Brazil's Decision to Drill for Oil Off the Amazon Shows Limitations of Government's Approach

[On 20 October, exactly three weeks before the beginning of COP30 in Belem, Brazil's environmental regulator, IBAMA, finally approved a licence for the state-controlled oil company, Petrobras, to drill an exploratory well off the coast of Amazonia, close to the mouth of the Amazon River. That same Monday, within hours of the announcement, drilling began. A couple of days later, Petrobras said it would need to sink three more wells in Block 59 to evaluate the exact extent of the reserves. Petrobras is hoping these deep-sea oil fields will prove to hold reserves similar in size to the estimated 11 billion barrels that Exxon-Mobil has begun to exploit further north off Guyana, in waters disputed with Venezuela. That's more than 30 times the amount of oil held in the Rosebank field off Shetland, which the UK government is about to rule on.

On 23 October, eight Brazilian NGOs sought a legal order to block the drilling. They pointed to the lack of any proper consultation with Indigenous peoples in the region, and the failure of any full evaluation of the environmental impact, both locally and globally. They suggested the move made a mockery of the Brazilian government's commitments for the coming COP30. But it seemed unlikely their injunction request would succeed. President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, of the Workers Party (PT), regretted that "nobody is in a position to do without fossil fuels". He said the income from the Amazon oil would be used to combat poverty and pay for the transition away from fossil fuels.

<u>Subverta</u>, one of the currents in the PSOL that makes up the Brazilian section of the Fourth International, says the decision reflects a much more fundamental limitation in the government's approach to the environment.]

On the eve of COP 30, to be held in Belém in Pará, this decision is by no means just a technical choice, but rather a political repositioning of Brazil in the face of the global climate crisis; it contradicts the image of a country seeking to lead a global just transition and reinforces the perception that Brazil remains trapped in a historical cycle of dependence and extraction.

Although the current government's programme is based on an ecological transition with social and environmental justice, this authorisation of oil exploration in one of the most sensitive regions of the planet highlights the contradictions between theory and practice. The rhetoric of a 'just transition' collides with the continuation of an extractive model that depends on fossil fuels, and which is justified on the grounds of energy sovereignty and national self-sufficiency.

Exploration on the Equatorial Margin will have an impact well beyond Brazilian territory. Much of the oil extracted would go for export, transferring emissions to other countries and undermining Brazil's global climate responsibility. According to estimates by climate organisations, burning the oil potentially extracted from this region could release more than 11 billion tonnes of CO₂. That is about 5% of the total remaining carbon budget available if warming is to be limited to 1.5 °C. In other words, this has a planetary impact, not just a regional one, which compromises the country's role in the international climate fight.

This puts us in a situation of even greater climate insecurity and uncertainty. The planet has already exceeded seven of the nine planetary boundaries (defined by the scientific community as the limits of stability for the planet's ecosystems), and the fossil fuel industry is primarily responsible for this. It is a mistake to expand drilling for more wells, wherever they may be.

In addition to the environmental and climate impacts, there is also an economic argument that cannot be ignored. Several international studies, such as those by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), warn that Petrobras' oil expansion represents a high-risk investment. They estimate that up to 85% of new production projects would only be profitable in a scenario of global warming above 2.4°C, i.e., in a context incompatible with the Paris Agreement targets. Although economic factors and figures alone should not be our main motivation for rejecting exploration, they show that, even according to the logic of profit, the country is investing in assets that may quickly become stranded by the global transition to renewable sources.

Petrobras, as a strategic company, occupies a paradoxical position in this situation. While seeking to reposition itself as a leader in the energy transition, with many renewable energy projects (despite a number of conflicts around wind and solar power plants in the Northeast of Brazil) and a lot of green advertising, it is also investing heavily in new oil fields. IBAMA's decision legitimises this ambiguity, and puts off confronting the need for a social and territorial restructuring of the energy sector.

The Equatorial Margin coastal region, stretching from Natal in the Brazilian Northeast to the border with French Guyana, is renowned for its high marine and river biodiversity, as well as being home to artisanal fishing communities, quilombolas and indigenous peoples who depend directly on coastal ecosystems. Even the installation of infrastructure for research and exploration in the Amazon estuary region will have a significant impact, not to mention the future risk of oil spills and contamination that could damage entire

ecological chains, affecting fishing, water quality and traditional ways of life.

