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On the Eve of the November US Elections

31 October, by Kay Mann

After several years of seeming to be politically invincible, Trump has become increasingly unpopular, including even in MAGA circles, and is widely seen as a handicap for Republican candidates. Losing control over one or both houses of congress would represent a blow to Trump's domestic and international agenda. A defeat for congressional Republicans will also be a sharp rebuke to Trump himself who has stepped up his efforts to use state power to prevent Democratic party victories through lies about election fraud and non-citizen immigrants voting, attempts to use the courts to limit voting in Democratic areas, and dark threats to send armed ICE agents and even the military to polling stations.

The elections are referred to as "midterm" in reference to the academic calendar and take place at the halfway point of the four-year presidential mandate for many, but not all, offices at the federal and state levels as well as elections for state governors. Trump has had a Republican majority in both houses of congress which has acted as a rubber stamp for his imperialist adventures and assault on democratic rights, political institutions, vulnerable communities, and the environment. But Trump has pursued his reactionary agenda largely through executive orders that have often overstepped congressional authority. Trump will very likely continue to try to sidestep congress, particularly if the Democrats become the majority party in both houses. The Supreme Court with its conservative majority has largely also acted as a rubberstamp for Trump, but has nonetheless shown an independent streak in several important rulings such as on the question of birthright citizenship and on his attempts to intervene in the voting process.

Invincible No More

Trump's slumping political fortunes are largely the predictable result of his own policies, particularly the high cost of living exacerbated by his tariff policies and the Iran war. His Republican allies have mostly sought to distance them from him. His insistence on weak candidates for Senate in South Carolina and Texas where Republicans have held those seats for decades, will likely be seen as major political gaffes in the event that Democrats prevail in those elections, which could mean that the Republicans would lose their Senate majority. The billionaires behind Trump have been exasperated by the tariffs which have mostly harmed them, and some sectors such as agriculture and meatpacking, areas with large, mostly Mexican immigrant labor have come to resent the scope of Trump's anti-immigrant campaign. Latinos, a population of which over 40% has voted Republican in recent national elections have recoiled at the violence and cruelty of the ICE terror campaign against immigrant Latino communities.

The anticipated victory of enough Democratics to take over the House of Representatives, and possibly the Senate, has nothing to do with the Democrats offering any progressive alternative to Trump's policy. During Trump's worst outrages from the deployment of violent ICE brigades in US cities and the deportations, to the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores and the looting of the Venezuela's oil wealth, to the attack on trans people, to the war on Iran, no oppositional voices have been milder that those of the congressional Democratic party congressional leaders, Chuck Schumer, leader of the Democratic party delegation in the Senate, and Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic leader of the Democratic delegation in the House of Representatives. It was the Democratic party's slide to right and its embrace of neo-liberal economic and social policies that help make Trump's first victory in 2016 over Hillary Clinton possible. If the Democrats take the majority in the

House of Representatives, and much more so if they win the Senate majority and thus control both house of congress, they will be under immense pressure to undo Trump's policy faster and more thoroughgoingly than they would like.

The Big Tent

There is also a discussion within the Democratic Party and DSA on the relation between the two. Bernie Sanders favors a big tent party with a range of political and ideological currents which would include DSA. The reformist and electoralist currents in DSA are very interested in having a seat at the table. DSA-endorsed Francesca Hong, a Wisconsin state representative who ran and narrowly lost, in the Democratic Party primary for governor spoke in favor of a big tent Democratic party during a televised debate. Hong is now campaigning for David Crowley, who narrowly beat her in the gubernatorial Democratic primary with support from the Democratic party establishment. The conservative big-money wing of the Democratic party is largely against giving the democratic socialists a place in the party although some enlightened centrists could very well see advantages in integrating an energetic electoralist oriented left wing which it could control better within the party than without. As gangsters in the Francis Ford Coppola film The Godfather reasoned, one should "keep your friends close, and your enemies even closer." In any event, if all DSA-endorsed candidates for the House of Representatives win their elections, they would have a delegation of seven (there are currently 214 Democrats to 218 Republicans), far too small to have much influence on party policy.

DSA at a Crossroads

Since its rapid growth beginning with Bernie Sanders' campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 2016, DSA has not endorsed a candidate for President. Currently however, the more pro-Democratic party reformist wing in the DSA leadership seems to favor DSA endorsing a candidate for the 2028 presidential elections and it would be in the Democratic party, very possibly Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Many on the revolutionary socialist left today also support the strategy of using the Democratic party ticket - the so-called "dirty break" with the Democratic party - as opposed to those who support a "clean break" with the Democrats in favor of independent political action. Revolutionary socialists who favor using the Democratic party ballot line see it as a short-term tactic on the road to building a left alternative or Labor party at some point in the future. But as Kim Moody recently put it, this "tactic becomes strategy." Indeed, there are clearly widespread illusions among the largely inexperienced DSA membership about the possibility of transforming the capitalist-run Democratic party into a pro-working class, anti-capitalist party. For many DSA members, running in Democratic Party primaries is a strategy.

The Mamdani Experience

Zohran Mamdani's victory for Mayor of New York city, and the good possibility that DSA-endorsed candidates for mayor in Washington DC and Los Angeles could win in November, have put wind in the sails of the strategy of using the Democratic party ballot line to win primaries and then general elections. But a closer look at Mamdani's experience in office reveals the contradictions and limitations of socialists running as Democratics with Democratic political and material resources.

The Mamdani victory in the New York Democratic mayoral primary election, which all but assured his victory in the general election, has had a big impact on debates on the left and in DSA. In the primary Mamdani faced Andrew Cuomo, the former governor of New York state who was accused by several women of sexual harassment, which made Mamdani's primary victory possible, which in turn all but assured his victory in the general election given the strength of the Democrats and weakness of the Republicans in New York city politics. Mamdani appealed directly to working class New Yorkers with a program of rent control, free public transportation, and affordable childcare. Winning the Democratic Party primary gave Mamdani access to considerable political and material resources including the endorsement of centrist Democrat Governor of New York, Kathy Hochul.

But of course, this support came with strings attached. Hochul made it clear that Mamdani's proposal to levy a billionaire's tax on the great fortunes to pay for his programs was off the table. He has also felt politically constrained to retain the former police chief Jessica Tisch, a billionaire in her position even after NYC police aided ICE agents who recently killed a person during a violent operation. To these political constraints preventing Mamdani from acting consistently on behalf of working-class New Yorkers are added institutional constraints facing any mayor. Budgetary restraints prevented Mamdani from supporting the just demand of New York city's paraprofessionals for a one-time ten-thousand-dollar bonus.

Independent Political Action

The Mamdani experience and the debates on the left regarding the use of the Democratic party ballot line is the most recent incarnation of the debate around the question of independent political action. The absence of a mass political party with some sort of institutional connection to the labor movement is a key aspect of American exceptionalism and an important barrier to the independent mobilization of the working class outside of the two main capitalist parties. Revolutionary socialists in the US have long considered the independent pollical organization of the working class and its allies as a fundamental and necessary step to bring the working class out of its atomization and political subordination to the capitalist parties, towards anticapitalist class consciousness, action, and

organization. The DSA today has the opportunity to help solve the question of independent working-class political action by educating its members and political audience on the class nature of the Democratic party and agitating on the need for a mass independent socialist or labor party.

However, reformist currents in the DSA leadership particularly the Groundwork and Socialist Majority caucuses have come out in favor of DSA endorsing a candidate for the 2028 presidential election, beginning with endorsing a candidate in the Democratic party primaries. They have launched a campaign to "draft" Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) as candidate in the Democratic party primaries. Some revolutionary socialists like the Bread and Roses caucus in DSA also support an AOC candidacy in the Democratic primaries.

Post-election Period

The post-election period will present a new political terrain. If the Democrats win control of both houses of congress, they will be under enormous pressure to undo the damage Trump has done. Such pressure would likely push the Schumer-Jeffries congressional Democratic party establishment to go further than it would like on issues such as US support to Israel, tax cuts, transgender rights on which they have already shown themselves as unreliable allies, environmental deregulation, releasing the Epstein files, and much of the mostly neo-liberal agenda that Trump and his Republican congressional majority have enacted. Their inevitable hesitancy on these issues will further expose their true nature to those on the left who still harbor illusions on the progressive nature of the Democratic party. The post-election period will also signal the opening of the campaigns for the 2028 presidential elections.

The coming period will also be a crossroads for DSA. Will it chart a course that will bring it and the energy of 135,000, mostly young members into the Democratic party where that energy will be dissipated? Or will it help create an independent political alternative for workers and the oppressed to fight Trump's neo-fascist, imperialist, extractivist neo-liberal attacks and lay the groundwork for a mass labor party outside and in opposition to the two capitalist parties?

The post-election period will also hopefully signal the return of mass anti-Trump protests. With the exception of a recent massive "protect the vote" called by the pro-Democratic party, NGO-dominated No Kings! apparatus, the mass movement has been largely dormant during the last few months as social movement energy was diverted first to Democratic primary electoral activity, and over the last few months, to the midterm elections.

Milwaukee,
30 October 2026

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31 October, by International Viewpoint

In the Spanish state, the eviction of 87-year-old Maricarmen, who died on 7 October, set off a movement that forced a snap general election. Miguel Urbán Crespo recalls Daniel Bensaïd's lesson that "history does not advance according to a railway timetable," Jaime Pastor weighs the general strike against the threat of a reactionary election victory, Juanjo Álvarez examines the housing decrees voted in Congress, and Dan La Botz reports from the tent city in Bilbao. Anticapitalistas respond to the snap election called for 29 November: continue the struggle on the streets. The contagion spreads: José Soeiro on a new cycle of struggles in Portugal, and Esquerda.net on the Lisbon encampment ("Can't manage anymore? Then pitch your tent!"); Dave Kellaway on mass protests of youth and workers in Italy, and Eliana Como on the CGIL's call for a general strike on 20 November; and Gauche anticapitaliste/SAP calling everyone onto the streets alongside the youth of Belgium.

Three elections went against the right. Srđan Atanasovski's cover feature explains the Student List's victory in Serbia, ending fourteen years of Vučić, as the product of "a conflict between two elites." Iain Bruce calls Lula's second-round comeback in Brazil "the most important defeat for the far right we have seen anywhere in the world in recent times," while Michael Löwy, writing before the first round, explains why time had to be bought. In Sweden, Socialistiska Politik reports that the right lost even as social democracy fell to a historic low. Jawad Moustakbal explains why Morocco's ballot boxes do not produce liberation, and Nadav of Tsedek! tells l'Anticapitaliste that Israel's election is "a race to the bottom" on Palestinian rights.

The United States approaches the midterms with Trump on the defensive. Kay Mann sets out the stakes, and Dan La Botz writes four more times: on the people turning against Trump, on the 7 to 9 million who joined the No Kings demonstrations, on the Latino vote that may decide the result, and on Mayor Mamdani, who condemned an ICE shooting in New York but faces criticism from the left. Dave Kellaway argues that Andy Burnham's first conference speech shows there is still life in Labourism, Colin Long answers

the Australian Greens' new leader that "peace is the fundamental business of the left" and Ukraine is entitled to defend itself, Paul Martial follows Kenyan and French workers organising together against Téléperformance, and Abahlali baseMjondolo's Thapelo Mohapi tells Amandla! that "the reason you are poor is not another poor person." Antoine Larrache reports the World Social Forum in Benin as a failure of NGOization, while Gippò Mukendi Ngandu and Uraz Aydin cover the anti-NATO conference held in Istanbul under state repression.

The Features section is dominated by artificial intelligence and climate. Ashley Smith opens a three-part series with two tech workers, and Eliana Como argues that the danger of AI lies not in the technology but in who controls it. Phil Hearse warns that we are sitting on a climate time bomb that the far right dismisses as a "scam," Nahuel Gravano shows that the collapse that follows El Niño and La Niña is not natural, Gregor Zahn reads the Swiss landscape through floods and droughts, and M.V. Ramana assesses the growing risk of nuclear war. Kim Moody answers Vivek Chibber's case for market socialism, Eduardo Lucita charts the new right's governments across Latin America, François Sabado untangles the historical ambiguity of "the Left," Angela Klein asks how far the AfD is fascist, and Enzo Traverso's preface introduces Salvatore Cannavò's history of the workers' cooperative movement. Two obituaries close the section: Sinistra Anticapitalista's farewell to the historian Antonio Moscato, and Duncan Chapel on Alan Thornett, "the best-known militant in the British car industry" in the decade that decided the fate of British trade unionism.

News from around the world carries two items: Anticapitalistas on the calling of the Spanish elections, and a report of Sinistra Anticapitalista's ecosocialist summer university, "AI, Anti-Capitalist Intelligence."

2.

The groundswell that threatens Macron and his world

30 October, by Léon Crémieux

October 17th was a historic day of mobilization in France, comparable in numbers to the major pension protests of 2023. 800,000 people (550,000 according to the police), more than one hundred declared demonstrations, plus numerous others, undeclared, in towns and neighbourhoods.

A social crisis, with deep roots, is being dramatically expressed today, echoing similar crises in many other countries, always centred on the massive mobilization of youth. And the violence that has erupted in the streets across the country against businesses and institutional buildings, perpetrated by minority groups but widespread in every city, is unfortunately a reflection of the social violence experienced daily by millions of men and women who suffer from precariousness and poverty—a violence constantly exacerbated by the policies of Macron's governments, which target the working class, remain indifferent to social misery, and protect the privileges of the wealthiest people and of large corporations.

The unprecedented nature of the protests

The first characteristic of the current mobilizations is their unprecedented nature, forcefully manifested on October 17th: a massive, even unexpected, surge, a convergence not only of anger but also of very concrete social demands, coming from the Yellow Vest collectives that emerged from the 2018 mobilizations, from high school and university student organizations and coordinating bodies, and from the CGT, FSU, and Solidaires unions. Thus, a broad mix, with young people at its centre, mobilized and self-organized in various ways for over a month. We can say that the current movement is a resurgence of the significant mobilizations that have appeared in the country over the past ten years: the Yellow Vests, the mobilizations in working-class suburbs against police violence and discrimination, and finally, the massive demonstrations by workers against pension reform. The strength of this movement cannot be understood without also considering the role of #MeToo, the mobilizations against social violence, and those against large-scale, unnecessary projects, notably the Sainte Soline mega-basin. In fact, the entire catastrophic record of the Macron governments since 2017 is exploding to the surface, a "supply-side policy", made up each year of 270 billion euros in subsidies and gifts to businesses and the richest layers of society [1], and of deep wounds for the working classes, for social rights, purchasing power and public services, leading today to the most stinging rejection of a president and a government since the beginning of the Fifth Republic in 1958.

The date of October 17th originated from a call on social media, starting on September 8th on TikTok , protesting the high cost of living and soaring fuel prices. Dozens of posters echoing the Yellow Vest movement's themes circulated, organizing rallies in

numerous cities across the country, from rural areas to small and medium-sized towns, using encrypted messaging. Joining them were the initiators of the "Block Everything" movement, who had already called for a major day of action in September 2025 against the high cost of living and tax injustice. They created a national map of the rallies, which quickly filled most regions and localities. Former Yellow Vest leaders, also active on social media, then took up the mantle.

This proliferation of grassroots calls, outside of any real political or union organization, is the first characteristic of October 17th, bringing together workers and those in precarious employment, often the first to be hit in recent months by heatwaves in inadequate housing, by the soaring price of food, and by the cost of energy. The anger is obviously all the greater because the minority government of Macron and Lecornu is constantly cutting back on social redistribution programmes and has been promising, since the summer, a 2027 budget that once again exempts the wealthy, capital gains, and large corporations from taxation, multiplying exemptions, aid, and subsidies for them, while severely impacting the working class, young people, and pensioners. The Yellow Vest movement in 2018 and 2019 was a profound wave of mobilization across the country, particularly in semi-urban areas. It began in protest against increased fuel taxes, the price of which had already risen sharply in previous years, but quickly broadened to include a rejection of the tax burden and the loss of public services in rural and semi-urban areas, resulting in job losses, hospital closures, and disruptions to public transportation. Essentially, it mirrored the situation experienced in working-class neighbourhoods of major cities. The movement grew by organizing around more than 1,000 Facebook groups, with over 4 million members. Around 3 million people participated in the Yellow Vest protests across the country, expanding their demands to include lists of grievances in their lists of grievances. The Yellow Vest movement witnessed an explosion of police violence, with people maimed by LBD (“sub-lethal” defence weapon) fire or stun grenades: one death, 613 people injured, 23 who lost an eye, five hands torn off. "The police have injured more protesters in a few months than in twenty years." [2] The violent way of dealing with popular demonstrations had already been organized in 2016 by the Socialist government of Manuel Valls in response to the protests against the El Khomri labour law. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Amnesty International have since condemned this violent handling of the demonstrations, the abuses, and the use of "intermediate force" weapons, such as LBD 40s, Tasers, tear gas grenades, and crowd control grenades, described as "sub-lethal" but which have repeatedly become deadly weapons.

The power of the youth movement

The initial strength of the October 17th movement stemmed first and foremost from this deep-rooted popular momentum. Then, of course, came the power of the youth movement, which began in high schools in underprivileged suburbs of France’s overseas territories in early September and continued unabated for over a month until October 17th, despite the violence and police repression it faced.

The triggering factor was the poor learning conditions: teacher absences, unsanitary facilities, and overcrowded classrooms, all the more unbearable after weeks of sweltering heat in their homes. Here too, it was a grassroots movement that quickly took hold. Initially, without much resonance in mainland France, blockades began in Mayotte and French Guiana at the start of the school year, in late August and early September, demanding the renovation and ventilation of classrooms, protesting cafeteria prices, and generally denouncing the state of neglect and the feeling of social exclusion—clear demands and great determination.

In France itself, the blockades began on September 17th at a high school in Créteil, in the Paris region, echoing the demands put forward by teachers. There, too, the issues of facilities, but also overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, impossible schedules, and the demand for the repeal of two measures introduced at the beginning of Macron’s first term in 2017-2018: the Blanquer reform (dismantling the academic tracks—literature, science, economics—in high schools and replacing them with "a choice of specializations") coupled with the implementation of a ruthless selection process for university admissions after the baccalaureate, "Parcoursup." This platform closes the door to numerous programmes, excludes students from working-class backgrounds from many higher education pathways, and, for example, in 2026, left 126,000 young people out of nearly 900,000 baccalaureate graduates without a university placement. The verdict is unequivocal: despite a "baccalaureate for all," since 80 per cent of an age group obtains a baccalaureate, 57 per cent of that same group do not obtain a general baccalaureate, the only qualification required for access to university bachelor’s and master’s programmes. "Parcoursup," with its algorithm, ensures a remarkably efficient form of social sifting. All studies demonstrate the harsh reality of social reproduction, and its intensification since 2020. [3]

Young people in working-class neighbourhoods

Among young people, those in working-class neighbourhoods experience the daily violence of social discrimination, alongside that experienced by their parents and that perpetrated against them by the police. This violence has intensified significantly in the last month with the school blockades, which were criminalized from the outset and classified by the Ministry of the Interior as urban violence, are unfortunately a long-standing issue in the country.

For twenty years, young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have repeatedly expressed their anger and demands in the face of their exclusion and social marginalization. This began

in 1990 in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of Lyon, and again in 2005 when two teenagers, Zyed Benna, 17, and Bouna Troré, 15, were killed in Clichy-sous-Bois, pursued by the police and electrocuted in an electrical substation where they had sought refuge. Several weeks of riots ensued in the neighbourhoods, demanding social justice, avenging the deaths of the two young men, and denouncing police brutality.

This mobilization, instead of being treated by the government as a social issue, was treated as riots of urban violence, perpetrated by "vandals, thugs," and "scum," as the then Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, called them.

"Nothing has changed," as Mekki Daouadji Djilali, president of ACLeFeu , a collective created in Clichy-sous-Bois after the deaths of Zyed and Bouna, reiterated in an interview twenty years later. The collective had drawn up a list of grievances outlining the population's priorities. At the time, 20,000 contributions were gathered from 120 cities. Twenty years later, the problems and priorities remain the same. "Since 2005, all the reforms implemented have been security-focused, not social," adds Mohamed Mechmache, a founding member of ACLeFeu. But, for political leaders, young people from working-class neighbourhoods, especially those from post-colonial immigrant families, cannot be political actors, bearers of social struggles and demands. The same pattern has been repeated several times, for example in June 2023, with the death of Nahel Mezrouk, a 17-year-old killed at point-blank range by a police officer during a traffic stop in Nanterre.

This profound dynamic originating in high schools in working-class neighbourhoods quickly spread to other high schools, universities and, unprecedentedly, to the "prestigious" grandes écoles HEC, IEP, Ecole des Mines explicitly in solidarity against social segregation, [4] 90 per cent of universities blocked the week of October 11-17, universities where more than 100,000 places are lacking to accommodate students .

The demands put forward by the high school student movement have been clear from the start: unions and coordinating bodies have united in their demand for the abolition of Parcoursup and the Blanquer reform, the creation of sufficient positions to address the shortages of teachers, nurses, and social workers, and a €10 billion euro budget increase to allow for the renovation of school buildings and their adaptation to climate change. The government has so far refused to provide any concrete response to these demands, even treating them with contempt.

But the underlying trend among young people reflects a multifaceted awakening of consciousness. LFI MP Louis Boyard explains the four main drivers of youth politicization:

- -the #MeToo movement and the prominent role played by young women with a feminist culture,
- -global climate strikes,
- -the revolts of working-class neighbourhoods against racism, particularly after the death of Nahel,
- -Palestine and the horror of the genocide committed by the Zionist regime.

All of this calls into question Macron and his world, and his sinister continuity in what the far right promises. [5]

The movement of youth and the Yellow Vest movement converge with the broader social concerns of workers : the lack of response to social needs, inadequate public services, the cost of living, starting with energy and food, and the increasing impoverishment of the working class. The poverty rate (60 per cent of the median income) is 15.4 per cent, affecting 9.8 million people, a rate that has been rising since the mid-2000s. France was once one of the countries with a low poverty rate thanks to its redistribution systems. The dismantling of these systems since the mid-2010s has undermined this safety net.

The combined effects of pension reform, the rising cost of living, job insecurity, housing difficulties, and stagnant or meagre wage increases are creating an increasingly difficult situation for workers and their families. The mobilizations against pension reform in 2023 expressed this widespread discontent and demanded a different social policy. The rejection of Macron's policies and their budgets, which disproportionately impact the working class, was expressed electorally in 2022 and 2024. Successive minority Macronist governments have since survived only thanks to the leniency of the Socialist Party, which saved the adoption of the 2026 public finance and social security budgets and accepted farcical social negotiations with Bayrou and Lecornu that led only to dead ends: in the spring of 2025, Bayrou's "conclave," and in the autumn of 2025, the "suspension of pension reform" and the "conference on pensions and work" justified the Socialist Party's (PS) reprieves granted to Macron's government and made possible a division among the unions. the unions. Indeed, on two occasions, the CFDT, CFTC, and CGC unions seized this opportunity, which led to no government backing down.

This autumn, a new landscape is emerging, and the role of militant unionism could be decisive in the outcome of the current social conflict. Following a joint day of mobilization and demonstrations on September 29th, public sector unions had set November 5th as the date for a future day of action focused on defending public services and increasing the minimum wage and salaries. Many felt that November 5th was too late, given the urgent need to strengthen and support the youth mobilization. Furthermore, October included several key events for the youth movement and the Yellow Vest protests. Solidaires, therefore, preferred to wait until October 17th o make a call for action on November 5th in order to mobilize first during October. And, in practice, the CGT, FSU, and Solidaires unions supported the blockades throughout October, protected the high school student marches from the police, and were present on October 17th. The rest of the national inter-union alliance did

not follow the same movement, although many unions, at least the CFDT and FO, were involved locally and through their education federations.

Also, on the 17th, the role of the unions was very important, providing the link to all the other components, and they were not spared by the police forces, as in Toulouse where the front line of the union procession was hit by grenades, resulting in injuries to four union leaders.

A turning point

Now, we are at a pivotal moment in the movement.

The government and the right wing were completely destabilized by the scale of the high school student movement and the political prominence it gained. For several weeks, they played the card of isolating young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, seeking to discredit and criminalize them, and portray them as being manipulated by La France Insoumise (LFI). The generalization of this movement to all young people was therefore surprising, but Lecornu remained steadfast in his refusal to back down or accommodate the students' demands. The students' interlocutors were the police and the Minister of the Interior. The method was to strike hard through repression, with a systematic smear campaign by the media, systematically stigmatizing young people as vandals and accusing "the far left, supported by LFI, of aiming to destabilize the Republic." The Republican Party even called for the dissolution of La France Insoumise and the imposition of a state of emergency. [6]

The violent crackdown by the police went hand in hand with mass arrests of young people as a form of political propaganda, aimed at deterring them from continuing to take part in the movement: 10,000 arrests, including 7,000 minors, between early September and 17 October. Nights spent in police custody in often appalling conditions, such as those reported in Bobigny; summary court appearances; and prison sentences even at the first hearing for young adults. Arrests have become political tools, previously used against young people in the suburbs in 2005 (5,643 young people arrested) and against the Yellow Vests (6,786 arrests). This mass intimidation and criminalisation has failed to prevent either the continuation or the expansion of the movement, nor its convergence with the trade union movement.

With the current movement, the government has been caught off guard, having assumed that the left and the working classes would be paralysed by the fragmentation of the left and the moderation of the trade union front. Lecornu wanted to be able to continue with a policy and a 2027 budget that would hit the working classes, imposing over 40 billion in cuts to social spending, with attacks on pensioners and young people, and a freeze on civil servants' salaries. These cuts were justified by invoking the unbearable level of public debt, whilst the government refuses to challenge the derisory taxation of capital gains and large corporations, and has approved a 6.5 billion increase in the military budget over two years.

This draft budget went hand in hand with an increasingly security-focused discourse that was increasingly permeable to the proposals and rhetoric of the National Rally.

Destabilised and shaken by the strength of the 17 October protests and the alliance with the militant wing of the trade union movement, Macron and Lecornu re-enacted the tragedy already scripted by the bourgeois leaders of the 19th century, and the great fear inspired by the Paris Commune: the working classes are, above all, dangerous classes; the rabble threatens the right to property; the police and the army must protect our lives and our property.

The images of smashed shop windows and hundreds of shops looted on 17 October in the centres of major cities were the trigger for a terrifying spiral of state repression: curfews in city centres, banned demonstrations, and heavy prison sentences. This spiral, applauded by the far right, was aimed just as much at silencing criticism of the police's inability to protect city centres as it was at trying to paralyse and silence the social movement and to dissociate the trade unions from future protests. Following the example of Zemmour (who blamed 'Arab-Muslim scum'), Retailleau, Ciotti, Bardella – all the leaders of the far right have, for several days now, been engaging in a barrage of racist rhetoric directed at young people and the protests, finding themselves, surprisingly, in lockstep with Trump and Netanyahu, who denounce 'the Islamic invasion of France'. All the television channels are broadcasting endless loops of footage showing the vandalism of public buildings, shops and burnt-out cars. Day after day, editorialists condemn the intolerable violence suffered by shopkeepers, without ever having paid the slightest attention to, or shed the slightest light on, the working classes' descent into precariousness and the impossibility of making a decent living. This everyday violence has very rarely been given a place in the media. But, caught out by its own security policy, the government has been accused of failing to protect small shopkeepers or even town halls, as in Marseille.

Since then, Macron and Lecornu have been stammering, calling both for order and for a ban on demonstrations, invoking "the Republic in danger and the seditious threat posed by La France Insoumise and its proxies", and, after a month of refusal, rushing into hasty meetings with representatives of the youth movement, on Monday 26th with the Prime Minister, then finally on the 23rd with Macron himself, only to announce that they would provide answers later! On the 24th, dozens of demonstrations were banned by the prefectures, then authorised, diverted from their planned routes, with some bans even overturned by the administrative courts. The authorities are stepping up their crackdown, striking hard, yet at the same time hesitating for fear of revealing their weakness and lack of authority in the face of a movement that persists and remains determined to secure its demands. Today, it is Macron and his government who are caught in a trap, and this makes them all the more dangerous.

The government now fears that the movement, far from running out of steam, will spread like wildfire in the coming days with strikes by workers, particularly around 5 November. Consequently, Macron and Lecornu are continuing to isolate themselves by refusing to make even the slightest concession to young people (…whilst announcing a meeting with youth organisations on Monday 26 October and an 'overhaul' of Parcoursup) and are taking a decisive step towards repression and authoritarianism. During the forthcoming demonstrations, the Minister of the Interior plans to deploy not only the police and the gendarmerie, but also the RAID – a police unit responsible for counter-terrorism operations – and forces from Operation Sentinelle, military personnel also tasked with counter-terrorism operations on the mainland, as well as the BRI (the brigade responsible for combating organised crime)… All this illustrates a hardening of authoritarian tendencies, applauded by the RN and the LR, who are calling for the imposition of a state of emergency with the suspension of civil liberties, but it also reveals the government's political weakness. Over the weekend of 24 and 25 October, dozens of demonstrations have been banned or prevented from following their planned routes through town centres.

So clearly, the movement is heading for a make-or-break moment. Either the police crackdown will succeed in stifling the movement whilst bombarding public opinion with images of 'terror organised by the far-left and LFI', or the protests will converge with sections of the workforce through rallies, joint actions in towns and cities, and, above all, with professional sectors going on strike, particularly around 5 November.

