2025 from the Jenin, Tulkarm and Nour camps.

The first four months of 2026 saw as many forced displacements in the West Bank as the whole of 2025. The violence also left nearly a thousand injured and 23 dead. Under Netanyahu's government, Israeli settlers have established 248 new set-

tlements in the West Bank, 65 of them since the beginning of the year. The settlement project is organized by all the bodies of the Israeli administration: while pretending to criticize the violence of the settlers, the state plans their settlement, their equipment and their protection.

Settlers in the vanguard of the Israeli state

The Israeli state relies on these semi-civilian and semi-military groups to pursue its projects while masking its involvement, if that is still a goal in 2026. The colonial project is indeed less and less concealed. Israeli personalities now describe it as such, such as Efraim Sneh, a former minister, who speaks of "ethnic cleansing" in the *New York Times*.

But settlers always pave the way for the Israeli state: in mid-August, the Ministry of Housing launched a call for tenders for 1,234 settlement housing units in the so-called E1 area. Considered "empty", it stretches from the east of Jerusalem to the Jordanian border in Area C. Nearly 5,000 Palestinians live there and are threatened with eviction. The call for tenders expires on the eve of the elections: a grand manoeuvre to impose the fait accompli. The construction of E1 would cut the West Bank between the north and the south and further fragment the territorial confetti of a hypothetical Palestinian state.

International condemnation is multiplying without being followed up. In August, seven Western countries — the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada and Norway — called the tenders "unacceptable" saying they would undermine the two-state solution by breaking Palestinian territorial continuity. As usual, they are content to describe what they are letting happen.

The French minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, has affirmed, without irony, that France was the country that had done the most for the Palestinians. The construction of E1 is a colonial project of ethnic cleansing in a genocidal context. Several European banks, especially French ones, are solicited to finance these

settlements, at the risk of becoming complicit in a crime against humanity. The state that claims to do the most for Palestine could start by prohibiting them.

10 September 2026

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USA

Trump Bribes Voters, We Remember 9/11, and Soon the Midterm Election

DAN LA BOTZ ·

He told those in the stadium to raise their hands and led them in taking an oath, saying, "I pledge to the greatest president in the history of the United States that loves us so much he can't even breathe that I will go out [to vote] with my family, my friends, I will do it anyway — I don't care if I'm registered or not, I'm going to try and cheat like hell, like they do." As an inducement he pledged that if his candidates won, he would give every American \$5,000, a bribe of dubious legality that would cost one trillion dollars and is just as unlikely to be fulfilled as similar promises of cash he made on other occasions.

Trump organized the event because polls have found his popularity declining and Republicans fear losing the election and both houses of Congress. Voters have turned against Republicans because of opposition to the war on Iran, rising prices for gas, housing, health care, and food, the violent attack by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on immigrants and U.S. citizens, the construction of massive data centers, and now new concerns that the government isn't restraining the development of artificial intelligence (AI). Prominent AI researchers and industry executives say that AI could bring about the end of human life within a decade. Congress has taken no action on the AI threat.

The Republican midterm convention coincided with the nation's memorials of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Al-Qaeda's terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001,

killing more than 3,000 people in both places. The victims ranged from businesspeople and military officials to workers of all sorts. As the commemorations took place, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani released 170,000 pages of documents that revealed that federal and state government officials had urged people to go back to work in New York City even though the air was toxic, leading to the subsequent deaths of at least 9,000 people.

Some commentators reminded us that in response to the attack, U.S. president George W. Bush launched wars on Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, wars that lasted twenty and nine years respectively and that killed between 400,000 and 900,000 people. In his remarks at a memorial organized by the Defense Department, Trump suggested that the 9/11 attacks justified his war on Iran today.

At the time, the attack led the U.S. Congress to pass repressive legislation, such as the Patriot Act of 2001, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 2008 which gave the government vastly increased power to spy on both citizens and foreigners alike. Those acts made it possible for the government to secretly collect the personal data of millions of American citizens who were never suspected of a crime.

So as Americans prepare to vote in the November 3 elections there is anxiety and fear. The U.S. war on Iran goes on and expands with the ever-present danger of it becoming a nuclear war. AI, experts say, could kill us all within a decade. And Trump has threatened to send U.S. troops and ICE agents to polling places, raising the question of his stealing

the election or carrying out a coup. Many organizations are preparing to defend the election.

At the moment, as children go back to school, the country is quiet. There are no protests to speak of.

But we are approaching what could be an explosive moment.

13 September 2026

UKRAINE

Civil and military resistance against Putin in Ukraine

NPA-A UKRAINE SOLIDARITY INTERVENTION GROUP ·

Russian strikes make life impossible

The Ukrainians are avoiding the collapse of the defensive lines that would have endangered the very survival of their independent nation. Ukraine's impressive capacity for innovation in the mastery of drones has made it possible to compensate, in part, for lack of numbers and deficiencies in defensive weapons. But Kyiv knows that Putin is seeking to compensate for the losses of soldiers through a new and unpopular mass mobilization, combined with investments in technological adaptation.

Russian shelling in Ukraine is moving from the front to the rear and from the military to civilians. The strikes, day and night, make daily life unbearable, endanger workers and paralyze essential infrastructure. Ukrainian air defence is powerless to counter these criminal attacks, due to a lack of interceptors and anti-aircraft missiles.

Impressive civilian resilience

Yet, despite the suffering endured, an impressive civil resilience is expressed in a thousand initiatives of direct and indirect support for the military resistance, but also in civic demonstrations challenging certain government decisions, particularly in the

fight against corruption or the defence of social rights, without anyone knowing when the nightmare will end.

It is in Ukraine, in this dual military and civil resistance, that the heart of the international anti-fascist front to be built beats today. It is coming up against an aberrant front bringing together far-right forces and left-wing "campist", even pro-Putin forces, who are advocating "peace" while wanting to deprive Ukraine of the means to resist Russian fascism.

However, this Ukrainian resistance has been going on for months through the export of the war to Russia by air and, on the ground, through the multiplication of spectacular acts of sabotage and targeted assassinations of criminals in uniform. For Kyiv, it is a question of attacking Russia's infrastructure and resources, particularly oil, to disorganize and weaken the overall offensive capacity of the Russian army. It is also a question of making the war difficult to bear for the Russian people, who are beginning to lose confidence in the regime. Despite the repression, more and more voices could be raised against the continuation of the war, a few days before parliamentary elections without legally recognized opposition.

10 September 2026

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IRAN

An acute crisis in Iran

BABAK KIA ·

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the maritime blockade and sanctions imposed by the United States, galloping inflation, poverty and the worsening economic crisis have brought Iranian society to the brink of social explosion. The deterioration of living conditions is accompanied by the militarization of the regime, an increase in executions and the intensification of repression.

Government strengthens security apparatus

This is evidenced by the bill presented to the Iranian parliament on 16 August, relating to "the infiltration of foreign intelligence services and agencies". Three days later, nine senior officials from the judiciary, the Prison Organization, the General Inspectorate of the country, the security organs, the Guardians of the Revolution and the Basij were dismissed and replaced. This so-called "reform" is above all intended to strengthen the regime's repressive capacity in the face of future upheavals.

The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, replaced the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) with Mohsen Rezaï, a former senior commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during the Iran-Iraq war. This sudden change places the latter at the heart of the national security decision-making process. The appointment of Hossein Taeb as head of the Basij is another example. Taeb, the former intelligence chief of the Revolutionary Guards, is a major figure in Iran's security apparatus, associated in particular with the repression of popular uprisings and opponents.

An economy in tatters

Washington is further tightening the maritime blockade and sanctions. On 20 August, the United States announced new measures threatening any country that helped Iran circumvent them or maintained trade relations with it. If they were effectively implemented, the economic and social situation would become even more critical for the vast majority of the population.

Immediate consequences: a new collapse of the national currency and a new surge in prices. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is severely affecting imports. For example, India's exports of medicines to Iran have declined. In August 2026, an Iranian pharmaceutical company announced an average price increase of 117% of 82 medicines, with some molecules increasing by several hundred %. Thus, between September 2025 and September 2026, the price of amoxicillin increased by 284%, that of ibuprofen by 110%.

In addition, there is a significant shortage of gasoline, which is pushing the regime to reduce subsidies and limit consumption. This situation illustrates the growing difficulties in the production, import and distribution of fuels.

The concern of the Iranian leaders

The Speaker of Parliament, Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, declared on 21 August: "We can have all the military power we want, but without financial circulation, economic growth and national production, we will not be able to stand up to a starving people."

President Masud Pezeshkian also speaks of a real economic, military and security war. He acknowledges the fall in imports and exports as well as the financial restrictions on aid to the population, the payment of salaries and social benefits. He also de-

clared that "it would be better to end the war today", implicitly questioning the leadership of the Guardians of the Revolution, who play a central role in defining the regime's strategic orientations. In response, currents close to the Revolutionary Guards and their media accuse critics of the current policy of being "lackeys of Trump and Netanyahu".

A few days before the fourth anniversary of the death of Jina Mahsa Amini and the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising, the government particularly

fears a new mobilization of workers, women, youth and national minorities. Caught between the violence of US imperialism and that of the reactionary dictatorship, the peoples of Iran are fighting for their survival, dignity and freedom. They need our anti-imperialist solidarity.

9 September 2026

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

SWEDEN

Setback for the racist populist right, success for the left

HÅKAN BLOMQVIST ·

The racist far right nationalist Sverigemokraterna, SD - the Sweden Democrats - suffered a severe setback in last Sunday's Swedish general election. It was the first time since 2010 the party declined in an election and is no longer the second largest party in the parliament. At the same time the Left Party obtained its biggest score for a quarter of a century.

The failure of the SD also means that the right-wing Swedish government - the most extreme one since the late 1920s - has had to resign. But simultaneously the Swedish Social Democracy had their weakest election result since 1908, that is before general suffrage. As all the conservative and liberal parties except the SD gained, the labour movement together with the Greens is not in a majority or able to constitute a government without the Centre party with its neoliberal economic agenda.

The Centre party has promised to never let the Left Party enter a government and the Left has promised to vote against any government which does not include it. So a period of complicated bargaining is going to follow. The Social Democrats leader Magdalena Andersson will form the government but with whom? On the left and the union movement, worries are strong that it will be a government leaning rightwards in economical politics. And both the Greens and the Left are in opposition to the anti-immigration politics of the Social Democrats, copied from the Danish social democracy.

The Left Party's success relied largely on turnout in so-called neglected suburbs, where it won more than 40–50 per cent of the vote in some districts after an energetic door-knocking campaign in-

spired by Mamdani's example in New York. The racist right wing dismissed the result as stemming from the "import of Muslims as voting fodder for the left".

In reality it is above all the result of the anti-migration politics of the right-wing government with attacks on asylum rights, residence permits and citizenship for immigrants, together with expulsions of children and teenagers, and obligations for authorities and institutions to report undocumented immigrants. The Left and the Greens oppose these policies.

But another explanation is also the strong agitation from the Left Party on affordability, that is to say: lower rents and food prices, tax the rich and introduce a billionaire tax and de-privatize the health care and school system. This agitation on the redistribution of wealth, a pure economic policy of class interest has met with growing support from "the new" mixed working class of the suburbs.

The Left Party's solidarity with Palestine is also an important factor here. While the party has been constantly attacked by the media for housing terror-romantic and antisemitic candidates from the Palestine solidarity movement, such attacks have little effect in the suburbs.

As almost a paradox, some leading members of the Left Party, including three MPs, left the party in protest against expulsions of some Palestine activists, accused in the media of posting on Facebook support for Hamas and antisemite tropes. Their new party ran candidates in only a few local elections and gained only marginal support of less than half per cent of the voters there - while their former party gained 30-40 per cent in the same areas.

Another criticism from left wing activists was that the campaign of the Left Party almost omitted climate change, ecological issues and opposition to nuclear power - questions that were raised only by the Greens who gained their best election result in many years.

Now the discussion within the left, both in the Left Party and broader circles will develop around which compromises will be acceptable for entering a government (for the first time ever since the foundation in 1917) or voting for it with demands without participating. The congress of the Left Party last spring decided on an ultimatum, either the party enters a new government or will vote against it, no matter what. If that would be possible will be decided in the coming weeks.

But to many activists the main issue is another: how to gather and form the many thousands of new voters and members of the left into a growing political force that can keep pushing back both the most

racist right-wing populists and the whole right-wing bloc - and force a more open door to social reform and rebirth of a stronger labour- and left movement in Sweden.

Election results in % to Swedish parliament (a few votes still being counted Thursday). In brackets the results of the last election of 2022.

Left Party 8,4 (6,7)

Social Democracy 28 (30,5)

Greens 6,1 (5)

Center Party 7 (6,7)

Liberals 5,3 (4,6)

Christian Democrats 6,2 (5,4)

Conservatives 20 (19,1)

Sweden Democrats 17,5 (20,6)

BRAZIL

Dispute in the Supreme Court disrupts elections in Brazil

LUÍS LEIRIA ·

With less than a month to go before the presidential elections on 4 October, Brazil finds itself plunged into a crisis that, for the first time, has divided the Federal Supreme Court (STF) and is already considered the greatest crisis of the bourgeois-democratic regime established by the 1988 Constitution.

In January 2023, the country was on the brink of collapse in the face of a coup d'état that would have kept Jair Bolsonaro in power, even after he had been defeated at the polls. It was largely the STF, through its investigations and almost unanimous rulings, that made it possible to defeat the coup plot. Thus, instead of being reinstated in power as a far-right dictator, Bolsonaro is currently serving a prison sentence of 27 years and three months; and, for the first time in the country's history, there are generals who have been tried, convicted and are serving prison sentences.

Four years on, we are in the midst of the election campaign for the 2026 presidential elections. Lula is standing for a fourth term, with his main opponent being Flávio Bolsonaro, the former president's son. The outcome of the elections is uncertain. Polls predict a victory for Lula in the first round, but a dead heat between Lula and Flávio Bolsonaro in the second. In these circumstances, any minor or unexpected event could sway undecided voters and cause them to lean one way or the other.

It was at this very moment that a Supreme Court judge, André Mendonça, chose to launch a scathing attack on his colleague Alexandre de Moraes. The latter responded in kind, and the affair threatens to throw the final stretch of the election into disarray.

The arsenal of ammunition on both sides is fuelled by the Banco Master scandal – the bank went bankrupt on 18 November last year – and the dangerous links between politicians and judges and the bank's owner, Daniel Vorcaro, who has been in custody since that date.

Banco Master / Daniel Vorcaro Scandal

Before exploring the theme of the 'duel between Supreme Court judges', it is worth briefly summarising the Banco Master case and its owner, Daniel Vorcaro.

The 42-year-old banker Vorcaro managed to vastly increase his wealth by setting up a classic pyramid scheme at Banco Master, issuing investment securities with no real backing, which were to be paid for by newly recruited clients. To give the impression of a financial strength it did not possess and assets that did not exist, the bank set up a veritable factory of forged documents that transformed worthless pieces of paper into securities worth millions. Another department of the bank specialised in threatening commercial competitors, adversaries and critics who posed any possibility of scrutiny or attempts to enforce legal rules and regulations.

At the same time, Vorcaro sought to win over figures from the political and legal spheres with favours, trips on his private jets and stays in luxury hotels. Depending on the importance of the person he wished to court, he might even arrange consultancy engagements without any clear provision of services. This gave him access to these circles and reinforced the impression of the bank's prosperity.

In statements given after his arrest, Vorcaro said he sought to build these close relationships to obtain

institutional protection against inspections and pressures in the financial market.

The out-of-court liquidation of Master, ordered by the Central Bank on 18 November last year, affected more than 1.6 million customers and may force the Credit Guarantee Fund (FGC) to pay them more than 47 billion reais (7.9 billion euros). It is already considered the biggest financial fraud in Brazil's history.

And the losses have not yet been fully accounted for. Far from it.

"Terribly evangelical"

The first shot in the duel between the Supreme Court judges was fired by André Mendonça on 1 September this year. The pastor was appointed to the Supreme Court by Jair Bolsonaro for being "terribly evangelical", a requirement put forward by devotees of this faith to maintain their support for Bolsonaro. He had previously served as Attorney General and Minister of Justice in the Bolsonaro government. His confirmation in the Senate was the closest ever, with 47 votes in favour and 32 against.

The trigger for André Mendonça's dismissal was the lifting of confidentiality on the Federal Police (PF) report concerning messages found on banker Daniel Vorcaro's mobile phone, which were reportedly intended for Judge Alexandre de Moraes. The messages suggest that meetings took place between Moraes and Vorcaro. The PF also discovered that the latest version of the contract between Banco Master and the law firm run by Moraes's wife, worth 129 million reais, had been drafted by the judge himself. The report further reveals that Vorcaro, when he felt the net closing in on him, asked Moraes whether he should leave Brazil – two days before being arrested by the PF as he was preparing to board a flight to Malta.

Moraes escalates the dispute

Alexandre de Moraes's response to Mendonça's barrage of criticism marked an escalation in the

conflict on Thursday 3 September. The judge accused Mendonça, who is leading the investigation into the Master scandal, of having breached "judicial impartiality" and favoured "certain political groups" by ordering an investigation into himself, Moraes, claiming that the Federal Police report on the exchange of messages between Moraes and Vorcaro was in itself an investigation which, to be valid, would have had to be authorised by the Supreme Court's plenary session.

A brief aside to better understand what is implied when speaking of favouring "certain political groups": André Mendonça was appointed to the post of Supreme Court judge by the then President Jair Bolsonaro, as we have seen. Alexandre de Moraes was nominated by Michel Temer, Dilma Rousseff's vice-president, who assumed the presidency on 31 August 2016 after Dilma had been removed from office following the impeachment approved by Congress. Finally, Edson Fachin, the current president of the Supreme Court, was nominated by Dilma Rousseff.

To support the argument that Mendonça was targeting certain individuals to the detriment of others, Moraes also lifted the confidentiality of other Federal Police reports which detail conduct by Mendonça deemed to be irregular, acting against Moraes himself and other colleagues on the court and usurping "the direction of investigations by the police authorities", by "directing investigations towards specific targets (Justice Alexandre de Moraes and Senator Davi Alcolumbre) for personal and political reasons (...)".

Added to this is the fact that Mendonça himself was forced to acknowledge that he had met with Vorcaro, after an investigation by Intercept Brasil had published text and audio messages regarding the arrangements for that meeting.

Attorney General sides with Moraes

On the same day, the Attorney General, Paulo Gonet, sought to have the decision annulled that

led the Federal Police to produce the report on Vorcaro's messages to Moraes.

Mendonça's response, last Tuesday, 8 September, was to provisionally suspend the Director of the Federal Police, Andrei Rodrigues, from his post, arguing that he had acted unlawfully in producing reports requested by Moraes and used to incriminate him.

And then, on Wednesday, 9 September, a third figure burst onto the scene: Flávio Dino, also a Supreme Court judge, who decided to reinstate the Federal Police director whom Mendonça had suspended.

Supreme Court President decides to intervene

Finally, the President of the Supreme Court, Edson Fachin, decided to intervene just as the confusion seemed to be reaching a head, convening a plenary session of the court for next Tuesday, 15 September, in an attempt to restore order.

The plenary session of ten judges will consider the request by the Attorney General (PGR) to annul the report on Judge Moraes' alleged involvement with the banker Vorcaro, which was commissioned by Mendonça. In the Attorney General's view, Mendonça lacked the authority to commission a Federal Police investigation at the pre-trial stage. Depending on this decision, the question of whether or not to open an investigation into Moraes's links with Vorcaro will then be discussed.

In addition to convening the court's plenary session and determining the matters to be debated, Fachin also decided to suspend Mendonça's decision to remove the Director-General of the Federal Police, whilst also overturning Flávio Dino's decision to reinstate him.

In other words, everything has remained as it was before. The President of the Supreme Court also stripped Moraes of his role in leading the Fake News inquiry, which he had been overseeing for seven years, with Fachin himself now taking over as rapporteur

By now, any reader who has followed me this far and who is interested in Brazilian politics will surely have put two and two together and concluded that this crisis in the Supreme Court is entirely linked to the October elections. The Bolsonaro supporter and "fervently evangelical" André Mendonça wanted to catch Moraes off guard and decisively alter the election result. After all, what better way than to make public reports that cast Moraes under suspicion of corruption, thereby whipping up sentiment amongst Bolsonaro's hard-core supporters.

On 7 September, they managed to gather 30,000 people on Avenida Paulista – fewer than the 40,000 who turned out at the same location in 2025 to demand amnesty for the coup plotters, but still a significant number that could have a growing impact. The most frequently heard chant was the demand for 'Xandão' (the nickname Bolsonaroists give to Moraes) to be removed from the STF.

Let us recall that it was Alexandre de Moraes who was responsible for investigating the 2022–2023 attempted coup d'état, which concluded with the conviction of Jair Bolsonaro and seven other defendants: four generals, a lieutenant-colonel, two former police chiefs and politicians.

But the toxic centre of these elections is called Banco Master / Daniel Vorcaro. Anyone caught red-handed having close ties with the banker is immediately suspected of corruption.

This was also the case with Flávio Bolsonaro. In May this year, conversations between Vorcaro and Flávio were made public, in which the latter pressed the former to transfer a sum of money towards the production of a film, *Dark Horse*, which tells the story of Jair Bolsonaro.

"Bro, I'm with you and always will be; there's no beating about the bush between us. I just need you to give me a hand! Abs!" wrote Flávio in one of the messages published by Intercept Brasil, which highlights the close relationship between the two. The revelation caught Flávio Bolsonaro red-handed, as he had previously claimed not to know Vorcaro.

Candidate Flávio Bolsonaro's involvement with the imprisoned banker and the lies he told have dealt a blow to his credibility, causing a drop of around ten points in the polls and bringing relief to Lula's campaign. The situation was reversed, however, with the revelation of Judge Alexandre de Moraes's possible involvement with Vorcaro. Although Moraes has no links to Lula's campaign, his uncompromising stance against the coup plotters and in favour of their punishment leads to him being identified with the current president. Lula distanced himself, stating that anyone who breaks the law must be punished; but the lead he had previously held in the polls has melted away, and Flávio Bolsonaro is once again neck and neck with Lula in the second round.

Meanwhile, the Federal Police have launched a new operation to investigate the link between the funds used to produce the film *Dark Horse* and the infamous parliamentary amendments, which make up the so-called 'secret budget'.

Between now and 4 October, if the current pace continues, a great deal will still happen.

The stakes are high.

A victory for the Bolsonaro clan in Brazil would be tragic for the left and for the people of Brazil, Latin America and the world. The Latin American political landscape would be tinted with the colours of the Trumpist far right, with unpredictable consequences. To give just one example: the next President of the Republic of Brazil is expected to appoint five judges to the Federal Supreme Court, replacing those who are due to retire. Now imagine the STF with six Andrés Mendonças. Will democracy – even in its most tenuous form – manage to survive?

14 September 2026

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Constitutional tampering in DRC

PAUL MARTIAL ·

The great presidential manoeuvres

To this end, the presidential majority presented a referendum law to amend the Constitution, which was validated by the Constitutional Court on 30 July. A change in the basic law would therefore allow Tshisekedi to reset the counters and run for a new term. A classic sleight of hand that many potentates have used.

This offensive by the government is taking place while the Ebola epidemic is out of control and the M23/AFC (*Alliance Fleuve Congo*) militia, supported by Rwanda, militarily occupies a large part of the east of the country. The government leaders are using this situation to impose the idea that all those who criticize the government are in the pay of Rwanda.

The opposition has formed a front against the third term, called Coalition 64 (C64) in reference to article 64 of the constitution, which states: "Every Congolese has the duty to defeat any individual or group of individuals who takes power by force or who exercises it in violation of the provisions of this constitution." This coalition has demanded the establishment of a national dialogue to address the social, economic and security problems facing the DRC.

Dividing the opposition and buying time

Categorically rejected by Tshisekedi at first, despite pressure from the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), which represents a significant weight in society, this proposal was finally accepted by the president, but on his terms. He has set several red lines: the non-participation of supporters of the M23/AFC — he is targeting in particular the

former head of state Joseph Kabila, sentenced to death for treason; the non-questioning of the Congolese vote, a way of ensuring that his power will not be challenged.

