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Overview

# Political Review of 2024 - a view from Britain

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**It is that time of year when we reflect on the key events of 2024. Unlike the mainstream mass media we are interested in examining what happened from the point of view of the current and historic interests of the working class. Our task is to deconstruct the ideology that focuses on the visually dramatic, political or cultural personalities or the trivial.**

We explore and expose a dominant narrative that reproduces a capitalist world as the only one possible. A world where the overwhelming majority are exploited, oppressed and alienated from their better selves. A world where our rulers refuse to accept the planetary limits and threaten us with human extinction. A world ruled by states that divide us from one another – migrant, native, straight, gay, trans, cis, Black, white, men and women – to prevent a unity in struggle that threatens their power.

Rather than look at 2024 chronologically we have selected the main political processes and events.

## Palestine

The genocide unleashed by the apartheid Zionist state has continued unabated. Israel has not only turned Gaza into a dystopian wasteland but invaded Lebanon, bombed and killed in the West Bank, Yemen and Iran. No longer able to rely on the 'stability' of the Assad regime it has taken the opportunity in the last weeks to degrade the Syrian military and occupy more territory on the Golan Heights. However, Israel's military success has provoked a huge solidarity movement, and it has become a pariah state in the eyes of world public opinion.

Our solidarity movement has drawn tens of thousands of new people into political action. Disgracefully. Palestinian solidarity activists engaged in peaceful non-violent direct action have been imprisoned. Activists like Tony Greenstein have been threatened with anti-terrorist legislation.

[ACR Statement on Palestine](#)

[Solidarity with Palestine and the Struggle from Below](#)

[76 years after the Nakba, let's build an international movement for Palestine!](#)

## Ukraine

If 2024 saw many massive mobilisations in support of Palestine in every corner of England and Wales/Cymru, it's undoubtedly been harder work continuing to act in solidarity with the people of Ukraine against the Russian occupation, with the full invasion passing its 1000th day in late November. Living under occupation and bombardment, as well as under Zelensky's neoliberal policies, is harder still, as is the fate of the Russian opponents of the war.

We have had small successes here in Britain; for example, strengthening the support of the Ukraine Solidarity

Campaign in a number of trade unions such as UNISON and UCU and continuing a vigorous campaign of practical solidarity with workers in dire situations on the front line.

At a political level, throughout the year there has been the organisation of small contingents on Palestine marches in London behind the banner 'From Ukraine to Palestine, occupation is a crime', together with the dissemination of leaflets with the same message. Welcomed by many other protestors, this challenges those 'leaders' who deny agency to the people of Ukraine while rightly demanding it for the Palestinian people.

Over the months ahead we will work to deliver ongoing solidarity and continue to put the case against any unjust, imposed 'peace' deal that leaves parts of Ukraine under Russian occupation.

[Meeting: Making sense of Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#)

[Palestine, Ukraine and the crisis of empires](#)

[Ukraine under Russian occupation](#)

## Syria

We can finally celebrate the overthrow of one of the most repressive Arab regimes as the Assad dynasty is ousted following the unexpected velocity of the HTS military campaign and the complete disaggregation of the regime's repressive apparatus. Damascus and some other areas fell to the people even before the armed HTS resistance arrived.

For many years campist currents on the left basically supported the lesser evil of Assad against what they claimed was a purely reactionary ISIS/Jihadist opposition. US and British intervention were uniquely condemned, and the repressive role of Russia and Iran were whitewashed. Today these currents suggest that the overthrow of Assad is entirely an Israeli/US/Turkish plot where the agency of the Syrian people is unrecognised. They call it a big political defeat.

We think that despite the risks involved in any new political situation that today it is easier to face those problems after the overthrow of Assad. There is a political space within which the most progressive and secular forces, including returning exiles, can operate.

[Understanding the Rebellion in Syria](#)

[What is Happening in Syria?](#)

[The Syrian Rebellion and Palestine](#)

## Trump triumphant

One of the most negative changes this year has been the return of Trump which expresses the continued rise of the new far right internationally. His victory has to be seen alongside the success of Milei in Argentina, Meloni in Italy, Orban in Hungary, Modi in India, Le Pen in France and the increasing electoral success of hard right formations elsewhere such as in Germany, Holland or Britain. Certainly the failure of the Democrats to respond adequately to working class interests, Biden and Harris's inept candidatures and their reliance on cultural personalities all helped Trump win.

The two failed assassination attempts and his sexist, anti-trans embrace of toxic masculinity all contributed to a much bigger victory for Trump than in 2016. It seems likely that Trump will carry out more of his reactionary programme than in his first term.

[ACR Statement: Trump's Second Term](#)

[Fascism has Gone Beyond Creeping... We are in Big Trouble](#)

[Disaster Nationalism: A Glimpse into the Far Right's Apocalyptic World](#)

## Starmer's 'thin' landslide

Most people were relieved that 14 years of Tory misrule came to an end this July, but there was no great enthusiasm for Starmer's very moderate Labour party. This was reflected in Labour's popular vote being lower than under Corbyn in 2016. Reform and the Liberals took huge chunks out of the Tory vote. On the other hand this election saw a surprisingly big vote for candidates we can define as to the left of Labour's manifesto – the Greens, Corbyn, the four 'Gaza' independents and the votes for Feinstein, Leanne Mohammed and Fazia Shaheen among others. The government honeymoon was short-lived as it cut the pensioner heating allowance, refused to move on the two child benefit cap, increased bus fares, backtracked on its green policies and retreated on Trans rights.