Solidaires has explicitly put forward this strategy by calling for general assemblies in workplaces and raising the prospect of strikes across as many sectors as possible from 5 November onwards. The CGT, through Sophie Binet, has also set its sights on strikes on 5 November and beyond; the FSU is likewise calling for discussions on the follow-up to this day of strike action in workplaces, having already served notice of strike action running until the end of November. Thus, in different ways, these three trade unions are setting out their priorities without allowing themselves to be held back by the pace set by the national inter-union alliance with the other unions (notably the CFDT, FO and UNSA). This is clearly the lesson drawn by the militant trade unions from the strikes of 2023. This issue is recognised by all the militant elements within the trade union movement.

The threat of the National Rally

Last but by no means least. Everyone on the left understands that the motivation behind the current mobilisation is also the fight against the threat of the National Rally on the brink of political power. There is a growing fear that the fragmentation on the left – exacerbated by the victory, for the time being, of the most social-liberal wing within the Socialist Party (with Glucksman's candidacy) and the rejection of Mélenchon's candidacy by the other partners of the former NFP (the Ecologists, the PCF and Après) – will lead to a fratricidal war on the left and to a victory for Le Pen. The current movement could therefore also shift the political landscape through a grassroots movement, making it necessary to build unity as had been achieved in 2024.

Few people have taken notice, but in Orléans, a broad unity on the left – bringing together the PS and LFI side by side – was forged to call for opposition to the RN's congress on the weekend of 24 and 25 October. In contrast to the current situation on the left, left-wing forces in the Loiret issued a call 'to build a popular and united front'. In order to oppose the RN and "prevent Pétain's heirs from regaining power", they called on "all progressive forces – associations, trade unions and political parties – the cultural sector, and all citizens deeply committed to the democratic values of peace and freedom to join this popular and progressive gathering". [7]

Building a social balance of power capable of forcing Macron and Lecornu to back down is possible, even if this was not the case a few weeks ago, but the energy of all activist forces will be decisive in achieving this. This can and must be combined with the struggle to forge a united political and social front to oust Macron and his clique and prevent the RN from gaining access to the presidency.

24 Octobre 2026

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Footnotes

[1] Matthieu Aron and Caroline Michel-Aguirre, *Le Grand Détournement* Allary Editions, 2025.

[2] David Dufresne, *Dernières sommation*, Grasset, 2019

[3] Nagui Benchichi, Julien Grenet, Georgia Thebault, *Ségrégation à l'entrée des Etudes supérieures en France et en Région parisienne : quels effets du passage à Parcoursup*. INSEE Documents de travail, n°2021-03.

[4] « Ségrégation sociale en milieu scolaire : appréhender ses causes et déterminer ses effets ». Conseil d'Evaluation de l'Ecole, Document de Travail n°23-02, novembre 2023

[5] Interview with Louis Boyard, *Contretemps* 12 October 2026.

[6] Decreed by the Council of Ministers, enabling restrictions on civil liberties and an increase in the discretionary powers of the police and the government.

[7] Call signed by the CGT, Solidaires and the FSU, ATTAC, the Confédération paysanne, the Soulèvements de la Terre, the MRAP, Amnesty international, l'ASTI, AFPS, the CIMADE, the Fondation Copernic, Alternatiba, the Planning familial, the NPA-A,

the Poing levé, France insoumise, the PCF, Après, the Ecologistes, Générations, teh PS, and a big number of local campaign groups.

3.

The victory of student populism: a conflict of élites and the future of Serbia

29 October, by Srđan Atanasovski

At the heart of Serbia's political transformation lay a mass student movement, and behind that was a conflict between two elites: the political elite built by the Vučić regime over the preceding decade and a half, and an academic elite that had remained relatively independent of his system of governance. The decisive factor was the latter's ability to forge an alliance with the student movement, which had developed a distinctive form of participatory populism. This alliance enabled the political mobilisation that led to a change in government.

This populist movement did not emerge around demands for a radical transformation of Serbia's economic or foreign policy. In many areas it replicated the existing political consensus, promising that similar policies could be implemented without corruption, organised crime, nepotism, or hiring based on party affiliation. The greatest challenge facing the new government will be to dismantle the clientelist mechanisms of the previous regime while simultaneously demonstrating whether its relatively popular economic model can be sustained without resorting to those same mechanisms of capital accumulation and political control.

A single-party system within a multiparty democracy

One of the most significant features of Vučić's political dominance was the systematic weakening of the multiparty system, even as the formal institutions of parliamentary democracy remained in place. The Serbian Progressive Party sought to incorporate nearly all political actors with significant electoral support. Political organisations and their leaders were offered positions within the ruling coalition—often through guaranteed spots on joint electoral lists—while those who refused to cooperate faced various forms of pressure, marginalisation, and political destruction.

The result was an attempt to establish a kind of single-party system within a formally multiparty democracy. Almost all significant ideological positions found a place within the governing coalition—from nationalist and conservative currents to liberal, pro-European, and socially oriented ones. Ideological conflicts shifted, to a large extent, from the arena of electoral competition to the internal relations of the ruling bloc. Elections increasingly became referendums on the exercise of power and attitudes toward the Vučić regime, rather than contests between alternative political programmes. Opposition parties that remained outside this system failed to build a sufficiently broad social base or to establish a distinct political agenda.

At the same time, Vučić developed an exceptionally extensive party and electoral apparatus. Its functioning relied on political loyalty, control over public-sector employment, the securing of so-called "capillary" votes—votes garnered through granular, localised networks—and various forms of pressure on voters. Membership in the ruling party, or a willingness to secure votes for it, became a key prerequisite for obtaining employment, advancing one's career, and accessing public resources. Gradually, this system extended beyond its electoral purpose, becoming a fundamental mechanism for organising social and economic relations.

For a teacher who had spent years on temporary contracts, a healthcare worker awaiting a permanent position, or an employee of a public-sector enterprise, party affiliation could directly determine one's professional future. Similar mechanisms extended into the private sector through business networks, public procurement, and privileged access to state resources. Alongside the major financial scandals reported in the media, corruption became an everyday experience for a large segment of the population. Almost anyone seeking employment, career advancement, or access to certain entitlements could find themselves confronting the consequences of partisan clientelism.

Alongside systemic nepotism, the regime was beset by serious scandals that raised questions about the links between state structures and organised crime. These include the Jovanjica case—which involved the discovery of a large marijuana plantation allegedly protected by members of the security services—and a murder in a Belgrade restaurant, the

alleged cover-up of which implicated the then-chief of the Belgrade police. The problem for Vučić was that, once established, the network of loyalties required the ongoing protection of its members. Penalising individuals for criminal activity or corruption could threaten the stability of the entire system, which rested on the expectation that political loyalty would be rewarded and protected.

Consequently, the electoral machinery gradually became a burden for the regime itself. The mechanisms that enabled it to remain in power simultaneously generated increasingly widespread social discontent.

The academic elite that Vučić failed to incorporate

Unlike the political and business elites—which he successfully brought into his fold through a system of mutual interests—Vučić never managed to fully incorporate Serbia's academic elite.

By "academic elite," I mean a broader stratum of highly qualified professionals—professional managers, economists, lawyers, intellectuals, university professors, researchers, and individuals working in non-governmental organisations. Their social authority is based primarily on education, professional qualifications, and experience, rather than on control of the party apparatus. Throughout his tenure, Vučić sought to attract segments of this elite. The appointment of Ana Brnabić to high-level government positions and the rise of Siniša Mali were key elements of this effort. Through figures such as these, individuals from the business and academic worlds, as well as from the NGO sector, were brought into the state administration and political leadership to provide the regime with professional legitimacy and an image of modernisation.

This alliance remained relatively limited and unstable. Universities—with the University of Belgrade at the forefront—never became solid strongholds for the ruling party. University faculty and researchers had long expressed their discontent with the regime, though this dissatisfaction was not necessarily linked to a shared oppositional ideology. Shortly before the outbreak of student protests, the conflict intensified following announcements that foreign private universities might gain access to public funds earmarked for higher education. A model of this kind—similar to certain educational voucher systems—raised the possibility of diverting budgetary resources from public universities to private institutions. The academic community viewed this as a threat that would lead to the further subordination of education to corporate interests linked to political power. Consequently, the conflict between the universities and the regime also affected the immediate material interests of the academic community.

When the roof of the reconstructed Novi Sad railway station collapsed in November 2024, resulting in the deaths of sixteen people, this pre-existing conflict took on an entirely new dimension. The tragedy was widely seen as emblematic of a system in which political loyalty, opaque management, and corrupt relationships had displaced expert knowledge and professional accountability. Regardless of the specific technical causes of the collapse, the question arose as to how a major infrastructure project—touted as a symbol of the country's modernisation—could have been completed without adequate safety oversight.

The student rebellion that followed received broad support from university faculty. This alliance also had a very immediate basis: students and professors already knew one another, met daily within their faculties, and shared the same institutional space. For the students, the academic elite included their own professors, with whom they could communicate and cooperate directly. Despite occasional conflicts surrounding blockades, universities—the University of Belgrade in particular—became crucial pillars of the movement, providing it with institutional, moral, and practical support.

The regime responded to the rebellion by relying even more heavily on party cadres. The formation of Đuro Macut's government, following the political crisis triggered by the protests, did not lead to any meaningful reconciliation with the academic community. Individuals who had failed to demonstrate sufficient loyalty to the party were further sidelined from the government—a dynamic that reinforced a system in which real political power resided within the party's informal hierarchy, while ministers and other formal officeholders enjoyed only limited autonomy.

Student plenaries and the emergence of a populist movement

The student movement that emerged from university occupations developed a distinctive organisational model based on direct democracy. General assemblies were established within the faculties, where students made decisions regarding their demands, protests, and other activities. Participation in these assemblies varied considerably, and over time, informal hierarchies emerged. Working groups tasked with preparing proposals often gained substantial autonomy, while the assemblies would ratify decisions crafted by a relatively small number of active participants. As the movement progressed, the number of students directly involved in day-to-day decision-making gradually declined.

Nevertheless, the plenary assemblies remained the primary source of legitimacy for the student movement. Their importance also lay in their capacity to generate broad social mobilisation. Student marches between cities, multi-day treks, bicycle journeys, mass demonstrations, and complex logistical operations all involved a large number of young people. Many did not necessarily participate in formulating political demands, yet by

organising these activities, they became active members of the movement. The student movement allowed them to integrate into a broader political community through collective action, without requiring them to adopt a specific political ideology beforehand.

The students carefully avoided ideological and political stances that might undermine broad social support, and sought to present themselves as a movement representing the interests of society as a whole. Although the organisational model of the plenary assemblies bore affinities to anarchist and horizontalist traditions, its political content was not revolutionary. Broad participation fostered the reproduction of prevailing social attitudes, since only those demands acceptable to a large number of participants could garner support. The radicalism of the student movement lay primarily in its methods of organisation and its challenge to the existing government, rather than in its ideological programme.

The alliance between populism and expert knowledge

The most unusual feature of the student movement was its alliance with the academic elite. In many contemporary Western societies, populist movements develop in opposition to educated elites, experts, and professional managers. Academic institutions are often portrayed as part of an alienated establishment, detached from the everyday concerns of ordinary people. In Serbia, a mass populist movement embraced the academic elite as a natural political ally. Education, expert knowledge, professional qualifications, and cultural capital became central elements of its political identity.

This was clearly reflected in the way the students were presented to the public. They were portrayed as educated, honest, responsible and capable young people—future doctors, engineers, teachers and specialists. Particular emphasis was placed on the message that they wished to remain in Serbia and build their professional futures in their own country. This narrative resonated directly with the prevailing discontent regarding the Vučić regime. In a society where employment and career advancement depend on political connections, the natural alternative is one that values knowledge, qualifications, and professional competence. The fight against corruption and nepotism thus became the link between the academic elite and the populist base.

This alliance also entailed a certain fetishisation of expert knowledge: the expectation that individuals with the appropriate training and professional qualifications—free from ties to the discredited political class—would be better equipped to govern the country. Such a belief overlooks the fact that expert knowledge in a specific field does not automatically translate into political competence, and that professional elites have their own social interests, which do not always align with those of the majority of the population. Nevertheless, the combination of populist mobilisation and the authority of expert knowledge enabled the student movement to extend beyond the universities and emerge as a serious political alternative.

This was also reflected in the composition of the Student List. Among its candidates were university professors, economists, lawyers, specialists from various fields, and a significant number of individuals from non-governmental organisations.

Why the student movement did not develop a new ideology

When the student movement decided to stop addressing demands to the existing government and instead call for parliamentary elections, it took a step that may at first have seemed like an abandonment of its original logic of direct democracy. However, this decision was consistent with the populist character of the movement. Although based on principles of direct democracy, the student plenums reproduced another dominant social belief: that parliamentary elections are the main mechanism of political change.

At the same time, they kept their distance from existing political parties. This was often explained by the organisational characteristics of the student movement. Since the plenary assemblies had no permanent representatives authorised to negotiate on behalf of the movement as a whole, cooperation with political parties was institutionally complicated. There was also a deeper ideological reason. It was difficult for the student movement to negotiate a common platform with parties that held clearly defined political positions. Cooperating with liberals, conservatives, nationalists, or social democrats would have required the movement to take a stand on issues over which its own base was divided. Its political strength depended on its ability to prevent such divisions from emerging.

The Student List represented what society broadly perceived as political normality. Its core demand was for a state free from corruption, for institutions that functioned properly and for expert knowledge to take precedence over party affiliation. Consequently, the election campaign was largely free from traditional ideological conflicts. Vučić sought to portray the Student List as a political force that would alter economic and foreign policy, jeopardise relations with Russia, or call into question existing social benefits. The Student Slate generally responded that such changes were not their objective, and that they would implement existing policies with greater effectiveness and responsibility. There was considerably more programmatic continuity between the two major electoral slates than the intensity of their political confrontation might have suggested.

Even when the Student List expressed its opposition to the cheap-labour policy promoted by the Vučić regime during its early years, the distinction was not entirely clear. Over the preceding decade, the regime itself

had sought to move away from the image of a country that attracted foreign investors solely on the basis of low wages, promoting instead technological development, investment in science, and more sophisticated industrial investment. There is a substantial gap between political rhetoric and actual economic outcomes, but the conflict centered largely on who was capable of delivering the desired economic model.

A similar logic was applied to foreign policy. The Vučić government sought to maintain relations with the European Union, Russia and China, while avoiding full alignment with any single international bloc. This policy enjoyed relatively broad support within society, leaving the Student List with little reason to challenge it in any radical way. The core electoral choice was much simpler: the continuation of a system based on party loyalty, or its replacement by one that promised professional governance.

A victory with the characteristics of a plebiscite and the defeat of the political establishment

The election results confirmed the strength of this political mobilisation. According to preliminary data from the Republic Electoral Commission, the Student List secured 52.65% of the vote, while the list led by Aleksandar Vučić received 39.22%. Voter turnout was approximately 69%, and seat projections indicated that the Student List could form a parliamentary majority on its own. Vučić's electoral machine managed to retain a substantial portion of its voter base, but it could not match the exceptionally broad mobilisation of voters seeking political change.

The student movement succeeded in turning the elections into a referendum. The vote was framed as a decision as to whether the existing system of government should survive, and this climate effectively eliminated any space for the traditional opposition parties. Most withdrew from the electoral race, and those that remained garnered negligible results. Apart from the two dominant lists, no other list managed to cross the electoral threshold. The student movement thus defeated Vučić and effectively replaced the previous opposition.

This may be the most significant political consequence of the elections. Serbia has not gained a new governing party that represents a clearly defined ideological alternative to the previous administration. A movement whose legitimacy rests on a combination of mass mobilisation, a rejection of corruption, and a reliance on expert knowledge has secured a parliamentary majority.

Real estate development: the drug that fuels Vučić's economic model

The Vučić regime survived thanks to its electoral machinery and clientelist networks, but its political stability also depended on its ability to deliver economic growth, a relatively stable standard of living, and increased purchasing power. The economic policy of the previous government was more complex than is often portrayed within opposition circles.

Over the previous decade, Serbia benefited from certain advantages stemming from its foreign policy stance. Maintaining relations with Russia provided access to relatively affordable energy, while cooperation with China brought in significant investments particularly in industry, mining, and infrastructure. In this regard, Serbia's economic model shared certain similarities with the policies implemented by Hungary and Slovakia. At the same time, maintaining a stable exchange rate for the Serbian currency against the euro served as an important tool for preserving purchasing power. For a population whose consumption relies heavily on imported goods, and for citizens with loans or other obligations denominated in euros, exchange rate stability held immediate economic significance. The regime also sought to ensure increases in pensions, public sector wages, and various social benefits. Regardless of the actual scope or the distributive effects of these measures, they helped sustain social support for the existing economic model.

Real estate development became one of its most important pillars. Major infrastructure projects, the development of residential and commercial complexes, the Belgrade Waterfront project, preparations for the EXPO due to be held in Belgrade in 2027 and other related urban developments sustained construction activity, created jobs, and contributed to GDP growth. The problem was the economy's excessive reliance on large-scale construction projects—often luxury developments—whose contribution to economic activity largely ended once the work was completed. Furthermore, a substantial portion of the labour was carried out by foreign firms that brought in their own workers and departed after finishing the projects, leaving limited long-term benefits for the national economy.

In Serbia, real estate development also served a distinctly political function. Large-scale construction and infrastructure projects were among the key mechanisms that linked political and business elites. Control over land, urban planning decisions, public procurement, and investment projects created opportunities for the private accumulation of capital. Real estate development thus became one of the mechanisms through which individuals with ties to political power could themselves become capitalists. This model created a strong interdependence among political authorities, investors, and the construction sector. Political control provided access to profitable projects, while those projects contributed to the economic growth upon which the government based part of its legitimacy.

In this sense, real estate development became a kind of drug for the Vučić regime. It made it possible to simultaneously satisfy two key demands: the continued enrichment of a politically connected business elite, and the maintenance of a level of economic activity high enough to keep

living standards rising. Each new major project extended the life of this model while, at the same time, increasing the dependence on its continued expansion.

The future of major urban development projects thus took on political significance. The Student List's opposition to plans for the commercial redevelopment of the General Staff complex in Belgrade—linked to the investment interests of U.S. President Donald Trump's family—was a visible expression of the rejection of the previous approach to the management of urban space and public resources. Consequently, the new government will face a serious problem: if it intends to dismantle the corrupt mechanisms of the previous regime, it will also have to change the way one of the key drivers of economic growth functions.

The new government's economic constraints

The Student List presented an ambitious reform programme, particularly in the areas of education, science, culture, healthcare, and social protection. This programme reflects the group's social composition and the significant role played by the academic and professional elite in its development. Fulfilling these promises will require substantial public resources.

One of the assumptions underpinning the new government's optimism is that combating corruption will free up sufficient resources to fund its promised reforms. More transparent public procurement, more rational investment, and a reduction in the misuse of public funds could undoubtedly generate substantial savings. It remains unclear, however, whether these will be enough. Even with a significant reduction in corruption, Serbia would still face low productivity, limited public revenue, a reliance on foreign investment, and structural weaknesses within its national economy.

A potential reorientation of economic development presents a particularly complex challenge. Should the new government attempt to reduce reliance on real estate development and place greater emphasis on export-oriented production, it would encounter limitations stemming from the existing monetary and economic model. Strengthening the competitiveness of the domestic agricultural sector and certain industrial sectors, for instance, could raise questions regarding the true value of the dinar, the national currency. Depreciating the national currency could improve the price competitiveness of exports, but it would also make imported goods more expensive and erode purchasing power. Such a measure would not automatically resolve production-related problems and could have serious social consequences. Preserving purchasing power was one of the key promises made by the Student List. Its populist base does not expect an economic policy that asks citizens to accept a declining standard of living in the name of long-term development goals.

Similar limitations apply to the emigration of young people and those with an educational background. Over the last two years, the student movement has strongly emphasised that young people want to remain in Serbia and build their futures there. However, the emigration of skilled workers is not solely a consequence of corruption or authoritarian rule. The experience of Croatia demonstrates that even EU member states can face large-scale labour emigration, and that the free movement of people within the European labour market can facilitate migration toward wealthier countries.

Therefore, the new government will face a series of problems for which there are no simple technical solutions. Its response to the question of future economic development centres primarily on increasing productivity—one of the most difficult tasks in economic policy—which requires long-term structural change rather than merely a change in political personnel.

Will the populist base control the new elite?

The most important question following the electoral victory is the relationship the new government will establish with the movement that brought it to power. Over the last two years, student plenary assemblies served as the movement's primary source of legitimacy. They determined political demands, methods of mobilisation, and, ultimately, the transition into parliamentary politics. Furthermore, the process of forming the "Student List" demonstrated the movement's insistence on maintaining control over its representatives. The candidates underwent extensive vetting processes regarding their personal histories and professional integrity, with the aim of preventing the nomination of individuals whose pasts could compromise the entire movement. This approach reflected the core political message that power should be entrusted to competent, untarnished individuals.

The entry of some 140 representatives from the Student List into parliament creates an entirely new situation. These deputies will now possess formal political legitimacy, access to state institutions, and the capacity to participate directly in decision-making. They will no longer be mere delegates of a protest movement, but rather holders of parliamentary mandates. The question is whether the new government will continue to recognise the authority of student plenaries and other participatory forms of organisation. The plenary assemblies themselves have already weakened considerably: their activity is declining, and fewer students are participating. If they manage to preserve their organisational structures and their connections to elected representatives, they could function as a mechanism of social oversight over the new government, limiting the autonomy of professional administrators and their ability to implement policies that run counter to the expectations of the movement's electoral base.

There is also the possibility that the connection to the student movement might gradually be severed. In that scenario, the academic elite—who already hold a prominent position within the Student List—could emerge as the dominant political force in the new administration. Its representatives might begin to behave like the professional political and managerial elites found in Western societies, justifying unpopular measures by invoking economic necessity, fiscal responsibility, or the demands of the market.

The representatives from the Student List hold diverse political convictions. Some lean toward liberal and pro-European positions, others toward conservative or nationalist ones, while some candidates align themselves with socially-oriented policies. As long as the primary objective was to topple the Vučić regime, these differences did not necessarily have to become politically decisive. Once the new government confronts concrete issues—such as taxation, privatisation, public spending, labour legislation, and international relations—ideological conflicts may well become inevitable. It is easy to imagine that liberal, conservative, nationalist, or left-wing groups might gradually emerge within the parliamentary majority. Such an evolution would mark the end of the specific populist unity that made the electoral victory possible and it could pave the way for neoliberal reforms, austerity policies, or other measures that directly threaten the living standards of segments of the population.

Between Political Normalisation and a New Democracy

The victory of the Student List demonstrated that even an exceptionally sophisticated party machine can be defeated through broad social mobilisation. The student movement united a large segment of the population around demands to put an end to corruption, nepotism, and partisan control of institutions. Its core promise was political normalisation.

The immediate consequences of this victory are already visible. From the perspective of Radnički glas (Workers' Voice)—an organisation to which I belong, which works with trade unions in education, research, culture, and other sectors—the shift in political relations was felt almost overnight. Barely a day after the elections, we have already observed changes in the behaviour of certain directors and managers, while questions arise regarding the future of numerous proceedings initiated against employees who opposed the government. A military union, which announced several months ago that it was ceasing its activities due to political pressure, has now issued a new statement suggesting that it might resume its work.

Partisan nepotism was an everyday experience for a large number of employees. For many, the victory of the Student List therefore brings a sense of relief from immediate pressure. The ability to speak more freely at work, to refuse to follow a political directive, or to plan a professional future without relying on party loyalty represents a tangible change. This helps to explain the massive celebrations that followed the elections.

The victory has also opened up the possibility of transforming political representation itself. Here, we encounter what is perhaps the most interesting—and seemingly paradoxical—similarity between the Student List and the Vučić regime. Both, in different ways, displaced the traditional multiparty system, which was based on competition between ideologically defined parties. Vučić incorporated various political options into his governing coalition and subordinated them to the party apparatus and its hierarchy. The Student List brought together ideologically diverse representatives around a common political goal, yet it built its legitimacy through mass participation rather than through a traditional party organisation.

The absence of clearly defined party programmes does not necessarily constitute a weakness of the new political order. Competition between political parties—in which citizens periodically choose among pre-formulated platforms—is not the only possible form of democratic representation. The student movement demonstrated that it could mobilise a vast number of people who had never belonged to political parties nor previously engaged in political activism. Their involvement went beyond protests: they organised the election campaign, protected polling stations, and directly supervised the electoral process. People who had previously been mere voters became active participants in political life.

The question is whether this form of participation can be sustained following the electoral victory. Student plenaries have already weakened, but the social energy unleashed by the movement need not remain tied exclusively to them. It is particularly significant that many candidates from the Student List are established professionals with no prior political ambitions. Their willingness to accept parliamentary mandates does not necessarily imply a desire to become professional politicians. Viewing a political office as a temporary social responsibility could help establish a different kind of relationship between representatives and those they represent.

Trade unions could play an important role in this process. Unlike student assemblies—whose activity is tied to the shifting composition of the student body—unions possess more durable organisational structures, direct connections to workers, and concrete demands that arise from day-to-day labour relations. In the political space that opens up following the fall of the previous regime, they could establish themselves as one of the voices organised from below.

This would also entail a different relationship with parliamentary power. Trade unions would not have to limit themselves to traditional social dialogue, appeals to government ministries, or occasional negotiations with government officials. They could forge lasting ties with the representatives from the Student List—following the model of the cooperation they developed with

student assemblies during the protests—and leverage these relationships to articulate workers' demands and exert pressure on the government.

Such a relationship could offer a way to move beyond the limitations of representative parliamentary democracy. Organised social groups could participate directly in shaping policy decisions and overseeing their implementation. Parliament could then become a space where the demands of the grassroots are articulated, rather than an institution where professional politicians make decisions independently between one election cycle and the next.

The most significant possibility opened up by the Student List's victory lies in the opportunity to free political representation from its exclusive dependence on party competition, and to build a more enduring bond between elected representatives and an active, organised society. The student movement has already demonstrated that mass political participation can exist outside the framework of traditional political parties. Its next challenge will be to show whether such participation can endure when the movement's representatives form the governing parliamentary majority.

27 October 2026

Translated by David Fagan ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Viento Sur****.*

The People Have Turned Against Trump

28 October, by Dan La Botz

In January 2025, when he took office, Trump had an approval rating of 47%, which according to a variety of polls, has now sunk to between 31% and 34%. That is, two-thirds of Americans no longer approve of him. A number of demographic groups, including some that were part of his base, have broken with Trump: young male voters, Latino voters, urban voters, and suburban, that is, more middle class and moderate Republicans. And several prominent Make America Great Again (MAGA) figures, among them congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, have publicly broken with Trump. MAGA is in disarray.

People have turned against Trump because of his failed policies. In late February 2026, Trump led the United States to join Israel in a war on Iran, and, though only Congress can declare war, Trump went ahead without congressional approval. The U.S. House voted several war powers resolutions trying to restrain the president, but the Senate did not pass them. The war, of course, brought about the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz, which led to higher gas prices. Today, according to several polls, 65% of Americans oppose the president's handling of the war.

Trump's tariffs are also unpopular, with polls reporting that about 63% of Americans dislike them. The tariffs have disrupted sectors of the U.S. economy and led to rising prices for consumers.

Trump has used the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency to carry out violent raids to arrest working class immigrants with jobs, families, and kids in school. These raids that have led to a number of shootings and to the deaths of both immigrants and U.S. citizens, so that today only 33% of Americans support ICE, while 60% disapprove of the agency.

Also, 83% of Americans disapproved of President Trump's pardoning of violent criminal offenders who participated in the insurrection at the Capitol and the attempted coup in January 6, 2021.

Finally, recent polls find that between 60% and 69% of Americans say that they are "very" or "somewhat" concerned about "corruption, self-dealing or conflicts of interest" in the Trump administration. The self-dealing of Trump and his family has finally become a national scandal. "Voters are more concerned about government corruption than any other issue, including high grocery and gas prices," according to the latest CNBC All-America Economic Survey.
We could also mention other issues that have turned people against Trump: his tax policies that benefit the rich, his firing of federal employees, his reconstruction of the White House together with his vulgar "beautification" of its interior.

With his party's election prospects looking dim, Trump has taken some extraordinary measures, unconstitutional measures since under the Constitution the states and not the president control elections. The Department of Justice is bringing lawsuits against the states and making raids, searches and arrests, allegedly to stop non-citizen voters. And Trump has not ruled out sending ICE agents or soldiers to polling places.

If Trump doesn't interfere in the midterm elections, he may well lose. But fearing he will intervene, last week 7 to 9 million people joined No Kings protests, and they're prepared to defend polling places and the right to vote.

25 October 2026

As 2027 approaches, where does class struggle trades unionism stand?

27 October, by Léon Crémieux

First, quite simply, in the face of a neoliberal steamroller, the question arises of the effectiveness of trade union action, the ability to defend the living conditions, wages, health and housing of the working classes on a daily basis, the effectiveness also of the national mobilizations of recent years in the face of employer and government attacks: the balance sheet of 2023 is still present. The largest social movement since 1995, with massive popular support, took place for several months without managing to build a general strike movement supported by several professional sectors capable of making the government give in.