He also defined the terms of the dialogue, which will first take place by region, before being centralized at the national level, in Kinshasa, the capital. While CENCO seems to be accommodating these terms, the opposition has denounced the *ukase* against the M23/AFC which, if it is indeed supported by Rwanda, is no less indicative of very real problems concerning the allocation of land and the control of mineral wealth.

In the absence of a timetable, Coalition 64 suspects Tshisekedi of playing for time in order to establish, at the end of his mandate, a transitional government by taking advantage of the heterogeneous and venal character of the opposition to integrate part of it.

Already, during the last presidential and legislative elections, Tshisekedi had managed to poach a number of opponents, which allowed him to benefit from a comfortable majority in Parliament, using the same methods as Joseph Kabila. The latter remained in power two years after the official end of his mandate, appointing Samy Badibanga and Bruno Tshibala as prime ministers from the opposition.

Beyond the struggle for democratic rights, the absence of a social and/or political force attached to the interests of the people is likely to make the regime of these crooked politicians last for a long time to come.

9 September 2026

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TURKEY

'My family is safe': the Turkish regime's crackdown on LGBTI+ people

URAZ AYDIN ·

Dozens of websites and social media accounts have also been blocked. The wave of censorship is gradually spreading to news websites and human rights organisations. In his statement, Justice Minister Akın G rlek explicitly equates certain organisations with groups "promoting LGBT and immorality" and asserts that the state will not tolerate any organisation that "targets our children, our young people and our families".

Criminalising the existence and organisation of LGBTI+ people

The fact that various organisations have received funding from the European Union is also highlighted in the investigations and portrayed in the regime-controlled press as a criminal act. Yıldız Tar, editor-in-chief of Kaos GL, denounces this as an attempt to criminalise the very existence of LGBTI+ people. [2] Tar points out that "all LGBTI+ organisations in this country are registered, operate legally and are inspected several times a year by the Ministry of the Interior. Among the main recipients of funding from the European Union and the United Nations are also public institutions, ministries and foundations close to the government, such as T GVA. In that case, are we the ones who become the criminals? "

Tar emphasises that LGBTI+ people organise themselves first and foremost to protect themselves from violence and discrimination: "LGBTI+ people organise themselves simply so they aren't killed. They organise themselves simply so they can be treated like human beings. And then you claim that this constitutes a crime."

Until 2025, repression against LGBTI+ people in Turkey mainly took the form of bans on Pride marches and police raids on gatherings and community spaces, periodically accompanied by humiliating statements from the highest levels of government. [3]

However, a qualitative shift took place with the declaration of 2025 as the 'Year of the Family'. LGBTI+ people are no longer merely portrayed as contrary to conservative values, but as an organised threat to the family, young people, demographics and society itself. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan speaks of 'LGBT perversion' and 'deviant trends' that 'poison' the younger generations, and claims that the family is under 'new-generation attacks'. He has also stated that these trends are 'undermining the institution of the family'.

This rhetoric has been accompanied by an attempt to enshrine it in criminal law. A draft reform leaked in 2025 provided for up to three years' imprisonment for behaviour deemed 'contrary to biological sex at birth and public morality', as well as for 'encouraging, praising or promoting' such behaviour. Attending a same-sex engagement or wedding ceremony could have been punishable by four years' imprisonment. The draft bill also significantly tightened the conditions for gender transition and provided for sentences of up to seven years' imprisonment for healthcare professionals who failed to comply with the new restrictions, and up to three years for transgender people themselves.

This draft bill, leaked in the autumn of 2025, was ultimately never tabled in Parliament following strong reactions from civil society organisations in Turkey and abroad. However, very similar provisions resurfaced in June 2026 in the preparatory

work for the 12th 'judicial package'. Following renewed mobilisation by feminist and LGBTI+ organisations, as well as numerous human rights organisations, these articles were once again withdrawn from the package before it was tabled in Parliament. They were therefore not adopted, but their repeated reappearance shows that the government has by no means abandoned this approach.

An offensive set to continue

Since 2026, this offensive has become part of a long-term policy. The government has declared the period 2026–2035 the 'Decade of the Family and Population'. The official presidential statement specifically condemns the trends towards 'degenderisation' which, under the guise of human rights and individual freedoms, are said to threaten the family, future generations and 'national and spiritual values'. The operation on 13 September, directly presented by the Minister of Justice as an implementation of this ten-year strategy, shows that this

approach is already leading to an intensification of repression.

In the face of this offensive – which is certainly not limited to Erdoğan's Islamo-nationalist regime but reflects the patriarchal and homophobic ideological orientation of virtually the entire international neo-fascist spectrum – the defence of LGBTI+ people cannot remain isolated. It demands the unity of Turkey's progressive, democratic, feminist, trade union and revolutionary forces against this criminalisation. International solidarity also remains essential: democratic organisations, social movements and left-wing forces abroad must clearly denounce the arrests, bans, the closure of associations and any attempt to criminalise the existence and organisation of LGBTI+ people.

So that we can all shout together, and even louder, just as we do at Pride marches:

'Get used to it! We are here!'

14 September 2026, Istanbul

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NEW ZEALAND/AOTEAROA

Beyond the Labour Machine: Aotearoa, the Alliance, and the Question of Working Class Independence

KYLE BARRETT ·

By the end of the year, that energy had been buried. The Post Primary Teachers' Association—the secondary teachers' union, and the more industrially assertive of the two teacher's unions—accepted a settlement below inflation for its 20,000 members. In February, the over 12,000 allied health workers of the Public Service Association—New Zealand's largest union of public sector workers, covering some 90,000 members across the state sector—voted for a similar deal. The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), the country's largest education union and the most rank and file in its internal structure of the major public sector unions, nevertheless pushed through a paycutting agreement for primary teachers over substantial member opposition. The Nurses, whose last collective agreement expired in October 2024, was presented in May 2026 with another subinflation offer, leaving frontline nurses with eighteen months of frozen pay amid 5 percent inflation. No further mass strikes were called; each section of the workforce was isolated, then squeezed.

This sequence—explosion, isolation, retreat—is the most important political fact in Aotearoa today, and understanding why requires knowing how New Zealand's unions sit in relation to its Labour Party. Labour was founded in 1916 by the unions themselves, and a bloc of them (the maritime, rail, and manufacturing unions among them) remain formally affiliated to this day: they pay affiliation fees, send delegates to Labour's conference, and vote in

its internal processes. Others, including the two teacher unions, belong to the Council of Trade Unions but hold no party allegiance at all. What the affiliated relationship buys, in practice, is a standing institutional interest in Labour's return to office, and therefore a standing reason not to escalate a fight that might make the opposition look unable to govern. This is the structural problem that the ruling right-wing three party coalition has bet on, the parliamentary opposition has refused to confront, and the official trade union leadership has been organizationally incapable of solving. And, in the first week of June 2026, it also produced an event whose significance should not be allowed to pass without notice: the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ), a small union covering seafarers, watersiders, and port workers, the unbroken successor to the Seafarers' and Wharfies' unions that helped build Labour in 1916, and an affiliate of that party ever since, voted unanimously to also affiliate with the revived Alliance Party, a democratic socialist formation that held thirteen parliamentary seats in the 1990s before collapsing in 2002. [2]

The affiliation does not end the union's century long relationship with Labour. National Secretary Carl Findlay was quick to insist that the wharfies "are not walking away from the Labour Party." But neither does it merely add a second letterhead. For the first time in living memory, a major New Zealand trade union has openly named another political home, and identified it as socialist. The MUNZ vote is at once a symptom of Labour's thorough failure towards the working class it claims to represent and a tentative beginning of the political reconstruction necessitated by that failure. It is not a workers' party, but it might, if much else goes right, be the embryo of the conversation that pro-

duces one. What is promising is not the Alliance's electoral prospects, which are slight, but the venue in which the question of independent working class representation is now being asked—inside a union's own constitutional decision-making, rather than in the seminar room or the propaganda of a sect. A national council put it to a vote and carried it unanimously. That precedent is portable in a way that a manifesto is not; it can be tabled at the next union's council, and the next. Crucially, the proposition it settles—that a union may hold more than one political allegiance at a time—counters the single party monopoly over labor that the Labour relationship has always depended on.

The Coalition's Three-Year War

The National-led government was formed at the end of 2023, after the National Party's Christopher Luxon stitched together a three-party coalition with David Seymour's ACT and Winston Peters's New Zealand First. ACT is a small right-libertarian party that has spent the past decade rebranding pro-market policy as anti-"woke" cultural warfare; under Seymour it has become the coalition's ideological driver of privatization and the anti-Treaty agenda. New Zealand First is a nationalist populist formation trading on anti-immigration politics, hostility to Māori-directed spending, and Peters's own considerable talent for keeping himself at the center of the country's political climate. The division of labor between the three is itself a governing technique: ACT is permitted to introduce what National and New Zealand First would rather not own, and the senior partners then position themselves as moderating influences on a radicalism that they have in fact licensed. From its first week in office, the National-led government has launched the most aggressive offensive against working class living standards in a generation.

The Equal Pay Amendment Act, urgently rammed through Parliament in early May 2025 with the support of all three coalition parties, gutted the pay equity regime by raising the female workforce threshold (the proportion of employees who must

be women for a role to legally qualify as work "predominantly performed by female employees") from 60 to 70 percent, and requiring that a role meet that raised threshold for ten consecutive years. [3] The significance of that test is easy to miss from outside the jurisdiction. A pay equity claim in New Zealand is not an equal-pay-for-equal-work claim; it is an argument that an entire occupation has been systematically underpaid because it is done by women, and that its wages should therefore be compared against male dominated occupations of comparable skill and responsibility. The female predominance test is the gate through which any such claim must pass before it can be even heard. Raising the threshold and imposing a ten year historical requirement did not merely narrow future claims; it retrospectively disqualified live ones. And because the occupations in question (aged care, disability support, school administration, cleaning) are disproportionately staffed by Māori and Pasifika women in New Zealand, a change written in the language of gender lands with racialized force. Thirty-three live claims, representing tens of thousands of such workers, were dropped overnight. Finance Minister Nicola Willis told Parliament the changes would "save" the Crown an estimated NZ\$12.8 billion over four years: the present value of the wages and back pay the state has decided to extract from women workers to fund tax relief for property owners.

The 2026 budget announced eighty-seven hundred further public sector job cuts over three years—roughly 14 percent of the 63,000-strong public service workforce—sold as "fiscally responsible" management and quietly justified by ministers as a substitution of AI tooling for human labor. [4] Housing support spending was cut from \$655.4 million to \$576.5 million for the year, even as homelessness in Auckland more than doubled from 426 to 940 rough sleepers between September 2024 and September 2025. [5] Electricity prices rose 12.2 percent in twelve months; gas 15.4 percent; insurance 10; dairy and eggs 9.9. Amid this increase in

cost of living prices, the minimum wage rose only 2 percent. [6]

To these material attacks, the coalition added David Seymour's Treaty Principles Bill, introduced in November 2024 as part of ACT's coalition agreement. The bill sought to rewrite the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi)—the legal scaffolding that has supported decades of Māori claims—out of New Zealand jurisprudence. The response was the largest tangata whenua (Indigenous Māori) mobilization in living memory: the Hīkoi mō te Tiriti protest march, which spanned the length of the North Island and gathered more than 42,000 marchers to Parliament. When Te Pāti Māori Member of Parliament Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke tore her copy of the bill in two and led the chamber in Ka Mate, the image spread around the world. The bill was "annihilated" at its second reading in April 2025, but its intended political work continues. The National Party and New Zealand First voted for it at the first reading precisely so they could then disclaim it—the licensing manoeuvre described above, and an act of choreographed cynicism worth remembering whenever those parties claim to be moderating their partner's worst impulses.

The throughline is austerity as statecraft. The pay equity rollback alone constitutes a form of primitive accumulation, in which a particular fraction of capital—landlords, professional services, the rentier infrastructure of the New Zealand economy—is allowed to draw rents from a feminized public sector workforce whose recourse to law has been quietly amputated. The cuts to housing support and the public service are not separate ledger items. They are a single distributional decision, executed under the cover of fiscal seriousness.

Labour as Machine

Confronted with this offensive, the Labour Party has done two things: spoken against the cuts in general terms and deliberately refused to commit to reversing them. New Zealand Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins began 2026 with a speech denouncing coalition austerity and reminding the public

that "working New Zealanders have always been integral to Labour's purpose." Within weeks, his shadow finance team was floating "tax relief"—presented as the party's answer to household cost pressure, and thus as a substitute for reversing the cuts that produced it—as a 2026 platform plank. Labour has committed to repealing the Equal Pay Amendment Act if it wins office, but only conditionally, in coordination with the Greens, and if fiscal "headroom" is available. The shadow cabinet has, with characteristic discipline, declined to call for the immediate restoration of dropped claims, the rehiring of fired public servants, the restoration of housing budgets, or—and this is the test—any commitment to defend the right of unions to strike against any future government, including its own.

That reticence is structural rather than personal, and the affiliated unions know it. National Secretary of the Maritime Union of New Zealand Carl Findlay's characterization of the party as "a big machine" with "different views from different people" is more revealing than he perhaps intended. The Labour Party today functions as a stabilizer of the New Zealand state. It administered austerity in government from 2017 to 2023, during which promises to address child poverty, the housing crisis, and the healthcare emergency were systematically diluted into policy gruel that delivered the 2023 landslide to National. In opposition, it offers verbal resistance while declining to commit the working class to any struggle it could not subsequently de-escalate from office. This is the historical role of social democracy in the imperialist core: a safety valve that converts working class anger into safe electoral expression in order to bleed it off.

Former prime minister and Labour Party leader Jacinda Ardern's 2017 mandate was a working class mandate: housing, child poverty, healthcare. She left office, having handed the premiership to Hipkins, with housing prices at record highs, child poverty stalled, and the health system in worse condition than she had found it. The 2023 landslide was not a swing to the right, but a strike by the

working class electorate against a party that had squandered its trust.

The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU), which represents 320,000 workers and is itself affiliated to no party, has nonetheless accepted the Labour relationship as nonnegotiable. The 2025 megastrike was magnificent, but the architecture of its follow up was incoherent: no indefinite stoppage, no coordination with the Hīkoi networks, and no organized challenge to the coalition's legal regime. The strike was treated as a one-day "demonstration of strength" rather than the opening of a worker's front in a class war the government had already unilaterally declared.

New Zealand readers will recognize the pattern from 1951, 1991, and every interval when the union bureaucracy treated parliamentary patience as the safer choice only to discover that capital does not wait. The Maritime Union has reason to remember. The 1951 waterfront lockout—22,000 watersiders and supporting workers locked out for 151 days by the First National government, while the Federation of Labour leadership refused to take solidarity action—is still remembered on the Auckland and Wellington wharves. In 2026, to affiliate with a party other than Labour is to act in light of that memory.

The Alliance, Revived

The formation MUNZ has affiliated to is not new—it is a resurrection. For readers unfamiliar with the Aotearoa left, the Alliance is the country's most historically significant post-1984 attempt to build a socialist electoral force to the left of Labour. The Alliance was born in reaction to the Fourth Labour Government's neoliberal turn. While briefly powerful in the 1990s, it catastrophically split in 2002 and deregistered in 2015. Its 2025 return is the direct outcome of a new generation of conclusions by activists that the Labour Party cannot be reformed at the speed the crisis demands. Its history is worth recovering in some detail, because it will be tested by the same temptations that destroyed it the first time.

The Alliance was founded in December 1991 as a coalition of five formations—Jim Anderton's NewLabour Party (a 1989 split from Labour over Rogernomics), the Green Party, Matiu Rata's Mana Motuhake, the Democrats, and the Liberals—united against the neoliberal counterrevolution of both major parties. [7] In the 1993 election (the last under first-past-the-post), the Alliance won 18.2 percent of the vote but only two seats. That result did more than any other to discredit New Zealand's single winner voting system and to deliver the 1996 referendum for a mixed member proportional (MMP) system, under which voters cast two ballots: one for an electorate candidate and one for a party. Under proportional representation, the Alliance returned thirteen members of Parliament on 10.1 percent in 1996. In 1999, it entered coalition with Labour. Anderton served as Deputy Prime Minister, and the government established Kiwibank as a publicly owned competitor to the Australian-owned trading banks and introduced statutory paid parental leave. Both reforms survive.

The party then destroyed itself. In 2002, Anderton broke with the membership over the deployment of New Zealand troops to Afghanistan. Most of the membership opposed the war; Anderton did not, and took several members of Parliament with him into the Progressive Party. The Alliance left Parliament that year and never returned. It was deregistered in 2015. For a decade, it existed only as a name.

In 2025, it re-registered, contested local body elections, and in January 2026 announced candidates for the November 2026 general election. In February, it held a national conference at the Trade Union Centre in Christchurch—the venue choice is not incidental—at which Victor Billot (MUNZ's National Communications Officer) was elected leader. [8]The platform ratified at that conference is a socialist program of the social democratic left. Its constitution commits the party to public ownership of energy, transport, water, ports, rail, and shipping; free healthcare and education; a steeply progressive tax system; recognition of Te Tiriti o

Waitangi as the constitutional foundation; an independent foreign policy grounded in Pacific solidarity; and—point ten, stated without embarrassment—the assertion that "global capitalism is not permanent or invincible" and that the party fights for "a socialist alternative." It accepts no corporate donations.

This is not a revolutionary program. It is recognizably reformist in method: it conceives the path to socialism as passing through the parliamentary state and organized via a mass electoral party. Anyone who has read Charlie Post or Kim Moody on the limits of broad left party projects, from Syriza to Podemos to Die Linke, knows the catalogue of dangers. [9] The Alliance is not exempt, as its own history demonstrates. In 1999 it entered a coalition with a center-left Labour government, and that coalition's commitments to war and the IMF-disciplined fiscal framework of the Helen Clark government were precisely what tore the party apart.

But the question is not whether the Alliance is the party we would write into existence. It is not. The question is what the Alliance currently is: a small organization with fewer than five hundred dues paying members at the time of the MUNZ vote that has begun to do two things: it provides an electoral vehicle through which the demands for nationalization, the restoration of the social wage, and a break with the neoliberal consensus can be voiced as a program rather than as moral protest; and it provides an institutional space outside the Labour Party in which trade union militants (beginning with the wharfies) can locate themselves politically without swallowing Labour discipline.

The under-five-hundred figure is being deployed, especially in left-of-Labour journalism that finds the Alliance embarrassing, as evidence that the affiliation is a stunt. This is upside down. The Alliance's small size is precisely what makes MUNZ's decision meaningful. A union of MUNZ's weight—small in membership, but central by sector and capable of halting freight through the country's ports—has voted to affiliate with an organization it

knows it can shape. That is not a stunt; it is a calculation about leverage.

What the Maritime Union Did

The substance of the MUNZ vote warrants pause. Findlay was specific about what the union sees in the Alliance that it does not see in Labour: a commitment to halt asset sales, to keep ports in public ownership, to rebuild the national rail network and a New Zealand-flagged merchant fleet, and to treat coastal shipping as strategic infrastructure rather than a cost center to be auctioned to the highest bidder. He also named the immediate provocation: open speculation about the Dubai state-owned port operator DP World "sniffing around" the Lyttelton Port Company, which posted a record half year profit in February 2026 even as the coalition's broader privatization agenda accelerated. [10]

These are not merely abstract considerations. The partial privatization of the New Zealand ports is already producing the conditions that led to the Ports of Auckland deaths in the early 2020s. Privatization is a direct attack on wharfies' working conditions and on the union's ability to enforce safety standards. The Maritime Union's resistance is the basic union function of defending the social conditions of work.

That defense has led to a political conclusion that the union's leadership has treated as taboo for over a century: the Labour Party cannot be relied on to do this work alone, and working class political representation must therefore be plural. This conclusion is being tested within an electoral architecture whose Mixed-Member Proportional voting system makes possible. Under first-past-the-post voting, dual affiliation would lead to vote splitting in marginal seats. Under MMP, every percentage point above the 5 percent threshold translates into seats, and electorate wins translate independently of the party vote. A union strategy of voting Labour in the electorate and Alliance in the party vote makes arithmetic sense. While MMP is insufficient to produce a workers' party, it removes one of the structural defenses on which the Labour-union fusion

has historically relied. In other words, it opens a door for dual affiliation.

Beginnings, Not Arrivals

We should be precise about what the affiliation does and does not constitute. Affiliation to the Alliance does not constitute a workers' party in the sense used in *Spectre's* recent debates on the rank and file strategy. The Alliance is not, currently, a vehicle for politically organizing and generalizing workers' direct action on the job. It is an electoral party that has acquired the affiliation of a militant union. The distinction matters.

The danger of conflating the two is substitution—that is, the temptation to treat a parliamentary vehicle as a substitute for the slow, structural work of rebuilding workplace organization, training rank and file leaders, defeating concessionary contracts, and reconstructing the cross-sectoral solidarity that turns a one day megastrike into the beginning of sustained class confrontation. The CTU's demobilization after October 23 was not caused by the absence of a workers' party. It was caused by the active choices of union officials who treated each affiliate's contract as a separate negotiation and refused to call strike action despite the clear invitation of both the moment and the polls.

A new party, even a good one, cannot fix that. David McNally and Charlie Post's "Beyond Electoralism," published in *Spectre* in November 2025, made the case bluntly: "revolutionary socialists have never rejected participation in electoral politics. What they have contested is the elevation of electoral campaigning to the strategic priority of the Left." [11] The argument applies on the south side of the Pacific. The Alliance can be useful, even necessary, but it cannot replace the work of rebuilding the unions from below. If the MUNZ affiliation is treated as the end of the political question rather than its beginning—as delegating to Billot the tasks that the wharfies and their allies should be doing themselves—it will become exactly the kind of substitution that has hollowed out broader left projects across Europe. Paul Ginsberg, writing

in this journal on the United States, has put the same point in his engagement with electoralism. As opposed to substitution, Ginsberg calls for "hybrid tactics" in which the anticapitalist left works to defeat the right electorally while also building the mass force that can defeat it lastingly. As Ginsberg stipulates, "neither imperative can be sacrificed to the other." [12]

The way to prevent substitution is to use affiliation as an organizing lever. The most useful thing the Alliance can be over the next eighteen months is a meeting ground: a place where rank and file militants from the Nurses Organisation, NZEI, the Post Primary Teachers' Association, the Public Service Association, First Union, E tū, Unite, and the dozens of smaller formations springing up around insecure work sectors can meet one another outside the disciplinary architecture of the Labour caucus. The model is recognizable in the Labor Notes network in the United States and in the rank and file traditions of the British trade union left. It is the work of building the infrastructure of cross-union solidarity that can independently call for action and sustain it alongside the electoral vehicle. Whether the Alliance can host that work remains an open question. Its 1999–2002 experience is a warning. Any party aspiring to be a working class formation in 2026 under MMP and in the face of both present geopolitical pressure and an Aotearoa state edging toward AUKUS Pillar Two and lifting defense spending past 2 percent of GDP for the first time since the early 1990s will have its principles tested early. Its constitutional commitment to "an independent foreign policy" and to "Pacific solidarity" will be tested by Washington's first request for naval access, the first dispute over Chinese deep sea cable infrastructure, and the first port visit by a nuclear powered submarine.

Te Tiriti, Tangata Whenua, and the Class Question

A workers' party in Aotearoa that does not understand itself, from the foundations up, as a party of Te Tiriti will reproduce the Labour Party's settler colonial bad faith. This is not moral hygiene. It is

the basic strategic recognition that the New Zealand working class has, since 1840, been structured along a color line; that Māori workers have historically been segregated into the most exploited sectors of the labor market; that Pasifika workers, recruited under the conditions of the dawn raids and their successors, have been used as a deliberate wedge against Pākehā labor; and that the very pay equity claims gutted by the 2025 Act were disproportionately filed by Māori and Pasifika women in care work. Any project of working class political renewal that does not put Te Tiriti at its center is, in practice, a project for the section of the working class the settler state most readily recognizes.