Just this week, Starmer reneged on promises to compensate the Waspi women, who were shabbily treated when their pensionable ages were changed at the drop of a hat. Despite some welcomed increased spending on health and education the big budget failed to tax the wealthy or big corporations. Reeves has ruled out new taxes for the rest of the parliament and is looking for 5% spending cuts in each department. Corporate managers are supposedly going to be introduced to improve the public sector's efficiency.

We have been there before, and we saw how it worked with the post office and water. Labour's strategy boils down to faith in a partnership with big business for growth as opposed to any sort of redistribution or radical green policies. Already there is evidence that growth is not arriving soon, and Labour's business partners are even not confident they can deliver the housing programme target.

[General Election 2024: End the Tyranny of Conservative Rule](#)

[Starmer's First Hundred Days](#)

## Anti-migrant riots and the threat from Reform

Given the vicious anti-migrant narrative that has been promoted for years by much of the mainstream media, the Tory party, Reform and the Labour party leadership, it is a surprise that the near pogroms we saw this summer had not taken place earlier. Starmer and his ministers reduced the riots to a question of policing rather than accepting the clear link to this racist political narrative. The rightward shift of the Tories – exemplified by Kemi Badenoch's victory – and the four million plus votes for Reform has given the street thugs marshalled by people like Tommy Robinson the green light.

John McDonnell MP has correctly raised the threat of Farage's Reform capitalising on dissatisfaction with this government to win a significant number of local and national representatives. Reform is second in 80 odd constituencies to Labour. It now has over a 100,000 members. Trump's victory will give Farage more credibility and money if Elon Musk delivers on his promise to fund it. A recent poll put them second in the national voting intentions, in front of Labour. Starmer's ratings are off a cliff and there are even rumours inside Labour of him being replaced in the future.

Resisting the far right and developing anti-racist campaigns will be key tasks for the left in 2025,

[Solidarity and Unity Now](#)

[Fascists Blocked by Mass Protest](#)

## Attacks on trans people

Trump spent over \$40 million in attack ads against Harris claiming she was for them and he was for 'you'. Previously Labour conferences have voted some positive policies for trans rights. Both pre-election and since July the tone has changed significantly. The pseudoscience of the Cass review has been entirely adopted by the Labour leadership and now puberty blockers have been outlawed by Wes Streeting, the health minister.

Even fringes of the radical left have allied themselves with some radical feminist positions that insist on a purely biological definition of gender. But trans activists and their allies are fighting back. A large pro trans demonstration took place this summer and there was an action organised against West Streeting

[Cass Means Social Murder](#)

[On the Cass Review](#)

[Be Realistic – Demand the Impossible!](#)

## Women fight back against male violence

Internationally the denunciation of male violence against women has been one of the main themes for mobilisation of women and their allies. Huge demonstrations were held in Rome, Paris and Madrid this November.

The case of Gisele Pelicot in France, who was drugged and then raped by her husband and seventy other men over

a number of years, has galvanised public opinion. Many publications have installed her deservedly as woman of the year for her bravery in going public. It may well lead to legislative change in France over the question of consent. As she says, shame has changed sides.

In the USA women mobilised against Trump's attack on abortion rights, winning some ballots but losing the presidential election. In Iran repression of women and their resistance continues.

[Mazan, rape as a political fact](#)

[Abortion at the Centre of American Politics](#)

[International Women's Day 2024](#)

## Ecosocialism

Trump's victory is bad news for the planet. He has already rejected the Paris agreements and is unlikely to engage with the COP process. His slogan is 'drill baby drill'. In practice it also means federal support for environmental regulations will be slashed. This year's COP in Baku saw little advance in the phasing out of fossil fuels. The amount offered to the Global South to compensate for the capitalist world's assault on their environment was pitiable and was mostly structured in loans rather than grants. In any case the promises often never materialise in practice. In Britain Labour has drastically cut back on its £28 billion green energy project.

Moreover, it has invested billions in a carbon capture programme that gives big subsidies to corporations but fails to radically alter carbon emissions. Resistance to fossil fuel companies by activists has continued this year with the courts using the reactionary measures devised by Tory home secretary Suella Braverman to imprison dozens of activists. There was a victory with the Cumbrian coal mine project being abandoned after mass protest. Labour has done nothing to rescind these draconian laws against non-violent protests. Recently the second Ecosocialism conference which ACR helped to organise drew about 200 activists.

[Ecosocialist Revolution: A Manifesto](#)

[Defining Ecosocialism](#)

[Who Wants Degrowth?](#)

30 December 2024.

Source: [Anti\\*Capitalist Resistance](#).

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