In the face of reactionary and capitalist forces, what is the reality in trade union action of the fight for its project of social transformation, which includes a frontal struggle against racist and gender discrimination, the consideration of the environmental struggle in the face of the climate crisis and the capitalist headlong rush? Does the relative weakness of trade unionism require, and in what forms, a rapprochement and a permanent front of the trade union forces for social transformation?

This question is posed even more acutely in the face of the rise of reactionary political powers and the threat, in France, of the arrival of the far right in government. This threat also raises the question of the political role of the wing of the trade union movement that explicitly fights for social transformation and therefore major political changes, diametrically opposed to the far right, but acting in complete independence without being subject to the agendas and orientations of the political parties.

It is partly the political splintering on the left that has prevented the mobilization movement around the NFP [1] in 2024 from being prolonged for two years by concerted and complementary action by the parties of the left and the social movement on essential social and economic issues. What role can the trade union movement play in once again taking on the construction of a front of the workers' movement against the reactionary forces, affirming the rejection of the far right and putting forward the essential social demands of the working classes? How can we impose our own word in the next six months, in complete independence and without being the auxiliaries of this or that political party?

There is also the question of organizing, in the wake of the youth movement, a large-scale social response to growing social inequalities, the fall in purchasing power and the salvo of new social attacks against the working classes provided for in the two budget laws presented by Lecornu's minority government.

Significant progress and convergence

The CGT, FSU and Solidaires generally converge on the analysis of the situation and the importance of the crises suffered on an international scale. It is striking to note that the trade union movement has largely evolved in its understanding of the climate crisis and its consequences, which comes on top of the social and democratic crises, discrimination and the aggressive security approaches of authoritarian regimes. These three unions put these issues, along with those of sexist and sexual violence, at the heart of their concerns.

But this still leaves open in many unions the difficulty of separating themselves from the productivist vision, making the progression of wages and jobs depend, not on social justice and another distribution of the wealth produced, imposed by the balance of forces, but on the growth of capitalist profits, and more precisely on the growth of "one's company".

Many debates remain open on the conversion of production, the fight against useless projects and harmful production, the place of nuclear power in the fight for renewable energies. On this last issue, at the 53rd congress of the CGT in 2023, a majority vote (50.3%), driven by the Mines and Energy Federation, led to the departure of the Confederation from the Ecological and Social Alliance (AES) – *Plus jamais ça*.

Nevertheless, major concrete steps forward have taken place for several years for the integration of these issues and a rapprochement of the CGT with the ecological organizations, around many struggles, such as in Sainte Soline with the Earth and Solidarity Uprisings, and the concrete actions of the employees of the Chapelle-Darblay paper mill or the Total Grandpuits refinery to build responses to social and environmental emergencies by questioning capitalist logics.

It is important to see the place given in Solidaires and the FSU to this work in the AES-PJC with its rupture plan developed in 2021, and to the collaboration with the organizations of the social and trade union movement that founded *Plus jamais ça*. This joint work is obviously very important because it can be the lever for mobilizations and common struggles, a decisive springboard and even an element of strength in the face of capitalist and far-right logics through the ability to link social struggles, defence of common goods, environmental struggles. The rally held around 26 September with the participation of 300 associative, political and trade union organizations is a good omen on this point.

In addition, the CGT and Solidaires,

faced with a context of social setbacks and transformation of the wage structure, have been asking themselves for several years the head-on question of their difficulty in developing and being present in the workplace, a difficulty that calls into question its existence as a militant trade unionism. This is even if the CGT welcomes a resumption of unionization in the wake of 2023.

Of course, these questions take different forms in the private sector and in the civil service, and for the CGT, the FSU or Solidaires. The FSU, like the Fédération Sud Education (member of Solidaires), seeks to answer these questions by pushing for the process of rapprochement, of regrouping of the trade unionism of struggle by "the common house". For the moment, the other public service unions of Solidaires do not put forward the same answer and the question of Solidaires' orientation on these questions will be raised again at the congress of the Union syndicale in June 2027.

Overcoming the break-up of work collectives

The logic of the employers and the government is to corset the trade union movement in order to confine it to the structures of "social dialogue" in bodies managed and punctuated by the employers' or ministerial agenda, while cutting back as much as possible on the means of union action in the workshops and offices, in the workplaces, means that can be put at the service of the work of information, mobilization, and the creation of a balance of power. These attacks on cantonment and integration strike at the historical contradiction of the trade union movement in France, and in particular of its combative wing.

In France, trade unionism is strong in its experience and capacity for struggle, but it is weak in terms of members, which affects its financial stability (by limiting dues income). Today, the functioning of the trade union is based on only 20 to 30% of its members' contributions (25% for example announced at the last congresses of the CGT Metallurgy), most often well below the situation in unions in other European countries. The rest comes from the AGFPN, the Joint Fund for "Social Dialogue" (since 2014), joint bodies (Social Security, Unedic), collective agreements and various subsidies . Needless to say, this funding ensures the base of the unions, but it is dependent on collective agreements and governmental decisions, with all the risks that this represents.

Trade unionism in France has a history that has differentiated it in several areas from that existing in most European countries. On the one hand, by its political strength, capable of exerting influence on several occasions (1936, 1944/45, 1968) to impose social advances for all workers while pushing for major political changes, capable of mobilizing the exploited on many occasions to oppose major attacks such as those undertaken since 1995 against the pay-as-you-go pension system.

But on the other hand, France, since the first decades of the 20th century, has also been one of the countries where the number of union members has been the lowest (30% at the end of the 1940s, it has remained at a rate of 10% since the 1990s (18% in the public sector, 8% in the private sector). This does not prevent a real representativeness of trade unionism, 58.8% of voters for the 2021/2024 CSE elections [2] (i.e. higher than most political, municipal, regional and legislative elections), and the CEVIPOF (centre of political research) political trust barometer of early 2026 recorded a rate of trust among employees in trade unionism of 45 to 48%, 37% among all respondents, when only 22% of the population said they had confidence in political parties... and 18% in the President of the Republic.

Since the 1980s, the trade union movement in France (like in the rest of Europe) has been hit by the attacks of neoliberal capitalism. The latter has gradually sought to undo all the advances in the social protection system achieved in previous decades, starting with the pay-as-you-go pension system. [3] At the same time, in the private sector as well as in the public sector, employers and the government have profoundly reorganized in the structures of production and network and service activities, with the virtual disappearance of large units in the steel industry, mining, textiles, shipbuilding and repair, but also, for example, in the Post and Telecommunications sectors, the disappearance of the large postal sorting offices and postal cheque centres.

In addition, there has been the outsourcing of production or service units in the automotive, aeronautical construction and chemical industries, with the proliferation of subcontracting companies, both on-site and offshored. This phenomenon also applies to sectors such as the Post Office, the SNCF [railways], air transport, the hospital sector and energy. Taking advantage of certain technological developments, entire activities have been outsourced, relocated, by creating production, distribution and maintenance processes, involving multiple players, including call centres or companies that fully manage the accounting of large companies, for example..

This is also true for building maintenance, cleaning, security and collective catering services, whether in the public or private sectors. In addition, there has been the uberization of many service professions (private hire vehicles, delivery workers and so on). leading to super-exploitation outside of employment law.

In the three public services (state [national government ministries, including education], territorial [local and regional government], hospital), precariousness is clearly increasing. Contract workers represent around 20% of the workforce (not counting the outsourcing to private companies of public action missions which represent a cost for the state of 160 billion, the equivalent of a quarter of the budget). The FSU and Sud Education address these issues in similar terms, worrying about the multiplication of contract workers in national education, 128,000 teaching assistants for students with disabilities

in 2024 (10.8% of national educational staff), nine times out of 10 women, nine times out of 10 part-time with an average salary of 900 euros, 58,000 teaching assistants. The common demand is the integration of these staff into the statutory framework.

This fragmentation represents a first strategic challenge for a trade unionism of struggle, which normally aims to organize the greatest number of employees, to establish itself in all professional sectors, and to mobilize the employees of the same sector on common demands. The difficulty, which has been new in recent decades, is that these tasks are made more difficult by the break-up of companies, either geographically or with subcontracting companies, which often weakens a once more important parent company and makes it more difficult to act together in companies that are no longer covered by the same branch agreements.

Despite this, large activity sites with a large number of employees continue to exist, such as the Nantes Saint Nazaire industrial-port complex, which has 28,700 employees, but in 613 different companies around the Chantiers de l'Atlantique (3,800 employees and about 5,800 subcontractors on site), the Roissy airport platform has 95,000 employees in 1,300 establishments; or the "industrial-port cluster" of Marseille-Fos sur Mer, which brings together 42,600 permanent salaried jobs (and around 3,000 temporary workers) in 1,570 establishments; the La Pitié Salpêtrière Paris-13 hospital group, which brings together around 20,000 employees, La Défense [business office complex] 200,000 employees (2/3 of executives) in 2800 companies, 25% teleworking more than two days a week; the Stellantis Sochaux [4] site, with 5,500 permanent employees and 1,000 temporary workers, 2-3,000 jobs at subcontracting equipment manufacturers.

Trade unionism is therefore being hit by a profound change in the organization of economic and social activities, that of the major industrial groups. The still impressive concentration of several sites bringing together tens of thousands of employees no longer makes them "workers' fortresses" similar to those of the 1960s: the break-up of companies, statutes and collective agreements on the same site. The SNCF group now has 284,000 employees spread over 7 public limited companies, but also a growing subcontractor, with, for example, the outsourcing of the maintenance of electrical tracks and systems, two-thirds of which is carried out by the major construction groups such as Vinci, Bouygues or Eiffage, the outsourcing of cleaning by ONET, Nicollin or Challancin.

So, one of the main challenges of trade unionism is to adapt to this reality that has been taking hold for decades. It is no longer just a question of sitting on the bodies of large companies that carry less weight than before, it is necessary to create structures that do not obey the level of negotiations set by the employers, but that can bring together employees from the same site or the same professional activity and to be able to identify common demands that allow them to come together.

Within the CGT and Solidaires, this question of the adaptation of union structures, demands and modes of action to this new reality has been raised for several congresses with more or less conviction and perseverance because the main unions are backed by the parent companies, still benefiting from company agreements or collective agreements that are more favourable than those of the subcontractors but not organising union association structures or unionised structures from external companies.

But experiments in this direction already exist, even if they do not appear in the statutes and the texts of congresses. This is the case, for example, of the *Union syndicale multiprofessionnelle* of Saint Nazaire, created by the CGT in 1999, with the slogan "one site, one status". This approach obviously goes against the trade union support of company management, the adaptation to the structures of "social dialogue" created by the employers, by breaking down the boundaries of status or nationality.

There is also the example of the Roissy inter-union association for the past fifteen years, which brings together structures from the CGT, CFDT, UNSA, Sud Aérien, and sometimes FO. It has led numerous mobilizations aimed at all the employees of the platform against the union repression two years ago targeting CGT and Sud activists, last June against the obstacles put in place by the prefecture to obtain the TCA (airport traffic permit), a badge of authorization to work on the platform.

Here too, the aim is to unify the employees, working as a whole for Aéroport de Paris or Air France, beyond the various companies, to create a common balance of power around common demands. On several occasions, the demand for a common status, a common collective agreement for all the employees of the platform (ground staff, subcontractors, assistance, security, transport and so on) capable of combating social dumping has been put forward. Sud Rail and the CGT Cheminots put forward in apparently similar terms a single status in the entire railway sector.

Other experiences are underway, such as that of the UL CGT of Lorient with the creation of an inter-company union. Dynamics such as these would make it possible to build on the victories obtained locally limiting the impact of the 2023 reform on pensions: that obtained in April 24 at the SNCF with a CGT, Sud, UNSA, CFDT agreement, for the employees of the SNCF Group on early retirements, or that of the CGT Ports and Docks obtained in 2025 on the five years of anticipation of the legal age in the Ports and Handling Agreement. Also, the government's retreat in recent days allows the 140,000 employees of EDF, Engie and RTE to continue to benefit from the "agent tariff" on energy.

The challenge of attacks on trade union rights

The reforms implemented since the government of Hollande [5] have aggravated this difficulty in adapting

trade unionism through two rogue laws: first, the "employment law" put in place by the Minister of Labour Myriam El Khomri in 2015 introduced the "inversion of the hierarchy of standards". Employment contracts in a company were, until then, governed by the Employment Code, the national interprofessional agreements (ANI) and the agreements of the branch to which the company is affiliated. Agreements in a company could not be less favourable than the ANI and the sectoral agreements.

The 2015 Employment Law reverses this hierarchy of standards and a company agreement takes precedence over other agreements, and in particular the sectoral collective agreement, in the areas of working hours, working hours, holidays, etc. and the threshold for the increase in overtime has been reduced from 25% to 10%. So a win-win law for the employers who can then impose less favourable rules in a small company without a strong balance of power, and obtaining the "lowest social bidder" becomes the weapon of blackmail, so that the union delegates of a subcontracting company sign an agreement not aligned with the branch agreement, thus "making possible" obtaining the contract from the contractor (this is what happens every year on the Roissy platform for airport assistance companies).

The second nefarious provision came a few months later with the "Macron Employment Law Ordinances" [6] of 2017 which continued and greatly aggravated the El Khomri law on the prevalence of the company agreement (validating company agreements in all areas and imposed on the employee against the clauses of the employment contract without having to justify economic difficulties). Much worse, these ordinances tore the staff representative institutions to pieces. A single structure, the CSE (social and economic committee) replaced three bodies: the works council, the staff delegates and the CHSCT (Committee for Health, Safety and Working Conditions).

The CHSCTs, which had become a formidable weapon to impose health at work, with the right to commission expert opinions and a legal personality, were eliminated by Macron. The SSCT Commissions of the CSE are present only in companies with more than 300 employees and no longer have this legal personality, nor the possibility of voting on expertise and making the employers pay for it. The elected representatives of the CHSCT had often become very competent specialists in their fields and able to intervene on the working conditions of employees of subcontracting companies. And above all, union action on the ground was undermined by this ordinance by reducing the number of elected staff and the hours of mandate by almost half. Similar attacks took place in the civil service in 2019 with the law on the transformation of the civil service (LTFP).

The concrete result is that the hours and mandates given by election can no longer allow, for example, devoting time to service or workshop rounds, to participate in unionization work. Among the essential victims of this clear cut in union resources are obviously the local unions which make it possible to help, to bring together isolated union members in small companies and to help with groupings for site actions. All this work will be more difficult, while the El Khomri law and the Macron circulars give more means to the employers' managements to put pressure on the employees of small companies.

This orientation of grouping employees beyond their status and their company is therefore of primary importance to fight against the effects of subcontracting and precariousness, against social dumping and the competition between employees. It goes hand in hand with the demands to make subcontractors subject to the conventions and agreements of the ordering company, and that all employees in a branch benefit from the same agreement, aligned with agreements that offer the best social terms.

How to build effective mobilizations?

This work of regroupment and the content of demands partly overlaps with the reflections on the construction of a adequate balance of power during the major mobilizations and the limits experienced in 2023 and, since then, in the construction of a front of struggle for wages, fiscal justice against the succession of austerity budgets. On two occasions, since 2023, the trade union front has cracked, weakened by the support of the Socialist Party (PS) for the government's desperate manoeuvres to continue its policies.

The "Bayrou conclave" [7] in the spring of 2025, then in the autumn of 2025, the "suspension of the pension reform" and the conference on pensions and work, both justified the reprieves given by the PS to Macron's governments and made it possible to disunite the trade union front. Indeed, on two occasions, the CFDT, CFTC, and CGC rushed into this breach, which did not open the door to any government retreat. So, two problems appear. That of the difficulty, for the CGT, Solidaires and the FSU, which put forward the need to build a social confrontation, to reconcile this objective with the unity of an inter-union alignment that does not pursue the same objective and clings to any manoeuvre by the government. Moreover, even on this point, the Secretary of the CFDT, Marylise Léon, at the confederal congress of June 2026, acknowledged a "social dialogue" at half-mast.

In this sense, surely, the structured appearance of a combative trade union front, capable of taking its own initiatives, would be support for imposing a better balance of forces. But the remaining difficulty would be the possibility for this front, even if it existed, to take root in the sectors that weigh in the mobilizations. For the only palpable reality is that the construction of the broadest unitary inter-union front depends on the combative balance of forces built by the mobilization of one sector "setting the tone" for other workers.

The other question, which has been present since 1995, but reaffirmed

over the last 10 years with *Nuit Debout* and the *Gilets jaunes*, and obviously during the 2023 movement, is that the fragmentation of employees and the weaker capacity of the unions to structure are reflected in the growing importance of large popular demonstrations, territorial gatherings such as those of *Nuit Debout* or the *Gilets jaunes* (which are also the place and the occasion for the extension of the movement within society to all the fields of struggle), in relation to the strike. To this is added, unfortunately, the greatest difficulties in the development of self-organization in the workplace.

The whole remaining question is therefore that of the structuring of the mobilization movements which, in recent years, have often been dependent on the deadlines put forward by the national inter-union coordination, which has led it, in order to maintain its unity, to align itself with the least offensive positions, in particular those of the CFDT. It should be noted, however, that on several occasions mobilizations have created their own rhythm during the *Gilets jaunes* or in Sainte Soline [8] in particular. It is obvious that the future of the most powerful mobilizations will depend in part on the capacity to overcome these contradictions.

What action for 2027?

The last question, undoubtedly the most urgent, is that of the ability of the trade union movement, as of the entire social movement, to occupy its full place in a context of reactionary offensive and gradual slide towards a hegemony of the theses and proposals of the far right. This on the eve of a presidential election in which the political left is for the moment "dispersed like a puzzle", despite electoral successes in 2022 and 2024 on a programme taking up a series of demands of the workers and social movements.

Because the reality is there. For the past two years, the capitalist class, the media and social networks in the hands of reaction and a few billionaires, have not stopped promoting the far right and its theses, and demonizing (la France Insoumise in order to discredit and fragment the alliance made within the framework of the NFP in 2024. The social democratic leaders, wanting to isolate LFI and rally towards the remnants of Macronism, have also put all their efforts into breaking up this framework, preventing the perpetuation of an anti-austerity political front. This situation puts the trade union movement and the entire social movement against the wall to deploy a sufficient counter-offensive.

So, what to do? In 2024, the CGT, the day after the dissolution of the assembly, headlined in a press release: "Facing the far right, the Popular Front!", stating that: "to defeat the far right, the world of work needs hope and perspectives that break with Emmanuel Macron's policies". In the wake of this, the CGT, FSU, Solidaires, CFDT and UNSA declared themselves in favour of the rejection of the far right and of the satisfaction of social demands, listing nine social emergency measures. Many associations or collectives of the social movement were mobilizing and demonstrating all over France even before the NFP agreement was built. Obviously, the risk of the RN's arrival is even greater today and the fragmentation of the left, with the desire now of the PS majority to reject any alliance with LFI (and obviously to emancipate itself from the NFP's programme) makes it necessary to quickly build unity in the face of the far right.

So, on the one hand, the situation is more serious and makes it more essential that the trade union movement and the entire social movement now act in complete independence to build a balance of power among the employed and in the working classes as a whole that will make it possible to counter and defeat the far right. From this point of view, the CGT, FSU and Solidaires (but also some CFDT, CNT, FO and UNSA unions) have developed, particularly with VISA , over the last two years work to develop training, action against the presence of the far right in the trade union movement, including preparation for the eventuality of Le Pen's arrival at the Élysée. The anti-fascist organization the Jeune Garde (before it was banned by Retailleau) had also contributed to trade union education and to the protection of demonstrations in the face of threats from the extreme right.

But the trade union movement, like the entire social movement, is facing a major problem. Blocking Le Pen's arrival in government, by fighting her audience among workers, also implies, beyond denouncing the dangers posed by the RN, working to defend a political alternative that meets the main social demands. The vast majority of workers have always opposed the pension reform and support elementary measures such as the Zucman tax [tax on big fortunes]], attacking the capitalist class, profits and the great fortunes.

It is also the role of the trade union movement to contribute to the defeat of the RN by putting forward, in the coming months, political and social measures that meet the demands of social justice of the working classes, as was done in 2024. The fragmentation of the main parties making up the NFP over the presidential election on the left is now making it difficult to deploy this work in the trade union and social movement. But the trade union movement can play an important role in helping to build a unitive dynamic in the social and political left. Obviously, the start cannot be support for this or that candidate, present or future. But it is urgent that, now and in complete independence, the trade union movement for social transformation manages, as in 2024, on the basis of its own common orientations, to come together in the coming weeks to organize a united campaign to defeat Le Pen in 2027 and for a break with capitalist austerity policies.

The situation is undeniably difficult, but we can evoke the memory of the years 1980/81 when, faced with a deep division on the left, a popular and united campaign, "Union in the struggles", created a salutary wind of unity, contributing to the defeat of the right in the 1981 elections. [9] Of course, the situation today is very different in many aspects, and Mitterrand and the social-liberal

governments led by the PS since 1981 have shattered many of the hopes of several generations. It is moreover the balance sheet of this policy, pursued from 2012 to 2017 by Hollande, that led to the NUPES and the NFP being built on a programme of rupture with social liberalism. It is also this record that explains the preponderant place taken by LFI on the left ahead of social democracy in recent years.

But we must insist on a point of similarity: as at the time, it is urgent that all energies come together to defeat Le Pen in 2027. The unions must intervene, with their specific means, in the political-electoral sequence that has already begun and whose outcome will be decisive for the working class.

8 October 2026

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Footnotes

[1] New Popular Front, an electoral union built between La France Insoumise, les Verts, le PCF, le PS as the main partners, with the NPA-A and other left groups, for the legislative elections in June 2024. They had a single candidate in each constituency, to be present at the second round and to avoid a majority of MPs for the far right.

[2] Economic and Social Committee, single structure of worker's representatives in companies with more than 10 employees

[3] This is a collective retirement model where the social security contributions and payroll taxes paid by current active workers are used immediately to fund the pensions of current retirees, in French "retraites par répartition".

[4] Historically, the largest car plant in France, for Peugeot. Stellantis today designs, manufactures, and markets vehicles under 14 brands: Abarth, Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Citroën, Dodge, DS Automobiles, Fiat, Jeep, Lancia, Maserati, Opel, Peugeot, Ram, and Vauxhall.

[5] François Hollande, Socialist Party member, was president of France from 2014-2017.

[6] Macron was at the time the Minister for the Economy in Hollande's government.

[7] Called by the then Prime Minister François Bayrou which brought together the trade unions and the employers' organizrtions to negotiate on the question of pensions.

[8] Site of an important struggle against the project to build a gigantic reservoir.

[9] At the end of the 1970s, the Union of the Left brought together the PS, the Communist Party and the left-wing radicals. This front, formed around a Common Programme of the Left, was victorious in the 1977 municipal elections, wresting from the right 3/4 of the municipalities with more than 30,000 inhabitants. But the PS easily outpaced the PCF for the first time since the war. In the months that followed, the PCF broke its alliance, and the Union of the Left was defeated in the legislative elections of 1978, breaking an electoral momentum built up from 1972 onwards. In order not to repeat this defeat in the 1981 presidential election, political and trade union activists built the Appel Union in the struggles in December 1979, to fight division and impose unity to defeat Giscard. Hundreds of collectives were created in the country.

6.

Lula's extraordinary victory overnight in Brazil

26 October, by Iain Bruce

This is the most important defeat for the far right we have seen anywhere in the world in recent times, and its impact will be felt worldwide. Seeing those millions and millions of people pour onto the streets across this vast country to celebrate was enough to make you weep.

The seemingly impossible turnaround in the second round is not a simple electoral victory. It was won in the streets and on socials. Immediately after the far-right candidate, Flavio Bolsonaro, won in the first round, thousands of mainly very young people took to streets in Niteroi, across the bay from Rio de Janeiro, to demonstrate against the likelihood of a neo-fascist government in Brazil. The same thing happened in cities in the Northeast, the most impoverished region. This was repeated throughout the country in the three weeks between the rounds.

In parallel, younger members of congress from a smaller party supporting Lula's Workers Party, completely revamped the campaign's lacklustre social media presence. 'Lula's Army', a Whatsapp channel launched by Janones of the Rede

party, went from 50,000 followers to a million in two days. Now it has 10 million.

The next stage will be difficult, and possibly violent. As I write, Flavio Bolsonaro is refusing to recognise the results and calling on his supporters not to either. He's promising a legal challenge, but last time, when his father, Jair Bolsonaro lost, they invaded the congress and presidential palace. President Trump looks ready to back him.

Even if the immediate threat recedes, Lula's presidency will confront big far-right and traditional right majorities in both houses of congress. If he is not to capitulate completely, he will have to govern with the streets, and with his new found digital army.

This in turn is likely to lead to confrontation. The far right is deeply embedded in large sections of society. And it could draw on the sympathies of at least parts of the armed forces.

What the Brazilian people have achieved can be a huge inspiration for all of us facing resurgent varieties of neo-fascism and the far right in different parts of the world. But they will also need support. We should be thinking now about how to organise that solidarity. The Scottish working class has a proud tradition in this area. 'Nae pasaran.'

But developing our own struggles is also part of building solidarity.

There is little doubt that the kids on the streets in Brazil have been encouraged by what they see in France and the Spanish state. No doubt the Serbian students who just defeated Vucic have been too. A new form of internationalism appears to be taking shape and we need to be part of that.
We live in interesting, if dangerous, times.

26 October 2026

7.

When no one expected it.... the sun has come out

25 October, by Miguel Urbán Crespo

Two weeks that serve to recall one of Daniel Bensaïd's key teachings: history does not advance according to a railway timetable. Politics is also made up of forks in the road, accidents, leaps, and events that suddenly alter a landscape that seemed stable. Bensaïd wrote that revolutions "occur when and where they are least expected. Inevitably untimely." Not because they appear miraculously out of nowhere, but because certain events manage to crystallise contradictions that had long been accumulating beneath a veneer of apparent normality.

Maricarmen's eviction played out in just that way. Clearly, the housing crisis did not begin on September 23rd. Nor did the tenants' unions or the housing movement. For years, there has been an accumulation of unaffordable rents, evictions, touristification, investment funds, wages unable to keep pace with housing costs, and a generation condemned to spend a large share of its income simply to have a roof over its head. At the same time, an organised movement had been patiently built up that had spent years denouncing that situation. What was unforeseen was not the existence of all those ingredients, but the moment they ignited.

As Brais Fernández wrote a few days ago, the housing movement has managed to temporarily bring together two contradictions: one existing between economic growth and the material problems facing a growing segment of the working class, and one separating the promises of progressivism from the results of eight years of government. Prior organisation does not in itself explain the outbreak, but without that organisation, the outbreak likely would not have reached this scale.

In fact, this is perhaps the primary lesson of these past few weeks. Social upheavals are unpredictable. We can analyse the contradictions that make them possible, build up strength, form organisations, and identify grievances, but we never know exactly which event will strike the spark. Maricarmen was that spark, yet none of it would have been possible without the "slow impatience" involved in the socio-unionist building of the housing movement.

A spark that ignited during a period of reactionary advance, when public discourse seemed trapped by an agenda defined by the humanitarian crisis in Ceuta—a time when the right and the far right had succeeded in establishing the language of warfare, speaking of "invasion" and "external threat" and casting the migrant as the enemy. In this regard, Maricarmen's eviction and the subsequent mobilisation have not defeated that reactionary climate. It is best not to delude ourselves. Nothing that took place at Sol appears to have structurally altered the balance of power—yet. However, the conversation has changed, even if only temporarily.

The fact that one of the protest slogans has become "the invaders are the investors" implies—as Jaime Pastor points out—that the framework established in the wake of the Ceuta events has been momentarily overshadowed. For this is no mere rhetorical flourish; it shifts the explanation for the prevailing discontent. In contrast to attempts to

justify the housing shortage by blaming poor migrants, the movement points to rent-seeking, investment funds, and the commodification of housing. The targets of blame shift, and in doing so, the potential political response is also transformed. This shift—occurring in a climate dominated for months by a reactionary agenda—constitutes a small political victory in itself.

A parallel with the 15M movement [1] and many differences

The sight of the Puerta del Sol once again covered in tents has made a comparison to the 15-M movement inevitable. This is understandable. Such images are powerful, and political memory often operates through them. Yet, the similarities likely end there. We are not witnessing a new 15-M.

The 15M movement emerged in a different historical moment. Its backdrop was defined by the Great Recession of 2008, the bank bailout, austerity policies, youth unemployment, the Arab Spring, and the loss of credibility of a political system that seemed incapable of providing answers. Its impulse was fundamentally destituent: "they don't represent us," "PSOE and PP—it's the same shit," "they call it democracy, but it isn't." There was no single demand capable of encapsulating the movement, because what was at stake was precisely the entire political system that had emerged from the Transition [2]: the so-called "Regime of '78."

The square also functioned as a massive political school. Thousands of people who arrived without prior affiliation took part in assemblies, committees, endless debates, and forums for deliberation. People went to Sol not only to protest but also to try to understand what was happening and to think collectively about what to do. The square was simultaneously a site of protest, organisation, encounter, and pedagogy. Fifteen years later, the logic is different.

The current movement is focused on a much more specific conflict: housing, and particularly rents. It also involves concrete demands and pre-existing organisations. The Tenants' Union did not originate in Sol. It has been organising, training activists, establishing structures, building strike funds, and tackling specific conflicts since 2017. Surrounding it is a whole constellation of housing unions and assemblies, political organisations, feminist and student collectives, and social movements.

In the 15M, the organisations that came to the square, to a large extent, had to dissolve within it. Now the organisations come to Sol precisely as organisations and express themselves publicly with a visible presence within the camp. This profoundly modifies the character of the encampment.