The Alliance constitution's sixth principle—recognition of Te Tiriti, "redress of violation of Te Tiriti," respect for Te Reo Māori and Māoritanga "as the first culture and language of this country"—is a starting point. On its own, it is merely words on a page. The party that emerges from this moment will be judged on whether it can build structural relationships with Te Pāti Māori, iwi authorities, the kohanga reo and kura kaupapa networks, and the urban Māori organizations that the Hīkoi mō te Tiriti revealed to be capable of mass mobilization. The 42,000 at Parliament in November 2024 were, for the most part, not organized by the existing Pākehā left. James Stout, writing in *Spectre* on liberatory movements from Spain to Rojava to Myanmar, argues that the fiercest struggles against oppression not only resist power but also build new ways of living together. [13] Te ao Māori has been doing that work in Aotearoa since 1840. A workers' party worth the name will take its lead from it.

The Maritime Union has more institutional memory of this work than many other unions. Its history of solidarity with the 1981 Springbok tour protests, the Bastion Point occupation, and port based internationalism—most recently through its public backing of the Global Sumud Flotilla and recognition of Palestine—gives it a place to stand. But solidarity with tangata whenua at home, on the question of tino rangatiratanga, is harder and slower work. It is the work without which an Alliance-

MUNZ axis will simply be the latest iteration of a Pākehā labor politics that mistakes its own horizon for the country.

What is the "Starting Point" For?

Is the Alliance's revival and the Maritime Union's affiliation a starting point for a working class government party in Aotearoa?

The honest answer is that it is the starting point for a conversation about such a party. The conditions for the party itself are not yet in place. If they are produced, they will be the product of what the working class itself does over the next two years, in the strikes not yet called, the workplace fights not yet won, and the cross-union infrastructure not yet built. In this project, the Alliance can be a useful interlocutor. It is not, at its current scale and program, the vessel into which the New Zealand working class should pour itself.

What the Alliance can be—and what the MUNZ vote has begun to make it—is a wedge: a small, deliberately placed instrument for prying open the union-Labour fusion that has contained New Zealand working class politics within a settler colonial social democracy and prevented its development of an organizationally independent expression for more than a century. The fusion is old and stronger than it appears, supported by a Labour bureaucracy whose first reflex when challenged is to remind workers—in the same tones used by the New South Wales right of the Australian Labor Party—that they have nowhere else to go.

The MUNZ affiliation says: yes, we do—not in the sense that Labour is finished, nor that the Alliance is the party we need. But in the sense that the assumption of nowhere else to go is itself a piece of political infrastructure that can be dismantled vote by vote, affiliation by affiliation, union by union, and that this dismantling has now begun.

We have watched too many "broad left" formations—from Corbyism to the Sanders movements to the various European left-populist projects—mistake a beginning for a destination. The Alliance, if it sur-

vives and grows, will face all those temptations: to soften its program to meet 5 percent thresholds, treat union affiliations as electoral assets rather than as sites of mutual political education, and discipline its own militants in the name of parliamentary respectability. The only guarantee against any of this is the existence, outside the electoral party, of a working class movement strong enough to hold it to account.

That movement is being built right now in Aotearoa—at the bedside, in the classroom, on the wharf, in the back of the ambulance, and on the picket lines of the next strike the CTU leadership will, at first, try not to call. It is being built in exactly the kind of

workers' experiments with new forms of politics that John Schultz has documented elsewhere in this journal: inchoate self-activity that, in its very doing, calls the class relation into question.¹⁴ The most that can be said for the affiliation at Lyttelton, the Alliance's small founding meetings in church halls and union centers, Billot's leadership, and Findlay's careful framing of dual affiliation is that some of the country's most experienced working class organizers have decided to stop waiting. In a country whose official left has been waiting since 1984, that is a beginning.

8 September 2026

*Source: **Spectre**.*

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America: Patterns and Pendulum

MARC BECKER ·

Four interrelated developments define the current political panorama. First, and most important, is the January 3, 2026 U.S. invasion of Venezuela and kidnapping of president Nicolás Maduro (and Donald Trump anointing Marco Rubio as a ruling viceroy), along with sadistic strangulation and threatened military action against Cuba.

Second are rightwing governments joining the Trump administration in a so-called Shield of the Americas in a hybrid "war on terror and drugs" that violates international law and strategically targets the left.

Third are the very narrow June, 2026 wins of hard rightwing presidential candidates over their progressive opponents in Peru and Colombia.

And finally is the virtual collapse of popular support for recently elected rightwing governments in Argentina, Chile and particularly the recent Bolivian mass protests and blockades.

In addition to the embedded anti-leftist, pro-establishment perspective of mainstream media, pundits have alternatively explained recent political developments as either a common pendulum swing from right to left and back again, or an example of ingrained anti-incumbency sentiments among the electorate.

Both interpretations fall short and fail to explain the contradictions of the situation that we are now facing.

Patterns of a Century

Rather than a swing of the pendulum, over the past century broad patterns have defined Latin America's political landscape. The 1930s saw the

rise of military socialists, influenced as much by Italian fascism as by Marxist notions of class struggle.

In the aftermath of World War Two, military dictatorships briefly gave way to the flourishing of civilian governance, as protests arose questioning why people were asked to fight for democracy in Europe while remaining subject to authoritarian governments at home.

Subsequently, with the onset of the Cold War, most of Latin America came under pro-U.S. military rule. Slowly, in the 1970s and 1980 much of the region returned to civilian governance.

In 1998 in Venezuela, Hugo Chávez won election on a populist platform that introduced a decade during which for the first time almost the entire region came under leftist rule in what was commonly referred to as the pink tide.

By the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, that dominance unraveled as conservative forces reasserted themselves. A brief interlude returned some moderately progressive governments, but by 2026 Brazil under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula") and Mexico with president Claudia Sheinbaum were very much outliers.

While we can discern broad transnational trends in these developments, they just as often respond to local conditions and a wide variety of specific factors including the popularity of charismatic leadership and the organizing capacity of different social forces.

Those who campaign as political "outsiders" are often in reality members of the traditional ruling class, so that positioning becomes more of a question of rhetoric than lived material reality. More relevant than perceived anti-incumbency senti-

ments to explain dramatic electoral shifts are larger political factors.

A quarter century ago, the left thrived in Latin America as the George W. Bush administration was distracted with its war in Iraq. Under the Trump administration, that imperial gaze has been turned back on the hemisphere, creating a very different environment challenging the goals of economic equality, political democracy and social justice.

Depending on one's perspective, these can either be seen as some of the darkest times for the Americas, or an example of the inherent contradictions of a capitalist mode of production as the limitations and failures of rightwing policies of the upward redistribution of wealth become readily apparent.

Donroe Doctrine Throwback

In the 2024 presidential election, the New York Post tabloid dubbed Donald Trump's aggressively expansionistic policies as the "Donroe Doctrine," a term Trump warmly embraced to signal his willingness to act unilaterally to secure U.S. strategic and economic interests in the Americas.

In a November 2025 national security strategy document, Trump proudly proclaimed his corollary as a revival and expansion of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine.

Demonstrating that this was much more than rhetoric, early on the morning of Saturday, January 3, 2026 and in blatant violation of international law, Trump ordered the U.S. military to attack Venezuela and kidnap Nicolás Maduro, along with his wife Cilia Flores.

This first military assault that the United States launched on the South American continent represented a return to the gunboat policies of more than a century earlier.

Trump followed this up with threats to "take Cuba," although with the U.S. increasingly bogged down in its war with Iran and control over the Strait of Hormuz those statements have receded into the background.

Some commentators at first pondered whether an attack on Cuba would be an easy victory for Trump to distract from his policy failures elsewhere. Alternatively, with the Cuban government rolling back many of the revolution's redistributive policies in the face of the intense pressure of the U.S. blockade that has destroyed its economy, that may no longer be necessary.

Reoccurring energy grid failures leading to complete power outages on the island occasionally trigger protests, but so far most Cubans appear either supportive of the government or resigned to their fate. In any case, for Trump the overt symbolism of projecting military power appears as important as any potential economic gains. As always, it is hard to understand or predict what his motivations or endgame might be.

Nothing in recent memory has been as brazen as Trump's complete disregard for the niceties of international law. His actions take us back more than 100 years to the end of the 19th century when the United States acted unilaterally as a global police force in the Caribbean basin.

Aligning with Trump

During the Cold War, rightwing dictators were willing to play into anticommunist narratives in order to earn support from Washington. What is different and notable in the current political environment is how many of these rightwing governments openly align themselves with Trump's blatantly illegal policies.

These include the open extrajudicial killings of alleged drug traffickers, first in international waters in the Caribbean and Pacific and then on land in Ecuador and Venezuela with threats to engage in similar actions in Mexico.

All this stands in stark contrast to nationalist sentiments that had long held dominance in Latin America. During the Cold War, many politicians as well as the general public admired Fidel Castro for his ability to stand up to the United States even if they did not agree with his policies.

No more.

An international ruling class has always had shared economic interests, and aristocratic oligarchs move in the same social circles that largely remain invisible to the rest of us, not unlike how European monarchs were thoroughly inbred with each other.

A U.S. (preferably Ivy League) education and facility with English has long been a prerequisite for a serious run for the presidency of a Latin American country, and more than one has held U.S. citizenship. What seems to have shifted in the last couple years, though, is an open support and identification among this ruling class and their conservative supporters for a U.S. policy agenda as if it were their own.

Previously the blatant violation of a country's sovereignty, as with the invasion of Venezuela, would have faced almost universal diplomatic sanction and public condemnation rather than a warm embrace. This extends beyond ideology and policy concerns and reflects something even more disturbing.

One piece of evidence about this change is an annual resolution that Cuba brings to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) condemning the U.S. blockade of the island as a violation of the UN Charter.

In its first year in 1992, 59 countries voted in favor, three opposed, and the remainder abstained. Over time, opposition to U.S. policy became nearly universal. By 2015, 190 countries voted with Cuba, leaving only the United States and Israel in support of continued isolation.

In 2016 after Barack Obama and Cuban president Raúl Castro reestablished diplomatic relations, no country voted against the resolution and only the United States and Israel abstained.

That has changed with Trump back in the White House. In October 2025, Cuba's annual UN resolution condemning the U.S. blockade again passed, but with a lower level of support than during the

Obama years. This time, 165 countries voted in favor, seven opposed, and 12 abstained.

Those voting against included the United States, Israel, Argentina, Hungary, Paraguay, North Macedonia, and Ukraine. Costa Rica, Ecuador and several Eastern European countries abstained.

On July 7, 2026 Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez called for an emergency session in the UNGA in response to Trump's escalating measures against the island. While Cuba still won the vote condemning the U.S. blockade, it received significantly less support than in recent years.

This time, only 136 countries voted with Cuba, nine voted against, 30 abstained, and some opted to skip the vote altogether. The nine countries voting against the resolution were the United States, Argentina, Israel, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Morocco, Czechia, North Macedonia and Ukraine. Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago abstained while Antigua & Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras and Venezuela skipped the vote altogether.

Venezuela Trapped

Venezuela's lack of support for Cuba, even though the country continues to suffer under the same crushing sanctions that have destroyed Cuba's economy, either represented interim president Delcy Rodríguez's move firmly into the imperialist camp or a desperate geopolitical attempt to ward off even more of Trump's wrath. Many observers remain divided over how to read and interpret her actions, and whether remnants of the Bolivarian Revolution can reasonably be said to hold power.

For some, Rodríguez faces an impossible choice: either cooperate with the Trump administration or face military attacks. In the meantime, Secretary of State Marco Rubio effectively rules the country as a viceroy, controlling its finances, natural resources, and government decisions.

It would appear that the intention is to extend a similar model to Cuba, not with the goal of chang-

ing its economic and political system but to rule it directly as a colony.

The UN vote reflected not only a resurgence of U.S. opposition to Cuba but also a rightward shift in global politics, and in particular one that was willingly and openly allied with Trump in a way that extends well beyond an embrace of shared economic and political interests that has always tied an international ruling class together.

As one example of this, in the Latin American past when presidents held dual citizenship, they either gave that up or faced pressure to do so to underscore that their primary allegiance was to the country that they currently governed.

No more.

Ecuador's president Daniel Noboa was born in Miami, continues to hold U.S. citizenship, and allegedly returned to Miami in November 2025 for the birth of his child so as not to leave any doubt as to the legitimacy of his offspring's citizenship.

Recently inaugurated Colombian president Abelardo de la Espriella does Noboa one better, holding Italian citizenship in addition to that of both Colombia and the United States.

A question in many critics' minds is in whose interests will these leaders serve, when their policies are already so subservient to Donald Trump.

And how does Trump manage to continue to project such levels of power when his policies, both domestically and internationally, remain so deeply unpopular?

Recent Elections

While the rest of the hemisphere shifted left at the beginning of the 21st century, Colombia remained the outlier in continuing to elect rightwing governments that were closely allied with U.S. imperial concerns. That ended in 2022 with the election of Gustavo Petro.

Petro came out of the ranks of the M-19 guerrillas, but eschewed armed struggle in favor of electoral

politics. With a famously abrasive personality, his terms in office as mayor of the capital city of Bogotá and then president of the country were tumultuous as best.

In the 2026 elections, Petro's supporters hoped that he would be followed in office by the human rights activist Iván Cepeda. Instead, Cepeda lost narrowly to the rightwing lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella who had defended drug dealers and paramilitary groups — the same people who in a different context conservatives would denounce as narco-terrorists.

Given Colombia's history and the polling in advance of the election, what is notable is not that Cepeda lost, but that he lost by such a small margin of 49.66 to 48.70 percent, or about 251,000 votes out of 26 million cast. In a social media post, Trump proclaimed that de la Espriella had won by a large margin but he did not even win a majority of the vote.

Almost simultaneously, a similar scenario played out in Peru. In her fourth run for office, Keiko Fujimori, daughter of the disgraced former president, the authoritarian Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000), similarly narrowly defeated Roberto Sánchez.

That race had echoes of the previous contest of 2021, which she narrowly lost to Pedro Castillo who came from the same leftwing party as Sánchez. In 2026, the vote was 50.12 to 49.88, or an even narrower margin than in Colombia of only about around 37,000 votes of almost 20 million.

The margin that gave Fujimori her victory came from Peruvians residing outside the country — particularly those in Miami, long a conservative stronghold. The irony is that she will be president even though the majority of people living in Peru voted against her.

In both cases the losers claimed fraud and initially refused to accept defeat. With some notable exceptions (blatantly stolen elections in Mexico in 1988, Honduras in 2017), under modern electoral sys-

tems the posted results accurately reflect the number votes cast in the ballot box. (Other factors, of course, are at play, such as the advantages of incumbency and particularly gerrymandering and voter suppression in the United States, but that is not what sore losers have in mind when they cry fraud.)

Grasping for Power

While the right effectively leverages the rhetoric of democracy to its advantage, recent events demonstrate that the left is more likely to respect institutions. Trump has yet to recognize his loss in the 2020 U.S. election, and Jair Bolsonaro followed a similar course in Brazil two years later.

Many different factors affect electoral outcomes, but the left has always faced the need for serious introspection as to why policies that favor the vast majority of the population fail to gain traction in the face of support for rightwing politicians who stand openly against their own class interest.

Sectors of the hard right are anything but democratic, and that becomes a broader problem. When George W. Bush lost the popular vote to Al Gore in the United States in 2000, and probably the electoral college as well until the Supreme Court overturned the Florida vote count, he initially pledged to recognize his small margin of victory and to administer collaboratively with the Democrats. As his subsequent policies immediately made clear, he did anything but that.

In Ecuador, the rightwing Noboa moved up the 2027 municipal elections and then barred his strongest opposition, former leftwing president Rafael Correa's Citizen's Revolution, from competing, thereby cementing his hold on power.

In El Salvador, Nayib Bukele has implemented even more extreme measures to tighten his grasp. Similar to military dictatorships from half a century ago, leftists are considered cockroaches to be eradicated, not a legitimate opposition.

This stands in marked contrast to a dramatic expansion of electoral democracy and secure voting systems under the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela after Hugo Chávez's win in 1998.

In the cases of Venezuela or Nicaragua, the removal of a nominally leftwing government, with whatever limitations and complications, would not mean the flourishing of democracy, much less the implementation of a more humane government attuned to the needs and desires of the populace.

Assisted by the heavy hand of U.S. imperialism, the right would jump at the chance to undo the remnants of whatever redistributive policies might remain, and implement their aggressive program of the upward redistribution of wealth that plays only to the interests of an oligarchical ruling class.

The Right's Inability to Govern

Given the built-in advantages that the owners of the means of production enjoy, what can be surprising is how difficult it has been for the current crop of conservative governments to implement their agendas. On the other hand, for readers of Capital this may come as no surprise as it reflects the inherent flaws of their economic system, particularly in its vicious neoliberal form.

In Argentina, the anarcho-capitalist economist, Javier Milei, campaigned with a chainsaw, promising to slash governing structures. As with Elon Musk, to whom Milei gave a chainsaw, and Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), in practice those policies have not turned out so well.

Milei played into Argentina's longstanding anti-incumbency sentiments of *que se vayan todos* (throw all of the bums out), but when his policies of privatization and austerity began to hurt people's bottom lines, they turned against him.

In neighboring Chile, José Antonio Kast (who literally comes from a family of Nazis) campaigned on a Tumpist anti-immigrant platform (this time blaming Peruvians and Venezuelans for the country's problems) found his popularity ratings plummet once in office.

Most recently, in Bolivia a runoff race saw two rightwing candidates face off. While the pundit class cheered the end of two decades of socialist rule under Evo Morales and Luis Arce that saw poverty and inequality rates plummet to their lowest levels in South America's poorest country, once in power the eventual winner Rodrigo Paz similarly proved unable to rule.

His neoliberal policies of austerity and privatization have faced massive backlash with roadblocks and calls for his resignation or impeachment.

A quarter century ago, similar dynamics led to the rise of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) as an electoral force. Bolivia has long had a highly politicized and aware population, yet the country continued to elect officials that implemented policies that undermined popular interests.

First the privatization of water in Cochabamba in 1999, and then battles over the exploitation, industrialization, and nationalization of the country's vast natural gas reserves in 2003 and 2005, led to Morales' rise to power.

Infighting and other problems with the MAS led to Paz's win in 2025, but underlying conditions of inequality remain unaddressed which triggered the recent protests.

Left Dilemmas

Part of what we are witnessing is a common phenomenon of a social movement left that is more powerful than its electoral counterpart. While events in Latin America demonstrate that street protests and general strikes can be useful to pull down opposing governments, they are less effective at building positive and concrete alternatives.

To do that, left parties need to gain control of power, but once they do so they prove to be ineffective at implementing their agenda.

One interpretation of the left's shortcomings in office is simply a question of a lack of governing experience. While the traditional oligarchy has centuries of experience in implanting a rightwing agenda,

grassroots activists and the left in general have had precious few opportunities to test and adjust their policy proposals in practice.

Given this reality, once the far right gains power even by a very thin margin, it is well positioned to force through its neoliberal policies of deregulation and privatization. In contrast, even when the left wins by a wide margin and seemingly with a strong mandate it lacks the skill to make important changes.

For some, this translates into the importance of gaining governing experience, even if on a municipal level, before attempting to implement more far-reaching policies of redistribution.

Another factor is the oligarch's traditional control over the communications media, and in recent years it has proved to be more effective than the left in exploiting new forms of social media.

A narrative, particularly when the right does not hesitate to present a narrow victory as a strong mandate, creates an advantage that the left appears incapable of countering. To some degree this is due to the left's natural embrace of critical thinking rather than the superficiality of political rhetoric that lacks material substance.

Responses to the twin devastating earthquakes that shook Venezuela on June 24 provide evidence of how the right is able to spin narratives to their advantage. Conservatives criticize the shortcomings of the government's relief efforts while at the same time condemning its perceived authoritarianism even while standard response guidelines call for limiting access to disaster sites.

Furthermore, the contrast to Hugo Chávez's response to a devastating 1999 landslide that occurred in the same region as the recent earthquakes can be stunning, and highlights the right's desire to score polemical points rather than to solve very real problems.

Coming from a career in the military and accustomed to command structures, Chávez effectively mobilized disaster relief and in the process gained a

good deal of popular support although there is retrospective criticism that the new housing may have been too hastily and inadequately constructed.

Now, instead of celebrating what they theoretically present as an alternative to the current administration's perceived shortcomings, conservatives opportunistically portray Chávez's actions as evidence of the inherent dictatorial nature of socialist governance.

Lean Left/Vote Right

In "Déjà Vu," Roger Waters sings, "you lean to the left, but you vote to the right." That conundrum has long perplexed the left, and defines the current political terrain across the Americas and around the world.

Surveys reveal that people favor the left for their redistributive politics that address longstanding problems of inequality, but end up electing conservative politicians out of security concerns.

With some notable exceptions (currently the second highest homicide rate in the world is in Ecuador under the rightwing Daniel Noboa administration), that fear is exaggerated as most crime rates have steadily fallen over the years. Yet law-and-order policies (known as *mano dura* or iron fist in Latin America) play well.

Some leftist commentators advise against diminishing these sometimes very real fears, but broadly they do lead to people voting against their class interests.

The current outliers to these patterns are Mexico and Brazil. Mexico's president Claudia Sheinbaum currently enjoys some of the highest popularity ratings for chief executives, not only in the Americas but around the world. With a doctorate in energy engineering, she is the first woman and the first person with Jewish heritage to hold the office.

Both her resilience and ability to lead Mexico in the face of constant threats from the Trump administration have led to praise, even as objectively Sheinbaum has made little headways in addressing

the country's deep-seated economic and social problems.

In Brazil, Lula is currently serving his third term as president and plans to run for reelection in October's contest. More than any other country, Brazil shares parallels with the United States, but with key differences.

For example, similar to Trump's supporters' storming of the U.S. capital on January 6, 2021, a year later on January 8, 2022, the losing candidate Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil attempted a coup against Lula. Unlike in the United States with Trump, Bolsonaro, along with many of supporters, were convicted and are currently in prison.

Ironically, and despite assumptions to the contrary, sometimes institutions and the rule of law are more established and better respected in Latin America than they are in the United States.

Polarization

Much of the Americas remain deeply polarized. In Brazil and elsewhere (although not universally), a rising Christian right provides a base of support for conservatism. As in the United States, that often translates into strong Zionist sentiments — underlaid with latent antisemitism.

Culture wars lead to fierce racist and sexist attacks, including on gender identities and reproductive rights. A religious left that fueled the social justice concerns of Liberation Theology and faith-based campaigns against U.S. intervention in Central America in the 1980s has all but dissipated.

That absence has become most obvious in the lack of an organized response to Trump's attacks on Venezuela and Cuba.

While most Latin American countries are now under the thumb of rightwing regimes, the fact that Mexico and Brazil, the region's two largest countries, remain under progressive administrations translates into the fact that numerically, most still live under some form of leftist governance.

While it may appear that the right has a dominant presence, another way of looking at the current situation is that the left is not quite dead yet. But the hard work on implementing redistributive policies

in the face of an aggressive, vindictive, mean-spirited, and frankly anti-democratic and dictatorial right wing still remains in front of us.

*Source: September-October 2026, **ATC 244**.*

SITUATION IN EAST ASIA AND JAPANESE POLITICS/ECONOMY

Oppose the Takaichi Administration's Military Expansion and Constitutional Revision

TOSHIZO OMORI ·

Over the past year, the domestic and international situation has undergone extremely rapid and drastic changes, which are still unfolding today. Following the 2026 U.S. National Security Strategy released in December last year, this year has seen a series of events; the invasion of Venezuela and the abduction of its president Nicolás Maduro and his wife and adviser, Cilia Flores by US forces, and the US control over that country; attacks on Iran by the U.S. and Israel; the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by both Iran and the U.S.; Israel's genocide in Gaza and its attacks on Lebanon; and the ongoing prolongation and expansion of war in the Middle East. Furthermore, examples illustrating these dramatic shifts are too numerous to mention—ranging from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Trump's "America First" policy triggering global military expansion and militarization across Europe and beyond, to the deepening political crisis in the two superpowers, the U.S. and China.

Moreover, the worsening climate crisis is being accelerated further by these successive wars. In Europe, record-breaking heatwaves have killed thousands and sparked frequent, massive wildfires. Devastating floods across Asian countries and mudslides caused by glacier collapses in Nepal are also driven by this deepening crisis. Furthermore, amid the crisis of the capitalist system, bourgeois regimes worldwide are moving toward authoritarianism and neofascism. Responding to this trend in Japan, the Takaichi administration was formed,

and following its overwhelming victory in the general election, it has initiated a "true strategic pivot" risking the survival of Japanese imperialism.