The 2011 encampment at Sol was more spontaneous, chaotic, contradictory, and difficult to govern. Yet, precisely for that reason, it also possessed an enormous capacity to bring in people who had never considered themselves activists for any cause. It was a public square where political identities were under construction. The current encampment at Sol, by contrast, is rooted in far more defined identities.

Simply put, one could say that the 15M movement was more about pedagogy, whereas this movement is more about agitation and propaganda. That square was fundamentally turned inward: the discussion centered on who we were and what we wanted. Adrián Almazán has described it vividly: in 2011, there was hardly a moment without invitations to join debates, assemblies, or spaces for collective deliberation; in the current encampment, the emphasis lies much more heavily on the public square as a stage from which to project messages to cameras, the media, and social networks. There are hundreds of shops and immense organisational capacity, but—proportionally speaking—fewer spaces dedicated to the kind of endless political conversation that characterized the indignados movement. This is not necessarily worse. It is different.

Moreover, the demographic the 15M movement appealed to was largely a middle-class facing impoverishment: educated young people—with no future—who had been promised that studying, working hard, and making an effort would guarantee upward social mobility, a promise shattered by the 2008 crisis. Hence the figure of the highly qualified young person—holding multiple university degrees—condemned to unemployment, emigration, or precarious work. And although the macroeconomy is performing better now than it was fifteen years ago, that meritocratic promise has been significantly eroded.

Regarding the current encampment, it is difficult to pin down its sociological makeup, yet there is a substantial difference in how the participants refer to themselves. "Long live the working-class struggle" is a phrase heard at the camp, serving as a way for them to recognise or perceive themselves. Where the landlord and the tenant cease to appear simply as two private individuals freely entering into a transaction, and instead appear as parties to an unequal class relationship. Housing makes it possible to translate seemingly private experiences—failing to make rent, sharing an apartment at age 35, being forced out of one's neighbourhood—into the language of the working class. In this sense, there is an explicit recovery of the concept of class, which was far less present in the initial mindset of the 15M movement.

The 15M movement succeeded in challenging the "Regime of '78" with an extraordinary cross-cutting appeal that, for a time, blurred existing ideological boundaries. People who had voted for the Left or the Right—or who had never voted at all—could identify with the slogan "they don't represent us" and the notion that the system had "swindled" them; this intuitive challenge to the regime was the key to the movement's ability to expand.

The current movement has a much more clearly defined political stance; in a sense, it is not merely a political expression of discontent regarding the housing crisis but also a reactive

movement against the rise of the far right. Anti-fascism is an explicit part of its identity; flags or propaganda from leftist organisations are not only accepted but viewed as a natural part of the encampment's ecosystem.

That is why its virtue differs from that of the 15M movement. It cannot trigger a shift of voters between political blocs—at least not in the short term—but it does have the capacity to remobilise a demoralised left-wing bloc, rejuvenate it by incorporating a new generation of activists, restore confidence in collective action, and demonstrate that the reactionary agenda is not invincible.

The context is also the reverse. The 15-M movement emerged after the Arab Spring, when an international wave of uprisings seemed to herald that anything was possible. The current encampment arises after years of the far right's rise, social defeats, and the retreat of the Left. As Brais Fernández points out, that earlier emergence was part of an international climate of offensive action; the current one, by contrast, arises as a reaction to the suffocation caused by a reactionary offensive.

For eight years, Pedro Sánchez has survived practically everything: motions of no confidence, pandemics, wars, lawfare, media onslaughts, right-wing mobilisations, corruption scandals, electoral defeats, and an opposition that has spent years predicting the government's imminent collapse on a daily basis. None of that managed to cut the legislative term short. Maricarmen did.

We must not forget that Sánchez arrived at Moncloa [3] leading a political bloc that had made ending evictions a symbol of the break with austerity policies. Eight years later, his government is calling elections precisely after the eviction of Maricarmen exposed the limits of those promises. Or rather, it was the accumulation of years of contradictions that unexpectedly found—in the eviction—a name, a face, and an event capable of transforming individual discontent into a collective force. For, as Bensaïd reminded us, history remains open, and events have a habit of arriving at the wrong moment, when no one was expecting them.

11 October 2026

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

Footnotes

[1] The anti-austerity movement in Spain, also referred to as the Movimiento 15-M (15-M Movement) and the Indignados Movement began on May 15, 2011.

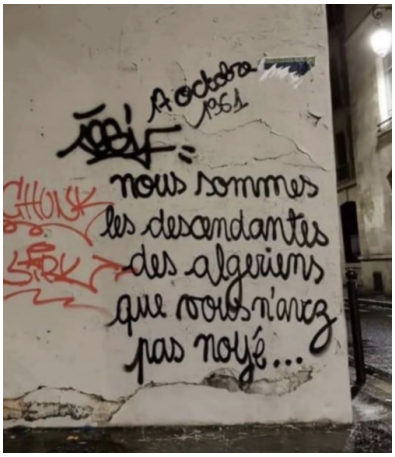
[2] The Transition refers to the Spanish transition to bourgeois democracy from 1975 from the Francoist dictatorship to the consolidation of the parliamentary system of a constitutional monarchy overseen by the political right in alliance with the Socialist and Communist party leaderships.

[3] A district in the municipality of Madrid; the Palace of Moncloa is the residence of the Spanish Prime Minister.

8.

France, October 2026: reasons to believe

24 October, by Olivier Besancenot, Stéfanie Prezioso



Stéfanie Prezioso: What is new and surprising about the social mobilisation of young people in France and the alliance forged with other sectors of society around the issue of cost of living on 17 October, which points to the crisis of social reproduction?

Olivier Besancenot: What is new and surprising about the mobilisation on 17 October and the alliance that has formed is that it is taking place outside traditional structures. We had already seen social outbursts – whether sector-specific or thematic – that clearly eluded the organisations of the labour movement, be they trade unions, social organisations or political parties – the Yellow Vests, for example. But for a convergence to begin taking place, outside these organisations, between completely different sectors of society, with the support and participation – whether implicit or explicit – of certain structures: as far as I can recall, this is unprecedented.

This explains both the surprise that has caught the political establishment off guard, whilst also highlighting the movement's limitations in terms of democratic organisation. I think this really points to the global crisis we are living through, which is also a crisis of labour movement organisations, to a transformation of society, and to a new type of proletariat which, in fact, is emerging through this sort of experience.

SP: You often refer to the French Revolution and the Paris

Commune – and the social and democratic aspirations driven by the working classes – when reflecting on the events we are witnessing today. Why are these historical references so pertinent?

OB: It is true that my primary point of reference has always been the Paris Commune of 1871, far more so than the French Revolution, which I am learning to discover – or rediscover – through the struggles, particularly that of the Yellow Vests. That movement was a turning point: this history has re-emerged in the mobilisation in a subliminal way – or perhaps not so subliminal after all. The large demonstrations in December, which marched up the Rue de Rivoli to the Place de la Concorde in order to reach the Élysée Palace at any cost and confront Macron there, naturally evoked the great peasant revolts – led in particular by women – who would go and fetch the king from his castle to bring him back, for example, to Paris. Not to mention the French flag, which was not merely an expression of the far-right currents present at the start of the movement, or *La Marseillaise,* sung at the top of people's voices, which I have learnt to listen to in a different light.

This *Marseillaise* can be heard, for example, in schools and in the secondary schools taking part in the protests, particularly in working-class neighbourhoods and the suburbs. So there is an underground history. And when one learns to rediscover it — as I am doing at the moment, notably by reading Jules Michelet's *History of the French Revolution* — one realises that something truly extraordinary did indeed happen: the people, from the grassroots up, put an end to centuries of domination, organisation and the monarchical mode of production, and decided to do away with it all—on several occasions between the storming of the Bastille; the act of going to fetch the king in October 1789 to bring him back to Paris—a mass abduction the likes of which we no longer see; later, by beheading him; and later still, by organising days of insurrection and communalist action.

This inevitably leaves its mark, which, for my part, I had underestimated. We belong to a very distinct current, deeply shaped by the political era that began with the October Revolution of 1917 and ended in 1989, and one realises that there is something profound there after all.

SP: What does the scale of repression in France today – carried out by a supposedly centrist government, which is in no way inferior to that of Giorgia Meloni's far-right administration – tell us about the convergence of the more or less extreme right-wing movements in Europe and around the world?

OB: The scale of the repression is, in fact, absolutely unprecedented. In terms of the number of people taken into police custody since the start of the secondary school pupils' movement, it far exceeds even that experienced by the Yellow Vests movement, which itself had far surpassed the protests against the First Employment Contract (CPE) or those of the 1990s. In fact, working-class neighbourhoods have served as a testing ground for the systematisation of a repressive apparatus that is now being rolled out to every type of social upheaval. This tells us, first and foremost, something about liberalism and its policies, which require an authoritarian turn.

Secondly, it tells us something about the ongoing 'fascisation' – that is what I call it, despite everything, even if the term is open to debate, for it at least has the merit of highlighting what is actually happening: a whole series of measures have already been put in place by the Macronist government, even before the far right has come to power. In July, for example, the presumption of self-defence was granted by law to the police, which is a long-standing demand of the far right.

And there are many more examples like this. In this process, we can also see the extent to which the Macron administration is losing control of its own repressive apparatus. There is therefore a loss of control over the situation and, in this race against time, there is what Daniel Bensaïd called the 'discordance of times': between social time, which is becoming more radicalised, and political time, which is nowhere near that stage.

SP: The media have placed great emphasis on the unprecedented violence of 17 October, which undoubtedly reflects heightened anger. But what surprised us most was seeing hundreds of thousands of demonstrators converging across France, united in their shared rejection of social injustice and the denial of democracy. What conclusions do you draw from that day?

OB: To assess the 17th, it is extremely important to understand the scale of what is happening. I took part in this demonstration, and I have never experienced anything like it in my life, in terms of its sheer size, determination and the mix of people. It was a tidal wave, a human tide. Of course, when you get home in the evening and see the mainstream media and political coverage of these events – which, incidentally, did indeed take place – you get the impression that you weren't part of the same thing. And this, for the time being, is being overlooked in the French political debate, as it is a sense of bewilderment that prevails, alongside the political exploitation of what happened: shops vandalised, and in some cases looted.

But all this cannot simply vanish overnight, for there is something too powerful, too profound in what has just been expressed, and which we have yet to understand: a movement that was organised solely through social media and subsequently supported by a number of organisations.

This points to a new phase, one that throws everything back into question, full of new possibilities, and which – despite the ongoing political unease of the moment, which persists and is catching up with this phase – must give us cause for hope.

SP: The hundreds of thousands of people who have mobilised no doubt feel today that the demonstrations are insufficient to bring a hardline government to its knees, a government that has no

qualms about imposing a partial curfew. The call for a general strike is on everyone's lips, just as it is in Spain. What do you think?

OB: The mobilisation will, indeed, lead to an outcome that, by its very nature, we cannot predict.

Nothing is over, because this movement isn't going to stop: it's too deep-rooted, too entrenched. It also has an international dimension. When you look beyond our borders, you can see that, amongst young people, similar events – or events we're tempted to compare – are taking place in Belgium, Italy and Albania. There's also the movement unfolding in Spain. There is also something happening from a generational perspective, which means that this movement will not be halted by the imposition of a curfew or by other authoritarian measures which, I am sure, will not be long in coming – perhaps even the dissolution of a number of organisations; we do not yet know.

The challenge now, in fact, is for the labour movement to take up the baton – that is to say, for the working class to take up the baton. If there is no strength in numbers – in terms of reminding society of the place occupied by workers – then, unfortunately, it will not be enough, and we will not succeed in ensuring that this legitimate revolt leads to a fully-fledged class consciousness, based on partial victories, or at least on a visibility that gives us reason to believe in it. This is what is at stake behind the call for a general strike. A day of cross-sectoral action has been called for 5 November: the challenge now is to ensure that the workers of this country do not remain mere spectators of what is happening, that they are not paralysed by the situation, especially as there are still grey areas.

There is talk of deaths in connection with the demonstrations, without a full explanation; accounts, theories and hypotheses are being put forward, but we have reached this level of gravity. We are therefore only at the beginning, and we are of course eager to see what the future may hold, even though we are, on the other hand, extremely — how shall I put it? — weighed down by the political anxiety of the moment, because we can see that all the ingredients of this period, this grim period in which we are living, are re-emerging.

20 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***marx21.ch****.*

9.

"The solution will not come from the Israeli elections but from external pressure"

23 October, by Editors l'Anticapitaliste

Can we expect anything from these elections in terms of Palestinian rights?

Frankly, no. The Palestinian question had already been buried. Today, it's a race to the bottom to see who can be the most against a Palestinian state. I'm not even talking about rights, freedom or resistance: simply about two states, as set out in the Oslo Accords.

A video sums it up: a presenter asks eight representatives from the main political lists – from both Netanyahu's bloc and the opposition – whether they support a Palestinian state. All reply 'no': we will do everything to prevent it. Several accuse their opponents of supporting it in order to discredit them.

Today, it's a race to see who can be the strongest against a Palestinian state.

They all share the same consensus on settlement activity, 'Judaisation' and Gaza. Only Yaïr Golan's Democrats, formed from the merger of Meretz and the Labour Party, say that it might one day be worth considering, but that after 7 October, it would be handing them a gift. The unified list of the so-called Arab parties, comprising Palestinians from 1948, speaks of a Palestinian state. But within the Jewish Zionist camp, no one presents it as a condition for peace any longer. Even close allies on the centre or the Zionist left say that 7 October has 'opened their eyes': there is no question of granting this reward to the Palestinians.

What, then, distinguishes the two blocs?

The usual divisions within Israeli society, now exacerbated. What is new is the inquiry into 7 October. Netanyahu shifts the blame onto the army for what he considers the most violent pogrom since the Holocaust; the opposition holds him responsible. Gadi Eisenkot, his main rival, promises an independent inquiry.

The other issue, which is rallying support among the secular and liberal sections of society, is the conscription of the ultra-Orthodox. Netanyahu wants to maintain their exemption; his opponents want everyone to serve in the armed forces.

The common thread between the two is the army, with its hyper-militarist rhetoric: Eisenkot is a former Chief of the General Staff, and all parties highlight their military experience.

The ultra-Orthodox, who do not serve, make a convenient scapegoat. You cannot maintain a settlement without a highly developed army.

The opposition longs for the days when the army functioned better, when 'we were left to our own devices' and when the world didn't hate us. During the protests against judicial reform, a reservist pilot from the liberal elite said, in essence: to continue bombing children, we need absolute trust in our institutions, in the Supreme Court. Because — and I'll add this myself — they protect Israel from international sanctions. Once the system is discredited, soldiers and commanders risk prosecution for war crimes abroad. They want to carry on as before, whilst saving face.

And what about the social and economic issues? The 'rule of law'—with plenty of quotation marks?

They're conspicuous by their absence. Everything revolves around Netanyahu and security. The Supreme Court, which had sparked mass protests, has taken a back seat. The opposition says: let's get rid of Netanyahu, and we'll see what happens afterwards. That does not constitute a political programme.

The anti-Netanyahu bloc has no other agenda regarding the Palestinians and differs little on many other issues

How does the election work?

A single round, using proportional representation. Where it turns into a 'Game of Thrones' scenario is that any votes below 3.25 per cent are discarded. Hence the alliances to clear the threshold, or the micro-parties that siphon off votes to remove them from the count, or withdraw after reaching an agreement. Polls suggest the blocs are virtually neck and neck. Without a new government, Netanyahu remains at the head of a caretaker government.

And what of the United Arab List?

It brings together Ta'al, Hadash – which grew out of the Communist Party – and Balad to clear the threshold. Some anti-Netanyahu lists would agree to govern with them, whilst others refuse: Liberman, a secular ultra-nationalist, will never associate with 'terrorists'. This weakens the opposition.

Balad was disqualified following a motion tabled by Ben Gvir; the disqualification was lifted on condition that its chairman and lead candidate, Sami Abu Shehadeh, withdrew, which he did. The most left-wing party in the Zionist opposition bloc – that of Yair Golan, a former soldier who has called for Gaza to be starved – voted in favour of this motion.

So would it be a mistake to portray the anti-Netanyahu bloc as being to his left?

Exactly. It is 'to his left' only because it is anti-Netanyahu. It has no other policy regarding the Palestinians and differs little on many other issues. It is unclear what policy Eisenkot would pursue: some on his list might well be found among Smotrich's, Ben Gvir's or the Likud's supporters; there are also religious Zionists. Even if they oust Netanyahu, the situation will not change.
For Palestinians, this government has been a disaster, but that will not end with a different government

Netanyahu remains neck and neck with Eisenkot. Backed by Trump, he highlights his so-called successes in Lebanon and Iran, where, according to him, the war is not over and where he alone can continue it.

For Palestinians from '48, the West Bank and Gaza, this government has been a disaster: colonisation, annexation, violence, torture in prisons – everything has been taken up a notch. But this will not stop with a different government. It is unclear what alliances will emerge from the ballot box. We may see elements of his government in a new majority, or people sharing the same ideology.

And what of the peace camp? For a moment, we thought Standing Together would stand for election.

This election shows that what we in France imagined to be the peace camp — a vast illusion — is dead. Standing Together formed itself into a party. Its activists gained visibility during the genocide through their humanitarian actions, by offering Palestinians from '48 a secure channel to send aid to Gaza, despite the repression, and by speaking out about crime within so-called Israeli Arab society, which nobody takes seriously. But it was something of a bubble, and they failed to reach the threshold required to stand for election. The United Arab List shut the door on them: their leaders come from a split within Hadash.

On the Zionist side, the Golan Democrats are projected to win six or seven seats: an extremely meagre haul for the alliance between the Labour Party, which has governed for decades, and Meretz.
And so much the better. Perhaps people will come to realise that there is no alternative to anti-Zionism – to the end of the State of Israel – if rights and justice are to be achieved in Palestine. This will not come about through a two-state solution, nor through negotiations with chiefs of staff, nor through a response from within, nor through elections. The solution will come from external pressure.

22 October 2026

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

Mass protests of youth and workers spread to Italy

22 October, by Dave Kellaway

On 17 October students joined the national demonstration against the spiraling cost of living called by the General Confederation of Italian Workers (CGIL) – the largest and most progressive of the union federations. Around 100,000 marched in Rome, beyond official expectations. There were more significant incidents in Milan where some shops were looted and some fires started. A police car was burnt out.

In the TV debates you see the same old positions expressed. Both the centre left and the right condemn all violence. The right wing call for a firmer response from the police and condemn the centre left for encouraging the demonstrations and not denouncing the incidents strongly enough.

Much is made of rupture between generations and the sense among many people that their future is looking a lot bleaker than previous ones. The mainstream press and the government are all issuing grave warnings about the risks of things getting out of hand on the general strikes called for 30 October by the rank and file USB unions and those on 20 November by the CGIL. Student organizations have already indicated that they are supporting these days of action and there is a national organizing meeting for students on 23 November.

Spontaneity of youth upsurge

Luciano Cimino, for radical left daily newspaper, Il Manifesto described 16 October student mobilization in the following way:

"No national coordination between cities, no shared platform, no leading organisation – simply the announcement of a date led yesterday to student demonstrations on a scale not seen for years. Tens of thousands of people marched in the capital, two thousand in Florence, five thousand in Milan, and similar numbers in Turin, Naples, Genoa and Palermo. And hundreds more took part in marches in smaller towns, such as Latina, Mestre and Padua. In total, half a million young people took to the streets yesterday with a range of demands: the impact of the 'security decrees' on their schools, solidarity with Palestinians amid soaring rents, the climate emergency alongside the issue of gender-based violence. All united by opposition to right-wing parties that are increasing military spending whilst cutting welfare."

The mobilization was called the 'No Meloni Day' calling out the far right prime minister who has denounced the protesters. You can see a significant degree of spontaneity at this stage. Social media means the message from France and the Spanish state travel fast and then it acts as an effective tool of mobilization.

The idea that there are 'extreme left' organizations behind the movement is just something the government wants people to believe. In that sense there are similarities with what is happened elsewhere in Europe. The Italian radical left is far weaker than in its heyday back in the 70s where it had tens of thousands of activists. Palestine solidarity has certainly played a role also in radicalizing young people before the recent demonstrations.

As in France, you can see too that young people from the poorer urban periphery are involved. They are at times more likely to be targeted by police since that happens anyway in their neighbourhoods and they are more likely to fight back. Consumer capitalism creates it own explosions. Young people are subject o endless advertising that only certain products will make them fully human. They have less money then ever, hardly surprising that when the opportunity arises a small minority will take advantage. As one said on the TV – my father would need two weeks salary just to buy some of this stuff in the luxury shops.

The government response has not been to negotiate or discuss improvements. Instead it has extended its power to put people it deems to be a threat to order in preventive detention. From now on it can also detain minors. New crimes and more severe penalties have been created. Government ministers have made ludicrous accusations today that the hand of Moscow or the Islamists are behind the incidents. It's all about hybrid warfare against the left and Western values because kids are nicking trainers from FootLocker.

Trade union day of action on cost of living

At the end of the CGIL demonstration on Saturday there were many incidents. Fires were started. People attacked shops. A big Feltrinelli book store was invaded, books were scattered and some electronic items were pocketed. Official reports say 80% of those arrested were the previous day there were skirmishes in Turin and Bologna.

Landini, CGIL leader, provided some militant rhetoric at the march in Rome:

> We are placing ourselves at the service of this process of change to put social justice back at the centre,' because 'this is not the time to ask young people to fight; it is time for us to fight to secure the rights they do not have, and the strike is the most solidarity-

Poverty and inequality

So there is a potential for the demands of young people and of workers in general to come together. Already the south of Italy is being affected by industrial action taken by hauliers who are reeling under the costs of diesel. Poverty and inequality is rampant in Italy. As Franco Turigliatto from Sinistra Anticapitalista (Fourth International organization in Italy) points out on its web site:

Anti*Capitalist Resistance

1

"L'autunno delle ingiustizie. Unire le mobilitazioni dei tanti scontenti"

1

A new cycle of struggles has begun in Portugal

21 October, by José Soeiro, Maria Manuel Rola

This struggle ushered in a new cycle of confidence for the popular movement.

The government, which holds a minority in parliament, put labour issues on hold and sought to change the subject. It ensured that the PS abstained on the draft state budget, on the one hand, and, on the other, reached an agreement with the far right on a new rental law which, in practice, virtually eliminates any rights for tenants.

A two-month delay in paying rent can lead to eviction. There is no longer a cap on deposits for renting a property. The number of months' rent a tenant must pay in advance when signing a tenancy agreement has been increased to three. The 2 per cent cap on rent increases has been removed. With this proposal, the rental market – which is used by those unable to buy a home – becomes even more cut-throat, in the eurozone country where house prices have risen the most, where only 2 per cent of housing is social housing,

where the rent per square metre has doubled over the last five years, where, on average, people spend 50 per cent of their income on rent for legally registered tenancies alone (that is to say, it is even worse if we take the informal market into account), and where the poverty rate rises from around 15 per cent to 27 per cent when housing costs are factored in.

The rising cost of living, including fuel prices, and the approval (albeit without a final vote yet) of the tenancy law have created the conditions for a new cycle of protests.

On 10 October, a coalition of various groups and associations, called 'Não Dá Mais' ('We Can't Take It Anymore'), organised demonstrations against the rising cost of living in five cities, attended by several thousand people. In the city of Porto, which has the greatest impact in the north of the country, this demonstration coincided with two other protests – in support of Palestine and to safeguard an old market (the Bulhão), which is highly symbolic for the city – and was followed by a call, inspired by events in Spain and the wave of outrage over Maricarmen's death, to set up a tent camp at the end of the rally, occupying the square where it had taken place.

On the first night, around 30 tents were pitched and remained in place. On the second night, there were more than 50. The camp was going to be cleared by the council at the end of the second night. The activists used social media to call for a new demonstration at the same location, with the aim of deciding, at an open-air public assembly, whether to resume the sit-in. On that same day, the Mayor declared that he would be "absolutely uncompromising" if the square were to be occupied with tents again. But not even that deterred the organisers of the camp, who set it up once more, with more people and more support.

At 3 am, with no journalists left in the square, the Government and the City Council, acting in concert, ordered a brutal police charge against a few dozen peaceful activists who had spent the night in that square. Curiously, this was on the very same day that, 20 years ago, a movement had begun to occupy the municipal theatre located in the same square.

The mobile phone videos shocked public opinion and the city. That very same day, thousands of people flocked to the square in outrage, in a massive demonstration that also made its way to the entrance of the city hall. Not only did the movement explode, but it also began to spark reactions in other cities and a huge wave of solidarity.

Not even the attempts by the Government and some commentators to stigmatise and blame the activists for having 'provoked the police' had any effect.

For the past ten days, the square has been constantly filled with thousands of people in the late afternoon and evening, with cultural events and workshops, whilst the organisers manage the day-to-day running of catering, security and cleaning. A new camp also sprang up in Lisbon last weekend, and in Coimbra. At the trade union demonstration called by the CGTP (Portugal's largest trade union confederation) against the rising cost of living on the 17th, trade union organisations and the 'campers' converged, forming a crowd of diverse ages and social backgrounds, which returned to the square in Porto. That same evening, the Porto camp was re-established with thousands of people, and several hundred spending the night there. A new cycle of protests has begun and will reach its next major national milestone on 14 November with a national demonstration.

At present, it is impossible to predict how the movement will develop. The issue of housing, however, is already at the centre of public debate, even as the government attempts to refocus the debate on 'violence' or the legitimacy of occupying a public space with tents. Progress has been made, notably during the demonstrations on 17 October, in developing a convergence between the housing protests and the trade union mobilisations. The political parties are under pressure to provide answers regarding the housing crisis, and the far right is already beginning to backtrack on its commitments regarding the new tenancy law, which may thus be defeated by popular mobilisation, as happened with the Government's labour reform package. There is also discussion as to what effect the Spanish general strike will have on the timetable and repertoire of struggles in Portugal. Undoubtedly, the inertia has been shaken off and we are facing a new cycle of collective action, with significant youth participation, which is already fostering a new collective consciousness and may have lasting effects on the reorganisation of the popular movement and the balance of power in the country.

20 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint****.*

Millions Join No Kings Demonstrations for Free and Fair Elections

20 October, by Dan La Botz

"I think the president is breaking our country," said Vic Cerra, a Vietnam War veteran, speaking to a reporter in Wheeling, West Virginia. "He's destroying our friendships with other countries; with our neighbors to the north and our neighbors to the south. He's fighting a war we don't need to be fighting. Taking money away from programs that should be helping our people. We need a change and voting is the best way to do it."

With the midterm election coming on November 3, participants' placards, speeches, and chants angrily criticized everything they hate about Trump's last two years: the war on Iran, higher fuel prices, climate change, the firing of thousands of federal employees, the reduction in government health, education, and social welfare programs, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's violent attacks on immigrants, the oligarchy of billionaires, the erosion of civil rights, threats to democracy, the proliferating construction of data centers, the unregulated expansion of artificial intelligence, and the 150,000 Flock cameras that track every movement of our cars.

Carrying a large sign reading "Defend Democracy," Kelsea Bond, a labor organizer and member of the Atlanta City Council, speaking at a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, said, "We need to build a society that works for the working class, not the billionaires." Her remarks were met with cheers and she went on, "We need an economy, we need a society that is democratically run by working people because we keep this economy running."

This latest No Kings protest was not built around mass marches in the big cities, but rather around local protests everywhere. Wherever they were held, many of those participating were older people in their 60s and 70s while young people were few.

An official No Kings slogan was "Hands Off My Ballot." No Kings organizers, protest participants, and millions of other Americans fear that Trump may try to steal the election or even launch another coup such as the one he attempted on January 6, 2021. The U.S. Constitution gives the states virtually total control over elections, with Congress having some oversight, and the president no role whatsoever. The Trump administration, however, has been trying to get access to the voter rolls of 31 states, supposedly to ensure that non-citizens are not voting. Trump has also suggested that ICE agents or the military might be sent to polling places on election day in violation of the federal laws that forbid armed people at voting sites. These are seen as efforts to intimidate voters and keep them from casting their ballots. They could also be the first step in a coup, leading to the seizure of ballots and a declaration that the election is invalid.

So, the key slogan of the demonstrations was "Vote Early." Some 47 of the country's 50 states permit early voting, getting the ballots into the hands of trusted state and local officials to collect and count them fairly. In this way, protecting the vote from Trump's shenanigans.

Esther Rodríguez, 73, participating in Denver, Colorado said, "I'm going to do everything I can to participate in active resistance against what is happening in this country. We have to preserve our democracy."

Thousands of young people launch a housing protest in Lisbon

19 October, by Esquerda.net

The vast majority of those participating in the encampment are young people who, in their statements to the media, testify to the impossibility of becoming independent and leaving their parents' home, even though they already have a degree and a job. Parents are often cited as examples to illustrate how much the situation has changed in recent decades: while a couple's salaries were once sufficient to rent or buy a home with a mortgage, today, children do their accounts and realize that it's nothing more than a dream.

The protesters are not holding back their criticism of the current government, which has adopted measures that benefit only landlords and real estate funds through tax exemptions: the recent amendment to the rent law, passed in its first reading [1] with the support of the far-right Chega party, weakens tenants. Their criticism also targets statements made by members of the government last week in response to the Porto encampment, with the Prime Minister calling the social movements selfish, and a minister asserting that the government will not heed the cries of the street.

Once the Rossio square was occupied, a popular assembly was held, rich in testimonies about the housing crisis. The slogan "the people united will never be defeated" was heard, and *Grandola, Vila Morena* [2] was sung several times .

In Porto, thousands of people once again decided to spend the night in D. João I Square
The encampments in Portugal began on Saturday October 10th in Porto, where, despite police repression, D. João I Square was the scene of gatherings and nighttime assemblies throughout the week. That Saturday,

thousands of people gathered again in the late afternoon, in solidarity with the right to housing movement, but also to protest against the police intervention early Thursday morning.

During the public meeting held in the early evening, it was decided to put up tents to spend the night on site.

"It was an unequivocal vote, almost unanimous. People are outraged and want to support us. More and more people are joining us," said Cristiana Leal, one of the organizers of the demonstration, who called for "more people to come and help the government hear the cries from the street: Lisbon is crying out, Porto is crying out, and in Faro too, there has been a strong mobilization."

17 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Inprecor****. First published* ***Esquerda.net****.*

Footnotes

[1] In the Portuguese Parliament, the vote "na generalidade" is the first of three stages in the adoption of a text, before the article-by-article examination and the final vote.

[2] This song by José Afonso, broadcast on the radio, on the night of 24-25 April 1974, signalled the military uprising that overthrew the dictatorship.

14.

Paris calls? Rome answers!

18 October, by Eliana Como

Paris calls? Rome answers! We are truly delighted that today's magnificent Via Maestra [1] march, on Saturday 17 October, concluded with the announcement that the CGIL [2] will call a general strike for 20 November, alongside the European student movements who, on that day, will down tools and take to the streets in many cities to protest against rearmament, austerity and war.
For us, this is a convergence that is as natural as it is necessary, centred on the slogans that students are also championing in our country.

Between now and 20 November, we have the time needed to organise the general strike in workplaces and across the country: any other mobilisation we take part in between now and then will help to spread a climate of revolt and hope – that very atmosphere we began to breathe during yesterday's student marches.

Any emphasis on violence, in relation to this autumn, is misleading and deceptive: young people demanding a future for all are not violent. As in Paris, it is police repression that is extremely violent; it is an act of violence to prevent the olive harvest in the West Bank; it is also an act of violence that was perpetrated yesterday against the ANPI [3] in Rome, which was excluded from the commemoration of the 1943 raids [4] by those who claim to transform the memory of the deportation into an alibi for colonial and genocidal policies and who, for this reason, ally themselves with the political and moral heirs of those who carried out the deportations.

17 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***le Radici del Sindacato****.*

Footnotes

[1] An alliance launched in 2023 by the CGIL alongside more than a hundred associations, centred on the defence and implementation of the Italian Constitution; it was this alliance that called for the national demonstration on 17 October 2026 in Piazza del Popolo, Rome.

[2] Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, Italy's main trade union confederation, led since 2019 by Maurizio Landini.

[3] Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia, the National Association of Italian Partisans, which emerged from the Resistance.
[4] the raid in the Rome ghetto on 16 October 1943, during which more than a thousand Roman Jews were deported to Auschwitz; only a handful returned.

15.

You can't defend peace when there is no

peace to defend

17 October, by Colin Long

Peace is the fundamental business of the left. But peace does not mean mindless pacifism. When countries come under attack from aggressors, they are entitled to defend themselves. Ukraine is entitled to defend itself. There is no point acknowledging that Russia is an aggressor against Ukraine and calling for the withdrawal of Russian troops, but then objecting to the supply of weapons to Ukraine. Objecting to Ukraine receiving weapons from wherever it can get them is doing Putin's work for him. Putin won't stop if Ukraine is unable to defend itself. The war would certainly end – but only with a subsequent crushing of Ukraine and hundreds of Bucha massacres. And then Putin will set his sights on the next victim – the Baltic states, Finland, Georgia, Sweden? Would Shoebridge object to weapons supplies to those countries?

There is a big difference between stopping weapons supplies to an aggressor or stopping arms going to countries before war has broken out, on the one hand, and stopping supplies of weapons to a country that is under attack, on the other. The former might end a war or stop it breaking out. The latter just guarantees that the victim loses. There is no peace to defend in Ukraine. There is a war and killing to stop. And while the war might end if the victim is unable to defend itself any longer, how is that a just peace? And ending the war on Russia's terms won't end the killing. It will just allow the killing of Ukraine and its people to continue in "peace".

There is no practical or ethical difference between someone who supports Putin's aggression towards Ukraine and someone who claims to oppose it but won't support Ukraine's right to defend itself. It's like seeing an innocent person being beaten up on the street, yelling at the aggressor to stop but grabbing the arms of the victim and holding them behind his back while the thug continues to punch him in the face. This ethical inconsistency completely undermines Shoebridge's objections to Australia's dangerously subservient relationship to the US. Why would anyone trust the Greens' judgement on Australia's own defence policies when Shoebridge shows such poor judgement on Ukraine's right to self-defence?

In November, the International Network of Solidarity with Ukraine is sending a Solidarity Convoy to Ukraine. We'll be taking generators, stoves and other equipment to help Ukrainians get through another harsh winter under Russian bombardment. You can donate here. We won't be taking weapons because we don't have authority or the resources to do so. But we fully support Ukraine's right to obtain arms to defend itself.

I hate hearing about the destruction being wrought in Ukraine, about the hundreds of thousands of soldiers from both sides being killed and wounded on the frontlines, the civilians, including many children, suffering and dying because of Putin's war. But expressions of dismay about war and love of peace are fine for comfortable Greens politicians from inner-city Sydney. They are of no use to people enduring daily drone terror attacks.

Shoebridge claims to oppose Putin's invasion and says the Greens support "basic humanitarian and civil assistance" to Ukraine but not the supply of weapons. This is mealy mouthed cowardice. Should others supply weapons? If they do, are they less principled than the Australian Greens? Are the Greens better than those who advocate for or supply weapons for Ukraine's defence? Or do the Greens hope that others supply weapons while they keep their hands clean with "humanitarian and civil assistance"? What is the point of such assistance if Ukraine is defeated and occupied by Russia? Or do the Greens think that everyone should be as "principled" as them and that no-one should supply weapons? Again, the result of that, of course, would be Ukraine's defeat by a Russia determined to eradicate it from the map.

It is rather ironic that Shoebridge's call to end weapons supplies to Ukraine replicates similar calls from the Trump regime and all the European far-right parties. What colour do you get when you mix red, brown and green?

Anti-imperialism should be consistent. Aggression by one state against another should be resisted wherever it occurs – Israel's relentless aggression against Palestine and other countries; the US's aggression towards Venezuela, Cuba and numerous other states; Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainians have a right to self-determination and self-defence. No geopolitical alliances, no complaints about NATO, no "western imperialism", no false narratives about the Ukrainian government's ideology: none of these justify the invasion of one sovereign nation by another and the killing of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians.

Russia is an aggressive petro-state determined to impose its nationalistic, imperialist agenda on neighbouring states. It is, alongside Trump's USA, the centre of the global far-right ecosystem of ethno-nationalism, Christian extremism, anti-LGBTQ prejudice, and anti-democratic politics. Putin's regime is supported by far-right, anti-union parties and individuals all over the world: Farage's Reform UK; Le Pen's Rassemblement National, the Alternative for Germany, members of Pauline Hanson's party, including Malcolm Roberts, the Freedom Party of Austria, Orban's Fidesz in Hungary, the UK's Tommy Robinson, the US's Tucker Carlson, and many more.

Ukrainian unions and leftists are highly critical of their government's policies towards the nation's workers. But they support the war effort. Unionists and leftists are on the front lines. Workers bear the burden on the

homefront in hospitals, on the railways, in fire and rescue services. They support their nation's struggle. They can oppose their government's domestic policies in a way that would get them only vicious repression in Russia. They ask only for our solidarity and our support – including the supply of weapons.

Imperialism should be resisted everywhere. Australia's role in it as a satrap of the US needs to be recognised and resisted. We can oppose AUKUS and support Ukraine's right to self-defence. You can show real practical support for Ukraine's workers and unions, and for its struggle for national independence, by supporting the International Network in Solidarity with Ukraine's Solidarity Convoy to Ukraine.

3 October 2026

Source: **Radical Civility**

16.

Spanish Housing Crisis May Bring Down Socialist Government

16 October, by Dan La Botz

On September 23 María del Carmen Abascal, 87, was evicted from the home where she had lived for 70 years. A lower court ordered her return to her home, but the Spanish Supreme Court overturned that ruling and she died in a hospital on October 7. Those events came to symbolize the housing struggle and brought the people of Spain into the streets.
There have been massive marches and occupations of public spaces in Madrid, Barcelona, and other cities, including here in Bilbao, the largest city in Euskadi (the Basque Country). Some local housing activists, about fifty of them, have set up an encampment, a tent city, in front of the massive, squat, neo-baroque Arriaga Theater in the heart of Bilbao.

These housing activists who have been spending their nights in tents now for three weeks, though the encampment is about to end because, according to a young activist interviewed by VoxPopuli, they can no longer continue the fight in this way, "we're tired, we're burned out," though he promises that they will participate in the protest march this weekend and in the general strike called for November 11 by the labor unions.

I enter the encampment, ask if someone can speak with me, an American leftist journalist, and a young man named Mikel offers to talk, though he prefers not to use his last name.

"We established this encampment three weeks ago as part of our fight for housing. We also join with the unions in the marches and rallies. We believe that housing is a basic right. People are entitled to decent housing."

In fact, Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution states that all Spaniards have a right to "decent and adequate housing," though this is a "guiding principle" rather than a legal right that can be enforced. So, in 2023, Spain adopted a Housing Law intended to regulate rents, protect tenants, and curb speculation. This year, a new housing law intended to stop evictions of the vulnerable, protect tenants, and cap rents was adopted, then rejected, then re-approved a weaker measure.

Mikel, however, feels that both Euskadi's autonomous government, headed by centrist President Imanol Pradales, as well as the Spanish government, led by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez of the Socialist Party who has been in power for eight years, have failed the people.

The housing crisis led President Sanchez to call snap elections which will take place on November 29, thinking the movement, including the general strike, could assure his victory. Now, however, it seems they could lead to his defeat and a victory for the rightwing People's Party and the far-right Vox party but he would rather be fighting over housing than over immigration.

"They talk about improving the housing situation, but they haven't done it," says Mikel, "They don't intervene to control the housing market. There's a disenchantment with the parties of the left."

In fact, over the past decade both the Spanish and Euskadi governments, have failed to resolve the housing crisis. According to the Bank of Spain there is a shortage of between 750,000 and more than a million homes. The global and Eurozone crises of 2008 and 2009 led to bankruptcies and evictions as what Mikel calls "vulture funds" moved in to take over housing being abandoned by former owners. Those financiers have continued to dominate the market. Speculating, but not building homes. In addition. social and public housing accounts for only about 2.5% to 3.3% of Spain's total residential stock, compared to about 10% for the European Union and as much as 20% in Sweden.

The Spanish far right parties blame the housing crisis entirely on immigration. In the last decade, Spain's population grew from 46.42 million to 49.8 million, a growth of 3.38 million, all of it the result of immigration. But in that decade, Spain built only 800,000 to 850,000 new homes when hundreds of thousands more were needed.

The increased demand for housing has led to the rising rents. And it is true that with the Socialist Party's liberal

immigration policies the immigrant population grew rapidly. Still, it is those immigrants who made it possible for Spain to maintain and expand its population, since the country has one of the lowest birthrates in the European Union, with a fertility rate below the generational replacement level. Those immigrants from Latin America and Morocco have also been an important factor in the success of Spain's economy relative to the rest of Europe.

The problem isn't immigration, it's wages, volunteer several activists in the encampment who are listening to Mikel and me as we talk.

"I used to work in public transportation," says one woman. "With those wages there is no way to keep up with rising rents."

Another woman says, "With my wages it would be impossible for me to ever pay off a mortgage."

And, according to economic studies, they're right. Rents have been rising seven times faster than wages, and today working people in Spain use 50% of their wages to pay their rent, while not long ago they used only 30%.

"We need rent freezes," says Mikel. "We're not asking for anything extravagant," he says, "we just want decent housing."

16 October 2026

Souce: ***New Politics****.*

17.

Workers' internationalism in action

15 October, by Paul Martial

This is a fine example of an international struggle. The CGT's telecommunications branch, in collaboration with Kenyan organisations, with the support of legal experts and drawing on academic research, has issued a formal notice to the company Téléperformance.

Social conditions in tatters

Although little known to the general public, Téléperformance, part of the TP holding company, is a French multinational employing over 400,000 staff worldwide. Through a series of acquisitions, TP has diversified, moving from call centres specialising in customer relationship management to visa processing and social media moderation.

The CEO receives a fixed annual salary of $2,625,000, plus a variable component of the same amount, whilst most employees in France barely earn slightly more than the minimum wage. Finally, as Hadrien Clouet, an MP for La France insoumise (LFI), pointed out in his question to the National Assembly in 2024, the 340 interventions by the labour inspectorate since 2016, the 60 on-site inspections to verify compliance with labour regulations, the 150 letters of observation, the dozen reports and the eight formal notices give an idea of the working conditions that may prevail within this company.

Employees at risk

As one might expect, this social abuse is found wherever the company operates. In Kenya, it has no qualms about employing undocumented migrants, which allows it to keep employees under pressure, particularly as, in that country, it is the company's responsibility to carry out the necessary formalities with the authorities to regularise their status.

Whilst social security contributions are deducted from wages, they are paid late, or not at all, causing hardship for employees and their families, particularly when it comes to accessing healthcare. Any dissenting voice is punished, especially when it comes to trade unionists.

Finally, employees responsible for moderating social media are subjected to a constant stream of content and must identify, within a matter of tens of seconds, the applicable rule to decide whether to remove a post. Added to this pressure are the traumatic effects of exposure to extremely violent content. The psychological support offered by the company falls far short of what is needed. Seeing the company psychologist takes time, at the risk of failing to meet productivity targets. Many employees also have doubts about the confidentiality of these consultations. This is the price employees must pay to ensure a 6.35 per cent return for shareholders.

International mobilisation

In collaboration with two Kenyan organisations – the Data Labellers Association, which supports data workers, and The Oversight Lab, which defends human rights in the field of new technologies – the CGT [major French trade-union confederation] has served a formal notice under the 2017 Duty of Care Act.

The company, whose profits amounted to 497 million euros in 2025, has three months to take measures to ensure the protection of employees and compliance with legislation on work permits and trade union rights. Failing this, the union will take the matter to the relevant courts. This is a model example of a workers' response to corporate offshoring policies.

15 October 2026

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

18.

"The reason you are poor is not another poor person"

14 October, by Amandla!

Amandla!: You represent people in shack settlements. They face desperate shortages of jobs, housing, land, water. You name it, they suffer a shortage of it. Why do some people come to believe that migrants are responsible for those problems?

Thapelo Mohapi: I lived through the 2008 xenophobia. I lived through the 2015 xenophobia. Xenophobia in South Africa has been here for quite some time. But people or grassroots on the ground are not the ones that are causing it.

I'm going to talk about something very practical. I lived in the community of Briardene informal settlements, and in 2010 we had a shack fire. A lot of people lost their possessions, including migrants from Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe who were living there and renting. And we took a collective decision that, because people were facing an emergency which led to their homes and their property being destroyed, everyone from now on must not pay rent. People must start rebuilding, because government was not there to assist people to rebuild their homes. And we did that. And people from Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were no longer renting from South Africans. They were now actually owning their own pieces of land in the informal settlements.

That was not a good thing, according to officials of the municipality. Together with the ruling party and other right-wing political parties that exist in the country, they tell people who are living in informal settlements that the reason why they are not getting services is because of migrants. There's a blockage, and there's running human waste because we allowed migrants to come. They say the sewage was made for a certain number of people. Now, here are more migrants that are coming in, and they were not part of the budget. And then that starts hate against migrants from people in the community. That's where people then start this discussion to say we want services from the municipality, but the municipality cannot service the community because there are more people than there were when this small township was planned. And then they start to say, "Okay, let's get rid of these people so that we can get services from the municipality."

People live in harmony and peace amongst themselves, regardless of which country they come from. It is when the government, through officials, through politicians, come into the community and says, "The reason why you're not getting your services is because of a brother and sister from another country that came to this country looking for better opportunity." And yet they are like any of us who come to the cities to look for better opportunities; we are coming from the rural areas where there is deep poverty.

South Africans are not xenophobic. It is when politicians who have influence and officials of the municipalities come to divide the communities and blame migrants for their failure.

The Franz Fanon School in the eKhenana settlement in KZN. We have a deep political education that we go through before anyone becomes a member of Abahlali baseMjondolo… And that's why, when we speak, our members listen; because they know that they have a principled position from the leadership through our political education. (Photo: Abahlali baseMjondolo

A!: What do you say to a member of Abahlali baseMjondolo who says to you, "Yes, I accept chasing foreigners won't solve unemployment or clinic queues. We understand it won't solve all our problems, but let's start somewhere.

TM: First and foremost, we have a deep political education that we go through before anyone becomes a member of Abahlali baseMjondolo. Our vision is to struggle for a just and equal society where everyone is treated with respect, and their dignity is recognised. And when we say dignity, we mean human dignity. We are not saying South African. We are not saying African. We are saying human dignity of all humankind. So we must treat every human being as a human being, not as a human waste that needs to be dumped everywhere. I don't believe that a piece of paper should be the one that recognises if you are a human being.

Capitalism is the reason why human beings are categorised as belonging to somewhere. But human life is more important than profit. Human life must be recognised as the main thing. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. We believe that Unyawo alunampumlo. One day, if I go to Zimbabwe, I expect

to be treated like a human being, so I must treat that human being the same way when he comes to visit me. Socialism is about that. It's about humanity. It's about looking after each other. It's about treating another human being as a human being, and that life is more important than anything else.

I'm saying this on the back of having people in KZN being killed as a result of this rise of the right wing that has taken place. Someone from Malawi was burnt alive in Mayville. Why would you do something inhuman like that because somebody was born in another country?

A!: Absolutely. But what is very striking in South Africa today is that Abahlali baseMjondolo is like the last tree still standing in the storm. Almost all the other trees have been blown down. There is so little resistance to xenophobia. How do you stand in the storm when everybody else is falling right, left, and centre?

TM: Fascism is something that has been created by the capitalist to say, while they loot, "Let's allow the brothers and sisters who live in Africa to fight amongst themselves, so that we continue to loot the minerals in these countries." We work with the Congolese Solidarity Campaign, and they say to us, "Comrades, we are not here to live in your country, but we are here to ask you, as Abahlali baseMjondolo, to help us to go back to the Democratic Republic of Congo, because our resources have been looted there. So, if we form a coalition and work together as Africans, one day, in that country that is ravaged by civil war, you will be able to visit it. I will be the first one to welcome you and say the reason why we are here is because of the revolution that was started in South Africa by Abahlali baseMjondolo. We need your help, just like how we helped you to fight against apartheid. So we can go back into our country in peace and harmony."

We say to a comrade who believes that things could be better if migrants have left: 300 Ghanaians were flown out of the country. No jobs were created. We had the most deportations of migrants in this country recently, and what happened to our unemployment rate? It increased. The enemy is giving us wrong information so that we fight amongst ourselves.

No African brother or sister who comes from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique has caused the problem that we have. That is caused by neoliberalism, which has made profit more important than human lives. Unemployment is created by neoliberalism, so that those who own the means of production are the ones who choose what price to pay for those who are selling their labour to them. That is not humanity. It's thinking about profits before the people.

A!: If we analyse this xenophobia, who benefits from it? Who do you think is behind it? It's generated somewhere and for some purpose.

TM: Without any doubt. The leader of March and March, Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma, does not live in an informal settlement. She doesn't know what the issues of people who are living in informal settlements are. I come from the informal settlement. I know what it's like to have my house burned down. To lose the photos and memories of my grandparents. That's what poverty deprives us of. So when I defend humanity, I defend it on the basis that I have lived the experience. When somebody from a privileged life comes to the poor and says the reason why you are poor is because of another poor person, I disagree with that.

We have grants that are not actually covering what a human being in South Africa needs. An average family in South Africa needs more than R5,000 to buy groceries. We are only getting R370, and that doesn't cover anything in this country. Our economy is stagnating. It doesn't go anywhere. We have a few billionaires who are richer, while the poor continue to be poor. We have 11,000 children who are dying of malnutrition in a country that is rich. A country that has mineral resources, a country that has plenty of food, and that food is thrown away, and that food is not distributed to the people that need it. The issue of housing continues to be a crisis. There are more informal settlements that are being built every day. We have a problem of leadership; we have a problem of political will, but we also have a problem of a government that continues to employ a neoliberal policy.

We had the most deportations of migrants in this country recently, and what happened to our unemployment rate? It increased. The enemy is giving us wrong information so that we fight amongst ourselves.

A!: What is the right direction to take to persuade the mass of people, not the hardened xenophobes, maybe, but the mass of people who are being led astray? How do we gain the initiative to do that?

TM: The rise of the right wing has been allowed because 'each one teach one'—a political conscientisation that we've had during the UDF—has gone away. We no longer meet and discuss political issues in our communities, which will result in actually teaching the young ones about the struggles that we have faced. So the organic organising that was there back in the days of the UDF—where we had street committees, where we had political education on the ground—is no longer there.

Abahlali baseMjondolo has political education, which we have come from this weekend, with leadership. When we launch a branch anywhere, we do a political education at a branch level. We do political education for the leadership, and we ensure that the leadership runs its meetings, conscientising the people on the ground. And that's why, when we speak, our members listen; because they know that they have a principled position from the leadership through our political education. And that has lacked a lot. When you want to destroy a nation, you destroy the culture of that nation. And I think Cyril is an ambassador of destroying the culture of political education in our country and promoting capital.

A!: You refer to the national liberation struggle, which is what it was — a struggle to liberate the nation; a single nation, not Xhosas

and Zulus and 'Coloureds'. Now that positive view of a nation is being transformed into a view where we keep everybody else out. Do you think that there is a danger to the nation from this xenophobia? Today they want to keep out Zimbabweans and Malawians. Tomorrow, in Durban, they will want to keep out Xhosas?

TM: Yes. We may think this is xenophobia, but it's also tribalism. The fact that you have amabutho, which was Shaka's army at the time, being in the forefront of these marches is an indication. It was happening during the time of Shaka's army in the 80s, when Inkatha used the very same method to destabilise the province of Natal, and many people died as a result of that. And they were killed by people who were called amabutho, who were actually traditional Zulu people.

Among the first people who were killed in the recent violence was a young Tsonga-speaking South African in the Western Cape. Sometimes you will hear people say that, once we are finished with these migrants, we must deal with these Sothos; we must deal with these Xhosas. And some officials of the municipality will say, "Why are you here? Your municipality is not functioning. Why are you moving to this part of the world?" So, here in KZN, first they come for the migrants who are born in another country, and then later they will deal with people who are South Africans.

We did not fight against apartheid because we were Zulus or Xhosas or Sothos. We fought because we were Blacks and we were being deprived of the right to be South African by a regime that did not recognise our existence as Black people in this country. But today there are people who want to divide the very same people who fought against apartheid into tribes.

The leader of March and March, Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma, does not live in an informal settlement. She doesn't know what the issues of people who are living in informal settlements are. I come from the informal settlement. I know what it's like to have my house burned down. (Photo: Ashraf Hendricks/GroundUp)

A!: What would you say to the organisations of the Left, to the organisations of the working class and the popular movement, that they should be doing now to take us out of this disastrous state that the country is being plunged into?

TM: I think the most important thing right now is for us to go back to who we are and remind ourselves where we come from. We need to have an agreement as the Left about how we fight against what makes us poor, what oppresses us. There are many petty things that have divided the Left. Major trade unions in this country are not working together because of petty issues that have existed in the past. We need to go back to that grassroots organising. Abahlali baseMjondolo is an example of how you organise at a grassroots level. We have political education that is grassroots, on the ground, and we educate our people in the language and in the simplest way that we can, so that they understand the struggles that we are facing.

30 September 2026

Source Amandla!.

To defend our future, against austerity and repression: everyone in the streets alongside the youth!

13 October, by Gauche anticapitaliste/SAP Antikapitalisten

In June, the government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation forced through its reforms to dismantle education: increased working hours for teachers in upper secondary education, increased tuition fees for higher education, and cuts to budgets for school infrastructure (just a few weeks after heat waves that turned classrooms into veritable ovens).

Youth at the heart of the movement and the target of repression

The Degryse government hoped that summer would quell the mobilization, but for several days now, actions have been multiplying and intensifying throughout Wallonia and Brussels. At the heart of this movement: a sacrificed, forgotten, and scorned youth who refuse to have their future stolen from them. Faced with an increasingly elitist education system that is desperately under-resourced, and with ever-widening inequalities, the government persists in its austerity measures. Secondary school students are on the front lines of this struggle and are showing us the way! They are demanding decent conditions for learning and studying, with adequate equipment, but also better working conditions for their teachers and more staff. They are also denouncing the price increases, particularly for public transport passes and tuition fees, in the face of

already widespread precarity, especially among young people.

The level of repression was extremely high during the June protests, particularly against young people of colour and those from working-class neighbourhoods, but the escalation in recent days has become increasingly brutal and alarming. Several dozen arrests had already been made across Wallonia by the middle of last week, including several judicial arrests and one young person placed in a juvenile detention centre. On Tuesday, the mayor of Dinant banned a gathering organized by students, and on Thursday, the mayor of Liège went even further by prohibiting any gathering of more than three people: serious anti-democratic attacks! At the October 9th demonstration, the repression accelerated even further: more than a hundred arrests and an astonishing use of tear gas and water cannons! A criminal police force acting with the tacit approval of the mayor of Brussels, Philippe Close.

Meanwhile, the right-wing government, with Bernard Quintin and Georges-Louis Bouchez at the forefront, is attempting to silence and discredit the movement, with an obsession about the "rioters." This narrative obscures the underlying causes of the mobilizations and focuses far more on the material damage than on the fierce repression against the protesters , who are often minors . In this respect, we regret that the mainstream media often treat the movement through such a sensationalist lens, relegating the students' demands to the background. The violence the movement may resort to is merely a response to the radical offensive of the right-wing government. The real rioters are those who dismantle sectors essential to society, imposing precariousness and repression!

Structure the movement in order to endure and strengthen it

Right-wing governments are counting on repression and on exhausting the movement to force their way through. To sustain itself and grow stronger, the youth movement should develop its own tools for discussion and decision-making, completely independent of existing structures (unions, left-wing parties, student unions like the CEF and the FEF). Such spaces would serve as forums for formulating demands and for strategic debates (on the role of violence in the movement, building links with other social and political forces, etc.). This structure would prevent the recent social unrest from quickly subsiding, for example, during school holidays. This grassroots self-organization will be key to keeping the movement alive and democratic.

The movement will also need the support of the unions. The demonstration on October 9th was symbolic of the potential of such an alliance and the road that still lies ahead: on the one hand, young people were present en masse at the demonstration, making it one of the youngest union mobilizations in recent years. On the other hand, the union and youth blocs formed two separate marches, and the unions rushed to the Gare du Midi train station, leaving the young people at the mercy of police repression. The struggle of young people is that of the entire working class, and it is crucial that union leaderships provide support and solidarity to the whole movement!

To defend a just, egalitarian, and democratic society, we demand:

• The complete withdrawal of the education reforms;
• The release of all young detainees and the dropping of charges;
• The resignation of the political figures responsible,, at all levels of power;
• The disarmament and defunding of the police and the establishment of genuine citizens' control;
• Massive refinancing of education and healthcare!

12 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Gauche Anticapitaliste****.*

Maricarmen, the general strike and the threat of an electoral victory for the reactionary bloc

12 October, by Jaime Pastor

This statement by one of the spokespersons for the Tenants' Union—the organisation that stood by Maricarmen in her fight against eviction right up to the very end—vividly conveys the shock caused by her death on October 7 among a broad and diverse majority of society, extending even beyond the borders of Spain. The cruelty and the malice—fuelled by falsehoods—directed at her by both

the vulture fund and the reactionary political, judicial, and media bloc have been completely exposed, leaving no room for excuses. The rage and indignation that have been evident in the protests against the eviction since September 23rd have now reached unprecedented levels, providing even more impetus for a movement that is growing stronger by the day—as demonstrated by the encampments and new acts of solidarity across the country with the person who has become a symbol of the movement. In all of them—as was written from the Sol encampment—"Maricarmen has been and will be a symbol and an example for all of us, for the protest for decent housing, and for continuing to organise for our rights. She has been the spark that ignited this fire of unstoppable struggle."

This harsh and sad news came after Pedro Sánchez's decision to call a general election for November 29, convinced that the social outcry over housing might offer him the best possible opportunity to remobilise the left-wing electorate and counter the prediction—shared by virtually all polls—of an absolute majority victory for the PP-Vox coalition. [1] It also coincides with the support of virtually all national and regional trade unions for the Tenants' Union initiative to call a general strike, scheduled for November 11.