The rapid acceleration of these changes—far exceeding our expectations—reflects the multifaceted crisis of global capitalism and marks our entry into an extraordinarily uncertain and unstable era. Under these circumstances, while grasping the entire picture of the situation is an extremely difficult task, attempting to comprehend it from a global perspective is indispensable for those of us aiming for ecological socialism. This essay attempts to organize key concepts toward that end and provide material for discussion.

The Balance Sheet of Successive Summits and the East Asian Situation

From May to June, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a series of summit meetings with U.S. President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and North Korean General Secretary Kim Jong Un. The outcomes of these summits reflect shifting power dynamics among imperialist powers following the events in Iran and the Middle East, carrying significant implications for the situation in East Asia.

First, the U.S.–China Summit held on May 14 and 15 effectively shelved fundamental issues surrounding the inter-imperialist rivalry between the United States and China, agreeing instead to a temporary truce under the banner of "strategic stability." For Trump, pursuing "America First" ahead of the midterm elections six months away required demonstrating tangible transactional achievements to the American public. However, contrary to his initial intentions, he ended up begging for China's

assistance to resolve the war with Iran, forcing him into concessions on the Taiwan issue. Xi Jinping presented extremely concrete demands, urging the United States to alter its official position from "the U.S. does not support Taiwan independence" to "the U.S. opposes Taiwan independence," and to halt arms sales to Taiwan. At the same time, facing a prolonged economic slump and lacking effective remedies, Xi sought to temporarily ease imperialist tensions with the U.S. to buy time. In that sense, no deal was struck that defied prior expectations. Regardless, the inter-imperialist conflict between the U.S. and China will inevitably continue over the medium to long term.

The subsequent China–Russia Summit clearly demonstrated China's dominance. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Sino-Russian relationship has fundamentally shifted toward Russian reliance on China. From an economic standpoint, Russia has become a partner that China "can replace if lost," whereas China has become "irreplaceable" for Russia (trade with China, including transactions via third countries, accounts for approximately 40–45% of Russia's total trade). Although the China–Russia Summit emphasized their partnership, it yielded few concrete results for Russia.

In the June China–North Korea Summit, Xi Jinping appeared to accommodate Kim Jong Un. This occurred against the backdrop of a North Korean economy booming from windfall demand created by the war in Ukraine. According to several visit reports, the economy is thriving, at least around Pyongyang. North Korea supplied troops and ammunition for the war in Ukraine, receiving urgently needed supplies such as food and oil from Russia in return, while earning an estimated \$10 billion (approx. 1.6 trillion yen) or more from arms sales to Russia (according to South Korea's Institute for National Security Strategy). Backed by this strengthened relationship with Russia, North Korea's bargaining power against China increased; consequently, unlike in past meetings, Xi Jinping made no mention of the "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" during the summit.

In effect, China tacitly recognized North Korea as a nuclear-armed state. The Chinese Communist Party regime has traditionally viewed North Korea as a buffer state against the United States. In that sense, historically speaking, the presence of U.S. military bases in South Korea (and Japan/Okinawa) has served as the baseline foundation for the existence of the North Korean state. Furthermore, North Korea amended its constitution to reflect the concept of "two states" on the Korean Peninsula, introducing a new territorial clause that defines: "The territory of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea includes the territory bordering the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation to the north and the Republic of Korea to the south, along with the territorial waters and airspace established on that basis." However, the phrasing referring to South Korea as a "hostile state"—which Kim Jong Un had mentioned during the Supreme People's Assembly in March—was ultimately not incorporated into the constitution.

Japan's Remilitarization and the Strategic Pivot Initiated by the Takaichi Administration

Following a landslide victory in the general election, Prime Minister Takaichi prioritized a series of policy agendas: economic packages driven by proactive fiscal policy; strengthening defense capabilities through revisions to the Three Defense Documents; establishing a National Intelligence Bureau and enacting anti-espionage legislation; reconsidering the Three Non-Nuclear Principles if necessary; tightening policies on foreign national control; legalizing the official use of maiden names; and laying the groundwork for revising the Imperial Household Law and amending the Constitution. In addition, as a starting point to challenge deeply divided public opinion, abolishing the "Five Categories of Arms Exports"—thereby granting complete clearance for arms exports, including lethal weaponry—aimed to reinforce military alliances across East Asia and transform the

defense industry into an engine of economic growth.

In Okinawa and the Nansei Islands, the construction of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) bases and the deployment of missile and electronic warfare units are progressing at a rapid pace. On the Japanese mainland, rear-support bases integrated with the Nansei Islands are being prepared through the construction of missile ammunition depots, the deployment of long-range missiles and Tomahawks, and the enhancement of transport capabilities via the military utilization of commercial ports and airports. In fiscal year 2026, the Joint U.S.-Japan Military Exercise "Resolute Dragon," designed to strengthen coordination and joint response capabilities between U.S. and Japanese forces, focused entirely on Okinawa and Kyushu as exercise grounds, featuring drills concentrated on remote island defense.

Furthermore, the SDF has repeatedly joined joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises in the Philippines. "Balikatan 26" (April 20 to May 8) mobilized more than 17,000 personnel from the Philippines, the United States, Australia, Japan, Canada, France, and New Zealand. The SDF contributed approximately 1,400 troops alongside the destroyers *Ise* and *Ikazuchi*, the landing ship *Shimokita*, transport aircraft, and amphibious rescue aircraft. In "Kamandag 26" (June 15 to July 1), the Ground Self-Defense Force deployed its 1st Airborne Brigade, Central Nuclear Biological Chemical Weapon Defense Unit, Counter NBC Weapon Medical Unit, and NBC Weapon Defense School alongside U.S. and Philippine Marines, carrying out airborne drop training. The stated objective of this exercise was to "maintain and improve the integrated operational capabilities concerning cross-domain operations of the SDF, while contributing to the creation of a security environment that does not permit unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force." Coupled with full-scale arms exports to the Philippines, these actions reflect an intention to fortify military alliance networks across all of East Asia, extending beyond Far

East Asia. This series of policy shifts and SDF maneuvers must be recognized as the inception of a true strategic pivot by the Takaichi administration.

Regarding the Political Character of the Takaichi Administration: Inclination Toward an "Authoritarian" Regime

We have viewed the political character of the Takaichi administration—against the backdrop of the global rise of authoritarian regimes—as having the "potential to become an 'elected authoritarian regime' under a soft exterior." Indicators reflecting this authoritarian shift include top-down decision-making led by the Prime Minister's Office that dismisses parliament, the creation of a "desecration of the national flag" offense, tightened control over foreign nationals, and preparations to establish a National Intelligence Bureau and pass anti-espionage legislation. However, further close monitoring of future developments is required regarding the likelihood of a fully "authoritarian regime."

The political foundation supporting the Takaichi administration relies on external factors, such as high approval ratings, the confusion and retreat of the centrist opposition, and the marginalization of the parliamentary left. Regarding centrist forces, while the integration of the Constitutional Democratic Party and Komeito into the Centrist Reform Alliance in the House of Councillors and local assemblies lagged behind, a series of defectors—primarily former Constitutional Democratic members who lost their seats in the general election—left the centrist force realignment around the Centrist Reform Alliance without a clear outlook. This culminated in the effective dissolution of the Centrist Reform Alliance on August 31. On the parliamentary left, the Social Democratic Party lost its seats in the House of Representatives, facing an existential crisis. Meanwhile, Reiwa Shinsengumi is experiencing an ongoing internal crisis following the resignation of its charismatic leader, Taro Yamamoto, accompanied by the election of a new leadership, a change in party name, and the departure of several lawmakers.

Although Prime Minister Takaichi had been sustained by high cabinet approval ratings, public opinion polls conducted in July showed a widespread and sharp decline in support. In a Mainichi Shimbun survey, disapproval ratings finally surpassed approval ratings. A fall in support among younger generations and women has been notably reported. Regarding this decline in support for the Takaichi cabinet, several key factors warrant attention:

The initial surge generated by Prime Minister Takaichi's popularity, high expectations, and the nationalistic enthusiasm for a "strong Japan" has passed its peak, with public focus returning to realities such as parliamentary missteps and daily economic hardship.

The temporary high expectations surrounding Prime Minister Takaichi did not necessarily translate to approval for her right-wing platform or high-handed posture.

A clear rift has emerged within the conservative camp between liberal conservatives and reactionary nationalists.

Among Western "major powers," the Takaichi administration stands alone in following the runaway actions of Donald Trump. This has amplified a sense of alarm even within the bourgeois mainstream, a sentiment reflected in recent newspaper editorials. In particular, note should be taken of how mainstream bourgeois outlets like the Nikkei and Yomiuri have harshly criticized Prime Minister Takaichi's management of parliament.

The Economic Policies of the Takaichi Administration and the Future of the AI Bubble

Regarding economic policy, Prime Minister Takaichi has adhered strictly to an expansionary stance and proactive fiscal policy, envisioning AI and the arms industry as the main pillars of economic growth. Her administration has shown reluctance toward addressing raw material shortages and rising prices; rather than promoting energy conservation, it formulated a supplementary bud-

get centered on spending subsidies for gasoline, electricity, and gas bills.

"The core of this system—stretching from the United States to Europe and Japan—remains stuck at modest growth rates or in stagnation. As for the United States, economic growth has been supported almost entirely by massive investments in AI data centers by tech giants and the accompanying stock market bubble" (from the aforementioned Smith paper). A similar economic phenomenon is occurring in Japan. The Nikkei Stock Average temporarily surpassing the 70,000 yen mark was driven by a massive influx of capital into AI and semiconductor stocks, making the degree of the bubble even higher due to a concentration in AI and semiconductor shares that exceeds that of the U.S. Because "the degree of concentration in specific sectors is stronger than in the U.S. market, and the benefits of high stock prices are not spreading to every corner of Japan" (Nikkei Shimbun), it forms a structure that increasingly concentrates wealth among a small portion of the wealthy.

The AI bubble will not last indefinitely. If further technological innovation renders giant AI data centers themselves unnecessary, or if it becomes clear that vast investments in them fail to yield profits, the bubble will collapse all at once. In fact, as soon as a high-performance generative AI developed by a Chinese startup was announced, stock prices of AI and semiconductor shares plummeted sharply in both the United States and Japan. Shares of semiconductor giant Kioxia—whose market capitalization had temporarily surpassed Toyota Motor—plunged to less than half their value in a single stroke. The Nikkei Stock Average also recorded a drop of over 10,000 yen in just over a month from its record high of 72,366.34 yen on June 25. An economic policy reliant on an AI stock bubble that is drastically disconnected from the real economy is bound to fail.

Progressive Poverty, Inequality, and Worsening Hardship Driven by Escalating Inflation

With the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and the subsequent blockade of the Strait of Hormuz nearly severing crude oil shipments from the Middle East, the Japanese government has responded to oil shortages and skyrocketing prices by releasing strategic petroleum reserves. Nevertheless, price hikes and localized shortages of petroleum-related products persist. Even if the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is lifted and Middle Eastern crude imports resume, restoring oil facilities in the Middle East will likely take time. Contrary to Trump's boasts, crude oil prices are unlikely to return to pre-war levels. Consequently, Japan faces a sharp increase in costlier crude oil imports, creating conditions for trade deficits, further depreciation of the yen, and continued inflationary pressures. On June 16, the Bank of Japan decided to raise its policy interest rate to around 1.0%, a move driven by the judgment that "controlling inflation through rate hikes was necessary, prioritizing the rising risks of inflation stemming from high crude oil prices over the risk of economic deterioration caused by the Middle East situation" (Mainichi Shimbun).

However, the weakening of the yen has not stopped, breaking through the 160 yen per dollar mark. In response, U.S. and Japanese monetary authorities conducted coordinated foreign exchange interventions, temporarily strengthening the yen by nearly 10 yen; however, this is by no means sustainable. Price increases driven by global inflation and a weak yen have generated massive profits for giant monopolies—as seen in listed companies reporting a 68% year-on-year increase in consolidated net profits for the April–June quarter of 2026. At the same time, these increases are accelerating poverty and daily hardship among working people, particularly vulnerable demographics such as women, the elderly, and the youth. The Takaichi administration's economic growth path, built on fiscal expansion, is further stoking this inflation.

The centerpiece of the Takaichi administration's anti-inflation measures, originally framed as "zeroing the consumption tax on food items for two years," was finalized in a Cabinet decision on

August 5 as "lowering the consumption tax on food items to 1% for a limited two-year period starting April 2027." However, the Nikkei Shimbun, speaking for the mainstream bourgeoisie, severely criticized the move in an editorial on August 6 following the decision, writing that "dogmatically insisting on campaign promises from the Lower House election to force through tax cuts laden with side effects and risks is nothing short of a foolish policy that will leave trouble for the future." The Nikkei editorial cited several reasons for its opposition: "it is utterly irresponsible to decide on tax cuts first while postponing the securing of alternative funding sources—amounting to 5 trillion yen annually—until the end of the year," "the effect as a measure against rising prices is limited," and "tightrope fiscal management risks driving further yen weakness and interest rate hikes, ultimately threatening the livelihoods of the public." Even the Nikkei points out that this policy fails to address the ongoing poverty and economic distress.

To defend living standards, we have advocated for the abolition of the consumption tax—funded through higher taxation on large corporations and the wealthy—along with radical wage increases, particularly a significant, nationally uniform hike in the minimum wage. However, the government has substantially delayed the target timeline for raising the national average minimum wage to 1,500 yen per hour, seeking to maintain its policy of wage suppression for non-regular workers.

Unite the Movement Against the Takaichi Administration's Military Expansion and Constitutional Revision with the Defense of Working People's Livelihoods—Build a Surge Toward Eco-Socialism

Against the Takaichi administration's moves toward military expansion and constitutional revision, major protest actions have developed on a scale not seen since the 2015 Security Legislation protests. Beginning with the "Emergency Action Against War" outside the National Diet—initiated after the general election primarily by youth and women, which grew with every gathering and

spread nationwide—events like the monthly 19th "NO WAR! Don't Change the Constitution! Main Gate Diet Action" (co-hosted by the "Overriding Action Executive Committee Against War and Destruction of Article 9" and "NO to Article 9 Amendment! National Citizens' Action") have mobilized large numbers of participants, alongside coordinated nationwide actions on the same day. To sustain and develop the momentum of this movement, we must build up grassroots actions at the local level and commit our full efforts toward that end. In particular, building solidarity with the anti-base movement in Okinawa and the Nansei Islands—where rapid militarization and base construction are underway—as well as opposition movements against SDF base expansions across the country, is indispensable.

At the same time, we must oppose the Takaichi administration's policies that prioritize the interests of big capital and the wealthy, building a movement to defend the livelihoods of the broad working pop-

ulace as a battle to revitalize the trade union movement. Crucial to this struggle is the process through which workers organize themselves, raising demands such as a nationally uniform minimum wage, a substantial increase in the minimum wage, wage indexation to inflation, and halting further deregulation of labor laws, including the Labor Standards Act.

These struggles for anti-war peace, the defense of working people's livelihoods, and the fight for climate justice in the face of a deepening climate crisis are unfolding in response to the multifaceted crises of the capitalist system. As these crises converge into a single unified front, our movements and struggles must likewise interconnect to form a powerful, single stream. The current situation demands nothing less.

24 August 2026

Translated by the author from the weekly **Kakehashi**.

"WAR ON TERROR"

9/11: A Quarter Century of Imperial War

GILBERT ACHCAR ·

Gilbert Achcar, where were you on 11 September 2001?

I was at home in Paris; it was my partner who alerted me that something momentous was unfolding, so I joined her watching television. What I saw was appalling. Beyond the appalling character of the crime itself, my immediate fear was for its consequences in the Middle East. It was obvious to me that it would be followed by the deployment of U.S. forces in the region, given that the Bush administration was already intent on invading Iraq. I was fully conscious that this would sow chaos, and that it would ultimately end in failure for the United States.

Before we move on to the global implications of the attack, what effect have 9/11 and the War on Terror had within the West?

The result has been catastrophic. Since 9/11 we have witnessed a succession of murderous attacks, from the Bataclan to Berlin, and each one has served as a pretext for strengthening an already formidable repressive apparatus. The far right has exploited these attacks relentlessly; in a sense, they have amounted to permanent life-support for far-right politics. Today the animating ideology of the far right is anti-Muslim racism, it is the Muslim migrant, not the Jew, who has become its central figure of menace. Antisemitism has not disappeared, to be sure, but it is no longer the animating ideology of the far right.

And in the Middle East, how would you characterise the situation twenty-five years on?

The Middle East has sunk into chaos and repression. As one could have predicted from the start, one notable side effect of the U.S. interventions after 9/11 was the strengthening of Iran, the greatest

beneficiary of the region's destabilisation. Tehran took full advantage of the American occupation of Iraq; it was the United States, after all, that installed pro-Iranian Iraqi parties in government, enabling the creation of a Tehran-dominated corridor running from Iran through Iraq to Syria, and from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. That same regional destabilisation also positioned Iran to help the Houthis seize control of northern Yemen. One of the underlying causes of the recent U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran is precisely the reach the Iranian regime achieved as a consequence of the U.S. intervention that followed 9/11. And look at Iran itself, where the regime is slaughtering its own people. The brutal repression and public executions are designed to terrorise the population into silence. We've entered a long-term destabilisation of the region, which today is probably the most unstable part of the world. It is a very sorry state of affairs.

When demonstrations erupted in Cairo's Tahrir Square in 2011 and what later would come to be called the Arab Spring began, you were quite optimistic. In your 2012 book *The People Want* your analysis was still relatively hopeful, a position you revised with 2016's *Morbid Symptoms*. How did your analysis of the Arab Spring change over time?

When the Arab Spring erupted, I insisted that it was rooted in a deep structural crisis, and that it should therefore be understood not as a fleeting episode but as the opening of a long historical process. The clearest symptom of the region's social and economic paralysis is that the Middle East and North Africa region has, for decades, held the world's record rates of youth unemployment, a direct consequence of the collision between neoliberal economics and the type of state and ruling sys-

tem that prevails there. I have always maintained that whatever happens, there can be no return to the despotic stability that prevailed in the Middle East and North Africa before 2011.

In the beginning, the uprisings everywhere were initiated by progressive forces, but the region was, and to some extent still is, characterised by the existence of reactionary currents of opposition to the old regimes. Religious fundamentalists are not progressive; they are reactionary in their social and cultural programmes. So, what we saw was not a simple binary of revolution versus counter-revolution, but it became clear there was a triangle: one revolutionary camp, and two distinct forms of counter-revolution, the old regimes on one side, and right-wing religious fundamentalist forces seeking to seize power on the other.

But the hopes raised by the Arab Spring have been defeated. We have watched civil wars erupt, dictatorships return in forms even harsher than before, and the continuation of U.S. wars in the region, peaking in the U.S.-Israeli genocidal war in Gaza and onslaught on Iran. The condition of the Palestinian people has reached its lowest point in history; it has never been worse. Hamas's attacks are among the worst miscalculations in the history of anticolonial struggle. In my view, all this is the consequence of the absence of a credible political alternative in the region: no progressive force has emerged capable of channelling the mass anger generated by social and economic crisis into meaningful change. That failure has produced a political blockage layered on top of the existing social and economic one.

How would you assess the current state of the Islamist pole of the triangle you described?

When the uprisings began, the progressive forces that had unleashed them were too weak organisationally to constitute a real alternative to the existing governments. Into that vacuum stepped the Muslim Brotherhood, which had spent decades in opposition and now seized its opportunity, present-

ing itself as the alternative. In the immediate aftermath of 2011, the Brotherhood took advantage of the moment, winning elections in Egypt and Tunisia. But for all its claims, it offered no social or economic alternative: its project is fundamentally ideological and political rather than socioeconomic. It did not represent a real social alternative to what already existed, and its political project collapsed accordingly. By 2013, 2014 the Muslim Brotherhood was defeated everywhere, with the military coup in Egypt and the political crisis in Tunisia. When the second wave of uprisings arrived in 2019 — in Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, and Lebanon — the Islamic fundamentalist forces were no longer part of it; they were rather enmeshed in the existing regimes

You said Sunni Islamist forces were largely defeated, yet in Syria, Ahmed al-Sharaa, former leader of the Islamist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, now controls the state and is consolidating power. Even the Kurdish YPG in the northeast has agreed to integrate into the Syrian army. Doesn't that suggest Sunni Islamists have, in fact, succeeded in some places?

There is a certain irony in the Islamic fundamentalists' victory in Syria, because it was a side effect of Israel's wars in Lebanon. By dealing a devastating blow to Hezbollah, Israel removed the last pillar propping up the Syrian regime. That regime had previously relied on Iranian and Russian military support, but after invading Ukraine, Russia became so bogged down there that it withdrew most of its forces from Syria. Once Israel had crippled Hezbollah's capacity to intervene on behalf of Iran, the fundamentalist forces controlling Idlib in the north were able to sweep in with relative ease. The Assad regime collapsed, much as the Kabul government did in 2021.

Since then however, Al-Sharaa has tried to project himself as a moderate. He is trying quite hard to get accepted by the West. He has made no major moves until now to impose Sharia, although there are signs of Islamisation of the state and society.

That is not the same as the way they ruled the Idlib province until 2024 or even less the way Daesh, the so-called Islamic State or ISIS, ruled parts of Syria and Iraq declaring its so-called caliphate.

So, in essence, you would say the Islamist project has failed?

It could never have succeeded, because it does not represent a real alternative to the underlying crisis. The same applies to al-Sharaa: he is simply replicating the socioeconomic policies of other Arab states, which is already generating an acute social crisis in Syria, one that will produce growing discontent, quite apart from the unresolved issues facing the country's minorities.

Why have the Kurds in Rojava agreed to fold themselves into the Syrian state? At the same time, the PKK in Turkey has agreed to disarm and has entered peace talks with Erdoğan. Why have Kurdish movements in both countries given up their bases of power?

Foremost of course in the Syrian case, because they were abandoned by the United States. Once Daesh had been defeated, Washington no longer needed the Kurds. Trump showed no interest in supporting them any longer.

Erdoğan, meanwhile, has been losing electoral ground since 2015 and is trying every available means to cling to power: suppressing the opposition, arresting its leading figures, even meddling in the leadership of the CHP. His outreach to the Kurds is another such manoeuvre: a bet that the Kurdish movement will not play the role it played in 2015, when it threatened the AKP's dominance in parliament.

The Kurdish leader Öcalan has been advocating compromise with Ankara for years. It has become clear that the PKK's armed strategy failed. Turkey, after all, has the second-largest army in NATO. Having bent the movement's strategy toward armed struggle for so long, Öcalan has now bent it completely in the opposite direction, toward com-

promise. But I am not convinced this will succeed either. The oppression of the Kurdish nation has not subsided, and there are no real guarantees for Kurds in either Turkey or Syria. There are disagreements within both the Turkish and Syrian branches of the movement, and some members resent the ongoing self-dissolution and warn of what may follow.

The agreement with the Syrian government envisions dissolving the Syrian Democratic Forces and folding them into the Syrian army, but that remains largely theoretical. Who commands the forces in practice? Will command remain in the Kurdish-administered areas in Rojava, or will Damascus take control of the northeast? This process will encounter many obstacles, not least the role of women. Feminism has been central to the Kurdish struggle, but women fighting in army units, such as the YPJ, have no place in al-Sharaa's conception of society.

Given the rightward drift you've described across these very different states, are they really all moving in the same direction?

Not at the regional level. Most Arab states remain traditional despotic regimes; they have not so much shifted to the right as always occupied that position. The Iranian regime, similarly, isn't meaningfully described as far right. What I would call neo-fascism at the global level, represented by forces like the AfD in Germany, the Rassemblement National in France, and the MAGA movement around Donald Trump, finds its clearest regional equivalent in the Netanyahu government, which has already reached the far right's outer edge. And then there is Erdoğan's own drift toward the far right within the Turkish regime.

In your 2002 book *The Clash of Barbarisms* on the immediate aftermath of 9/11 you described a dynamic in which reactionary forces across different contexts feed off and radicalise one another. That was twenty-five years ago. Has this process slowed, or has it simply continued?