Sánchez's final decision to call early elections had become virtually inevitable following Junts' [2] rejection of the initial housing decree and with no hope whatsoever that the proposed general budget would secure a parliamentary majority. Sánchez also had to take into account that he was unlikely to face a better set of circumstances in the coming months, given that inflation continues to rise (currently 4.9%) and legal harassment (the Zapatero and Leire Díez cases) [3] as well as issues involving family members, shows no signs of ending. That is why he chose to announce the call for elections with a speech in which he once again employed anti-elite rhetoric and boasted of some of his moderate social measures or of favourable economic growth figures even though these continue to contrast with the deteriorating material living conditions (especially regarding wages, housing, and prices, not to mention healthcare and education) of the majority of the working class.

Furthermore, Sánchez has opted to have the Council of Ministers re-approve—with some modifications—the two decrees [4] that were previously rejected by Congress, aiming to secure approval for at least the first one in the Diputación Permanente (Permanent Deputation or DP [5]) within a month. In doing so, he seeks to demonstrate that he remains responsive to the pressure exerted by the housing movement, attempting to position himself as its ally against the PP, Vox, Junts, and the conservative Unión del Pueblo Navarro (Navarrese People's Union or UPN).

However, staging a comeback like the one in July 2023 will not be so easy this time; the task would be far more daunting now, as the advance of the right—particularly Vox—appears difficult to reverse. Compounding this is the fact that disillusionment with the PSOE-Sumar [6] coalition government has grown substantially among many working-class people, driven by numerous policies—or unfulfilled promises—regarding issues such as housing and the failure to repeal the "Gag Law" over the course of its eight years in office.

The PP and Vox were quick to respond to the snap election call—despite their initial bewilderment—since, prior to the Maricarmen eviction incident, the Ceuta crisis had offered them a more favourable landscape for their racist campaign and their electoral prospects. [7] Alberto Núñez Feijóo, head of the PP and leader of the Spanish opposition, has nevertheless expressed his satisfaction, as he sees himself—"at last"—as the future head of government. Even so, he does not appear entirely convinced, for he has once again resorted to the threat of electoral fraud, following the lead of Isabel Díaz Ayuso (President of the Community of Madrid and the PP) and Vox as loyal vassals of Trumpism. That said, the PP leader is barely heard speaking about policy proposals—beyond wanting to repeal any progressive measures enacted under Sanchismo and his obsession with sick leave—or doing anything other than trumpeting slogans like "PSOE or democracy" or "Spain against the PSOE."

But, once again, it is former Prime Minister Aznar who has spoken most plainly, attributing profound significance to the November 29 elections. He goes so far as to argue that these are the most important elections since the Transition, as the future of the "Regime of '78"—with the monarchy at its helm—is supposedly at stake…

As for Vox, its proclaimed pillars of "national priority, deregulation, and remigration" leave no doubt about its intentions should it come to power: to impose a policy that is racist, aporophobic, sexist, climate-change-denying, and ultraliberal—a stance now confirmed regarding a key issue, the pension counter-reform already announced by that sinister figure, MP José Figaredo, of Vox—the very man who called for the hunting of migrants in Ceuta. So, what awaits us if these parties come to power—amid the rise of the reactionary international, as we are currently seeing in Germany and Brazil—is a genuine counter-reform on the political, social, and cultural fronts.

Meanwhile, the call for elections has caught the national-level forces to the left of the PSOE—which have governed alongside that party—in the midst of a dispute. The conflict centers on who will lead the Sumar coalition—now being renamed the Frente Amplio (Broad Front)—and the question of whether or not to reach an agreement with Podemos. As polls predict, the potential electorate for that political space has shrunk significantly over the past eight years; the total vote share would likely be higher if they ran separately—to the benefit of the PSOE or of voter abstention. Occupying other political spaces are the regionalist left-wing parties (such as EH Bildu in the Basque Country; Bloque Nacionalista Galego, the Galician National Bloc; Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Republican Left of Catalonia; Coalició Compromís in Valencia; Chunta Aragonesista, Aragonese Union; and Adelante Andalucía, Forward Andalusia)—which possess genuine

territorial roots—and will run under their own banners. It remains to be seen what platform and rhetoric they will adopt, in order to assess whether they reflect a desire to shift political direction following the varying degrees of subordination to the PSOE they have maintained until now. Separate cases are those of Adelante Andalucía—a proponent of anti-capitalist Andalusianism—and the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy or CUP) in Catalonia, whose national leadership has decided not to run, although this decision must still be ratified in an internal referendum.

On the other hand, what is also becoming apparent in these mobilisations is the emergence of a new generation of social and political activists who—alongside significant segments of earlier generations—are articulating a new process of radicalisation that urgently demands a left-wing movement committed to a clean break from, and independence from, the still-hegemonic socio-liberalism. [8]

Prepare and Organise the General Strike

In any case, preparing for the General Strike on November 11 requires the greatest possible unity of action among the organising bodies to establish neighbourhood, workplace, and campus committees across the country—as has already been proposed by the Tenants' Union and various other trade union, feminist, environmental, and social organisations. It must be—as was successfully proposed for the feminist General Strike of March 8, 2018—"a strike involving labour, care work, consumers, and students," although its impact in factories was limited at the time, since the major unions called only for partial, two-hour work stoppages.

Therefore, there are sufficient grounds to believe that the agreement reached regarding this call to action will pave the way for a virtually total work stoppage—an unprecedented scenario on the eve of an election campaign. Moreover, this process is unfolding against the backdrop of a likely "hot autumn" across Europe—a phenomenon not seen in a long time, as we are already witnessing in France and Belgium.

Obviously, there are various currents and strategies within that bloc; therefore, efforts must be made to avoid any instrumentalisation for electoral gain. Instead, this call to action should be grounded in shared objectives that—while rooted in demands for decent housing, fair wages, and fair prices—go further to target a form of capitalism that is rent-seeking, speculative, and predatory.

This mobilisation cannot remain indifferent to the threat posed by an electoral victory for the right—a threat that must be confronted with our full collective strength. Yet, this must be done while asserting the movement's autonomy and its readiness to keep fighting regardless of who holds power, at any level, both before and after November 29. This is all the more true given that primary authority over housing lies with the autonomous communities and municipalities—mostly governed by the PP, and in many cases in coalition with Vox.

We are entering a decisive few weeks in which the reactionary bloc, business associations, and rent-seeking lobbies—emboldened by the blackmailing power they demonstrated against Junts—will not hesitate to use every possible dirty tactic to prevent the General Strike from becoming a success capable of shifting the current balance of power.

10 October 2026

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

Footnotes

[1] The right-wing Partido Popular (People's Party or PP) has forged a number of alliances with the far-right Vox (Voice) party.

[2] Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia, JxCat or Junts) is a Catalan pro-independence centre-right, populist political party.

[3] Former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero of the social-democratic Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party or PSOE) and former PSOE member Leire Díez are linked in a number of corruption investigations.

[4] For a discussion on some of the limitations and contradictions of these decrees and the need to "ban the purchase of housing not intended for owner-occupation," see: "Vivienda: una situación insostenible", Gloria Marín and María Gómez, viento sur, October 3, 2026. For a historical perspective on the Spanish real estate model, the 1997–2007 bubble, and its consequences up to the present day: "Urbanismo con burbujas, auge de las operaciones y declive del planeamiento", José Manuel Naredo, viento sur, October 7, 2026. Also: "Con la carne de gallina: Desbandada de los fondos buitre, la desregulación y la vivienda", Fátima Martín, viento sur, October 10, 2026.

[5] The DP is a parliamentary body consisting of a reduced number of members of parliament which assume the legislative powers of the Parliament when it is not in session.

[6] Movimiento Sumar (Unite Movement or MS) is an electoral alliance formed by Spanish second deputy prime minister, labour minister and member of the Communist Party of Spain, Yolanda Díaz involving a number of leftist formations including—temporarily—Podemos.

[7] An election poll conducted on October 7–8 and published in El País on October 9—that is, following Maricarmen's eviction and the announcement of a snap election—assigns 50.8% of the vote to the bloc comprising the PP (31.9%) and Vox (18.9%), while the

PSOE garners 28.1%, Sumar 5.3%, and Podemos 2.3%. This would yield a total of nearly 200 seats for the PP and Vox combined, whereas the progressive coalition would fall short of 130. While seats won by non-state-level left-wing political forces would need to be added to the latter figure, the gap remains far wider than it was prior to the start of the 2023 election campaign.

[8] Even before the "Maricarmen effect," there were already polls pointing to that trend: "Los votantes de izquierda se sitúan más a la izquierda en una España que gira a la derecha" (*Público*, September 26, 2019).

21.

Mamdani Condemns ICE Shooting in NYC and Israel's Genocide, but Faces Criticism from the Left

11 October, by Dan La Botz

An ICE agent attempting to arrest Oscar Belgal, a Dominican immigrant, fired seven gunshots into his car, one of them hitting him in the neck, while his five-year-old child sat in the car's backseat. Others were on the street when the shots were fired and another ICE agent walked nearby carrying an assault rifle.

Mamdani issued a statement saying, "This is an unconscionable and incredibly serious situation. I have called the President; when we spoke, I demanded that he end all ICE enforcement actions in our city. I will not stand by while ICE agents terrorize our communities. Abolish ICE."

Thousands of New Yorkers rallied and marched through the city chanting "ICE Out of New York" and "Abolish ICE." Speakers demanded the release of Belgal and for the indictment of the ICE agent involved in the shooting.

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, the agency that runs ICE, said that their operation had been lawful and that Belgal had been in the United States for the past three years, during which he participated in "extensive criminal activity."

While Mamdani's statement was consistent with his opposition to ICE, the NYC Democratic Socialist of America (DSA), of which he is a member, issued a statement implicitly critical of Mamdani, saying, "Jessica Tisch must get ICE out of New York and end NYPD complicity with these terrorists. If the Commissioner can't put a stop to these injustices, she must be fired." Tisch is a billionaire worth between $10 and $14 billion who describes herself as a "proud Zionist" and is characterized as a Democratic Party moderate. Mamdani, who inherited Tisch from the previous administration, has been reluctant to remove her.

Seventeen DSA elected officials and nominees signed a letter saying, Tisch "must end police assistance for ICE operations and disband NYPD's Strategic Response Group — and if she won't, she must be fired." The Strategic Response Group is a special NYC Police Department unit that often responds to protest demonstrations and has been criticized for use of excessive force, mass arrests and violation of First Amendment rights.

Speaking at a vigil on the anniversary of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Mamdani was booed by pro-Palestinian protestors after he issued a statement saying, "This day is profoundly painful for so many New Yorkers. It marks three years since the horrific war crimes of October 7. On that day, Hamas killed more than 1,100 Israelis and abducted 251 others. We grieve alongside our many friends and neighbors who still carry that unthinkable loss." Some DSA members and Palestinian groups, criticized the mayor, saying in an advertisement for the protest, "Zohran Mamdani campaigned on promises to the Palestine movement. ..Instead, he has repeatedly capitulated to Zionist pressure."

However, Mamdani has repeatedly criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel for the attacks on Palestinians. His October 7 statement went on to say, "The suffering did not begin nor end that day. It instead continued through the Israeli government's devastating, ongoing genocide in Gaza, in which it has killed more than 74,000 Palestinians—including more than 21,000 children. Even since the so-called ceasefire, more than 1,400 Palestinians have been killed." His use of the word "genocide" infuriated Zionists.

Mamdani finds himself criticized both by conservatives and some socialists, by Zionists and some Palestinians, but his progressive credentials remain intact: Against ICE. And Against Zionism.

22.

The start of an unprecedented movement in France

10 October, by Antoine Larrache, Elsa Collonges

This movement began in working-class neighbourhoods, where secondary school pupils face the harshest study and living conditions in the country, with a lack of resources – including staff shortages and the poor state of school premises – that undermines their ability to study, alongside social discrimination embodied in particular by Parcoursup [1], linked to pervasive racism and authoritarianism. It is the 'unrestrained' repression, in the words of the Minister of the Interior – by which we must understand that the police allow themselves to maim, blind, torture, beat and imprison people… – that has extended the mobilisation to the youth as a whole. Whilst trade union and political organisations have been reluctant in recent years to launch protests, young people can be proud of their united response. Young people are championing the social struggle, the anti-racist struggle and the struggle for Palestine.

A mobilisation to be understood in its context

This mobilisation can only be understood by analysing the social situation and the ongoing political and class conflicts in France. Buying power has deteriorated sharply, particularly due to food and energy prices, whilst the quality of public services is increasingly deteriorating (transport, housing, education, healthcare!), and the government's legitimacy is very low. Protests were planned for 17 October and 5 November to demand improved purchasing power, following an initial day of action (29 September) on the civil service, which met with a mixed response.

The violence perpetrated by the government must also be understood within this context: those in power are afraid; they realised very quickly that the movement could spread and give rise to a widespread expression of social and political anger. They believed that the authoritarian and racist atmosphere would enable them to make this repression acceptable, but they miscalculated. It attempted to curb the mobilisation on 6 October with widespread bans on gathering outside secondary schools – a completely unprecedented and ultra-authoritarian measure – and here too it was both unable to enforce this ban and completely overwhelmed by the scale of the mobilisation. This measure also shows, once again, that the danger of dictatorship does not come solely from the RN. It is even possible that, to resolve the current crisis, the ruling class is prepared to form an alliance between the right and the far right.

And now? Let's build!

An extraordinary movement must consolidate and – without a doubt – will consolidate. The government's attempt to set aside time for debate in secondary schools over the coming days will fail miserably, because it does not meet young people's need to express themselves freely, without institutional constraints, and because the movement has already spread far beyond secondary schools.

To consolidate, several points are essential:

• Demands. The movement must seek to adopt a platform of demands, with a budgetary package at the forefront to lift students out of poverty – for example, 20 billion euros (the FSU [majority teachers's federation] is calling for an emergency plan of 5 billion per year for 10 years) – and a maximum class size of 25 pupils. It must categorically oppose any form of selection: we must put an end to Parcoursup and MonMaster, and return to the principle that 'every student has the right to enrol on the course of their choice at the university of their choice' (the Savary Act of 1984). Other demands will emerge within the movement, concerning resources, teaching methods, Palestine, racism and the environment, even if it will be difficult to give them the concrete strength needed to succeed. The disarmament of the police would be one feasible concrete demand.

• Self-organisation, mass mobilisation and unity. Every movement must strive to maximise the self-activity of the masses. This concern creates constant tensions between self-organisation and the unity of organisations, between the radicalisation of a minority and the need to bring everyone on board, and between the structures of self-organisation and the organisations themselves. It is the responsibility of activists to work towards building democratic frameworks for self-organisation – that is, frameworks which do not merely bring together a minority but constantly seek to mobilise more broadly and in a united manner, which means making compromises. To make compromises and build democratic representation that enables political action, we must seek to establish national coordinating bodies and a central strike committee.

• Make the general strike a real threat. For over 40 years, no movement – particularly a youth movement – has succeeded without making those in power fear the possibility of a general strike. The movement must therefore make it a priority to reach out to workers. Without abandoning the youth sector – we do not remove secondary school pupils from their struggle simply to go and campaign outside workplaces – but with great determination, particularly in discussions about the pace of the movement and in engaging

with trade union organisations – from the grassroots to the top. The first step is to organise a strike in the education sector, as blockades by a minority will not be enough and the government will find ways to circumvent them, such as through distance learning.

Beyond the youth movement, activists and organisations have a responsibility not only to relay the key demands of the youth movement, but also to broaden them to include wages, pensions, all forms of income and public services. Demands for a net pay rise of 400 euros and one million new public-sector jobs are measures that can broaden and strengthen the movement.

Building a political confrontation

The mobilisation already has a strong political dimension: it addresses Palestine, racism, class divisions, the legitimacy of the government and Macron. Politicisation is an asset for the movement provided it does not make it lose sight of the need for concrete demands and grassroots actions that strengthen it.

In this struggle, some on the left will seek to sow division by denouncing the trade union apparatuses or politicians seeking election in 2027, or by calling for social revolution. On the other hand, certain organisations will seek to negotiate, to stabilise the situation, or will refuse to call for Macron's resignation.

But politicisation must be the concrete expression, at a given moment, of the movement's level of maturity – Marx said that humanity only poses the problems it is capable of solving. For the time being, it seems possible – both to make gains on specific demands and to highlight the illegitimacy of the government, particularly in relation to the issue of repression – to work step by step on demands such as 'Macron out' or 'Down with the Lecornu government', to broaden the focus to the broader issue of the budget, the conflict between social needs and the drive towards war, to work towards a general strike (which, as everyone knows, cannot be decreed but must be built), a constituent assembly, and so on, depending on the movement's level of development.

Preparations for the vote on the state budget are already being jeopardised, and that is a very good thing: the movement will put pressure on all political forces. Starting today, we must call on the entire radical left, particularly LFI, to ensure that unity is not merely electoral, but is also social. The budget debate must not remain confined to the National Assembly, as it was last year. The political organisations represented there have a responsibility to forge links with the social movement on the streets.

The current mobilisation calls everything into question: it is a crisis in the sense that a series of contradictions are coming to a head. It can therefore change everything, from the far right Rassemblement National's position to the balance of power between the labour movement and other classes. And the outcome of the presidential election. It must therefore be taken with the utmost seriousness, for victory or defeat (which can take many forms, ranging from negotiations to a left-wing headlong rush) will determine a great deal for the coming months, if not years. All the more so as the protests in Spain, which brought down the government, and in Belgian secondary schools, are helping to pave the way.

6 October 2026

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

Footnotes

[1] The process of applying to higher education establishments.

World Social Forum: the failure of NGOization

9 October, by Antoine Larrache

Since its first session in Porto Alegre 2001, the World Social Forums have brought together, on average every two years, tens of thousands of people from around the world and from diverse activist backgrounds to debate. Unfortunately, recent editions have only mobilised a few thousand people – with the exception of Nepal in 2024 – and have been largely centred around the host country, with other continents poorly represented. Furthermore, there has been a shift in the nature of participating organizations, with a decline in involvement from trade unions and political parties (which have never been formally integrated into the World Social Forums), and an increasingly prominent role for non-governmental organizations.

The banning of the Forum

This session was affected by pressure from the Beninese government, which decided to ban the World Social Forum. It is difficult to know whether it acted on its own initiative, particularly in the context of the elections held last April, or under

pressure from imperialist forces. Their interests are indeed aligned: Romuald Wadagni, the new president of Benin, sworn in on 24 May 2026, succeeded Patrice Talon, whose Minister of Economy and Finance he had been since 2016, and who became President of the Senate on the very day the Forum was able to open. Their ties with international financial institutions, France, the United States, and Israel are well known.

Nevertheless, a few days before the opening, the government announced that the Forum was not authorized. It was unclear at the time whether it would be banned outright or tolerated, but the day before, a more formal prohibition was issued: the university, where the Forum was to take place, appeared to be closed, several activists were expelled, and the West African caravans [1], which had mobilised nearly 500 people who had arrived by bus, were turned back at the border with Togo. Initially, they were allowed to cross the border, but then the police forced them to turn back. The opening demonstration was also banned.

A meeting of volunteers was held on the afternoon of 4 August, and the atmosphere was subdued, despite the activists' efforts to liven up the session. The International Council was virtually absent that day, entangled in negotiations with the government. The Council did not, in fact, establish any relationship of forces with the government, contenting itself with negotiating, no doubt hoping that its docility would convince the authorities to let things slide. Mobilization for the World Social Forum had already been very limited, and no international activist campaign was launched to put pressure on the government and denounce these actions. In particular, no strategy was put in place to openly protest, alongside Beninese organizations, against the ban on the demonstration.

On 5 August, fearing evictions and campus closures, the debates were held semi-clandestinely and self-organized. A WhatsApp group brought together dozens of activists, who reported debates taking place in hotel conference rooms or bars. Thus, the CADTM [2]. maintained its programme, continuing the momentum of its own global assembly held in the preceding days. The silence of the International Council triggered a grassroots response. Late that afternoon, it was announced that the Forum could finally take place starting the following day, 6 August.

A disorganized and very moderate Forum

From then on, the Forum was able to take place under almost normal conditions, but with glaring limitations, not least the reduced attendance of around 3,000 people.

Like all social forums, it gave rise to irreplaceable encounters: activists from completely different backgrounds, trade unionists, members of associations, peasant organizations, and individuals who came were able to exchange ideas informally in the cafeterias, at the "festive intergenerational networking evenings," and during some of the debates. Among those present were trade unionists from the CFDT, Benin, and Mali, members of the Communist Party of Benin, the CRID, and representatives from associations in South America, Canada, and elsewhere.

But the ban caused great disorder: part of the debates had been held the day before in an alternative manner, which led to questions about the need to hold the same debates again.

The space where the forum was held—the vast University of Abomey-Calavi in the northwest of the city, the labour exchange in downtown Cotonou, and a few other halls and bars—was disproportionately large for the number of people present. This severely limited opportunities for interaction, as each organization tended to participate in the discussions it was leading without engaging in other initiatives.

The opening forum was held in the large "Idriss Déby amphitheatre" (several rooms in the university are named after African leaders whose construction was financially supported by their countries). But, like most major sessions, it was dominated by an NGO-like mindset : grand declarations of intent on the need for development, the rejection of war, and human rights, without any mention of the means necessary to confront imperialism and dictatorial regimes.

As with the ban, we witnessed a kind of wishful thinking, the hope that things would resolve themselves without any relationship of forces. A striking example was the Algerian delegation, composed of several dozen people and organized by the authorities, who staged a small demonstration at the university demanding rights for Western Sahara, displaying Palestinian flags, wearing t-shirts reading "Algeria: Another World Is Possible," and chanting the slogan "One two three, long live Algeria!" This action is symptomatic of the lobbying exerted by certain regimes on organizations participating in the World Social Forum. Not to mention the associations that are in reality businesses aiming to sell seeds or handcrafted clothing, with very little militant or protest-oriented substance.

The major absentees were the organizations and activists. Beninese people. A few organizations were involved, but this does not appear to have been the case for the majority, and in any event, the vast majority of the population and students on campus were unaware of the event. We were able to meet with a member of the Communist Party who assured us that only a few highly institutional organizations had been involved, such as the trade union federation close to the government, and that, overall, activist organizations had been neither involved nor consulted.

On the Fourth International side, there were about ten of us, from Belgium, France, Mali, Morocco, Pakistan, Switzerland, and involved in different delegations, in particular that of the CADTM, which organized a very comprehensive programme concerning its preferred area of focus, debt, but also the imperialist powers of the West and the East, debates on the nature of the regimes in the Sahel, the mobilizations of Generation Z, etc. [3]

What are the prospects?

The next World Social Forum (WSF) is expected to take place in Latin America, although the decision has not yet been finalised. This challenging edition serves as a reminder of the importance of social forums. Indeed, there is no comparable framework capable of bringing together tens of thousands of people to debate for several days. Some editions, particularly the early ones, as well as the continental social forums, have played a crucial role in the development of the alter-globalization, feminist, and anti-war movements.

In the preceding period, the decline of international and internationalist struggles certainly hindered the development of coordination frameworks and contributed to the dominance of less radical NGOs in social forums. But the resurgence of international struggles, with the Gaza movement, #MeToo, the climate movement, and the establishment of the Porto Alegre Antifascist Conference, demonstrates that it is possible to build internationalist actions that are rooted in grassroots struggles and independent of state apparatuses.

Various organizations are calling for a renewal of the social forums, which must involve independence from states, engagement with organizations of the workers' movement—particularly in the host country—and grassroots construction. This means seeking funding from below, centrally amplifying major mobilizations, encouraging struggles in the host country, and so on. As in any social movement, maximum transparency, from the bottom up, is a tool for fostering self-activity and the broadest possible participation.

For their part organizations of thw workers' movement should be concerned about their low participation, which contributes to the diminishing influence of demands within the World Social Forum. This is not inevitable; the World Social Forum can once again become a space for coordinating mobilizations, but this requires significant changes in its objectives and functioning. As the social movements of Latin America stated in a declaration: "The World Social Forum was born affirming that another world is possible. Today, faced with the situation we are confronting, we are called upon to affirm something more: another World Social Forum is necessary" [4].

August 20, 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint****.*

Footnotes

[1] In French Attac's account "WSF 2026: West African caravans", 17 August 2026 and more generally the logbook of the Attac delegation.

[2] Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debts. This committee brings together numerous organizations, on all continents, campaigning on the issue of debt and on other social and anti-imperialist demands.

[3] Read the CADTM report article: "Report on the World Social Forum in Cotonou (BeninThe World Social Forum in Cotonou (Benin): Taking Stock", 13 August 2026, by Éric Toussaint, Sushovan Dhar, Solange Koné, Omar Aziki, Fernanda Gadea, Veronica Carrillo Ortega and Gabriella Lima.

[4] "Political letter from Latin American social movements to the International Council of the World Social Forum" Lettre politique des mouvements sociaux d'Amérique latine au CI du Forum Social Mondial, 5 August 2026.

24.

Lula and the race for a turnaround

8 October, by Michael Löwy

I begin with the question you must be tired of seeing badly formulated. In *Fire Alarm*, you show that Benjamin inverts Marx's metaphor. Revolution is not the locomotive of history; it is the act of pulling the emergency brake. In Brazil, the image has become common currency for describing catastrophe and almost never for describing an election. So I ask, with all the risk that entails: is a vote for Lula on October 25 an emergency brake in the Benjaminian sense, or is it exactly the opposite, boarding the locomotive and asking it to go more slowly? And does the concept survive being applied to a ballot, or does applying it there dissolve it?

Michael Löwy – For Walter Benjamin, the emergency brake is a revolution, not a simple presidential election. In Brazil's case, revolution would be a rupture with the foundations of modern industrial capitalist civilization and the beginning of a process of radical change whose horizon would be a new civilization, which I call ecosocialist, based on solidarity, social justice and respect for nature.

A vote for Lula is obviously something far more modest, yet extremely important, because it allows the driver of the locomotive to be someone willing to slow down this suicide train.

We need to buy time! Slowing down is essential. The other candidate, Flávio Bolsonaro, is clearly determined to throw more wood on the fire or, if you prefer, more coal into the locomotive's furnace. From the standpoint of preserving the Amazon rainforest, a decisive issue not only for the peoples of the forest but for all of humanity, Lula, unlike his opponent, tries to limit the damage. That is not the case, unfortunately, with the oil of the Foz do Amazonas, which Lula is willing to exploit.

In *The War of the Gods* you established something that Brazilian political science still digests poorly: that the PT, the CUT and the MST were born, to a decisive extent, inside the Church, in the ecclesial base communities, and not in defiance of it. The Lula of 1980 came from the CEBs and from the ABC region. The Lula of 2026 negotiates with the evangelical caucus. What is left of that origin within the party, and does a fourth term still owe anything to it, or has the genealogy become mere history?

Michael Löwy – The legacy of what I would call liberation Christianity, linked to the Church but not necessarily within the Church, still exists in the PT and in Lula's government. But it is far more important in the social movements, in the struggles of residents, peasants, Indigenous peoples, ecologists. The Landless Workers' Movement, for example. Its founders were pastoral agents of the Pastoral Land Commission. From the beginning the MST defined itself as a secular movement, with no religious affiliation, but its political culture and its rituals, such as the Movement's famous "mística," have deep roots in liberation Christianity. Other movements, such as the Homeless Workers' Movement, have many members who are Christians, Catholic or even evangelical. The base communities no longer have the same impact they had in the 1960s or 1970s, but they are still quite present in the popular movements of the peripheral neighborhoods. Besides the PT, other left parties, such as the PSOL, have a significant presence of liberation Christians among their activists.

You are one of the founders of ecosocialism, co-author of the manifesto with Joel Kovel. [1] The Lula government reduced deforestation and, at the same time, pushed the oil frontier toward the Equatorial Margin. In strictly ecosocialist terms, not electoral ones, is this government part of the solution or a more presentable version of the problem? And here comes the discomfort I don't know how to resolve. Does ecosocialist criticism have the right to be voiced in the week of a runoff, or is it precisely this purism that has historically done the right a favor?

Michael Löwy – Lula's program is obviously not ecosocialist, and it has serious social and ecological limits. Oil exploration in the Equatorial Margin, a disaster for the forest, for the local population and for humanity if that oil is extracted and burned, is only the most obvious example. Ecosocialist criticism of Lula is therefore exercised in the first round, in the runoff and after the elections.
That said, we ecosocialists know that a Lula government is infinitely preferable to a government of the Bolsonaro clique, which is ecofascist in character and totally opposed to any social or ecological measure. Such a government would be directly ecocidal, and a catastrophe for Brazil, Latin America and the planet. It would be a dramatic regression in terms of democracy, Indigenous rights, women's rights, the environment, education, culture, society. It would hand Brazil over to the destructive rage of Donald Trump's United States, the number one enemy of the peoples of Latin America and of nature. Therefore, without any hesitation, ecosocialists will vote for Lula da Silva, who, with all his limits, is the only alternative to the Bolsonarist catastrophe.

In *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity,* you and Robert Sayre establish that romanticism forks. There is the restorative way out, which wants the past as destiny, and the revolutionary way out, which steals from the past the spark to ignite the future. Bolsonarism seems to me anticapitalist romanticism in the first key: nostalgia for a lost order, the family, the nation, the barracks, all against modernity without ever touching capital. If the far right has occupied the romantic critique of modernity, what is left for the left? Is there revolutionary romanticism available in the Brazil of 2026, or has the left been left with the role you always feared, that of the party of modernization and administration? And, in this typology, what is a fourth Lula term?

Michael Löwy – Look, romanticism, as Sayre and I defined it in Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity, is a revolt against capitalism in the name of the values of a pre-capitalist past, real or imaginary. Bolsonarism does not fit this definition. It does not criticize capitalism, quite the opposite, and the past it refers to, the military dictatorship, is merely a more authoritarian and brutal form of the capitalist system itself. It is, as in the case of fascism, what the historian Jeffrey Herf called reactionary modernism. It identifies with capitalism, with industry and with modern technology, today artificial intelligence, and rejects only the legacy of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity.

Who are the representatives of revolutionary romanticism in Brazil? Those communists, ecologists, ecosocialists and Indigenous-rights advocates who reject capitalist civilization and believe we have much to learn from the way of life of Brazil's Indigenous peoples. We cannot go back to living in the forest, certainly, but we should study with interest and respect the critique that Indigenous peoples make of the world of commodities in which we live, and the relationship of harmony they maintain with the environment, the trees, the animals, the rivers.

The governing left, the fourth Lula term, belong more to what I would call progressive modernism. Without questioning the capitalist system itself, they seek progressive social reforms. It is a kind of social liberalism. It does not break with the

neoliberal model, but tries to do everything possible for the disadvantaged, the poor, the excluded, on the condition of not touching the privileges of the oligarchs. The limits of this policy are evident, but it cannot be denied that it lifted millions of Brazilians out of poverty and carried out important reforms, such as the end of the 6×1 work schedule and the income tax exemption for the poorest.

You edited and defended Mariátegui, and his phrase that Latin American socialism can be neither imitation nor copy, that it has to be heroic creation. What, in the Lulism of 2026, is creation and what is imitation? I link this question to Redemption and Utopia, where you showed the elective affinity between Jewish messianism and libertarian utopia, and the Benjaminian idea of a weak messianic power entrusted to each generation. Does that force still exist in Brazilian politics, or has the messianic migrated entirely to the other side?

Michael Löwy – When it emerged in 1979, under the leadership of the ABC union leader Lula da Silva, the Workers' Party was a true heroic creation. Heroic because it immediately confronted the military regime in the great workers' strikes of those years. Creation because it is neither imitation nor copy, but something new: a workers' party that brings together the working class, the base communities, left-wing intellectuals, veterans of the class struggle such as Mário Pedrosa and Apolônio de Carvalho, and Marxist, Trotskyist and Maoist groups. A party that manages to integrate all these components into a democratic organization, rooted in grassroots committees. And that would adopt, in 1990, after the fall of the Wall, a socialist, democratic, explicitly anticapitalist program.

Obviously, the Lulism of 2026 is very far from that first version of the PT. It is merely a variant of the so-called progressive governments of Latin America, which manage to carry out some significant reforms but have lost their subversive, anti-systemic dynamic. In Lula's case, the limits are even more evident, partly owing to the control of Congress by the corrupt and reactionary right.

That is exactly where I am going now. Dark Horse, the biopic of a convicted and imprisoned Jair Bolsonaro, financed with money linked to Banco Master, a bank liquidated for insolvency, has Jim Caviezel in his role, the actor who played Christ for Mel Gibson. You have spent your life studying the elective affinity between religion and emancipation. Here there seems to be the exact opposite: messianism without utopia, redemption without emancipation, the face of Christ pasted onto a leader who attempted a coup. Does this have a name in your work? Is it the aestheticization of politics that Benjamin spoke of, or is it a new figure, which the categories of Redemption and Utopia do not reach, because there the messianic still pointed toward someone's liberation?

Michael Löwy – For Walter Benjamin, fascism is a false messianism, and its leaders are figures of the Antichrist, a miserable caricature of liberating messianism. The history of religions, and of politics, is full of false messiahs who present themselves as saviors and redeemers and are nothing but tyrants in the service of the ruling elites. Such is the case of the Jair in question, regarded as a messiah or myth by his admirers, but who is nothing but an obscure horse, a dark horse, mounted by the Brazilian oligarchy. It is worse than the aestheticization of politics that Benjamin referred to, in another context. It is a mythification, a mystification of politics. Jair is far from the only one. His great friend and ally, Donald Trump, is another false messiah, who has the gall to have himself represented, in an image created by artificial intelligence, as a kind of new Christ. Some Roman emperors, such as Domitian, already demanded to be worshipped as dominus et deus. It is an old story.

In 2021, you reviewed in *En attendant Nadeau* the book by Leneide Duarte-Plon and Clarisse Meireles on Frei Tito de Alencar, the Dominican friar kidnapped and tortured by the dictatorship, exiled in France, dead in 1974. Fifty-two years later, a presidential candidate campaigns for the freedom of a man convicted of attempting a coup, and Congress debates an amnesty for the coup plotters. An important part of the Brazilian religious field asks for this amnesty. You, who worked on the Benjaminian thesis that not even the dead will be safe if the enemy wins, what do you say about an election in which amnesty is a platform? What does an amnesty do to Frei Tito?

Michael Löwy – An amnesty for the 2022 coup plotters would be a direct attack on Brazilian democracy and a green light for future military coup attempts. The same goes for an amnesty for Jair Bolsonaro, with an aggravating factor. He never ceased to express his admiration for the military dictatorship and, in particular, for the torturer Colonel Ustra. His amnesty would be an insult to the memory not only of Frei Tito but of all the victims of the military dictatorship, the thousands who were tortured and the hundreds murdered by the barracks regime. Among them a friend of mine, Luiz Eduardo Merlino, a twenty-three-year-old journalist, killed under torture on the orders of Colonel Ustra. As Walter Benjamin said, if fascism wins, not even our dead will be safe.

Thesis VIII says that the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the state of exception in which we live is the rule. I apply it to the concrete: the hundreds of thousands dead in the pandemic, January 8, the coup plot that has been tried. If Flávio Bolsonaro wins on October 25, is that a rupture, or the continuation of a normality that Brazil's oppressed have always known, and the astonishment is only ours, of those of us who thought we were outside it? And, of your eighty-eight years, sixty-five of them looking at Brazil from the outside, is there a Brazilian specificity here, or is it one more chapter of the wave you have been describing since the nineties?

Michael Löwy – In the history of the class struggle, the rule is domination by the elites. The exception is the

revolution of the oppressed: the revolt of the slaves with Spartacus, that of the peasant serfs with Thomas Müntzer, that of the proletarians in the Paris Commune and in the October Revolution. But there are differences within that domination. Fascism is the most violent, barbaric and destructive form of the power of the oligarchies. It is not an exception; it is the most brutal and inhuman form of the rule. That is why we must do everything possible so that the nightmare that was the father's government does not return with the son. Hoping that one day, with the ecosocialist revolution, we can establish what Walter Benjamin called the true state of exception, the emancipation of the oppressed and the exploited.

The neofascist wave is not a Brazilian specificity. It is planetary. It already governs the leading imperialist power, with Trump, and the most populous country on the planet, Modi's India, as well as several countries in Latin America, and it already threatens several countries in Europe. If Brazil manages to stop this catastrophic wave in the October elections, it will be an encouraging sign for the whole world. Otherwise, the whole of the American continent, with the exception of Mexico and Canada, will be under the neofascist boot.

For me, Trump, Bolsonaro and Milei are manifestations of neofascism. It is not a repetition of the Nazi-fascism of the 1930s. We do not have totalitarian states, concentration camps, uniformed shock troops, national-corporatist economic policies. The main difference is economic policy, because neofascism is fanatically neoliberal. But it has in common with classical fascism racism, xenophobia, hatred of communism and of any form of the left, the cult of the Leader and authoritarianism.

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Outras Palavras****. 5 October 2026*

Footnotes

[1] In 2001, Kovel and Michael Löwy, released *An Ecosocialist Manifesto*. which set out to define eco-socialism.

Burnham – the resilience of Labourism

7 October, by Dave Kellaway

Some organisations and individual commentators in the movement define Andy Burnham as 'Starmer continuity', 'Starmer 2.0' or use the phrase 'new boss same as the old boss'. His conference speech and actions since taking office shows that this sort of analysis is lazy and fails to track significant changes in the political conjuncture. These changes affect how the left has to intervene today in a tactically different way.

Writing these lines a few days after a conference speech that both the mainstream media and most of the Labour movement recognised as consequential, we have heard another reversal of a Starmer policy – juries will not be abolished. Preventing people from opting for a jury trial was an attack on one of the fundamental democratic rights that previous generations fought so strongly for. David Lammy and other Starmer stooges had defended this reactionary change as though it was a mere technical move to relieve the huge court backlog.

Restoring juries

True this decision is not a decisive challenge to Capital or its state but it has a practical, material effect on our ability to organise and take action. Environmental and Palestine activists have been acquitted or had their sentences moderated on a number of occasions in recent years when they exercised their right for a jury trial. An ordinary group of our peers often has a better sense of justice than a judge who has been nurtured by the establishment throughout their lives to defend the status quo.

We welcome this U turn from Labour that is, to a degree, a result of the organised uproar among lawyers and progressive forces generally inside and outside the Labour movement, It should inspire us to keep campaigning to force Burnham to end the pernicious and increasingly embarassing proscription of Palestine Action. According to Novara Media at conference they found few Labour people, even in the leadership prepared openly to defend the proscription. Even Yvette Cooper, one of its authors, did not speak up for it.

Does this mean we are entering into a semi-Corbynist period? Do we think that Burnham's government will present a similar challenge to the interests of Capital that the 2017 Labour manifesto provided? Should we all rejoin Labour? Certainly not.

Even the progressive policies proposed in his speech are still just promises and the proper financing of a national care service, the housing programme, the 16-24 youth training and jobs guarantee and public 'control' of utilities is far from established. A lot of it is a lot further down the road.

Real relief now from the soaring energy prices and the cost of living crisis has not happened despite some minor measures like removing VAT on energy bills. Reform and the Tories will attack hard on such issues. Already dropping the Triple Lock on pensions plays into their hands. [1]

Political situation changing

However both the broad policies and the general hopeful vibe of their presentation is changing politics. Some people on the left were downplaying the Burnham bounce in the polls but today nobody can deny the evidence. For over a year Reform was averaging up to ten point's advantage over Labour. This month Labour are slightly ahead and winning by-elections. Reform has stalled and its competitors on the right and far right are clawing back its votes.The bounce is also hitting the Greens who are down to around 10% or less in the polls.

A few months ago it was odds on that we could see a Reform or a Reform/Tory coalition. Latest projections suggest a Labour hung majority. You have to ask yourself whether this would have been the case if Starmer had survived. Polanksi would have had a much better chance in Holborn/St Pancras if Starmer had still been at the helm. Projections suggest he will get a respectable score but lose.

We cannot exclude a Reform comeback – their coffers are full and they are spending seven thousand pounds a day on social media. The Burnham project could come unstuck under the pressure of economic crisis and/or international events like the US war of aggression in the Middle East. Recent reports on the way the Mayor of Manchester local economic success story was financed by the Abu Dhabi investment connected to Manchester City football club shows Burnham is no angel when it comes to partnerships with big Capital. The full story has still to come out and he has already slipped up in seemingly downplaying City's financial cheating.

We should not underestimate the very serious consequences for the workers movement of a far right/right government. Not to speak of the retribution that would be handed to refugees, migrants and the Black, Asian and Islamic communities. Of course some people on the left always minimise the differences in governments whether Labour, Conservative or far right so for them the new Burnham government is not that significant.

How activists are responding

We also have to be honest about the impact of Burnham on what we might call the broader vanguard of the movement – the people who keep the trade unions going on the ground, the anti-austerity campaigners in the community, those defending democratic rights and of course the Palestine solidarity movement.

If you talk to these activists – who are mostly not members of left organisations – they do not necessarily have huge illusions in Burnham since they know his history. Many are new members of the Greens. But they do support some of these new policies and agree with the general framework of challenging 40 years of neo-liberalism and taking back even limited public control over the market. They feel a bit of hope. Given the decades of defeats and the weaknesses of the radical left it is understandable that this is the mood.

Working alongside these activists as they campaign to force Burnham to carry through his new promises is important. This is what united front tactics are about as a way of building anticapitalist and ecosocialist influence. If the first thing you say to these activists is that Burnham is just another sell out, that all his policies are a trick and a waste of time you will not only be distorting reality but failing to connect with them.

Limits of Labourism

That does not mean we hide our disagreements with the strategy of Labourism. It relies only on electoral power and negotiating concessions with capital. You can air such differences within the united struggle to win significant changes on care, housing, jobs and public control over the market. We explain that the change will always be limited unless you challenge the system itself, until you build the relationship of forces in the institutions, workplaces and communities that can impose a decisive break with capital.

One left wing paper, Counterfire, had a front page that just listed the 'backing down' by Burnham. Nothing wrong with denoucing his retreats from earlier positions. However It did not distinguish between backing down and radical differences with the former Starmer line. So for example on council and other homes there have been changes, including in legal moves councils can make and in what housing associations have to do. Then it says he has backed down on net zero and electoral reform, neither of which is accurate, even if you think he might U turn later. Do they expect you can change electoral systems almost immediately? This sort of approach makes engagement with a broader layer of activists much more difficult.

Obviously a smaller number of activists we work with are already very critical of Burnham and Labourism and can be directly attracted to more radical left politics. Socialists have a separate, different conversation with them.

Response to the speech inside Labour and the trade union leadership was generally positive. Labour Hub has a comprehensive round up here. People were positive but not uncritical. Daniel Kebede, the NEU teacher's leader, said resources were needed and that the fragmentation of schools through academisation must end. Most others did not agree with dropping down the triple lock to a double lock. There is also no evidence yet of a surge of people joining or returning to Labour. However these activists are saying the left is finally leading or at least is back inside the debate in a way they were frozen out of under Starmer. Burnham's rhetoric can obviously create illusions that he can bring real change but it can also galvanise activists afresh and open up debates that the left of the movement can be part of. He might find it hard to control a base that wants change.

Engaging with new debates

For people on the left this change in the debate is something we should grasp with both hands. We want to be discussing a national care service which would be free at the point of use, paid for from general taxation. Of course our contribution would be to raise the importance of the people 'receiving' care having the greatest possible autonomy and control. We would want local democratic participation of old, young or disabled people using the service alongside the staff to manage the system in order to achieve the highest quality. These sorts of discussions are much easier to have if the agenda is already about an NHS style financing rather than the current privatised chaos.

We want hedge funds and private companies totally removed from the system. At the moment it is not clear whether the free care would be 'franchised' through some of these profiteers. Burnham's notion of public control can allow private capital back in through the front door.

Another key policy proposal was for a change to a fairer electoral system based on proportional representation. This would be in the next manifesto after a commission report. Most serious people on the left recognise that the present system of first past the post gives a huge advantage to the established parties and makes it harder for newer currents to grow. It has been one of the main reasons why it has been so difficult for the Greens to be fairly represented and for any socialist parties to the left of Labour to break through.

Supporting PR

Both as socialists who want an alternative to Labourism and as consistent democrats we should campaign for this change. Our position should for the fairest of the PR systems and not the very limited version we last voted on in a referendum. We should fully participate in any consultation or united campaigns for a fair voting system. Dismissing it because the 'real struggle is not elections' is wrong.

Of course just having a PR system does not produce a left alternative to Labour. The PR systems in Italy and the Spanish state have today not resulted in any breakthrough for the left. Nevertheless you have a chance of intervening in state institutions if you can politically build a credible alternative on the ground.

Housing is another area where you need to examine the facts beneath the rhetoric of Burnham's speech. As Martin Wicks explains in his article on the Labour Campaign for Council Housing site only 6% of the 300,000 yearly homes target are for council housing. Shelter estimates 90,000 are needed as a minimum. Even making the new Help to Buy scheme for first term buyers more targeted to people on modest incomes tends to see the solution in terms of boosting private market supply.

Ecological issues absent

Ecology and the environment were barely mentioned in the conference speech except indirectly when Burnham said the government had to be 'pragmatic' over North Sea drilling. In fact the government has a great opportunity to link up the need to generate proper skilled jobs for young people and tackle the green transition at the same time. Instead of unpaid work experience at Sainsburys and in hospitality young people could be trained to do the retrofitting we need for our energy inefficient housing or fitting solar panels or heat pumps.

Rather bizarrely during his speech Burnham invoked the sad loss of his father not just to correctly raise the priority of a national care system but to defend the British union at all costs – against the SNP's John Swinney's call for an eventual referendum on independence. Labourism is always at its worst when it comes to defending the Union, the monarchy and increasing arms spending. Burnham is not an exception to the rule. On these issues there is no possibility of any engagement with partially progressive policies.

The bold shift on Brexit surprised many pundits. Brexit has been negative for working people. Apart from losing the right to study and work anywhere in Europe a weaker capitalist economy affects us too – there are even less jobs and there is more downward pressure on wages and social spending. It can be easier for working people to forge trade union and other links if Britain is inside the EU. Important labour and ecological protections have been achieved through the EU.
Burnham's new electoral coalition

The line on how to compose a winning electoral coalition has now changed from the McSweeney/Starmer one. They tended to chase the Reform voter at all costs. Burnham sees – correctly perhaps – an electoral majority that wants something serious done on social care, wants more public regulation of the utilities, needs protection on the cost of living, likes the idea of electoral reform and desires closer ties with Europe. It is not an unrealistic project. How many Green or Lib Dem voters might be tempted to vote Labour in marginal seats where they have no chance in order to get these policies carried through?

A conference speech is just words and promises but to a degree it sets the political weather. What is much more crucial is the upcoming budget which will indicate if the reforms are credible because the money is there. The fiscal rules so much bowed down to by the Labour leadership can also be interpreted in a more flexible way than under Starmer. Changes to capital gains tax or one off windfall taxes on the banks or energy companies cannot be completely ruled out. On the the other hand the budget could put a complete block on significant changes and take the momentum out of the Burnham bounce.

All the hopes and bright new policies could also be derailed if the international economic situation seriously worsens. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the US attack on Iran could drag on for some months or even longer. In that eventuality the

'old labour' policies being proposed would require a much more radical framework if they are not going to just be remembered as conference speech soundbites.

5 October 2026

*Source: **Anti*Capitalist Resistance**.*

Footnotes

[1] "The triple lock currently guarantees that the state pension goes up each year in line with either inflation, wage increases, or 2.5% – whichever is the highest." BBC, 29 September 2026 "What is the triple lock and why are people talking about it?".

26.

Class, the protests: Notes on the social explosion over housing

6 October, by Juanjo Álvarez, Rául Camargo

The social tension that housing introduces into the lives of the majority has become political tension thanks to the successful intervention of the Tenants' Union, the eviction of Maricarmen as a foundational event and the pressure in the street. Today, Spanish politics is inevitably moving towards another moment and the vote in Congress is a step in that transition.

A step, but not just any step. The struggle of the movement has taken politics to the streets and has forced manoeuvres in the institutions: from approval in the Council of Ministers to negotiations and parliamentary votes. The entire political body of the state has been shaken in these days and has not ceased to open avenues of struggle, which has been its best success, in view of the closure that the institutional path has found. A few days ago, even before the Council of Ministers began the legislative process that was frustrated yesterday, the movement had begun to launch the slogan of the general strike and to prepare demonstrations, in such a way that the pulse of the struggle would not wane with the failure of the government. This Saturday, 3 October, there have been demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of people throughout the state, and more than half a million in Madrid. The calls for social response are multiplying throughout the state with a force that does not diminish, but absorbs the collective anger at the institutional failure. We are in an unprecedented moment of political and social radicalism, where the masses accept and share the criticisms of the progressive government parties for their inaction and their hollow rhetoric.

The parliamentary forces, meanwhile, have moved along an expected line: the left has once again staked everything on a changing majority that, once again, has not managed to impose its proposals, and the right and extreme right repeat their old – and false – mantras about liberalisation and massive real estate construction. It is important to point out that these right-wingers, although they do adopt an incendiary tone and are close to occupying the Moncloa, have not yet fixed their messages and have undoubtedly lost their footing with respect to the situation of a few weeks ago, when the crisis in Ceuta was the central issue of national politics.

In this context, a particularly strong potential is the flexibility and openness shown in the Acampada de Sol and that seem to be a mark of this new cycle of activation. Instead of the reactivity towards political organizations that the social movement has shown at other times, the impulse that is now opening up is open to relating to parties, no matter how left-wing they may be, and to discussing ideas of a total break with capitalism without prejudice. In this, the housing movement has been intelligent and agile in maintaining a flexible stance while avoiding attempts at co-optation by political forces, particularly those that make up the government. In this way, the starting signal for this new cycle emerges with a fresh potentiality around housing and a capacity to relate that will mark the emergence of a new militant generation.

The scenario is now opening up in a context that is difficult to interpret: on the one hand, it is clear that the phase of progressive governments that have fed fundamentally on fear of the far right is coming to an end, but we cannot yet know how a situation in which there are many elements will develop, starting with the electoral calendar. If Sánchez decides to go to general elections, the left of the government will try to swallow up the housing movement and feed on its momentum to alleviate the predicted electoral disaster, but it does not seem easy for them to succeed after showing their impotence with the negotiation of the decrees. It is foreseeable that the right will manage to form a government and that it will begin, as it did in 1996 and 2011, a period of intense regulatory activity that will mean a full-fledged attack on the popular classes.

We have to be clear: in a phase of defeat of the institutional left, we must not put palliatives to the parties that have formed the government, but recover the interests of the working classes and put them above the acronyms that have monopolized them during these years. The *Sindicato de Inquilinas* (Tenants' Union has been able to open a breach at a very complicated time, when the growth of

the right seemed inevitable, and has done so with a radical line that activates the youth sectors. The pending task is to build new political-electoral experiences that must aim to restore the organizational links of the popular classes to achieve a structured social majority on all fronts, below and above. In this process, the electoral calls are moments of importance, insofar as they involve a condensation of political activity, but we must flee from the reduction of the political to the electoral and work every moment to achieve forms of organization that are not limited to the electoral terrain, but that aspire to form a broad pole of the class that fights in all spheres of the political. At the end of the day, volatile scenarios open up and what we seek is to build class strength that can take advantage of the rapidly changing times to make leaps, rapid advances towards political positions that benefit the majority.

3 October 2026

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Viento Sur****.*

27.

Latinos May Decide the Midterms, Defeating Trump and the Republicans

5 October, by Dan La Botz

Even Republican politicians have turned against Trump. Florida State Senator Ileana García, a co-founder of Latinos for Trump, made a vehement public criticism of Trump, saying, "This is not what we voted for... this is unacceptable and inhumane." She gave expression to the sense of betrayal felt by many Latinos.

Before the 1960s, Latinos were a negligible factor in U.S. elections, though there were already six million of them or 3.5% of the population. In many areas racist laws and practices excluded them from voting. John F. Kennedy's presidential Viva Kennedy! campaign of 1960, brought Latinos into national politics for the first time. Kennedy and his successor Lyndon B. Johnson patronized the Latinos and brought them into the Democratic Party coalition together with the AFL-CIO unions, Blacks, and women. By and large for the next fifty years Latinos were Democrats, with the exception of the Cubans who had fled the revolution of 1959 and resented Kennedy for failing to overthrow Fidel Castro.

Waves of immigrants over succeeding decades made Latinos the largest U.S. ethnic minority. Today there are 65 million Latinos in the United States, making up 20% of the total U.S. population, while 13.5% are Black. The Latino population is diverse: Mexican Americans make up 57%, followed by Puerto Ricans, Cuban, Salvadorans and Dominicans. Some 36.5 million are eligible to vote. Most Latinos are Catholic but there are many Evangelical Christians. The largest groups are 8.5 million in California, 6.5 million in Texas, 3.5 million in Florida, 2.2 million in New York, and 1.3 million in Arizona. Not all Latinos are eligible to vote: 20 percent because they are not citizens and another 20 percent because they are under 18.

In 2024, Latinos like many other middle-class and working-class voters, especially men, believed Trump's promises that he would raise their living standards, deport only immigrants with criminal histories, "the worst of the worst," and avoid foreign wars. But under Trump, not only did he launch a war on Iran, but the war led to higher prices not only for fuel, but food and many other goods. And Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) launched a virtual war against immigrants. Latinos began to see co-workers, friends, and family members arrested, imprisoned, and deported.

And all of this has been very violent. With a $75 billion budget, ICE has deported 400,000 immigrants during Trump's second term. ICE agents have shot 21 people and killed eight of them. Others have died in ICE custody: 33 people last year and 27 already this year. Communities organized protests intended to impede ICE in Chicago and Los Angeles, cities with large Latino populations who participated.

In protest, 250 Latino leaders signed a letter to Trump ad Congress arguing that long-time undocumented immigrants should be given legal protection and work permits. Most may be Democrats, but the list included conservatives such as Massey Villarreal, a former chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, and Reverend Samuel Rodríguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference.

Latinos, like everyone else can now see it all: the war, the rising prices, the corruption, and, above all, the violence against them. Trump has lost many of these voters and Republicans may well lose Congress without them.

4 October 2026

28.

Morocco's Elections in a Time of Despotism: Why Ballot Boxes Don't Produce Liberation

4 October, by Jawad Moustakbal

Einstein defined insanity as repeating the same experiment with the same tools under the same conditions while expecting different results. Today, I believe that Morocco is experiencing a form of political insanity in the Einsteinian sense. The elections on September 23 showcased the same familiar faces that have worn thin on the Moroccan public, accompanied by the same broken promises and poorly executed theatrics. Furthermore, it is the Ministry of the Interior that oversees the entire electoral process—from drawing constituency maps to organising the vote itself. Despite these circumstances, both old and new mouthpieces of power persist in trying to persuade us of the necessity of participating in this appointment to construct a new Morocco with the same old system. It is as if the sheer number of electoral lists could create genuine pluralism: 28 parties, 1,850 lists, 7,288 candidates—more than 18 candidates per seat—yet the political offerings remain fundamentally poor and largely unchanged.

Elections under an authoritarian regime

Contrary to what various forms of disinformation would have us believe, we are not voting in an imperfect democracy that merely needs "improvement". We are voting in an absolute despotic system in which legislative, executive, and judicial powers are effectively concentrated in the hands of the king and his advisors—what might be called the real shadow government: unelected, unaccountable, and absent from any electoral platform. Parliament legislates only within the margin it is allowed. The government carries out decisions made elsewhere. The judiciary has only as much independence as it is granted. In this context, political parties do not compete to serve citizens; rather, they vie for a better position within the system by presenting themselves as the most capable of implementing the neoliberal policies that are devastating social and economic rights, the most skilled at "managing" popular anger, and the most devoted to advising the regime on how to prevent the next uprising. The winning party is not the one that wins voters but the one that convinces those above it that it can absorb the shock and delay the explosion. Nothing illustrates the situation better than the declarations heads of government routinely make upon taking office: that their essential mission is the literal execution of the royal agenda.

Parties: Biologically Aged, Programmatically Sterile

These are rotten parties, in the direct moral and political sense of the word, given the involvement of several of their leaderships in financial and administrative corruption scandals—and rotten in the figurative sense too, meaning that their shelf life (périmé) has expired. They are no longer even fit for the role they were created to play: camouflaging authoritarianism and lending legitimacy to a fictitious multiparty system that functions, in practice, much closer to a single-party model, despite the multiplicity of names and symbols.

Parties with old faces, leaderships that have lingered far too long, and programme sterility generate an almost automatic aversion among citizens. And what applies to the ruling majority applies equally to much of the opposition, which competes more for seats than for alternatives. Their platforms resemble one another, promising "the social state", "dignity", and "employment" in the same vague, exhausted language.

These platforms avoid the strategic questions altogether: What economic policy would rescue the country from chronic regional and social disparities? What specific redistribution of wealth is being proposed, and through which mechanisms will it be implemented? What equitable tax system could replace the current one, which places a heavy burden on wage earners and small traders while favouring major investors, beneficiaries, and the corrupt? What about the debt spiral that swallows up a significant share of the state budget in debt servicing? What is their stance on the vanity megaprojects and massive stadiums that are consuming billions in preparation for the 2030 World Cup, while hospitals and schools suffer from shortages? What alternative do they propose to rescue the education and health systems? How do we achieve food and water sovereignty in the face of recurring drought years and volatile global markets? And where do they stand on rising prices and the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a narrow elite?

All these questions are absent from these parties' platforms, and when they do appear, they are addressed with vague slogans that ultimately bless the very policies whose consequences Moroccans have been burnt by in their daily lives. The campaign degenerates into personal quarrels and mutual accusations among those racing for their share of the pie.

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campaign degenerates into personal quarrels and mutual accusations among those racing for their share of the pie.

Governments Allied with Despotism and the Ruling Oligarchy

We are not simply facing a government that has failed to deliver on its promises. We are facing a series of governments that are structurally an organic ally of despotism and of the ruling oligarchy—rather than an executive authority emanating from the will of voters and accountable to them. When the head of government is a businessman ranked, according to Forbes, among the continent's wealthiest people and owns companies that have become the target of wide-reaching popular boycott campaigns, we are not looking at a passing "conflict of interest" that a law could resolve. We see a structural fusion of political and economic power—between the legislator and the profit-maker. These governments do not rule as agents of the people; they administer public affairs as agents of a narrow oligarchic circle, which is organically tied to the real centres of decision-making, sharing the rents with that circle far more than they share decent public services with the citizens. They also join hands with our old and new colonisers for the further plundering of the country and its people.

In 2021, the current government promised a million jobs. Five years later, youth unemployment remains among the highest in the region. But this failure is not a technical shortcoming in "governance"—it is the logical result of a government whose real mission is not to serve the majority but to manage the political and economic capital of the very elite that produced it, ensuring the continued flow of rent toward circles close to power, even at the expense of health, education, and the purchasing power of millions of Moroccans.