I countered Samuel Huntington's idea of the so-called "clash of civilisations" with the thesis of a "clash of barbarisms". The wars between Western imperialist powers and Islamic fundamentalist forces were not opposing civilizations, but barbaric tendencies inherent in each side's civilization. This is still ongoing; it is dreadful to watch the Israeli government's drift toward the far right, and the wars it has waged since 7 October.

That process has reached its peak with Gaza. I described Gaza as the first genocide perpetrated by an industrially advanced state since 1945, since the defeat of Nazi Germany. There have been other genocides since then, Rwanda among them, but none carried out by an industrialised state backed by Western powers.

You've written that Gaza marks the definitive end of the Western liberal order. Why not the invasion of Iraq in 2003 already?

Because the invasion of Iraq was opposed by figures like Gerhard Schröder and Jacques Chirac, and by some voices even within Washington. The illusion persisted that liberal forces would ultimately correct course. Barack Obama, after all, built part of his political identity on having opposed the Iraq invasion, and adopted a principle of only joining a war with UN cover. He intervened in Libya only once the Security Council authorised the no-fly zone. That illusion of a liberal, rules-based order survived and was later used against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. But the contrast in how Western governments responded to Ukraine and how they responded to Gaza was the final nail in that order's coffin.

You mention Chirac and Schröder opposing the Iraq war, but they still granted over-flight rights and cooperated in other ways. Was that resistance genuine or largely symbolic?

At the time of the Iraq invasion, the United States stood at the very peak of its global hegemony, so neither Chirac nor Schröder dared provoke

Washington to the point of denying it use of their airspace or military cooperation. Still, each had real interests at stake. France had invested heavily in its relationship with the Saddam Hussein regime and understood that it stood to lose that investment through U.S. invasion. Schröder, for his part, recognised that German public opinion was strongly opposed to the war, and he thus found an easy way of trying to be popular. With Gaza we have not seen any resistance to Israel's wholly disproportionate response to October 7th. The last fig leaf of liberal decency is gone. Hamas's attacks triggered an intensification of the instrumentalization of the memory of the Holocaust, one that left Western governments unable to muster a critical position toward Israel for several months into the genocide.

That's a surprisingly idealist claim for a Marxist to make. Do you believe this is a matter of cultural legacy rather than material interest?

The United States has a clear material stake in its alliance with Israel as a subcontracted enforcer of American hegemony in the region. European governments' support for Israel has far less to do with material interest. The starting point regarding their stance on Gaza is ideological, it is the way October 7th was represented as the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. This sentence was repeated again and again. The attack led by Hamas produced a wave of shock and sympathy, and Western governments rallied behind Israel's so-called right to self-defence. Only months later, once the scale of destruction became impossible to ignore and it became clear how disproportionate the Israeli response was, did they begin shifting toward calls for a ceasefire.

In terms of material interest, it is certainly not in the interest of Europe's liberal governments to have a government like Netanyahu's in power in Israel, it creates no end of problems for them. Netanyahu has no sympathy for the liberal European governments at all, and he keeps showing it. Even the United Kingdom now has tensions with Israel. Europe is far closer geographically to the Middle

East than the United States, so whatever happens in the region has immediate consequences in Europe. That simple fact reveals that there is a clear divergence between the interests of the different Western powers in the Middle East. But Europe is subordinate to the United States. That is a quite peculiar strategic position for the Europeans to be in. A handful of governments, Spain and Ireland among them, have dared to speak out against what the Israeli government is doing. In doing so, they arguably represent European interests more faithfully than those who remain silent.

The neoconservatives famously pursued American interest with little regard for anyone else. The neocons were quite dominant in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, but now almost no one speaks of them. What was their project, and did it succeed?

The neocons are remembered chiefly for their doctrine of "regime change", the idea that the United States had a mission to impose liberal democratic rule across the globe. The illusion of rebuilding an Iraqi state on the Western model led the occupation to dismantle the existing state apparatus entirely. And this led to chaos. It was a total failure as an exercise in imposing a "liberal" order by force.

So Washington then shifted away from its ostensibly democratic project for Iraq, which had actually empowered pro-Iranian actors, toward a more pragmatic reliance on tribal structures and the withdrawing of its troops. Even before the occupation formally ended, Iran had already gained more influence in Iraq than the United States itself. And from this, the so-called lessons of Iraq were drawn: the error, it was believed, consisted in dismantling the dictatorial state, which should have been kept intact, just changing its orientation like what happened in Venezuela at the beginning of this year.

There is currently a rift within the American right between interventionists and isolationists. Trump's own approach seems different in both method and aim from either

camp. How would you characterise this split?

The American far right has always contained an isolationist strand alongside a hawkish one. Trump has tried to weld together its different currents, from the isolationists to the conspiracy-theory milieu, appealing to all these constituencies simultaneously, a fact that accounts for the many contradictions in his behaviour. Trump is a Frankenstein's monster of the American right, assembled from all these disparate parts. But one thing is certain: he has no regard for democracy whatsoever. He is fighting democracy at home in the United States! So, it should surprise no one that he makes no pretence of exporting it elsewhere.

In any case, narrowing the debate to a simple opposition of intervention or no intervention misses the nuances of imperialist policy. The type of intervention matters enormously. Today, rather than replacing regimes it considers rogue, the U.S. attempts to preserve them, simply forcing them to collaborate. Before taking office, Trump was explicit in embracing this lesson of Iraq and publicly criticised the "regimechange" illusion. His approach to Venezuela is entirely consistent with that: he removed Maduro, and the remainder of the apparatus was simply made to collaborate with Washington, with no attempt to impose democratic elections or bring back the so-called liberal opposition. Even with Cuba, where Marco Rubio has a particular interest, Washington is negotiating with figures from within the regime; the grandson of Raúl Castro is among its main interlocutors! And that's what Trump tried to achieve in Iran as well. He believed that he could force the regime to collaborate with him, except that his actions have been reinforcing the hardliners instead of those who would be willing to make a compromise.

Where does that leave American liberals, caught between these competing camps?

They are thoroughly disoriented, unsure what position to adopt. This is precisely why we are seeing a resurgence of the left: people recognise that the

half-hearted liberalism that the establishment offers is no longer credible, and they are looking for more radical answers to their social, economic, and political circumstances, even in the defence of democracy itself. Liberals have proven far too pusillanimous, for instance, to mount a frontal challenge to the ongoing strangulation of Cuba. What is happening there is criminal. Decades of embargo have now reached the point of imposing outright hunger on the population, and this is provoking far less international reaction than it warrants, not only among governments, but among mass movements, which should be expressing far greater solidarity with the Cuban people. These sanctions punish the population more than the regime.

Your 2023 book *The New Cold War* tackles the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Do you see Russia's attack as a long-term consequence of the War on Terror and neoconservative interventionism?

In a sense, the 2003 Iraq invasion demonstrated to Russia, to China, to everyone, that the United States would not abide by the rules of the order it claimed to champion. The invasion of Iraq was a flagrant violation of international law. After the Soviet Union collapsed, matters could have unfolded quite differently; there was talk of a "peace dividend" and all that. Instead, the U.S. made deliberate political choices that antagonised Russia, particularly the expansion of NATO. I believe this was done on purpose. Washington wanted Russia to remain a scarecrow for the rest of Europe, so that other European states would remain in a vassal-like relationship with the US.

Helmut Kohl also initially favoured eastward expansion, since it served German capital's interest in establishing hegemony over Eastern Europe. But by the time Georgia and Ukraine were invited by George W. Bush to join NATO, Angela Merkel actually came out against it. Again, here we have a divergence between American interests and the interests of European states like Germany.

None of this, however, justifies in any way the invasion of Ukraine, a terrible crime whose price is being paid by the Ukrainian people, and increasingly by the Russian people as well. Putin bears the greatest responsibility for that catastrophe.

Looking back at a quarter century of U.S. imperial intervention and the War on Terror, where does the U.S. stand today?

Every war the United States launched after 9/11 was, in a sense, "lost". I would put that in quotation marks because Washington did succeed in destroying the regimes it targeted. The real losers were the civilian populations of these countries, not the United States itself. Still, America failed to achieve its own stated objectives in every case.

This has been a classic case of imperial overstretch. In the late 1980s, the British historian Paul Kennedy wrote a bestselling book observing the fairly obvious fact that empires decline once they take on more than they can control. But he was wrong in his reading of the Reagan era: Reagan managed to reboot both the American economy and American hegemony. After the Soviet collapsed, however, the Bush administration succumbed to hubris. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were a textbook case of overstretch, well beyond what the United States could actually control, and it failed in both countries. But anyone who believes the American empire is finished is simply dreaming. The U.S. remains an extraordinarily powerful state, still the most powerful on earth, still capable of enormous destruction. Its limitations, however, are now far more visible than they were at the turn of the century.

Is there anything that gives you hope in this situation?

Absolutely, I hold on to hope, hope rooted in the new generation and its capacity to invent new forms of struggle, as we have seen recently with the Moroccan Gen Z movement, an extraordinary moment, with thousands of young people mobilising and using modern technology to coordinate their action. I make a crucial distinction between opti-

mism and hope, they are not the same thing at all. Optimism is the belief that the best outcome will happen. Hope is the belief that a better outcome is possible, with no guarantee attached. I can keep

hoping, while recognising that today the balance of evidence weighs heavily toward pessimism.

10 September 2026

Source: [Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung: To start page <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/55207>].

GERMANY: REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN SACHSEN-ANHALT

The AfD just short of an absolute majority

HELMUT BORN ·

When the first projection was published on the evening of 6 September, showing the AfD on 44.2 per cent, the election-night parties of the other parties fell completely silent. The shock the result produced was too great. It looked altogether different at the AfD, which many people call a Nazi party. The party's leading figures around the [national] co-chairs Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla crowded around the lead candidate Ulrich Siegmund to celebrate together what they called their historic election victory.

The CDU, the large bourgeois party, was punished terribly above all. It lost more than half of its votes and of its deputies. The liberal FDP did not make it into the Landtag at all and goes on wasting away. For the party Die Linke, too, the evening was not a happy one: three weeks before the election it had still been recorded at 13 per cent, and it has now ended up on only 8.4 per cent. The SPD and the Greens, by contrast, were able to improve slightly on their result at the last Landtag election, reaching 9.1 and 8.9 per cent respectively, a little more than Die Linke.

The decisive factor was a massive campaign by influential civil-society organisations which had called for tactical voting, so as to ensure that the SPD and the Greens got back into the Landtag at all. That had been in the balance for a long time. It was certainly a surprise that the Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) also entered the Landtag, which it managed with 5.3 per cent.

In the new Landtag, made up of deputies from six parties, forming a new Land government will not be easy. Since the AfD with 39 of 83 seats did not obtain an absolute majority of the seats, it depends on

coalition partners or on support from others. All the other parties have refused to form a government with the AfD. The BSW too rejects a coalition with the AfD. Instead, according to the BSW, an independent minister-president should be elected, who would put a government together and would have to win a majority every time. This model existed in the Netherlands as well, at the election before last, when the party of the racist Geert Wilders narrowly missed an absolute majority and nobody wanted him as prime minister. It remains to be seen whether the AfD will agree to it. The SPD and the Greens have already declared themselves in favour.

For Die Linke this election result was a disappointment. It lost 2.4 per cent against the last Landtag election. The party certainly did not have an easy campaign, since it has a good anchoring only in the cities and its results in the countryside are traditionally poor. That showed again at this election. In the two large cities of Halle and Magdeburg it was able to win three direct mandates. All 38 other constituencies went to the AfD.

The party Die Linke has to become clearer and more radical. Many people simply assign it to a red-green camp together with the SPD and the Greens, which the "vote tactically" campaign also showed. It has to become clear that Die Linke stands for clear opposition to existing conditions, that its representatives are not "politicians" like all the others, that it wants to overcome capitalist class society, and that this will not be achieved in parliament alone. However good its parliamentary demands may be, and however much such measures would noticeably improve people's lives if they could be realised, there will be no majorities for them in the parliaments. What is needed is a party that is both represented in parliament and that is able to change the

social balance of forces through pressure on the street, through anchoring in workplaces and neighbourhoods, and through fostering the self-confidence and self-organisation of those below.

9 September 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **SoZ**.*

USA

Gloria Steinem, prominent American feminist, 1934-2026

DAN LA BOTZ ·

Yet all of her adult life Steinem was a champion of women's full economic, social, and political equality. She argued that women should choose whether or not they wished to marry and have children. She advocated women's right to be able to work in all jobs and professions and to be paid equally. She believed that women should have sexual and reproductive freedom, free universal childcare, and that men should take equal responsibility for child rearing and domestic work. While initially critical of the trans movement, she evolved to become a stalwart supporter. [2] In an early interview she said, "The guts of the movement is the working woman.... It's the blue-collar working woman who needs these reforms the most. Also poor women and welfare women. And it's an important bridge between Black women and white women."

But it is also true that she hobnobbed with the wealthy and politically powerful; that she often chose the political establishment over its critics and opponents. And she never challenged either capitalism or the liberal state.

Steinem, whose parents divorced and father left when she was ten, had to care for her mentally ill mother, so didn't go to school until she was eleven. An avid reader, she graduated from high school and was then accepted into the prestigious Smith College where she graduated cum laude in 1956. She became a journalist, working from 1958 to 1962 with the Independent Research Service (IRS), a CIA front organization that attempted to influence the Soviet-sponsored international youth fes-

tivals in Europe. When the CIA's role was revealed in 1967, she disingenuously defended its work as promoting dialogue. She ignored its role as an agent in the organization of imperialist coups and wars in Guatemala, Vietnam, and Chile.

She first won recognition as a journalist when in 1963 she worked undercover as a "bunny" at the Playboy men's club and wrote an exposé on the sexist treatment of the young women employed there. As a freelance journalist her articles on birth control, women's wages and working conditions, the women's liberation movement, and politics were published in the glossy magazines New York, Cosmopolitan, Vogue, and Glamour.

In 1971 she founded Ms. Magazine, Ms. referring to the neutral title, as opposed to Miss or Mrs. that became popular in the 1960s and 70s because women felt they should not be defined by their relationship to men. Ms popularized—some said diluted—the feminists' program.

Steinem used her growing fame and influence to advocate for political causes. In 1971 she joined with other feminist leaders such as writer Betty Friedan, congresswomen Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm to found the National Women's Political Caucus to support women running for political office. When Chisholm, the first Black woman to be elected to Congress, became the first Black woman candidate for president on the Democratic Party ticket—in the face of the hostility of both the male leadership of the Black civil rights organizations and of the Democratic Party—Steinem became a Chisholm convention delegate.

In the 1980s and 90s, Steinem was an honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America. Yet though DSA endorsed Sanders, she chose to sup-

port Hilary Clinton and ridiculed women who backed Sanders, saying, "When you're young, you're thinking: 'Where are the boys? The boys are with Bernie,'" She was widely criticized for her shockingly sexist remark and later apologized.

In supporting Clinton, she seemed to have forgotten what she said in 2011, "Revolutions that last don't happen from the top down. They happen from the bottom up."

7 September 2026

GERMANY

Eastern elections and Die Linke: anything but an all-party government

THIES GLEISS ·

Only a few days now until the Landtag elections in Saxony-Anhalt (6 September) and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (20 September), and the debates about how the party Die Linke should conduct itself towards the apparently unstoppable rise of the AfD are sharpening by the day.

For one part of the party establishment, led by the Bundestag vice-president Bodo Ramelow but solidly anchored in the party executive and in the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag and in the Land parliaments, it is entirely clear that what is at stake here is a crisis of "democracy" in its struggle against "authoritarianism". Die Linke must therefore live up to its overall responsibility for the endangered democratic state. In practice this means: incorporation into an all-party alliance of the "democratic parties" against the AfD, including possible arrangements with the CDU about governing together in the Länder.

The numbers

In Saxony-Anhalt the AfD has 3,500 members. In the polls among the 1.7 million people entitled to vote it takes 42.1 per cent; at the 2025 Bundestag elections it actually received 498,100 votes, 37.1 per cent. On the current polling, as of 25 August, the AfD would occupy 41 of the 83 seats in the Magdeburg Landtag. In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania the AfD has 2,700 members and reaches 36 per cent in the polls among 1.3 million voters; at the last Bundestag elections it actually brought in 357,356 votes, 35 per cent. If the polling result is reached, the AfD would take 28 of the 71 seats in the Schwerin Landtag. In Saxony-Anhalt it is expected that only the CDU, on 22.9 per cent in the

polls, Die Linke on 13 per cent and perhaps the SPD on 6.6 per cent will win seats in the Landtag. Considered purely arithmetically, an AfD takeover of government can be prevented only by a governing alliance of CDU, Die Linke and SPD. In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania the SPD, on 29 per cent in the polls, Die Linke on 11 per cent and the CDU on 10 per cent, and perhaps the Greens on 5 per cent, will be represented in parliament. If the Greens enter the Landtag, coalitions with the SPD and the CDU or with the SPD and Die Linke would be possible; if they do not get in, then here too only an alliance of SPD, CDU and Die Linke would prevent an AfD participation in government.

There is no parliamentary solution, but let's use that route anyway

The federal party congress of Die Linke has unfortunately given the Land organisations in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Saxony-Anhalt a free hand to embark on any parliamentary adventure. Motions to maintain the old tradition of left and workers' parties, and to enter into no governing alliance and no toleration agreement with the bourgeois parties, found no majority. Now those responsible in both Land organisations are signalling that they would enter into arrangements with the CDU and, if need be, support a government under CDU leadership. Such a decision would be fatal for Die Linke and a step backwards from the successful phase, under way since 2024, of building the party as a left, independent class party.

The success of the AfD and its broad support, both of them still a long way from reaching a level of votes and above all of anchoring in society comparable to that of the NSDAP in its model Land of

Saxony-Anhalt in 1932, cannot be separated from the actual politics that the CDU, SPD and Greens have been conducting for years at federal and at Land level. It is a politics carried on the backs of wage-earners and especially of migrants; of the smashing of welfare-state structures in health, care, pensions and education; of the refusal of real solutions to the crises of rents, of the climate and of transport; and of the structural neglect of the east German Länder. All of that constitutes the driving forces behind the rise of the parties of the right and above all of the AfD. Added to this is the permanent crisis of the EU, which is miles away from its promise to create a flourishing future for European capitalism, and the war orientation of the governing parties, which has not only revived old fears of war and destruction but has led directly to an enormous rise in the cost of daily life. A survey has just found that anxiety about this inflation is the population's principal fear in east Germany.

Minority government with shifting majorities

The rise of the AfD is not only a result of these policies and of the fears of social decline bound up with them. The party has also managed to turn both of them into the basis of a broad anchoring in society. That can be reversed only if, first, the concrete policy of governments changes, and second, the broad left, together with the party Die Linke itself, sets

about building a broad societal front against the right and advancing its own anchoring in society as a socialist alternative.

With an alliance with the CDU and the SPD in government, however it were arranged, the concrete policy will of course not change. The tiny concessions that Die Linke could obtain in return for a coalition, or for tolerating a CDU or SPD minister-president, would be nothing set against the concessions that would have to be made to bourgeois politics, and a death blow to any credibility of the left. A coalition with the CDU, or toleration of it, would above all be a kowtow to the federal government, would be a further building programme for the AfD, and would surrender the whole role of opposition to that same AfD.

Parliamentarily there is no "solution" to the AfD problem. In parliament only a minority government is conceivable, one in which Die Linke supports only those things that are socially acceptable. An all-party government, like a party-independent "government of experts", must be prevented. For Die Linke there is no alternative to the construction of a politically independent class party.

27 August 2026

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Sozialistische Zeitung**.*

UKRAINE

A summer in Ukraine

NPA-A UKRAINE SOLIDARITY INTERVENTION GROUP ·

Intense Russian shelling

The bombing of Ukrainian cities has increased in intensity, while air defence is suffering from a shortage of interceptor missiles and is legitimately calling for Crotale missiles to destroy air targets at low and extremely low altitudes (from 15 m to 6 km). The impact of these strikes is terrible. 90% of food storage warehouses have been destroyed. According to the Minister of Food, the supply system is being restructured. But if the country is not threatened with famine, in Kherson, after the destruction of the thermal power plant, the inhabitants have been called upon to leave the city: heating is no longer guaranteed this winter. Strikes on printing houses and warehouses have destroyed more than a million books that Ukrainian students will be missing on the eve of the start of the school year.

Civil society continues to fight

The summer remained marked by demonstrations in the main cities in support of former Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, popular for his innovations in drone warfare and his denunciation of corruption. But his neoliberal logic and his demand for wartime elections have demobilised some of his supporters.

Civil society continues, in increasingly difficult conditions, the fight against the neoliberal policies of the government. The health workers' union "Be as

we are" held a seminar in Poltava on the rights of professionals in the sector who, under martial law, are on the frontline in hospitals to ensure continuity of care and fight for their rights. Nurses in Lviv told the network that supports them, RESU, on the daily life of trade unionists in a country at war: "We are currently on our way to Poltava, but we are under incessant fire, we cannot reach our destination normally, we have permanent evacuations from the train"... "Because of the shooting, the train was 8 hours late... But the seminar still took place. Now we are worried about how to get back to Lviv."

Resisting war and exploitation

According to Vitaliy Dudin, leader of the left-wing Social Movement (*Sotsialnyi Rukh*): "The record number of alerts in Kyiv is disrupting the rhythm of work and rest, even though you might think that we have become accustomed to everything. This affects the entire city of several million people, especially workers who work in manual trades and have to stay at their workplaces, or whose lives become an ordeal due to transport disruptions and lack of shelter. It fights against any sanctions against employees who are late because of transport disruptions or lack of sleep; against wage reductions due to a stay in a shelter; or against the obligation to continue working if there is no properly equipped shelter to carry out the activity.

Committed to resisting the war, the workers of Ukraine continue the struggle in the companies against their exploiters. This double fight is ours.

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

RUSSIA

Preparing the Left for Russia's Future Crisis

IVAN DRURY ZARIN ·

Against the Current: Let's begin with an introduction about yourself, your organization, and your background in the Russian left.

Mikhail Lobanov: I'm a Russian mathematician, but also a left politician, a leftwing activist from Russia, now in exile.

I have organized a lot of campaigns in universities because I was, for many years, a student, postgraduate student and professor of mathematician at Moscow State University, the most ancient and biggest university in Russia.

Together with my comrades at MSU, we created the Initiative Group, a kind of underground party. There are a lot of successful stories of our activities.

It was a unique experience for Russian universities because during the Soviet Union, it was impossible to organize without repression in the universities. I saw a new generation of students that wanted to participate, to use collective action, to have influence in the life of their universities.

We organized Occupy Rectorate, which was like Occupy Wall Street, but occupying the university administration building, bringing petitions with thousands of signatures against the administration's bad decisions.

After four or five hours, the president of the university would say, yes, I can speak with you, with your delegates, and at times we succeeded, after some struggle.

This new political movement became more visible before the invasion of Ukraine. For more than 10 years, we had many successes with this strategy, and we were able to unite students and professors behind these campaigns.

Also, we protected the university. From time to time, the government wanted to do something bad for the university and we defended the university. And we also protected our university against development corporations, because around Moscow State University there is a huge green zone, a lot of parks where developers want to build towers.

Every two years, we needed to make a new campaign to protect these parks. It was a very powerful experience. It is also one of the reasons why my comrades and I have good communication with local activists in the districts around our university.

Around the same time, I was a co-founder, a co-president of an independent trade union of university workers at different universities in Russia. Called University Solidarity, it still exists and continues its work, but it's a small union. This experience is also rather important for the future.

Crushing Independent Unionism

ATC: Was it more possible to form an independent union in the academic sector compared to other sectors?

ML: It was a very difficult, extremely difficult task. We created this trade union and had some small successes in different universities around salaries, and protecting a professor when the administration wanted to fire him. But we were unable to create a big trade union.

There are different reasons, but the basic reason is the politics of Vladimir Putin. When he was prime minister, Putin was well connected with the previous president, Boris Yeltsin, and the oligarchs, who then chose him as a rather young person from security services, to become president and help to save their powerful regime and its property.

It worked. Putin understood when he was a prime minister and before, when he was a chief of security services, that the main threat to the oligarchs was independent democracy and an independent trade union movement.

One of the first things Putin did was change the law for the trade unions and introduced measures to destroy the roots and perspective of trade unions.

He changed the Trudovoy Code, Russia's labor acts, in order to destroy the perspectives of independent trade unions. And at the same time, security services worked to destroy unions.

ATC: You're saying that one of the first developments of Putin's style of repression was to cut the legs out from the trade unions?

ML: When human rights defenders outside of Russia, in Europe and the USA talk about repression in Russia, they always talk about mass media; about Putin's destruction of the freedom of mass media. They say he corrupted judges and the courts.

What nobody talks about is the basic, fundamental way that this regime destroyed all perspectives for people in Russia through attacking unions in multiple ways, and why for many years, before the invasion of Ukraine, most people in Russia hated their lives.

How could this regime continue? How could they present themselves as a very successful regime? At the very base of this problem is Putin's destruction of the perspectives of independent trade unions.

And now we see in the war in Ukraine that the base of Putin's army is low salaries. Most of the men who live in small towns in the country cannot find a good job with a decent salary. They are very poor, and the only possible way they can buy an apartment or car is to go to the front.

ATC: So there's sort of this double effect of the attack on trade unions: First, to eliminate the base of working-class power that

people could use to resist the other reforms that were going to come. Second, lower wages, to create an economic draft, so poor people had to join the army because there's no other work.

ML: The basis of Putin's regime is a neoliberal practice: the degradation of life. Putin and his managers brought neoliberal techniques from Western governments and corporations. Putin destroyed the fundamentals of solidarity and collective action in Russia so Russian businesses, oligarchs, can implement neoliberal policies without resistance; without problems.

And after 25 years of these neoliberal technologies, big business in the West says oh, it's a very effective regime! In our countries, in order to do something, we need many years to fight the trade unions, the workers' movement and student movements. Putin is a very efficient, effective manager! His neoliberal practices are better than ours, we need to learn from his experiences!

I see that in some countries in Western Europe and some conservative Republican politicians in USA say — in public — that they are anti-Putin. But in their practice, they see, oh, it's a good experience! And they try to support Putin's regime and try to use this experience in their countries.

Stolen Election and Arrest

ATC: What was your experience after the Initiative Group, the student movement, University Solidarity, and Putin's new attack on labor unions?

ML: After these years of different struggle in universities and trade unions, in 2021, the last big Russian parliamentary election before the invasion of Ukraine, I was a candidate of the opposition.

I was a candidate for a district in the western part of Moscow, where my university campus was situated, and we built my campaign as a real opposition. It was a very interesting and unique electoral campaign for Russia.

My campaign was like the Bernie Sanders campaign, though in just one district. My campaign was similar to Bernie's because we did not take money from corporations. We used donations only from common people. I received about 73,00 votes, and several thousand votes were transferred to the ruling party's candidate through electoral fraud

We united a network of activists: university activists, ecology activists, local activists, trade union activists, leftist groups, and it worked. It was a visible and successful campaign.

Five months before the invasion of Ukraine, we won this election. We won 40% for me, against less than 30% for the most visible and famous candidate of Putin's party, Evgeny Popov, a tele-propagandist.

Everyone in Russia knows this person, because he has a daily political TV show. He has taught people in Russia, over many years, that we need to hate Ukrainian people, that we need to hate people in Western Europe, in the USA, that we need to hate. He had a lot of money for this campaign, but we won.

However, after the polls closed, the government used the electronic voting machines to change the results. The fact is that in reality I should be a deputy in the Russian parliament. I would be an antiwar oppositionist in Russia's parliament. And it would be terrible for the Kremlin.

Regardless, it was an extremely important experience for Russian leftists. We continued to run candidates after this election and after the invasion. We supported and made a platform for an independent antiwar candidate in a local Moscow election in 2022 we created the VyDvizhenie (Nomination) platform to support independent antiwar candidates in the Moscow municipal elections.

We also organized different projects, not only election campaigns. Because we have a left agenda we know that elections are important, but our objective is not only to run in and win elections: our ob-

jective is to see deep social change in our country and in all the world.

After one year of problems with security services and police, I was arrested twice. I was beaten by police. They searched my apartment two different times. They gave me "foreign agent" status, and I was fired from the university. This was at the same time as the Prigozhin (Wagner Group — ed.) revolt.

I understood that they were trying to pressure me to leave Russia and decided that I needed to leave Russia and continue my activities in exile — or soon they would send me to prison.

At the beginning of July in 2023, I left Russia. But I don't consider it exile. It's a temporary political business trip.

Building Movement Infrastructure

Now, outside of Russia we need, within a few years, to create an infrastructure for a strong movement in the future. We see that after some years, we don't know exactly the moment, there will be an economic and political crisis. Maybe after Putin, maybe with Putin.

In the active parts of Russian society, the anti-Putin, antiwar part of Russian society, there are people with very good experience: good independent media, good journalists, good human rights defenders, good IT infrastructure for civil society, many, many young activists, but no political structures.

Figures outside Russia with a liberal agenda, like Vladimir Kara-Murza, Maksim Katz, and Garry Kasparov don't have any connection with people inside Russia. There is a huge gap between them and the hundreds of thousands of activists.

The majority of Russian society are not interested in politics now; they think that it's impossible to do anything with Putin, or to do anything about the war. The majority are anti-Putin and antiwar. Yet they think that Putin and the war are like the weather. The weather is very bad: I don't like this

weather, but I cannot do anything about it. These people support a social democratic politics.

ATC: That's what you said in your talk at this conference that stood out to me, just that there is a general social democratic consensus in the popular classes, and that in the middle class there's a general socially progressive sentiment?

ML: Not in the middle class — amongst activists. Amongst the Russian population generally, there's a social democratic consensus; amongst activists, there's a social progressivism.

Today the active parts of Russian society are the younger generation, who are 20-30 years old. For these young activists, a progressive agenda, a progressive point of view, a leftist point of view, is the mainstream.

Old liberal politicians don't do anything useful for Russian society, don't have a connection to people in Russia, and don't have perspectives for the future. There is a gap between this liberal opposition and today's activists. There is also a great gap between them and the millions of people inside Russia.

Both of these gaps are very important. In the future, in the moment of crisis, we will need to create an effective structure very quickly. Activists will be the ones who will create this movement and its infrastructure.

That's why we need now to unite these hundreds and thousands of young activists so that they can be prepared. A political project with a left social agenda, in the moment of crisis, will mobilize these millions and millions of people.

Common people can see they don't have money like the oligarchs, but they can create their movement, they can act rather well and they have perspectives.

ATC: Is it possible to unite those activists in discussion when it's not legal, when you can't form organizations or create infrastructure?

ML: Yes, we do this step by step. It's a very hard task.

If anyone in the world knows how to make the revolution in this situation, invite us. We need to make a Zoom call and we need to learn from your experience.

In our situation, we need to experiment. Over the last year, we have started a project platform called Radical Democracy. It's not a party, it's a project to create an infrastructure for a future movement.

We invite activists to one-on-one discussions. Usually those who participate are key participants from different left milieus: left media, independent NGOs, human rights defenders. The person we invite to communicate with weekly is a key participant in one, two, or three such initiatives.

Altogether we see a huge number of initiatives and can understand what we can do and what infrastructure we need in order to help these initiatives grow. In doing this we help activist and researcher groups survive and develop their activities. We are creating an infrastructure for the future.

Most left and feminist activists are still living inside Russia, but the most visible and experienced activists left Russia in order to avoid repression. We bring the resources, expertise and solidarity from those in exile to our comrades inside in Russia. And it is working.

That's the first step of our strategy. It's an efficient structure always seeking to connect, connect, connect, connect.

The second step, which we will begin this year, is to build a membership organization. It's not a political party. It will be an organization for people to help each other in order for our new generations to have the experience of a membership organization steeped in political discussion.

The third step will be to unite these two efforts and make a big organization out of these activists and Radical Democracy's working groups. This effective

structure will be controlled by its members. It will be a democratic organization and, we hope at the moment of crisis, will be a center of a huge democratic mobilization in Russia.

When that mobilization comes it will be a chance for us to realize our left program. And it will be a chance for Russian society to change authoritarianism to something better. Such a deep, healthy, revolutionary transformation in Russia will be good news for many countries near Russia and in other parts of the world.

ATC: Well, and to smash this fascist laboratory that is Putin's Russia would be a gift to the world as well.

ML: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

ATC: My last question is what can socialists outside of Russia, especially the United States, do to help with this process?

ML: To the leftists in these countries and left-wing activists, we need your experience.

For example, now I'm in Porto Alegre at the anti-fascist conference, and I've found that the experiences of Brazilian comrades important for us.

In the 20th century, Brazil was a military dictatorship (1964-85 — ed.), and the activists during this period tried to do something. And it was a success story that the Brazilian people won a democratic transformation with a huge left movement, a huge movement of trade unions, and they changed their own country and they continue.

In January, we organized a conference in Copenhagen, Denmark where one of our comrades has lived and worked. He connected up with left activists and they asked trade unions in Denmark to donate resources to invite 15 coordinators of Radical Democracy for a one-day, closed conference.

We had about 50 political activists from different organizations and parties, deputies, trade union activists, journalists, and the active participants the Russian-speaking diaspora in Copenhagen.

We discussed the situation in Russia, strategies and tactics of leftists, of trade union activists, and our perspectives. There was a report about the conference in Jacobin the following month. (See "In Search of Russia's Lost Opposition," by Morton Hammeken, February 6, 2026.) You can also invite our comrades to participate in discussions and conferences you organize.

And you can ask Russian leftist journalists to write articles in English. Russian activists and journalists often have significant expertise not only on Russia but also on other post-Soviet countries.

It would be helpful for us if your leftist publications and independent media would use our expertise, because exile for independent leftist journalists is not an easy life.

We think and talk about the situation in Russia, but there's an international agenda at the base of our politics. In Radical Democracy, we participate not only in the politics in Russia, but also, for example, in political projects with people from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and other post-Soviet countries.

We think of our strategy as an international strategy with a focus on the situation in Russia, because Russian politics is rather important for many countries. We need to change all the world.

ATC: Thank you for your time and for all of your work. Let's find a way to continue to work together.

ML: Yes. Thank you.

Source: September-October 2026, ATC 244.

PALESTINE

After a catastrophic summer, rebuilding hope in Palestine

ÉDOUARD SOULIER ·

In Gaza, the scorching heat in tents has further aggravated the suffering. The lack of basic necessities and electricity is making life hellish: hospitals can no longer provide real care, water cannot be properly pumped or filtered. According to a report published on 13 August by the IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification), the world's main body for monitoring famine, acute food insecurity remains widespread throughout the Gaza Strip.

Famine, bombings, colonial violence

Nearly 1.2 million people are in a food "crisis" situation (phase 3 out of 5) and more than 200,000 in "emergency" (phase 4). According to the IPC, nearly two million Gazans may soon face high levels of food insecurity. The report also estimates that 74,200 children under the age of five will need treatment for acute malnutrition by April 2027, including more than 11,400 for severe malnutrition, as well as 24,600 pregnant or breastfeeding women. After months of genocide and blockade, the health consequences will be felt for years to come.

Yet the bombing continued, maintaining a horrific level of death in Gaza. Israel went so far as to call the balloons and kites launched into the enclave a "threat," warning that it would intensify its strikes and evacuate areas used as "launch sites." The kites with which children play are thus presented as acts of war. One more pretext to bomb and displace the population.

In the West Bank, the situation is increasingly critical. Settler attacks, with the complicity of the army,

have reached an unprecedented level: cattle theft, destruction of equipment and physical assaults, several times a day. Attempts at self-defence are immediately described as "terrorist" and repressed in blood, often collectively, in a reversal of the now systematic reversal of guilt.

There is no significant change to be expected for Palestinians in the first Israeli elections in four years, which will be held at the end of October. Massacre, genocide and colonial expansion have produced broad national unity: in the campaign, candidates are competing in radicalism against Palestinians. Neither the creation of a Palestinian state, nor the end of the occupation, nor even an end to the genocide are really defended. A large part of Israeli society seems to have internalized the idea of solving the "Palestinian problem" by violence.

Elections in the midst of genocide

In a grotesque mirror game, the Palestinian Authority also announced elections at the end of November. If they are not cancelled as in 2021, they will be the first since 2006. About 64% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are under 30 years old, so most have never voted. Under international pressure, the Palestinian Authority, despite being ultra-collaborative, is being asked to reform or risk losing part of its funding, particularly from Europe.

Following talks in Cairo, a coalition was formed around Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and, more particularly, historical opponents or former members of Fatah. Left-wing groups are expected to announce soon whether they will join it. Such an alliance could threaten Abbas and his camp, so dis-

credited is the Palestinian Authority. Unable to protect the inhabitants from the settlers, it has mainly worked over the past three years to neutralize Palestinian armed groups in the West Bank, to the point of appearing as a proxy force for the occupation.

However, it seems difficult to imagine that the elections will take place serenely in the midst of genocide, while the occupier targets, arrests or assassinates opponents who may run. Nearly 10,000 Palestinians are currently imprisoned, particularly for their political opposition. The precedent of 2006 also remains in the memory: Hamas' electoral victory was not recognized by either Israel or

the Western powers, paving the way for the blockade of Gaza.

However, these elections can provide Palestinians with the opportunity to rebuild national unity, to relaunch a hopeful political struggle and to renew mass opposition to genocide and occupation. The Israeli noose must still be loosened. After a catastrophic summer, the urgency is therefore to relaunch the mobilization to end impunity and to strengthen international solidarity.

28 August 23026

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

LIBYA

Trump approves militia law in Libya

PAUL MARTIAL ·

A weakened regime

Both clans are facing significant difficulties. Dbeibah has had to deal with strong popular mobilizations that have taken place in Tripoli, but also in other cities such as Ain Zara or Hay al-Andalus, to protest against electricity cuts and, more generally, against the deterioration of living conditions. Although one of the organisations, *Harak Abna' Souq al-Jumaa*, has put an end to the civil disobedience campaign, tension remains high. Especially since Dbeibah's power is based on different militias, which sometimes clash with each other, as in the oil town of Zawiya.

The Haftar clan is facing other difficulties. Khalifa Haftar has chosen his successor, Saddam, as head of the army, from among his five sons, causing turmoil, particularly within the military apparatus. The attack that cost the life of Fawzi Al-Mansouri, head of the intelligence services, has undermined the discourse on total control by the security forces, which is so popular with European countries. Finally, the alliance between Haftar and the tribes of the south, particularly in the Fezzan region, has been shattered with the creation of an armed militia led by Mohamed Wardougou.

The Boulos plan

At the international level, Turkey, which supports Dbeibah, as well as Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, who support Haftar, have met with the opposing camp on both sides. It is in this context that the United States is making its diplomatic comeback with its plan, which aims to reunify the

country from above, with a single administration, government and army.

The program would consist of appointing Saddam Haftar as president, while Dbeibah would retain his position as prime minister. The Haftar clan, favoured by this plan, is showing its goodwill by playing a central role in the release of the American hostage, the missionary Kevin Rideout, in Mali. The Libyan oil company National Oil Corporation has just paid its debts to American companies, including Baker Hughes and Halliburton.

As for Dbeibah, he has to deal with the militias. While some are opposed to the project, others are more circumspect, understanding that their opposition would place them outside the new government.

Financial and strategic gains

The United States is motivated by economic issues: to get its hands on oil reserves and to allow American companies to take advantage of a market with high potential. It is also a question of beating the pawn of the Russian troops of Africa Corps, present alongside the Haftar clan, and of strengthening their military grip on North Africa.

There is a risk that the Boulos plan will further destabilize the country, where everyone will seek to consolidate their power or acquire a new one, including by force. Indeed, power, whether acquired through negotiation or by arms, allows enrichment through smuggling, corruption and human trafficking.

The United States is playing the role of sponsor to establish peace between gangs, while removing the prospect of Libyans deciding the future of their country themselves by profoundly renewing the political offer.

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RUSSIA

What Victory Means: Release All Political Prisoners

IVAN DRURY ZARIN ·

Against the Current: Thank you for taking the time for this interview, Kseniia. Can you begin by explaining your campaign for Boris Kagarlitsky's freedom?

Kseniia Kagarlitskaya: I'm from Russia but I can't live in Russia anymore because of everything I do in defense of my father. My father's name is Boris Kagarlitsky. He is a well-known sociologist and Marxist politician. And now he's a political prisoner.

My father was imprisoned and sentenced to five years in a penal colony for making a video on YouTube. It was an analysis of the explosion of the Crimean bridge in 2022 and why it happened. And the title of the video was "Explosive Congratulations of the cat Mostik," a reference to the Russian name of the bridge.

The government classified the explosion of the Crimean bridge as an act of terrorism. If you say "explosive congratulations," the authorities conclude you think the explosion was something good, so you are justifying terrorism. This is the logic of the government's whole case. It's absolutely absurd. He was locked away in prison for five years for those two words: "explosive congratulations."

ATC: Could you say something about your father's political background? He's not an ordinary person putting up a video. Like you said, they were looking for a reason to put him in prison because he's a leftist activist and Marxist writer. Can you say something about his history?

KK: My father has been a political activist his whole life. He is a political scientist, a political activist, and a politician. This is his second time in prison. His first was in the days of the Soviet Union.

He spent 13 months in prison under Brezhnev, and now he is imprisoned by Putin's government. It doesn't matter which government is in power, he always tells the truth.

He's well known all around the world, including the United States. He has written 18 books, which have been translated into several languages. People study his books in the universities, whether in departments of politics or economics.

When the war started, my father kept producing on his YouTube channel; he kept writing articles; he kept doing everything he did before the war. But times changed after the war started.

Remember, Russia is a dictatorship. For the Russian government, it is not okay for someone to criticize them loudly. And he kept speaking. The main idea of our government was to silence him. They needed to shut him up so they found a reason.

Although this video was published in 2022, he was not arrested and sentenced until 2023. A year passed between the video and his arrest. They decided to use the video and accuse him of saying "explosive congratulations." It was the only thing they could come up with.

ATC: What is the significance of his incarceration for the left?

KK: From my point of view, my father is the most well-known left-wing activist in Russia. His arrest should be a sign for all left-wing activists all around the world to see how the Russian government treats left-wing activists.

Maybe many people think that only liberals could be imprisoned in Russia, or that Putin is anti-imperialist because he's against Trump or America, therefore if you are leftwing you cannot get imprisoned. That is not true.

ATC: You were saying that people in Brazil you've met are surprised that a leftwing activist could be in prison.

KK: They thought it's impossible! But everyone is facing repression right now. You could be an activist, or not, and still be put in prison for any reason.

Fear in Putin's Russia

ATC: I wanted to ask you about this dynamic. You said in your talk that your father is a political prisoner but it feels wrong to use the word political prisoner because Putin is locking up people who are doing the most minor things like making a comment on a Facebook post. What is the role of repression in Putin's Russia, and in his mode of governance? What function does it play?

KK: The main idea of Putin's government is to make people fear so that they self-censor. People will think twice before writing a comment. This is how people remain silent.

People don't share their oppositional opinions. Everybody outside Russia thinks oh, everybody supports Putin! Nobody says a word against Putin! But you get you can get 15 to 20 years in prison just for writing a Facebook comment.

At this moment we have more than 2000 political prisoners in Russia. Although this is an enormous number, for a country of more than 140 million people, it's a small percentage of the whole population. But you have to understand that in imprisoning 2000 people for minor cases, people think before doing, saying or writing something. Everybody fears being put in prison.

ATC: It sounds like there's two functions to this sort of repression. One is targeting activist leaders like your father with strong sentences for doing his political work. That has a chilling effect on the left. But if people hear that others are being locked up for a Facebook post or a small donation then they

become hesitant about doing ordinary things.

It reminds me of Trump's strategy of deportations, that ICE makes so much noise about deportations mostly for the effect of convincing people to self-deport. It's a strategy of terror to intimidate people so that they will leave on their own. It saves money and the hassle of having the state do it.

KK: A good example of this is the case of Nadezhda Buyanova. She's a doctor. She said something against the war in front of her patient; the patient went to the police. This doctor was imprisoned. It was a warning doctors not to say anything to their patients.

We don't know: did she even say these words? But it doesn't matter. She's still a political prisoner.

And we have a case of Antonina Favorskaya, a journalist imprisoned for her articles. Her arrest was a sign to all journalists not to write the "wrong" things in articles.

They pick a person from different social groups to set an example for everyone.

ATC: So your father is not imprisoned because of an individual act. He's in prison because of a social campaign that is attacking him. This is a structural problem. It's interesting that he is stating his refusal of any personalized or individualized route out of prison. Why is that?

KK: We had a giant political prisoner exchange in 2024 when Putin released 26 political prisoners in exchange for European prisoners. My father stated that he doesn't want to be included in any exchange list, which seemed really weird because prisoner exchange was a ray of hope for all political prisoners. Everyone wants to be included in those lists because this is the route to freedom.

He was saying that we don't want an exchange, and we don't want to have political prisoners. We have to fight the system but when we exchange prisoners, people become a resource for these states, an

incentive for all countries to have their own political prisoners.

The idea is that if you kidnap your own citizens, you can then trade them for prisoners in other countries.

Our goal is to fight the system. We don't want to have political prisoners anywhere in the world. This is why my father said he would not participate in a prisoner exchange. Further, if he was exchanged he would have gone into exile. He believes exile is also a form of repression, even if a softer version.

My father says if you are doing politics, being imprisoned is your professional risk. It's similar to being a firefighter who dies on the job. If you are a firefighter, you know the risk, but you still do your work as a firefighter.

The same here. You understand that you could get sent to prison because of your activities, but still, you know, you keep doing it.

Freedom for All!

ATC: It sounds like your father has made his incarceration a field of struggle against the system of incarceration. What would victory mean for Boris Kagarlitsky?

KK: We are fighting for the release of all political prisoners. We think that every peace negotiation between Ukraine and Russia should include a point for the release of all political prisoners, on both sides. In Ukraine there are also political prisoners, so victory would mean the release of everybody.

ATC: My last question is how can people outside of Russia help political prisoners in Russia?

KK: The first thing you can do is to write letters to political prisoners. The website "Prison Mail" lets you send letters to prisoners in Russia. The only rule is that the letters must be in Russian; you can use ChatGPT or Google Translate or whatever to translate.

Imagine being in prison in Russia and getting a letter from Brazil. It could change everything for a person. Every political prisoner who has been released repeats the same thing: receiving letters is a ray of hope. It's their window to freedom. If you don't know what to write, just write about yourself: how you live and what you like.

In Freedom Zone, we have a webpage with pictures of prisoners, and where we describe what each prisoner likes, including their favorite books. You can start the conversation about those books or about the topics which are interesting for that particular political prisoner. Writing letters is really important.

The second thing is to donate. It's a really expensive to be a political prisoner. You need lawyers. You need parcels. Your family needs funds for living because most political prisoners are the main breadwinner in their family. Once the breadwinner has become a political prisoner it is a disaster for the family.

I made some calculations: we need 10 million euros per year to cover the expenses of all political prisoners. All human rights organizations together don't collect this amount of money.

The third thing is to follow Freedom Zone on social media because we distribute different stories of political prisoners. I think it is important for people abroad to understand what is happening inside Russia.

There are many political prisoners who are not famous. We don't know their names — I want people to know their names. I want people to discuss their stories. That's why I hope that people from America and other countries will follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

We just launched English language media especially for this conference, so we can distribute those stories in English.

ATC: Thank you very much Kseniia, and solidarity for you and your work.

*Source: September-October 2026, **ATC 244***

DENMARK

Impressive commitments – but now it's time to fight!

SAP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ·

We imagine virtually everyone was impressed by the mark that Alternativet [the Green Party], and perhaps especially the Red-Green Alliance, managed to make on the new government's policy platform.

Impressed by scope of the commitments: I.e. the immediate, albeit temporary, halt to any expansion of conventional pig farming and the ceasing of tail docking and extreme breeding; the redistribution of agricultural subsidies; the investment of 4 billion DKK (over €133 million) into free dental care aiming for free dental care for everyone by 2035; making buses and trains across the country free for everyone up to the age of 22, and cutting VAT on food by half and removing VAT from fruit and vegetables entirely.