This is a government that raises the banner of "the social state" while, in reality, merely executing major choices decided elsewhere—as citizens experience the deterioration of public services every single day. And when public anger finally exploded, it wasn't triggered by a UN report or an international index but by the deaths of pregnant women in a hospital in Agadir.

So do our people deserve better than governments whose primary mission is to protect the regime and its oligarchy rather than serve the citizen? Given their struggles and sacrifices, do our youth deserve more than governments allied with those who benefit from the perpetuation of despotism?

The Gen Z 212 Uprising: A Path of Hope

Defenders of the status quo have wheeled out their old arsenal against every voice that disturbs them: "vandals", "nihilists", "foreign agents"… and the propaganda machine has rushed to replay the old record of "Moroccan exceptionalism". But the Gen Z 212 movement, which erupted on September 27, 2025—as something like a second wave of a revolutionary process of anger whose spark first ignited in 2011 but is carried now by the tools of a new generation—proved that the anger never died. A movement that organised itself through the Discord platform, whose membership surpassed 220,000 within a few days, and that raised a simple, profound slogan: "Health first, we don't want the World Cup." Thousands took to the streets in Rabat, Casablanca, Agadir, Marrakech, Fez, and smaller towns and marginalised regions, demanding healthcare, education, jobs, an end to corruption, and the resignation of the government.

This movement was met with the same security-first approach: arrests and prosecutions targeting dozens of young people and three deaths in Laqliaa near Agadir during the protests. And when the youth addressed the king directly, bypassing the government altogether, their action was itself a tacit admission that the government and the parties no longer convince anyone.

Today, almost a year later, these same young people are being asked to return to the ballot box as if nothing had happened. The statistics are clear: the percentage of registered voters aged 18–24 decreased from 8% to 4%, while the percentage of those aged 25–44 declined from 19% to 15%. This is a silent referendum on the credibility of the entire party landscape.

But we need an active response, not a protest vote or a passive boycott. What we need is a genuine collective consciousness, rising from the ground up, led by the youth themselves, toward radical change that liberates us not only from political despotism but also from dependency in all its colonial and neocolonial forms—toward genuine food, energy, financial, and cultural sovereignty that breaks with decades of neoliberal economics and its myths: the myth of "comparative advantage", which has condemned us to exporting our water in the form of fruit and vegetables while our subsistence agriculture dries up; the myth of "trickle-down", which promised that the wealth of the rich would eventually seep down to the poor, when in fact nothing has trickled down but debt and inequality; and the "theories" of economic freedom, which were never, at their core, anything but a cover for the freedom of capital to concentrate itself and evade taxation—never the freedom of the citizen to live with dignity.

Our generation's mission today is clear, despite all the obscurity surrounding it: to decide either to accomplish the task of full liberation or to betray it by settling for yet another electoral performance that changes nothing in the structure of power.

In her book This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate, Naomi Klein argues that the catastrophic environmental crisis produced by the globalised capitalist model of production, distribution, and consumption is, at the very same time, an opportunity to change everything. I

embrace this hopeful, motivating vision for Morocco: radical change today is not an option but a duty we owe to the majority of our people and to future generations.

No serious alternative societal project in Morocco can afford to ignore the disasters caused by political despotism, economic liberalism, and their catastrophic convergence. The September 23 elections—whatever their results—will resolve none of this convergence, because they are held within the very structure that produced the crisis in the first place. Our alternative must take our concrete reality into account, must grow out of our own culture and traditions, and must reconcile us with our identity. We must break with ready-made solutions imported and crudely imposed on our reality. We must break with the myth of "modernity" and the Orientalist view of development and radical change in our countries. At the heart of our alternatives, we must establish the full sovereignty of local communities over their resources—their land, water, sun, and minerals—managed democratically, in solidarity, and complementarily, by themselves and with others. We must build a better Morocco in which citizens control their own institutions so that those institutions respond to the essential needs of the majority for food, education, and health in ways that respect ecosystems and their capacity for renewal. This is the horizon worth fighting for—not a ballot box recycled every five years to reproduce the same despotism with new faces.

24 September 2026

*Source: **CADTM**.*

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NATO, the climate crisis and the ecosocialist emergency

3 October, by Gippò Mukendi Ngandu

We are facing a multidimensional systemic crisis of capitalism, the roots of which can be traced back to:

- An explosion of social inequalities within and between countries, as a result of the neoliberal headlong rush and a growing crisis of the representative systems and traditional parties that have managed political life all over the world,
- The return of old and new fascisms, of religious fundamentalisms,
- An aggravation of geopolitical tensions in a context of hegemonic disorder and the resurgence of aggressive imperialisms,
- Climate chaos, desertification and the accelerated collapse of biodiversity, with increasing repercussions on the economy (inflation, destruction of infrastructure and so on) and on daily life.

I will focus on this point.

The exponential growth of military investment poses a growing threat to the climate. This sector is of course dominated by the imperialist powers. If NATO member countries achieve the military alliance's target of 5% investment in the military by 2035 – which they are doing – the result in terms of carbon footprint would be the emission of more than 500 million additional tonnes of CO_2 into the atmosphere. This prospect is totally incompatible with the drastic reduction in emissions needed in the face of the crisis.

The comparison between the financial investments represented by this 5% target and the climate "commitments" of these countries reveals the total duplicity of the states. The necessary spending could thus finance 200 times the 100 billion "loss and damage" fund promised by the imperialist powers to the countries of the "South" at COP27. A derisory sum, which they have never raised in its entirety until now, and which they have partly paid out in the

form of loans, thus aggravating the plundering of the "South" by the debt.

These few figures show that military funding is undoubtedly the most polluting investment there is. While the acceleration of the climate crisis requires a rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, an ecology that is equal to the challenges requires resolute opposition to all military spending.

Militarism is one of the main causes of overstepping planetary boundaries, and first and foremost of climate change. The world's largest army, that of the United States, consumed as much fossil fuel in 2019 as a country like Portugal, this time counting both the production of weapons and the military interventions and strategic operations that result from them.

However, it is not only in a direct way that the military-industrial complex has contributed to the ecological catastrophe, but also indirectly, because of the role that the armies have played in the expansion of fossil fuels from which they essentially derive their power. The driving role of Western military industries, linked to their imperialisms – first and foremost those of the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth century – in the development of fossil fuels within the civilian sectors. Finally, we should recall the major role of the military industry in the invention and development of ecocidal agricultural technologies, extractivism and polluting chemical processes and compounds.

The link between the development of militarism and the expansion of capital (and thus of the ecological crisis) is particularly clear in the extractive industries. The fierce competition between the imperialist powers is generated by the extractivist policies pursued both by the still dominant imperialism – that of the United States, which has put fossil fuels back at the centre of its concerns – and by China, which is showing an unusual voracity in the appropriation of strategic resources in Africa and Latin America.

Extractivist logic is the hidden engine of contemporary capitalism. On the one hand, it is based on an exploitation of resources that cares neither for their renewal nor for its negative repercussions (pollution, poverty) and, on the other hand, on the monopolistic control of these same resources.

In this context, socio-environmental disasters have strong repercussions on global geopolitics.

The catastrophe that is currently unfolding is unprecedented. In addition to the scourges of war, colonialism, exploitation, racism, authoritarianism and all forms of oppression, a new scourge has been added, which aggravates them all: the capital-accelerated destruction of the natural environment on which the survival of humanity depends.

The fight against the giants of extractivism and fossil fuels necessarily involves questioning the military activities that allow their progress.

As long as capitalism persists, and in particular disaster capitalism, imperialist wars will be inevitable. No doubt since the financial crisis of 2008, and even more so since the global turning point of the 2020s, with its succession of global disasters forming an explosive cocktail, including: the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the genocidal war in Palestine, the United States' waging of the trade war, the interventions in Venezuela and then in Iran, the inhumane tightening of the embargo against Cuba, all accompanied by the development of generative artificial intelligence, which is also a factor of militarization.

But then, if war is inevitable, should we not resign ourselves? The movement in support of the Palestinian people is one of the first steps in the necessary convergences between the movements to confront the ongoing barbarism. It has shown us a way forward, namely the need to build a movement against war and militarism in open and plural forms, an internationalist movement capable of restoring hope and identifying an alternative path.

Ecosocialism constitutes, from this point of view, a union and a vital synthesis of the different struggles: the struggles against environmental disasters, for the protection of human beings, for the development of common goods and against privatizations, the anti-racist struggles and for freedom of movement, against the big high-tech companies, for the liberation and self-determination of peoples, against imperialism and colonialism, in order to propose a revolutionary, radically democratic project, which feeds on the contribution of feminist, ecological, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist and LGBTIQ+ struggles.

It is for these reasons that we have drafted, as the Fourth International, an ecosocialist manifesto, because we are convinced that the process of ecosocialist revolution is more necessary than ever. The socialist progress that is the basis of our proposals requires a profound refoundation, nourished by a pluralist evaluation of experiences and by the great movements of struggle against all forms of domination and oppression

Ecosocialism can contribute to the rise of an international movement: since global ecological, economic and social crises know no borders, the fight against the systemic forces that cause these crises must also be international.

By becoming aware of the close link between war, the exploitation of labour and the exploitation of the environment, ecosocialism becomes essential as much to oppose imperialisms as to reformist "market ecology" and "productivist" logic. By adopting a new, strongly democratic model of planning, society can take control of the means of production and its own destiny; imposing shorter working hours and privileging genuine needs over consumerism can facilitate the primacy of "being" over "having," as well as the acquisition of a deeper sense of freedom for all. There is no other way out to achieve real systemic change. The ruling class must be expropriated and its political power overthrown.

4 July 2026

30.

Anti-NATO Conference in Istanbul: A Success Story that Contributes to the Anti-Imperialist Struggle

2 October, by Uraz Aydin

A week before the annual summit of the terrorist organization of world capitalism, the regime of Turkish president Erdogan had, in order to welcome its "friend" Trump properly, reduced mobility in the capital to a strict minimum and carried out several hundred arrests, through dozens of raids, including against revolutionary parties and groups.

The anti-imperialist conference organised by the No To NATO initiative took place in an atmosphere of a state of emergency. Almost all foreign delegations that came to participate in the conference were detained for several hours at the airport and interrogated by the police about the reason for their stay in Türkiye. Following calls made by the deputies of the Workers' Party of Türkiye (TIP) to the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, many participants were released. However, delegations from Italy, Finland and Germany were sent back to their countries, by virtue of a joint decision of the governments concerned.

The counter-summit was held with the participation of several delegations from Greece, Belgium, Lebanon, Britain, the Czech Republic, Germany, the United States, Sweden, Italy and Serbia. The Fourth International was represented by Gippo Mukendi Ngandu. OKDE-Spartakos, part of the Greek section of the International, also took part in the conference. Unfortunately, the MES-PSOL participant from Brazil was unable to fly for visa reasons. Various international Trotskyist currents such as the CWI, ICL and ITU-CI also sent delegations.

The limits of the conference

While the conference was an opportunity to protest against NATO's coming together and its militarist policies and to display an intransigent will to fight imperialism, and in particular its predatory aims in West Asia, it is important to underline some limitations.

First of all, the conference was organised by the No to NATO initiative, which was itself founded by the leadership of the TİP and members of this party. It was therefore not a broad and plural initiative, even if some sympathetic revolutionary organisations were asked to take part, without concrete results. However, there was no open appeal to the various currents of the radical left, trade unions and so on. The main reason lies in the desire to avoid endless debates due to the sectarian, identitarian and competitive reflexes of a large part of the Turkish left – which is of course not a local specificity and extends widely to the international level, as we have been able to experience on many occasions. This would most likely have blocked the organisational process and made it almost impossible to hold the conference. The anti-NATO demonstration that took place the next day could only be organized with great difficulty because of the problems mentioned above. It should be added that, in this demonstration of just over 2,000 people, in which almost the entire spectrum of the revolutionary left participated, half of the demonstrators were members of the TİP, especially its youth.

Another weakness, which was also often observed in meetings of this type, was that there were no real debates or interactions between the participants, with each speaker essentially setting out the positions of his or her organisation.

An anti-imperialist statement with ambiguities

As for the final declaration, it seems to us to be generally satisfactory, given the political and conjunctural framework in which the anti-NATO counter-summit was held. The text thus focuses specifically on Western imperialism and its armed wing, condemned from an internationalist, anti-capitalist, feminist and ecological point of view. However, the place given to the relations of the Turkish state with NATO and to the tradition of struggle against it among the revolutionaries of this country may seem disproportionate for an international declaration. While the position of Russia and China within the imperialist hierarchy is not explicitly mentioned, the text nevertheless clearly mentions the invasion of Ukraine, the existence of

different imperialist blocs as well as the opposition to any form of occupation, and Russian aggression was criticized in some interventions. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that, in a country where various versions of campism are dominant within the left, the TİP has condemned Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and supported the popular uprising in Iran.

The anti-NATO priority

However, it is important to keep in mind that the objective was precisely to organize in response to a NATO summit, in the context of military offensives carried out by US imperialism in West Asia, with the aggression against Iran and the continuation of the genocide against the Palestinian people. It is therefore natural that the text mainly targets NATO.

It is of course necessary to wage an ideological struggle against the hegemony of campism. But it is equally important to bear in mind that, for a significant number of countries in the Global South, Western imperialism is the main enemy: a concrete enemy, whose material reality is rooted both in the history of these states and in their present.

This is the case with Türkiye, whose past is marked by massacres and political assassinations perpetrated by NATO-linked counter-guerrilla formations, and where the presence of NATO military bases makes it one of the main points of support for guaranteeing the geopolitical interests of Western imperialism in the region.

Anti-Americanism is a predominant and historically rooted sentiment in large sectors of society, and it is on this terrain that what we call campism is rooted. A campism that cannot be considered only as an ideological and strategic deviation, but which is itself the result of a series of defeats of the international workers' movement, and in particular that of a perspective of revolutionary socialism from below, self-managing and democratic.

The ideological and strategic struggle to be waged is therefore a long-term one, which we cannot wage by boycotting the various international initiatives where campist reflexes predominate, but by building and fighting side by side.

The text concludes by situating itself "in the political continuity of the Porto Alegre Anti-Fascist Conference, the global anti-militarist webinar and the mobilizations against the G7" that took place this year, announces its support for the anti-fascist conferences planned in Argentina and Puerto Rico and sets itself the task of preparing an anti-imperialist and anti-fascist Conference on the scale of the Balkans. However, this will constitute a major challenge, where, this time, it will be impossible to ignore the Ukrainian question.

4 September 2026

Declaration of the International Anti-Imperialist Peace Summit: A Common Front Against NATO, Imperialism, and War

At a time when NATO, the war machine of Western imperialism, held its summit in Türkiye, we gathered in Istanbul to declare our resolve to expand the anti-imperialist struggle for peace against NATO, imperialism, militarism, and the war-driven order. NATO is not a 'defensive alliance' but the chief representative of foreign intervention, military domination, occupations, coups, sanctions, and the arms race. The interests of the people are sacrificed to those of the ruling classes, weapons monopolies, energy corporations, imperialist blocs, and their local accomplices.

This gathering is not merely a protest. It reflects our determination to build a common struggle for peace against the rulers who are trying to preserve their world order by dragging the world into a cycle of endless wars. The militarization and lockdown of Ankara for the NATO Summit, with the city reorganized around security measures and restrictions, showed once again that imperialist gatherings are organized not for the security of peoples, but through their repression. The refusal of entry and deportation of some members of the international delegation who came to attend our summit is a direct attack on international solidarity and on the right of anti-imperialist forces to come together.

The struggle for peace cannot be limited to a call to stop wars. It must confront the order that produces them. Policies of destruction are co-produced by weapons monopolies, finance capital, military bureaucracies, NATO institutions, and collaborative regimes. Just as imperialist powers and capital organize on an international scale, the peoples' struggle for peace and freedom must also organize on this scale. Anti-imperialism must come to life in the collective rebellion of workers, youth, women, migrants, anti-war activists, socialists, and all progressive forces.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO's existence did not come to an end. On the contrary, NATO has continuously created new enemies, new areas of intervention, and new pretexts for war. While NATO-led military aggression was justified yesterday under headings such as the 'communist threat', then the 'fight against terrorism', 'humanitarian intervention', 'stability' and the like, today all 'humanitarian' and 'democratic' rhetoric has been left behind, and the threat of imperialist expansion has become more overt. NATO's ambition for growth has made the world not safer, but more fragile and vulnerable to wars.

The ongoing occupation, blockade, apartheid, and genocide in Palestine show the clearest face of imperialism. Israel's policy of massacre continues with the support of the US, NATO, and European states. Israel's impunity stems from this collaboration. Therefore, we must stand in solidarity with Palestine, expose fake friends, and apply pressure on all states that arm Israel. The ongoing aggression in Gaza, Israel's attacks targeting Lebanon and Iran, the continuing imperialist interventions in Syria, the military tensions stretching from the Red Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean, the invasion of Ukraine, and the accelerating armament moves in Europe all show that NATO and imperialist powers are

preparing the world for greater wars.

Since joining NATO in 1952, Türkiye has been an important part of the security strategy of imperialism. Through military facilities such as Incirlik Air Base in Adana, the Kürecik Radar Base in Malatya, and NATO's Allied Land Command (LANDCOM) in İzmir, Türkiye plays a critical role in NATO's regional operations. These bases have been centres for planning and carrying out military operations, from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan and across West Asia. When a country's territory is used for military operations, it cannot be considered outside the war, even if it is not directly engaged in armed conflict.

Over the years, especially under the Erdoğan regime, Türkiye has maintained close relations with the US and NATO while also developing a special relationship with Israel behind closed doors. Its military presence in Syria, cross-border operations, and interventions that ignore the will of the peoples of the region reveal the expansionist ambitions of Türkiye's ruling classes. Türkiye presents itself as a mediator that can negotiate with all countries, but this image hides its collaboration with imperialist powers. Ongoing trade, diplomatic, and military relations with Israel expose the insincerity of its claims of solidarity with the Palestinian people. The military presence in Northern Cyprus, multiplying military bases, its role in the competition over energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, and interventions in Syria all demonstrate Türkiye's regional ambitions.

Despite the orientation of the Turkish state and capital, socialists in Türkiye have a strong tradition of resisting both NATO and imperialism. The anti-imperialist movement in Türkiye has long combined opposition to NATO and the call for sovereignty. Today, drawing strength from this history, preventing Türkiye from continuing to play this role in the region and resisting its future actions remain among the main goals of Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries.

The five-percent military spending target imposed on NATO countries means that public resources are transferred to arms monopolies. Likewise, the normalization of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons on the grounds of 'deterrence' or 'national security' is unacceptable. These weapons do not provide security for any people, but instead pose a threat to all life. The arms race does not only expand aggression in foreign policy. It also deepens authoritarianism at home. The aggressive imperialist rule represented by NATO and its allies, the growing far right in Europe, and the security-driven nationalist regime in Türkiye are all different faces of the same global dark order. This order uses the threat of war as a pretext to strengthen border regimes, xenophobia, the criminalization of opposition, and anti-labour policies.

The same dark order is also escalating attacks on the fought-for rights of women and LGBTQI+ people. Militarism and authoritarianism reinforce the patriarchal family model, seeking to confine women to the burden of care, precarity, and a regime of obedience, and to target women and LGBTQI+ people in order to discipline society around reactionary, nationalist, and patriarchal values. War policies produce occupation and intervention abroad, and repression, patriarchy, and social control at home. As military budgets grow, the rights to education, healthcare, housing, social security, care services, and a dignified life are being seized. The working class is condemned to lower wages, heavier taxes, greater precarity, and deepening poverty. For capital, the war economy means profit. For working people, it means the cost-of-living crisis, unemployment, debt, the loss of social rights, and a futureless existence.

Ecological destruction and militarism are not separate from one another. War machines, military bases, fossil fuel competition, struggles over energy routes, and the arms industry destroy nature, agricultural lands, resources, and living spaces. The future of the peoples cannot be handed over to those who profit from war.

For this reason, opposition to NATO is opposition to military blocs and also a struggle against authoritarianism, racism, nationalism, patriarchy, ecological destruction, poverty, and anti-labour policies. The struggle for peace goes beyond simply calling for an end to war. It is a struggle to defend the people's right to life, equality, freedom, labour, nature, and a future free from war and exploitation.

These responsibilities, carried over from the summit, are a powerful call for solidarity to build a common front against imperialist war, NATO, the arms race, authoritarianism, imperialist ideologies, patriarchy, racism, ecological destruction, and anti-labour policies. This summit should be noted as the first step to build further collaborations and actions such as regional meetings and demonstrations against imperialism and regional rearmament. Building on the political continuity of the Porto Alegre International Antifascist Conference, the Global Antimilitarist Webinar, the mobilisations against the G7, and the International Anti-Imperialist Peace Conference, we will, in the coming period, strengthen mobilisations against COP31, to be held in Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026. We will also support the planned Antifascist Conferences in Puerto Rico and Argentina, and set ourselves the task of preparing a Balkan-wide Anti-Imperialist and Antifascist Conference.

As the concrete political ground for this line, our demands are listed below:

- Dissolve NATO, shut down all military bases!
- No to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons!
- Stand with all colonised and occupied people against imperialist powers!
- Support the Palestinian resistance against Zionist genocide! Sever all commercial, diplomatic, and military relations with Israel and impose a weapons embargo!
- Divert military budgets to health, education, and the means for a dignified life!
- Anti-imperialist solidarity and internationalist shoulder-to-shoulder struggle with the earthquake-stricken people of Venezuela; with the Cuban

people under blockade and embargo!
- Build solidarity and common struggle against the provocation of Turkish and Greek governments' militarist policies and nationalist threats!
- From the Balkans to West Asia: uninterrupted and permanent coordination against imperialist aggression and organizing new actions!
- Defend life against the war economy, patriarchal oppression, and ecological destruction!

31.

The Right Loses the Election – Social Democracy Records a Historic Low

1 October, by Socialistiska Politik

The election result of September 13 has, for the time being, brought the conservative right and the far right to a halt. The opposition parties, the Social Democrats, the Green Party, the Left Party, and the Centre Party, together received 49.5 percent of the vote. The right-wing parties, the Moderate Party, the Liberals, the Christian Democrats, and the far-right Sweden Democrats, received 48.8 percent. The far-right Sweden Democrats, a party with Nazi roots, has increased its support in every election since entering parliament in 2010, finally experienced setbacks as they lost three percentage of support in this election. However, this may partly be explained by the traditional right now more openly pursuing the Sweden Democrats' policies, but perhaps also because some voters increasingly perceive the party as part of the political establishment. The outgoing Prime Minister, Ulf Kristersson, has formally submitted his resignation but refuses to concede defeat, hoping that Social Democratic leader Magdalena Andersson will fail to form a new government.

Among those who voted against the right and the far right, there is a certain sense of relief. The risk that the right and the far right would remain in power was very real. The election result has prevented this, but the margin was small, around 50,000 votes. The right as a whole lost, but it can hardly be described as a crushing defeat. After four years of what can best be described as Swedish-style Trumpism, the margin of victory over the right should have been considerably larger.

This points to a fundamental problem. The Centre Party is also a bourgeois liberal party but currently chooses to cooperate with the red-green bloc because of its refusal to rely on the support of Sweden Democrats to form government. At the same time, the Centre Party opposes the Left Party joining a new government, whereas the Left Party insists on being part of it. Negotiations on forming a new government are ongoing. If these efforts fail, Sweden could be faced with a snap election.

It is therefore difficult to speak of a landslide victory for the red-green parties. The election also contains a paradox: the Social Democrats remain the country's largest party while simultaneously achieving their worst election result in more than a century, the worst since 1908. The result is even more remarkable considering that, since coming to power in 2022, the right-wing bloc had lagged behind the red-green parties by a wide margin in opinion polls for long periods. At the beginning of 2026, the election seemed almost certain to be won by the red-green bloc. Yet the Social Democratic leadership managed to squander much of this advantage. Instead of presenting a clear alternative to four years of right-wing policies, the Social Democrats continued to shift to the right and, on some issues, even adopting elements of far-right rhetoric in an attempt to win voters. While seeking agreements and governmental cooperation with the Centre Party, the party simultaneously showed a reluctance to cooperate with the Left Party.

This strategy has had serious consequences. Support for the Social Democrats among workers fell from 42.4 percent in 2022 to 38.7 percent in this year's election. The political responsibility for this is considerable. Although the far right has lost ground, it continues to challenge the Social Democrats for the position of the largest party among workers.

The problem therefore extends far beyond parliamentary arithmetic. The Social Democrats and the Left Party, the two parties that have historically had their strongest social base within the working class, together managed to secure only slightly more than one-third of the vote. From a class perspective, there is therefore a clear bourgeois majority in parliament.

The major success story on the left belongs to the Left Party. It achieved its best election result in 25 years and made particularly strong gains in several working-class areas of the major cities, especially Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. This success comes despite an election campaign during which the Left Party was subjected to intense media attacks, particularly accusations of antisemitism and alleged indulgence toward supposed "romanticization of terrorism."

The Left Party has also adopted a defensive position on the issue of Palestine, as the party leadership's primary objective has been to gain entry into a Social Democratic-led government. Nevertheless, the need to defend itself against the brutal attacks of the right weighed heavy on people

in the most economically and socially segregated and marginalized areas. In these communities, a large majority voted for the Left Party and the Social Democrats. Voter turnout among these groups increased in this election. However, the Left Party's success does not in itself alter the balance of political power, which in parliament remains highly unfavorable to the left. Over recent decades, Sweden has undergone a clear political shift to the right.The election campaign itself focused partly on voters' personal finances, at a time when around 500,000 people are unemployed in Sweden, and partly on various forms of agitation against immigrants, people with foreign backgrounds, and especially Muslims. This extensive repressive attack in both public debate and legislation created fear among racialized groups.

The climate crisis also failed to become a central issue in the election campaign, despite major demonstrations demanding strong climate and environmental action. The same was true of the genocide in Gaza and questions of war and peace. This did not prevent the right from allocating billions to military rearmament, deepening Sweden's role in NATO, and continuing the military cooperation agreement with the United States, which grants U.S. forces access to 17 Swedish military bases and other military areas.

At the same time as government formation negotiations are ongoing, allegations of electoral fraud have been directed at several Left Party members of parliament of Somali background. This campaign is clearly orchestrated by the right, with substantial support from the media and almost no support from the individuals' own party, the Left Party. The racism, class prejudice, and hostility toward the left reflected in this campaign and in the unfounded accusations are painfully obvious. Moreover, the allegations concern relatively minor matters, such as people being given rides to polling stations or pre-marked ballots being distributed, and only on a limited scale. Nevertheless, the issue has been magnified by the media into a major controversy and an attack on the Left Party, which has responded defensively rather than offensively.

Regardless of the political composition of the next government, we anti-capitalists remain committed to our position. Until September 13, we argued that the immediate task was to remove the right and the far right from government power. Now the task is to build resistance within the social movements against all right-wing policies, regardless of who implements them. The balance of power is not determined in parliament. It is determined above all in workplaces and trade unions, in the defense of welfare, in the climate movement, through antimilitarism, consistent anti-racism, and the struggle for a humane migration policy. It is through the resistance of social movements that a fighting left can be strengthened.

24 September 2026

Nuñez, Geffray, resign! They are the ones wreaking havoc.

1 October, by NPA-l'Anticapitaliste (NPA-A)

When there aren't enough chairs, ceilings are collapsing, there are rats, and there aren't enough teachers or staff, we've hit rock bottom. And secondary school pupils, who are also under pressure from the selection process and Parcoursup [the procedure for higher education applications], know this all too well. That is why they are taking action and blockading their schools: to demand decent conditions for education!

A government that responds with repression

Unsurprisingly, the government refuses to understand. As for Geffray and the Ministry of National Education, their only response has been to set up a consultation platform, before handing the central role over to Nuñez, his colleague at the Ministry of the Interior, whose only response was to send in the police to crack down on the mobilised secondary school pupils. He'd already had a taste of this during the last pension protests when he was Prefect of Police of Paris

Multiple shots of tear gas and plastic bullets to the head, tear gas, beatings, hundreds of people taken into police custody: this chilling level of violence against children and teenagers must not go unpunished. One child had their mouth smashed in, another had an eye gouged out: how far will this go?

Fortunately, the crackdown has not intimidated the secondary school students, who are continuing and even stepping up their movement, supported by elected representatives, school staff and parents who are organising to defend them. Even today, hundreds of secondary schools are blockaded, and the movement is taking root and is already spreading to some universities.
Let's all stand together in support of the secondary school pupils

Calls to expand the movement amongst university students are growing

We offer our full support to the movement that our young comrades are building. We call on all social and political forces to jointly support the secondary school pupils' mobilisation and to take to the streets very soon to protest against repression and police violence. An inter-union day of action has been proposed for 6 October, and the mobilisation must be massive! For we consider both their demands and their actions to be legitimate. What is illegitimate is this government's brutal response.

Lecornu's draft budget heralds a continued dismantling of public services, including the national education system. He has even just announced the introduction of tuition fees for certain courses that were previously free (BTS, preparatory classes, etc.), as well as a reduction in the number of civil servants and a freeze on housing benefit (APL)… This is a genuine provocation.

Nuñez and Geffray must therefore step down, and with them the rest of the government, which is just as responsible for the social destruction and repression.

Montreuil, 1 October 2026

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