And also impressed by the number of positive fingerprints. There is simply a wealth of good intentions and a long row of more or less concrete promises in the government's policy programme. Not just in the areas of agriculture and the environment, but across a long list of areas ranging from schools in remote areas and the victims of social security reforms to fairer conditions for trade unions.

Freedom to oppose

Almost more importantly, it was made clear that the Red-Green Alliance and the Alternative are entirely free to take a relentless stance against all the neoliberal, climate-destructive and right wing policies which, quite as expected, were also set out in the government's programme. For example, the tax cuts for companies and shareholders and for those with the highest incomes; even accompanied by minor tax increases which disproportionately affect those with the very lowest incomes. The continued xenophobic immigration and integration policy, the

absurd 5 per cent of GDP spent on military spending, the unchanged policy on Palestine, and so on.

Similarly, we are free to criticise the climate policy, which, on the whole, unfortunately remains catastrophically lax by ignoring the 2030 target and setting the 2035 target at a paltry 85 per cent reduction. The government's platform only pays lip service to Denmark's global consumption-based carbon footprint, which is an entirely different and far more embarrassing matter. The fact that not even the opening of new oil digging sites is being halted exposes the fact that Denmark's climate hypocrisy continues.

Of course, the government's policy platform will do nothing to address this problem. Because – despite the green rhetoric – we are dealing with a government whose primary objective is to stimulate endless capitalist growth, preferably based on cheap green energy in enormous quantities and by the rapid roll-out of AI –and with a declared openness to the introduction of nuclear power in Denmark.

The experiences of the Red-Green Alliance in relation to the government

If the Red Green Alliance did not have this freedom to simultaneously act as the left-wing opposition, it would, of course, be a political disaster to give political support for this government. But we do have that freedom, as Denmark has a negative parliamentary system. That is why it was the right decision to let the Social Democratic-Reformist-Petite Bourgeoisie coalition come to power; to secure as many political commitments as possible from the situation rather than risk facing something worse.

Despite the clear centre-right majority in the Parliament, this government is not fundamentally different from governments for which RGL has pre-

viously provided parliamentary support. Take, for example, the Thorning government (2011-2015), where Margrethe Vestager certainly did not wield the rich's baton any less than Lars Løkke does now. There we learnt – the hard way – that it was important to be in clear opposition. We were on the barricades in tough battles against the government, including in the teachers' labour dispute and against the privatisation of the electricity company. We also learnt that we might need to be more willing to bring down such a government in situations where there was a shift to the left amongst the population.

Between 2019 and 2022, we sought to draw on the lessons learnt from the Thorning era to set limits on the bourgeois tendencies of the Social Democratic government by means of an internal so-called 'memorandum of understanding'. That period was unusual due to the coronavirus pandemic. But we must at least acknowledge that, even though the Red-Green Alliance, armed with this document, secured a number of concessions – whilst formally remaining just as independent as we are now – the party came across too much as a supporting party rather than an opposition party. This applied, for example, to the series of climate agreements which, despite many fine words, formed the framework for the 'hockey stick model' and the Danish climate hypocrisy with which we are still living.

Has the Red-Green Alliance succeeded?

The RGA negotiating group has been open about the fact that it is not our policy, but that of the government and the centre-right parliamentary majority, which is reflected, for example, in the government's policy on Palestine, in its immigration policy with the plans of opening asylum-processing facilities in Rwanda, in the anti-social tax cuts, and so on.

However, in the external communications from the Red-Green Alliance, it must be said that there has been room for enthusiasm – to such an extent that one could say we have oversold our influence and left an overly positive impression of the govern-

ment's platform as a whole. For example, it does not provide an accurate description of the new government when Pelle Dragsted (spokesperson for the RGA) apparently presents it at a meeting of the European left as a major step forward for the 'Tax the Rich' movement.

There is absolutely no reason to believe that all the positive promises in the government's policy programme will be fulfilled automatically. Many of them are vague and/or unfunded. It is rather worrying that many of the specific objectives are explicitly not to be achieved within this term of office – not even in the form of clear interim targets.

Even in the most promising area, animal welfare, the deadline for phasing in compliance with the statutory ban on tail docking has been set for 2030, which is after the next election, and the deadline for ending extreme breeding practices has been set for 2035.

The VAT reductions are already being postponed until 2030. The reforms to social security benefits, etc., will reportedly require a great deal of 'back-and-forth' before they are implemented. We must be prepared to exert massive pressure on the government, or many of the long-term promises will remain shelved in committees up until the next general election, where they then risk being scrapped altogether.

We also run the risk that the government will attempt to link the fulfilment of its promises to the Red-Green Alliance with 'funding' measures that miss the social mark entirely. Løkke, minister of finance from a right-wing party, has, after all, made it a condition that the rich should not have to pay, but rather be pampered.

So there may only be room for enthusiasm – and there will certainly be a great need for movements that fight fiercely for their cause, with this government as their expected opponent.

There's nothing wrong with enthusiastically celebrating these fine promises! It's fine to highlight them – to promote them as realistic goals in the

class struggle. For example, the promises of free dental care and a complete overhaul of agriculture. The enthusiasm these promises arouse is an excellent springboard for waging a struggle to have these demands met. It will by no means be easy for the government to shove these hopes back into the coffin – and we must make the most of that momentum.

But statements such as 'The Red-Green Alliance has now delivered on its election promises' is misleading and creates false hopes. And if we phrase things as though this is something Pelle and the others have already sorted out or will sort out in the Parliament (provided we just remember to vote for them or donate €1,5 a month) – then we are sending out completely wrong signals. For the Red-Green Alliance's most important task is not to maximise the number of votes, but to organise and mobilise people. Not make people pin their hopes on politicians, but to become active themselves in pursuit of their own interests and views.

From enthusiasm to action

That is why enthusiasm must be used as a driving force for action.

The green movement – which bears the main responsibility for ensuring that pigs and drinking water were included reasonably well in the government's policy platform – must be strengthened by us all to become even stronger, whilst we see the requirements through to the end. Otherwise, it could well end up with Løkke and the agricultural lobbyists undoing most of the 'achievements'. That is why we must not give the impression that this matter has already been settled.

There will probably also be grounds for a social movement – or at least protests – rejecting tax cuts for the rich and tax increases for the poorest – as a precursor to VAT reductions that might lead to falling prices, but only in a year or two or even four.

We must use the enthusiasm generated by the many incentives in the government's policy platform to mobilise support for the fight to make them

a reality. Right now, the focus is on the fact that we on the left – not the far-right – are the ones actually trying to improve the livelihoods of those who are struggling financially. That is why people will listen if we call for action on this issue.

And of course, we won't stop there! When VAT falls but prices do not fall to the same extent – that presents an obvious opportunity to demand price controls – and perhaps even to organise them ourselves. Danish retail prices have long been the highest in Europe and profit margins in the grocery sector are high.

Similarly, a victory over the pig farmers will be a victory for the entire green movement – which can strengthen the green struggle in general. It is a movement that can and will set a completely different (and urgently needed) growth and climate agenda than that of the government. An agenda that challenges the profit-driven approach which is currently driving the world towards the abyss.

And the struggle for Palestine continues! Now, as before, with the Red-Green Alliance – but unfortunately not the government – on the right side of the barricade.

Victories and mass mobilisations can be a 'grinding mill of the class struggle', which we'd love to set in motion, and through that sidelining the far-right completely. And when it becomes necessary and possible to topple the government, the way will be paved for something truly red and green.

A potential horror story

So much for that optimistic, enthusiastic and hopeful vision of the future. Unfortunately, things could also turn out quite differently: If the Red-Green Alliance becomes so fixated on having to rely only on negotiations in the Parliament that – in order to 'deliver on our promises' – we vote for one dubious 'package' after another, we will end up merely chasing our own tails.

If we allow ourselves to be pressured into voting for austerity budgets because there are signs of an eco-

conomic downturn, and Løkke demands that rich and poor alike should share the burden.

And if the Red-Green Alliance wants to 'save' the government at any cost – because we're hoping that in 5 or 10 years' time it will fulfil the promises made to us in its government programme.

Well, then enthusiasm won't last long. Frustration and anger will spread and, quite rightly, be directed towards the government. But also at its (in this nightmare scenario) 'loyal supporting party', the Red-Green Alliance. In that situation, we'll quickly be seen as, and become, part of 'the system', 'the

Copenhagen elite', who make the little people pay whilst the rich get by just fine.

In that situation, however, there are other forces that are only too happy to step in as the opposition. Other forces that will give voice to the justified anger – in their own way. So it may well be the xenophobic and/or neoliberal far-right that, riding on the back of the people's anger, take over Government after the next election. And then there probably won't be many of those 5- to 10-year promises that hold true. Neither for pigs nor for people.

21 August 2026

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Mladic, the war criminal, dies - we remember Srebrenica

GEOFF RYAN ·

Srebrenica remains the worst massacre in a single day in Europe since the second world war and was classed as genocide by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). 16 people were convicted of crimes committed in Srebrenica including army chief Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic President of the Bosnian Serb state Republika Srpska both of whom are serving life sentences in the Hague.

Slobodan Milosevic, former President of Serbia and the main war criminal, was also eventually arrested, sent for trial and imprisoned in the Hague where he died in 2006. His deputy and head of the modern day fascist Cetniks, Vojislav Seselj, is also imprisoned in the Hague. How different from the current situation of Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu.

How different as well from the attitude to the daily massacres of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The murder of 8,000 Bosniaks is called genocide whereas the description of perhaps ten times as many Palestinians is hotly contested, particularly by western governments.

In May 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/78/282 which designated 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, to be observed annually.

The same resolution also condemned any denial that genocide had been committed at Srebrenica and urged member states to preserve the established facts and to 'act in remembrance, towards

preventing denial, distortion and occurrence of genocides in the future'.

However, the UN failed to explain how the genocide could take place in an area that had been designated 'a safe 'area' and that was supposedly protected by UN troops from the Netherlands. The Dutch 'blue helmets' were in an almost impossible position because they were 'peacekeepers' and therefore very restricted in how they could respond to Serb and Serbian attacks on the Bosniak population. [2] The Netherlands was the only state that offered to supply troops and western governments were preoccupied with discussing their plan to end the war drawn up by US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and British Foreign Secretary David Owen.

Irish UN troops were shot at by Israeli forces during Israel's recent war in Lebanon. The difficulties faced by the Dutch at Srebrenica do not appear to have been taken on board.

The Srebrenica genocide is not just an important horrible event from the past. It also impacts how we relate to current struggles, in particular in Ukraine and Palestine. To understand that we have to go back in history and look at the dynamics that led to the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. [3]

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY)

The SFRY [4] was created at the end of the second world war from the ruins of the old Yugoslavia. The dominant force was the Partisan army in which the Communist Party was hegemonic. The Partisans had fought the invading German armies, the pro-Nazi Serbian government in Belgrade, [5] the equally pro-Nazi Ustase regime in Croatia and

Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serb nationalist Cetnik movement before emerging victorious.

The main struggles took place in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the majority of the Partizans were Serbs, they were predominantly from Serb areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina rather than from Serbia itself. Their leading figure Josip Broz (better known as Tito) was part Croat and part Slovene.

The Partizans were fully aware that one of the causes of the break-up of the old Yugoslavia was the conflict between different national groups. In particular they were concerned to prevent domination by Serbs, the largest national grouping. The solution was a federal state consisting of the Republics of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

At the same time the Yugoslav Communists were involved in a struggle with Stalin and the Cominform. Under the agreement Stalin had reached with Winston Churchill, Yugoslavia was supposed to be in the British sphere of influence and Stalin was decidedly unhappy that the Yugoslavs had taken power. Tito and the Partizans were ostracised and expelled from international communist organizations.

The split with Moscow had a real impact on the development of Yugoslavia as a federal state. The Republics were allowed some autonomy; 'workers' self-management' was promoted in contrast to the highly bureaucratized model in the Soviet Union. On the international stage, the Yugoslavs were actively involved in creating and developing the Nonaligned Movement. But behind the scenes developments were taking place that would eventually lead to the destruction of the SFRY after the death of Tito

Kosova [6] Uprising

By the late 1980s the SFRY was experiencing major problems. The economy was in serious trouble, unable to pay the massive borrowing undertaken in the 1970s. Economic problems were most acute in

the autonomous province of Kosova, part of Serbia with an Albanian majority but with an almost mythical significance for Serb nationalists. [7] Unemployment was over 20%. Young people took to the streets and demanded that Kosova should become a Republic independent of Serbia but within the SFRY. Their protests were brutally suppressed by the police and army who were increasingly loyal to Slobodan Milosevic who had come to power in 1987.

After he came to power Milosevic set about changing the balance of forces. He replaced the party leadership in Montenegro, abolished the autonomous status of the two provinces of Kosova and Vojvodina (the latter had no majority nationality, but Hungarians formed the largest minority) but retained their seats on the Federal bodies, thereby giving himself a minimum of 4 votes out of 8.

The other Republics were also experiencing severe economic difficulties. But whereas in Serbia and Montenegro Milosevic advocated much greater federal control in Croatia, and especially Slovenia the leadership of the League of Communists wanted looser controls, greater decentralisation.

Slovenia Versus Serbia

The very different perspectives of the leaderships of the League of Communists of Serbia and the League of Communists of Slovenia and the conflict between them are central to understanding the breakup of Yugoslavia. Serbia wanted a more tightly controlled economy alongside a more centralized state: the Slovenes wanted greater economic freedom and a more decentralized state with greater autonomy for the Republics. Both sides wanted greater concessions to capitalism and the market: it is completely wrong to see Milosevic as defending socialism and Slovene leader Milan Kucan supporting capitalism.

Milosevic's increasingly authoritarian tendencies eventually led to the leadership of the League of Communists of Slovenia declaring independence, something they were theoretically guaranteed the

right to do under the 1974 constitution. The response of Milosevic and the leadership of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) was military. For ten days, from 27 June to 7 July 1991, the Slovenian Territorial Defence Force and the police fought against the JNA. The war ended with a ceasefire and the withdrawal of JNA forces.

Why did the JNA withdraw and why did Milosevic support this? Primarily because there were very few Serbs in Slovenia and by this time Milosevic was a confirmed Serb nationalist. Milosevic's decision to call off the war against Slovenia would, however, have major repercussions in Croatia and later Bosnia because once Slovenia was allowed to secede from the SFRY then it was almost inevitable that Croatia would follow and that Bosnia-Herzegovina would not be far behind.

War In Croatia: Echoes of Ukraine

Milosevic may well have been willing to let Slovenia go but Croatia was a totally different issue. Croatia, unlike Slovenia, had many Serbs and Milosevic was determined to pull them into a Greater Serbia. Milosevic's supporters in Croatia had initially come into conflict with the then Communist government when they organised demonstrations supporting the repression of the Albanian population of Kosova. Now they came up against the government of former Communist turned Croatian nationalist Franjo Tudjman.

There is little evidence that Serbs in Croatia were initially threatened by the Croatian government, nor is there evidence that the government were Ustase. Just as there is no evidence that Zelenskyy in Ukraine is a neo-Nazi, as claimed by Putin and his supporters. The parallels between the wars in Croatia and Ukraine are striking.

Milosevic and the JNA invaded Croatia just as Putin and the Russian army invaded Ukraine. Both of the invading forces included activists from far-right parties. Vukovar was destroyed in Croatia just as was Mariupol in Ukraine. Fraudulent referenda were used in Croatia to establish the Krajina Serb

Republic just as they were to establish the pro-Russian 'republics' in eastern Ukraine. Zelenskyy is accused of being a Banderite just as Tudjman was accused of being an Ustasa. The Serbs in Krajina were not primarily motivated by defending Serbs but by making an independent Croatian state impossible, in a similar way to the pro-Russian (and very often Russian) forces in the Donbass who appear more concerned to destroy Ukraine rather than defend the people of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Sadly, there is also one other parallel: the inability of the left, particularly in Britain, to see beyond their preoccupation with an all-powerful western imperialism that controls all events. So, the Socialist Workers Party at the time claimed that the war in Croatia was the fault of Germany, because Germany recognized the independence of Croatia. The fact that other states recognized Croatia before Germany was ignored as well as the fact that the recognition came after the war had begun.

Western intervention was blamed, the people of Croatia mere puppets to be manipulated at will by imperialism. More echoes of Ukraine where much of the left in Britain denies any agency to the people of Ukraine in their war against Putin. They too are mere puppets in the hands of imperialist powers. The Maidan protests were all manipulated by the USA or neo-Nazis – and other nonsense.

In any case, is not recognizing a state not also a form of imperialist intervention? Are we indifferent as to whether or not the British government recognizes a Palestinian state for example.

War in Bosnia

The conclusion of the war against Croatia led Milosevic inevitably into war against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Given his determination to gather the largest possible of Serbs into a single Greater Serbia state there was no way he would ignore the large Serb population in Bosnia. His attempt to carve up Bosnia was aided by his former enemy Franjo Tudman who also tried to carve out the

largely Croat Herzegovina for his vision of a Greater Croatia.

Much of the left in Britain again failed to understand the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, seeing it as purely a clash of different nationalisms. [8] They didn't have an understanding of the complexities of Bosnian society and particularly failed to grasp the multi-national nation of the state and, for that matter, the government in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite the worst efforts of Milosevic and Tudjman, a multi-national government survived including Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs and other national minorities. The head of the Bosnian army was a Serb. The editor of the pro-government daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*, which continued to publish throughout the war, was a Serb.

Above all the workers' movement remained multi-national. In the industrial town of Tuzla, the trade unions organized defence forces which included Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, Yugoslavs who refused ethnic categorization, and all the nationalities of the region. Tuzla became a central focus for those on the left throughout western Europe who could understand the difference between the multi-national, multi-ethnic government of Bosnia and the ultra-nationalism of Milosevic and Tudjman. The Fourth International is rightly proud of the role of its militants in aiding the struggle of the workers of Tuzla and building International Workers Aid. [9]

*Source: **Anti*Capitalist Resistance**.*

FEATURES

In-depth analysis from International Viewpoint's Features section



LIVIO MAITAN

The Inventor of Big Things: A Tribute to Livio Maitan

GREGOR BENTON · 16 September 2026

There is a photograph I keep returning to. Livio in a meeting room somewhere in Rome, probably the 1980s, looking precisely as the veteran Spanish revolutionary Pepe described him: not at all the classic image we carry of revolutionaries. He looks like a patient man. Like someone who has been in many meetings and intends to be in many more. Which is, of course, exactly what he was.

I am speaking from Borneo. My times, bookended by struggle, have deposited me here, working on a dictionary for a critically endangered indigenous language in a long house: a project, like so many worth doing, that seems never-ending. I am sorry I cannot be with you in person.

Let me explain how my life meshed with Livio's. Because the two trajectories converge in ways that still surprise me.

Livio joined the revolution by choice. When war reached Italy he joined the resistance, was arrested, fled to Switzerland to escape the fascists and the cold. In 1945 he returned. He became national secretary for socialist youth. By 1947 he had joined the Trotskyists: a conscious decision, reasoned, irreversible.

My background was different. Deep red, but differently red. Dad worked on the buses. He was an International Brigader, then a party organiser in Luton and Southampton. In 1959 I joined the Young Communist League, encouraged by dad, who also pushed me toward languages at grammar school. In 1962 I went to Turin and joined the Italian Communist Party: the party Livio had entered specifically to subvert, which tells you something about the difference in our political formation. I knew vaguely about his group. Vaguely.

Later I went to East Berlin to work on the project to translate Marx's writings into English. Then to Cambridge, to study Italian and Spanish, and to work for the party.

In 1964 I was arrested for daubing slogans around Cambridge calling for the release of Mandela, then on trial for his life. Suspended for a year. I returned to Italy to work on a farm.

Vietnam was the issue that cracked everything open. The war escalated and we longed for action. Back in Cambridge after my suspension, together with my friend Paul Kay, I wrote to the Vietnamese embassy in Paris asking their permission to set up a new International Brigade. They replied, with more sense than we had shown, that we should work in our own country instead, raising medical funds for the Vietnamese Revolution. Which we did. I went further. I gave up modern languages entirely and switched to Oriental Studies to learn Vietnamese. But there was no one qualified to teach it. I had to choose from among classical Arabic, Biblical Hebrew, classical Japanese and classical Chinese. I chose classical Chinese. I graduated able to read Mencius and Confucius but unable to ask for a cup of tea in the modern language. That is the kind of revolutionary I was.

Alienated by the party line on Vietnam, I joined the Vietnamese Solidarity Campaign, became a Trotskyist, and was expelled. At that point I discovered Livio properly.

In the late 1960s Trotskyism was thriving in the Italian youth movement, chiefly through Livio's influence. The Trotskyist wave was met by a counter-ing wave, and during the debate that ensued Livio wrote his book on China: *Party, Army and the Masses in the Chinese Cultural Revolution*. As a young revolutionary, as a young psychologist trying

to make sense of the world, it deeply influenced me. And I translated it. My first book translation.

What he achieved in that book was genuinely difficult. He combined criticism of the Chinese Revolution with support for it: committed but scholarly, unflinching but not hostile. He didn't know Chinese. He worked from sources published daily by Beijing's English-language Xinhua news agency, and he used them with rigour. But he could have used that same scholarly apparatus differently. He could have taken the easier path. He could have been a top professor at a leading university, enjoyed a stellar academic career, the conferences, the royalties, the security. Instead, apart from a spell lecturing, he worked on a shoestring, for decades, to overthrow capitalism. That choice was not incidental to his intellectual work. It was the condition of it.

By 1989 the Italian Trotskyists had joined Democrazia Proletaria, and in 1991 this regroupment launched the Communist Refoundation Party, within which the Fourth Internationalists persevered as the movement's Italian section. It seemed, for a moment, like a real opening. Then came the D'Alema government, and Rifondazione's wrongheaded decision to maintain its support despite the bombing of Yugoslavia. Crisis. Split. The opening closed. Livio's response, characteristically, was not despair but black comedy. All my life, he said, I have been longing to overthrow a bourgeois government. Finally I had one.

In 2002 Livio completed his history of the Fourth International, published in Rome in 2006. He traces the early years: Tito's break, the Chinese Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the wars of liberation in Algeria and Vietnam, the Cuban Revolution, May 1968, the long fight for socialist democracy within the movement itself. He lived within that history. It was not reconstructed from archives. It was recovered from memory and cross-checked with argument. The two things are not interchangeable, and the difference shows on every page.

Livio died in Rome in 2004, shortly after a council meeting he had been due to address. He was ill and he went anyway. It was not a surprise to anyone who knew him.

Pepe, writing his tribute in the months that followed, caught something essential. He looked normal, Pepe wrote: not at all the classic image we carry of revolutionaries. The closest thing to a trade union worker, patiently handling all the problems of someone overwhelmed by the state or by the brutal machine of a regime that seemed to have few fissures. In 1992 Livio underwent heart surgery. He stuck to his rhythm. He still had time to join the new movements: not, as he put it, to put the old workers' movement to light, but to make a new one.

His legacy had none of the sectarian certainty that poisons so many currents of the revolutionary left. No conviction that his tendency represented the true transmission belt, the chief meaning of the classics, the only legitimate continuity. His canon was a point of departure, not of arrival. As a thinker, Pepe said, he was no exegete but an inventor of big things. A living embodiment of communist integrity and ardent internationalism. A Marxist for whom theory is valid only to the extent that it helps us understand the reality with which we wish to engage.

And a lover of football. A comrade of the sort who feels like a friend the moment you meet him.

Penelope Duggan was keen to publish a translation of Livio's memoir, and I volunteered. Which means I have lived Livio's words twice: at the start of my life as a revolutionary, and again now as an old man. From his book on China I first learned what engaged scholarship could look like. From his memoir I relearned it. Translating both was, I should say, a bittersweet experience: not quite sad and not quite joyful. Something in between that I don't have a word for, in English or in classical Chinese.

We had much in common, Livio and I. Both members of the Italian Communist Party at one point, both eventually Trotskyists, both fascinated by

China. Livio published three books on China across a lifetime of writing. Each of us, translator and author, has translated roughly as much as we have written. Working through his memoir I was able to relive, chapter by chapter, a wild political youth and a difficult middle age, most of which, if I am honest, came to nothing. Or so it seemed in the living.

Enzo Traverso, in his *Left-Wing Melancholia*, chronicles how youthful certainties become the defeats of later life. That is part of our story too. The Vietnamese embassy was right. The Cambridge slogans were daubed on walls that no longer stand. The parties we built fractured or were absorbed. But Livio's indomitable spirit, his capacity for self-

sacrifice, his zest for life and his fantastical commitment to politics, lifts his story from a catalogue of false starts into something else entirely: a chronicle of heroism, and of joyous, incorrigible optimism.

He died before Black Lives Matter, before the MeToo upsurge, before Corbyn's moment in Britain, before Extinction Rebellion and the new wave of struggles. But he paved the way for all of it. Not as an architect. As someone who kept the road open when most people had given up on its existence.

His book shows the road to socialism. Not as a completed map. As a working instrument.

November 2019

TURKEY

'Nobody announces that democracy ends now'

CAN KOÇAK & IAN PARKER · 7 September 2026

Ian Parker: We suggested 'creeping fascism' as a topic partly because of where Britain is. Fascism seems to be knocking on the door here, with Reform UK and the rest of it, and the implication was that Turkey might have lessons for us. Is that the right way round?

Can Koçak: Partly. There is that element to it, and I don't want to dismiss it. But fascism is also something that creeps in and of itself. It permeates gradually within everyday life. In the Turkish context we're talking about institutions hollowed out from within, the media gradually instrumentalised, and no single step that looks like the end of democracy. Nobody announces that democracy ends now and fascism begins now. It's the sum total that adds up to an authoritarian order.

I'd want to say one thing about the framing, though. This shouldn't be a moment of remembrance, or of pity for supposedly lost-cause countries. For a genuinely internationalist and anti-imperialist solidarity, we have to remember this is the same struggle. It isn't 'you tell us about your context so we'll be better prepared for ours'. It's coming together to fight a common struggle.

Turnout in Turkish elections is very high, much higher than here. Is that a sign of health?

In one sense, yes. It suggests people are interested, invested in politics. But I'd argue it's also a problem, because it's the only way people can participate in politics in Turkey. Every other route has been hollowed out, narrowed or cut off.

That's why the three themes that came out of our last general congress, in November 2025, a few months ago, or not a few months ago, almost a year ago now, time moves fast, were independence,

democracy and socialism. When we talk about democracy in that sense we mean opening up new ways for people to take part in politics, to take their own fate into their own hands.

The figure, and I should have checked this before coming here, is somewhere in the high eighties. Eighty per cent or so. [2]

And the cost of that fixation?

Two things. You start building saviour narratives. X person is going to come and save us; X person is going to found a new party, they'll be the candidate at the next presidential election, they'll save us. What has happened among the opposition in Turkey, and I find myself admitting that left politics in Turkey has fallen into this trap time and time again, is that after every defeat comes a search for a new leader, a new party. Those searches are a form of escape. Finding the next right leader takes far less effort than organising, than talking to people and persuading them, than patiently building relationships and programmes and new forms of solidarity. Someone is going to come and do it for us.

The second thing is that you get caught up in narratives. You look at opinion polls and say, well, this time they're definitely going to lose, surely they can't recover from this. I gather you have similar discourses here. Surely Nigel Farage cannot survive that five million pound donation story.

In 2023 you had an economic crisis and an earthquake, and Erdoğan still won.

He did. The AKP became the first party again and formed the government again. Twenty-four years in power now; they came in in 2002.

You can tie that to a few things. The economic crisis was real and it was hurting people. But authoritarian regimes like this survive not only through force,

and force is a real cause as well, but through their historical and ideological alliance with capital itself. That's how an economic crisis doesn't necessarily translate into electoral defeat.

More pragmatically, there is the opposition's fragmentation. The labour movement, the ecological movement, the women's movement, LGBT movements, city rights movements: all of them have a relatively strong showing, all have made significant historical gains, and all have failed to coordinate around a shared programme. A left alternative has to find the programme that brings those disparate struggles together.

You call it the palace regime. What has changed in how it talks about itself?

After two decades in power they no longer feel obliged to legitimise themselves as a political party. They speak in the name of the state itself. They call it the reason of the state, or the intellect of the state. Rather than explaining themselves to the opposition and to the people, they demand that the opposition explain why they aren't standing with the state. Because I represent the reason of the state, so why aren't you with me? That's the rationale.

That discourse disarms a playbook the opposition finds very handy: exposing contradictions and chasing scandals. Two years ago you were saying X, now you're saying Y. It doesn't really matter when the other side is claiming to represent the state itself.

Someone in the room found that strange. Farage would say he represents the nation against the state. Trump says he represents the people against the state. Embodying the state seems unusual for the far right.

That's a very good point. It almost feels like saying we represent the establishment. But there's a nuance, because it's close to how Trump champions American values, or Farage champions British values, a true understanding of what Britishness looks

like. I think the intellect of the state means something closer to that.

Globally we see the regime as part of what we call a dark order, or a far-right international. Look at the ties and alliances with other authoritarian contexts, all of those regimes supported by the US and the various Trumps, even though verbally they seem to be at odds. I'd add Netanyahu's regime to the dark order too, in alliance with Erdoğan.

You said the left has things it needs to overcome. What are they?

First, that internal polemical culture, the opportunistic point-scoring off each other's mistakes. [3] My metaphor for this is football. Think of the five-a-side games you play with friends: informal rules, and critically no offside. So it's very easy to wait in the opposition's half for the ball to come to you and score an easy goal. I find that in leftist politics as well.

Then there's the sectarian cliquishness that produces micro-neighbourhoods where any outside contact almost feels like contamination.

And then the thing we've been talking about, letting the expectation of a new party or a new saviour substitute for real organising. What we want instead is a left that puts down roots locally, that accumulates concrete wins even if they're small, and that doesn't burn its energy fighting among ourselves.

How does that work in practice for your party, which does take elections seriously?

We feel there should be other ways of doing things, but elections are also the thing that legally mobilises people in Turkey, so you play into that. Ideally we treat elections not as the end goal but as a tool. Our ultimate aim is to bring the working class to power, and we know that might not happen at the next election. But we try to become powerful enough to be relevant in the politics that mobilises people.

We're very active in unions. Over the past couple of years we've organised a lot of local public meetings, including in local marketplaces, which has proved very useful.

We were asked about political diversity within Turkey, and about the Kurdish question in particular. Where does your party stand on self-determination?

Very clearly, we see it the way Lenin saw it: the right of peoples to determine their own future.

We've historically been in electoral alliance with Kurdish parties. And that's why our name is not the Turkish Workers' Party but the Workers' Party of Turkey, to cover the different ethnicities within Turkey.

And the peace process?

There has seemingly been a move towards recognising Kurdish identity a little further. What the regime is doing can be summarised as: urbanise, adapt and obey. There's a visibility of identity, a recognition of identity to some extent, alongside the suppression of political rights. Kurdish politicians, leftist Turkish politicians, activists, even comedians, are jailed for this and that. One of our MPs, whose name is in fact the same as mine, Can Atalay, has been imprisoned for years despite national rulings and European Court of Human Rights rulings against it. So visibility and suppression go hand in hand. A depoliticisation through recognition.

I'll give you the football version, and I'm sorry, this is my second football reference. The biggest city in the east is Diyarbakır, with the biggest Kurdish population, and it has a team called Amedspor, Amed being the Kurdish name for Diyarbakır. Which brings us back to names again, because there's a tension over what these cities are called. Amedspor are in the top league now, and with nationalism rising they meet animosity and racist chants wherever they go. Kurdish people tend to be very politically aware, almost necessarily so. And a piece I read argued that in the stadium they answer

the racist chants with wilder chants of their own, using racist or sexist language themselves. Football rivalry becomes the means of depoliticisation. That fits the paradigm of urbanise, adapt and obey too.

A Turkish comrade in the room put the peace process in a regional frame, dating it from the collapse of Assad, and reading it as the consequence of imperial interests needing the PKK out of the way before they can deal with the new Syrian state. Talks between Erdoğan and Öcalan came three or four months after Damascus fell, and the argument was that this is one connected project rather than an accident.

I'd take that seriously, and it made me think about something adjacent, which is how contextual these things are. There's a real tension around Islamist regimes in the Middle East and Islamophobia in the West, and the two clash inside left movements in different parts of the world, because the left in Turkey and elsewhere in the region has actually suffered under Islamist regimes.

That's also a way of describing how fascism creeps. What the broader secular movement in Turkey has feared for decades is: are we going to be ruled by Sharia law? What the left kept trying to say is that nobody arrives and announces that from tomorrow we're ruled by Sharia. It's the everyday implementations that change your day-to-day life. People get beaten up for drinking water during Ramadan. That happens in Turkey. Every year.

Then take it to the West. Coming here from London I stopped at Stockport, which reminded me of the stabbings a couple of years ago. Sorry, Southport, similarly named town. With the online disinformation people decided the perpetrator was a Muslim man, which he wasn't, and they attacked Muslims and mosques. So Islamophobia is a serious problem in this context, and in an internationalist frame these are the things we need to think about collectively. We rarely do.

We were asked whether Turkey has a mass movement or only elections. Britain ar-

guably has nothing but elections, which is why every new left party here has been built around one named politician who was never going to be half as good as we hoped.

More broadly it's similar in Turkey. It's focused on electoral politics, on party politics. But there are noteworthy wins from workers' movements and unions. The miners especially have been very vocal recently, with multiple rounds of successful strikes and hunger strikes. So you see small but significant wins. Generally, though, the same electoral focus.

We think of fascism as arising from the defeat of the working class, from the demoralisation of failure, and from the ruling class running out of other options. One comrade argued that Britain doesn't have the strong organised left that would frighten capital into that solution, so we might not be sliding towards a pure fascism. For Turkey to go for it, there would have to be a deep crisis and no other way of holding power. Are you at that point?

I do think we have been at that point for some time now.

That argument is interesting though. When we talk about a new party, a new leader, a new saviour, I was also thinking about the safe centre. I was thinking of Andy Burnham, to be fair. And if you compare it with the early twentieth century, the whole equilibrium has shifted somewhat to the right. You don't get that many left options. It almost feels as though the far right has become relatively common sense.

Independence was one of your three congress themes. From a British vantage point that word has a bad ring, because we're an old imperial power.

This is a more metaphorical independence than a formal one. Turkey is an independent state, an independent republic. But look at the relationships. We feel the current regime does a lot of America's, Trump's, or the West's bidding. Erdoğan used

Syrian and Afghan migrants as bargaining chips against Europe: unless you give me X and Y, I'll release these people onto European soil. Their relationship with Trump, with America, and, regardless of what they say, with Israel, is tied to what those powers want Turkey to become. It sometimes feels as though we're the henchmen, the hench-nation, of this Trumpian order in the Middle East.

A comrade in the room, wearing his historian's hat, pointed out that Turkey sits at the pressure point between three continents, which is why the city has been Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul in turn. He raised the Mecca defence pact signed in August with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and the first committee meeting held in Istanbul the week before ours, and read it as a new sub-imperial bloc feeling its way into being, trying to create space against Russia, against China, against the US and the EU. [4]

I'd agree it's a new kind of coalition against Russia and China, but I wouldn't say it's against NATO more broadly. It's a different kind of alliance, and it's precisely the type of alliance that compels these nations, Turkey included, to play the role I was just describing: the role the US has set for them in the Middle East.

Does the regime look back to the Ottomans or to Atatürk?

Predominantly the Ottomans, and the secular-versus-Islamist divide comes mainly out of the Erdoğan regime's early clashes with the republican regime, whose whole vision was integration with the West. But what has happened is that they've started to reconcile with Atatürk as a figure. Their newer discourse places Atatürk and Erdoğan as our two founding fathers. They're no longer in institutional clash with the Republic. They're saying: you had a hundred years of that, now we'll have a hundred years of our second founding father.

You wanted to end on Louis XVI.

On 14 July 1789 he wrote in his journal: nothing major happened today [5] He used the journal for the days he went hunting, and he hadn't gone hunting, so nothing major had happened. He had failed to register the defining moment of the century.

The moral is that the breaking points of history are usually missed by the people living through them. Which is why I don't think we can trust two very

radical sentiments. One is the certainty of pessimism, nothing's going to change, we can't change anything. The other is the optimism of I've looked at the polls and so-and-so is definitely losing. What determines the moment is the social and organisational foundation we build before the moment arrives.

2 September 2026

Stalinism's Failures Vindicate Trotsky's Critique

LIVIO MAITAN · 3 September 2026

The Fourth International in Today's Struggles

In the 1930s, those who refused to resort to invective in the Stalinist style reproached first the Left Opposition and then the Fourth International with a fundamental lack of realism. Not all of Stalin's decisions, they said, could be endorsed, and building socialism in a single country entailed contradictions. But in the given context, they maintained, there was no alternative, and the duty of every revolutionary was to defend the Soviet leadership unconditionally. When the USSR then made an essential contribution to the defeat of fascist imperialism in the Second World War, the "realistic" argument appeared enormously strengthened. Subsequently, the reconstruction of the USSR from the ruins of war and its rates of economic growth throughout that period were cited as further proof of the correctness of the choice made at the end of the 1920s. It was seen as a further condemnation of those who had criticised it and had thus deserved the defeat they suffered.

Today, sixty years on, a very different overall balance sheet is possible, starting from the very denunciations and admissions of the Gorbachev leadership of the Soviet bureaucracy (a first balance sheet had already been possible thirty years ago, starting from the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and Khrushchev's criticisms of the "cult of personality"). The substance — forgive the schematic summary — is that what was built in the USSR was not a socialist society, even within the borders of a sin-

gle country, but a society that has very little to do with socialism as Marx, Lenin and the leaders of the October Revolution and of the Communist International at its foundation conceived it.

Certainly, there has been no restoration of capitalism, and in this sense some fundamental conquests of the revolution have not been swept away. But power is in the hands of a bureaucratic caste which enjoys enormous privileges and constitutes an ever more serious brake on the development of the productive forces. The most glaring example, on the economic terrain, is agriculture, which has still not overcome the catastrophic consequences of the forced collectivisation of the early 1930s. More generally, bureaucratised structures and management have prevented the creative potential of the workers from expressing itself, producing distortions, bottlenecks and paralysing contradictions of every kind.

There is hardly any need to recall, moreover, that Stalin bore the principal responsibility for the tragic military failures of the first year of the war, which brought the USSR to the brink of defeat. He had decapitated and disorganised the Red Army with the bloody purges. Also he based his policy until the very last day on the assumption that Hitler would respect the non-aggression pact signed in August 1939. The situation could only be turned around once the people of the USSR, and first of all the peasants, grasped what Nazi imperialism meant and threw all their forces into the victorious counter-offensive.

No less correct have proved the criticisms of Trotsky and the Left Opposition on the terrain of international politics. The subject is addressed in other articles in this special issue. It is enough to recall here the critique of the sectarian and irresponsible policy of the Stalinised Comintern and

the German Communist Party in the crucial phase of the struggle against Hitler. It was one of the essential factors in a historic defeat from which, in terms of anti-capitalist political consciousness, the German proletariat has still not recovered.

The battles of these decades

Trotsky, the Left Opposition and the Fourth International did not counterpose merely generic programmatic assertions to Stalinist political choices. Anyone who wishes can verify that from 1923–24 onwards, at every moment when problems of decisive importance were on the table, the Opposition put forward alternatives in concrete political terms. It did not neglect the conjunctural framework and tactical requirements. This was the case, for example, during the battles against the bureaucratisation of the party, for a correct approach to the problems of industrialisation, and over policy in the countryside. The same holds for its international choices. What is even more important, our movement never confined itself to criticism and denunciation, but took a direct part in the struggles, despite the hard blows it suffered and the persecution of its militants.

We were defeated, in the sense that Stalin succeeded in imposing himself both in the USSR and in the international communist movement. But we were not the only ones defeated. The Soviet masses were defeated: the exercise of political power was torn from them, and they paid, dramatically and in every sense, the price of Stalinism. The workers and peasants of all those countries on which the Stalinist leadership imposed a policy and a form of organisation that led to catastrophic defeats were defeated too. As for the "victors", there are not many left who still care to claim certain "victories".

The reality is that, from a general historical standpoint, the great battles begun in the aftermath of the First World War are still in full swing. Who will be the victor in the end is by no means predetermined. But revolutionary Marxists, in the light of experience, can lay claim to the fundamental validity of their critique. Beyond all the errors and all the

contradictions, their battle has been fought in the right direction. That is why we are determined to continue it.

The question now arises of the context in which the construction of an international workers' movement is situated today. Without ignoring what is happening in other regions of the world, we must underline that the most important event of recent months is the crisis convulsing the Soviet Union from top to bottom — the bureaucratised society that seemed ever more sterilised by the caste of old men who dominated it.

New possibilities in the countries of the East

We were always convinced that the "ice age" in the USSR would not last forever, because we believe in the underlying truth that the dynamic of social forces is, in the final analysis, more powerful than all structures and political apparatuses, and even than the most systematic police repression. We ourselves are astonished by:

- the depth of the wave that has shaken the Soviet Union in so short a time
- the breadth and level of consciousness reached by broad layers of the population
- the intellectual and political courage of the vanguard groups now taking shape
- by the strength of certain mass mobilisations.

A new historical phase has effectively opened, with a dynamic of anti-bureaucratic revolution. This revolution will not, however, be completed by Gorbachev, nor by any bureaucratic leadership group. Our international press has amply explained the reasons, and we shall not return to them here.

Gorbachev is in fact proposing a new version of peaceful coexistence. More precisely, he speaks of a "peaceful conception which necessarily requires co-operation". In his view, "it falls to history to judge the merits of each particular system. History will make the choice. Let each nation decide for itself the best system, the best ideology." The underlying idea is that capitalism still has an entire historical

phase ahead of it, and that one must therefore wait patiently for history's verdict.

From this standpoint one can only abandon any perspective of overthrowing capitalism, and hence of revolutionary struggle on a world scale. At the same time one is led to evade the historic choices of the international workers' movement. The communist parties, or what remains of them, are consequently induced to carry their neo-reformist course through to its conclusion, and the question of relaunching any international organisation does not arise. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) has understood the message well, and its leaders are among Gorbachev's most enthusiastic supporters.

All this indicates that the battle for internationalism and for the construction of a revolutionary International will continue to be very difficult in the USSR. It will be no less so in the countries of Eastern Europe, where for decades the bureaucrats presented their subordination to the Moscow bureaucracy as "internationalism", and where the political disorientation is far from being overcome. Those who have a real understanding of the meaning of internationalism, and of the need to give the workers' movement an international framework, amount only to very small nuclei.

Internationalism in the capitalist and dependent countries

The internationalist battle is also very difficult in the capitalist countries of Western Europe, and all the more so in North America and Japan. Dramatic events of the past decade — the China–Vietnam war and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — have caused deep disillusionment and demoralisation, first and foremost in those sectors of the workers' and internationalist movement that had committed themselves to solidarity with Vietnam. The hammering of the bourgeois media, which seeks to relaunch the values of capitalist society, has wrought real destruction. The bureaucrats of the workers' movement have often capitulated before this offensive, which went hand in hand with attacks on living standards and on workers' conquests and rights. When any perspective of overthrowing capi-

talism is renounced, and the idea that it will last indefinitely is accepted, not much room is left for internationalism, and any project of international proletarian organisation looks like the residue of a bygone era.

The panorama is more encouraging in other regions of the world. In Latin America, the victorious revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua are engaged in a courageous struggle against imperialism, while other revolutionary movements are shaking the colonial regimes in their countries. Internationalist ideas retain their power of attraction, and internationalism itself keeps a real meaning.

Cuba and Nicaragua have given shining examples of this. But not even the leaders of these two countries share the conception, fundamental for us, of the dialectic of the three sectors of world revolution. While they have helped and continue to help revolutionary movements in other countries, they have not posed, and do not pose, the problem of building an International. More particularly, the Cuban leaders are largely inspired by a campist conception which has led them to unacceptable positions, such as approval of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and support for the Polish bureaucracy against Solidarność and the revolt of the working masses.

What role does the International play today?

In this context, our battle for the internationalist principles that were at the origin of our movement, and for the construction of a mass International, is more necessary than ever, and we shall continue it whatever the difficulties.

Does this perhaps mean that we hold a self-proclamatory and narrow conception of the International, as our adversaries and critics claimed fifty years ago and as some still maintain today? The decision to found the Fourth International was dictated neither by an abstractly self-proclamatory concern nor by conjunctural considerations or perspectives. Rather it was the conviction — founded on many experiences — that it

was necessary to provide a programmatic and political answer to the crisis of the workers' movement and to the problems that crisis posed. It was dictated by the conviction that only an international organisational framework, however limited, would make it possible to:

- maintain the indispensable links between the existing revolutionary groups,
- ensure the continuity of Marxism and Leninism
- confront the new problems that would arise
- and — what counts most — to commit the forces thus gathered to the battles of the workers' movement in the various regions of the world.

It was a necessary historical task, and one that we have, in substance, fulfilled.

To conclude: we never argued that the revolutionary mass International would be built with our

forces alone. From the debates of the 1930s to the resolutions of the last World Congress in 1985, we have explicitly maintained that this International will arise from the convergence of different revolutionary currents and movements. Our project was not the linear growth of the organisations that had joined first the Left Opposition and then the Fourth International. Today this approach is more valid than ever,. If we defend the existing International with the greatest tenacity, and fight to strengthen it, it is precisely because it represents an irreplaceable instrument for advancing towards the formation of a qualitatively superior International: the revolutionary mass International.

*Source: Livio Maitan, "La Quarta Internazionale nelle lotte di oggi", **Bandiera Rossa** no. 11, November 1988, pp. 16–17. Translated by RedMole.org.*

NEWS

News from around the world



SLOVENIA

Slovenian trade unions propose referendum to overturn the new government's anti-social policies

CORRESPONDENT · 21 September 2026

The Slovenian Constitution (Article 90) provides for the right to a repeal referendum initiated by the people. This allows civil society to compel the government to organise a referendum aimed at repealing a law passed by Parliament. There must be 2,500 petitioners. They then have one month to collect at least 40,000 signatures (just over 2 per cent of registered voters). The result of the referendum is binding, subject to two conditions: that the 'no' vote secures an absolute majority, and that 20 per cent of voters have cast their ballots.

It is this mechanism that the Slovenian trade unions have decided to set in motion. The president of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia [Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije; ZSSS] stated on this matter:

We oppose the adoption, without proper social dialogue and under the guise of intervention or emergency, of significant systemic changes that undermine the foundations of the state, the pension, health, education and social protection systems, as well as labour relations. We oppose the

worsening of job insecurity and the facilitation of unfair competition in various sectors.

The government attempted to have the referendum initiative annulled, but the Constitutional Court upheld the trade unions' initiative, and a campaign in favour of consulting the public through referendums has begun. Since 1 September, the trade unions and left-wing groups have been working to collect the 40,000 signatures required. There is a very good chance that the campaign will succeed, which could call into question the legitimacy of the current government, or even its survival.

Slovenia is not the only European country to allow civil society to force the organisation of repeal referendums. This provision also exists in the Italian constitution. In 2011, three repeal referendums targeted the privatisation of water, the return to nuclear power and the immunity granted to Silvio Berlusconi. They were won by the initiators.

The right to a repeal referendum is an important democratic demand that should be championed everywhere. This is particularly true in the current climate of rising authoritarianism, exemplified in particular by the tendency to force through attacks on pension systems.

17 September 2026

INDIA/PAKISTAN

Statement on the Pakistani State's Attack on Free Media "Jeddojehad"

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA · 17 September 2026

This comes from the determined resistance of *Jeddojehad* to the Pakistani rulers' attempt to treat Jammu and Kashmir as a bilateral issue between Pakistan and India, and the refusal to genuinely allow self-determination in the parts of Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistani domination. In opposition to this, *Jeddojehad* seeks to uphold the principles of revolutionary Marxism on the right of oppressed nations to self-determi-

nation, not restricting that hypocritically to the Indian side.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of India denounces the attacks on "Jeddojehad". We demand its freedom to propagate its views. We demand a halt to all raids and restrictions on its staff. For democracy in every part of Jammu and Kashmir. Internationalist solidarity with our cothinkers.

Central Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party of India

9 September 2026