From an eco-socialist perspective, the permit given to Petrobras shows that territories on the periphery continue to be sacrificed for the sake of a centralised, dependent development project; it illustrates in practice the impasse of a 'transition' that has been captured by capital. It is not a question of denying the need for energy, but of questioning who produces it, according to what logic, and in the service of what kind of society.

Drilling for oil in the Amazon estuary reveals a conflict between two kinds of rationale: the productivist rationale (of 'commodity peoples', in the words of Davi Kopenawa), which transforms nature into a commodity, and the ecological rationale (of the forest peoples), which understands the interdependence between living systems, territories and cultures. Defending the Amazon is not an 'environmentalist' demand in the narrow sense, but a political struggle for other ways of living and other kinds of social reproduction. Protecting the mouth of the Amazon means fighting for a future for our civilisation that cannot be measured in barrels of oil, but in flows of life, autonomy and socio-environmental diversity.

This dispute between different rationales also reveals how the path of more drilling for oil reproduces historical inequalities. The indigenous, quilombola and traditional communities that live on the Amazonian coast find themselves confronting the advance of the energy frontier with no access to real decision-making mechanisms. The absence of any free, prior and informed consultation, as laid down in ILO Convention 169, reinforces the marginalisation of these peoples. The colonial logic of exploitation and environmental racism is revived, imposing socio-environmental risks on those who benefit least from the extracted wealth.

The challenge facing the progressive camp, especially those who make up the social and political base of the government, is to insist that there can be no socio-environmental justice without a break with fossil capitalism. We need to strengthen initiatives that contribute to the development of a new energy infrastructure, with communities playing an active part from the planning stage onwards the aim must be to replace thermal power and fossil fuels with decentralised, accessible, renewable and low-pollution public infrastructure at all levels.

We are opposed to any new thermal power plants, to drilling new oil wells and all other polluting projects, as well as to renewable power projects that lack socio-environmental justice. We must continue to promote dialogue with oil workers' unions and other workers in the fossil fuel sector. Only organised struggle will be able to stop fossil capitalism, and we call on everyone to join us in this struggle!

22 October 2025

Catherine Connolly wins: An historic victory for the left — Rupture Magazine

Paul Murphy, 25 October 2025

Catherine Connolly's resounding victory in the Presidential election is a watershed moment. It is the first time that the left has won a majority of votes in a national election. This was not a narrow victory either; Catherine won the largest

percentage and largest total vote of any Presidential candidate in history.

The combined forces of the political and media establishment threw everything they could at Connolly to try to stop the momentum behind her campaign. "Smear the bejaysus out of her", as Ivan Yates suggested, was the strategy deployed. Her trip to Syria, her employment of a Republican convicted of a gun crime, her comments in opposition to US, French and British imperialism, as well as her previous work as a barrister, were all endlessly scrutinised and picked over.

The red thread running through the majority of the smears was the fact that she is out of touch with the political and media establishment in her defence of neutrality and opposition to aligning more and more openly with NATO. While Fine Gael's Heather Humphreys pointedly refused to criticise what she termed "our allies" and their arming of genocide, Catherine Connolly openly criticised US funding of Israeli war crimes and the drive for rearmament in Europe, to the horror of most political commentators.

Despite this, her campaign, backed by all the 'left' parties and a movement from below, continued to gain support in successive polls and handily beat the establishment candidate. There will be attempts to minimise the extent of the victory by pointing to the calamities that struck the establishment parties — from the dropping out of the preferred Fine Gael candidate, Mairead McGuinness, due to illness, and the dramatic withdrawal of Fianna Fáil's candidate mid-contest, to the unconvincing media performances of Heather Humphreys. But these calamities were mostly an expression of the declining social bases of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.

The fact that Fianna Fáil, the historically largest party in the state, could not find a credible candidate within its own ranks and the leadership felt compelled to go with a celebrity candidate in order to stop the corrupt former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, from being nominated, is itself instructive. That Jim Gavin was undone by a scandal of being a landlord who robbed money from a tenant was poetic justice for Fianna Fáil.

Similarly, the fact that Heather Humphreys proved to be such a poor candidate exemplifies how deeply out of touch Fine Gael is with the majority of people. They were convinced that Humphreys would prove a popular figure with a down-to-earth manner. In practice, she appeared uncomfortable with any questioning that went beyond soundbites. Despite her previous position as a Minister, she had never been faced with much challenging questioning. Might Mairead McGuinness have been a better candidate for FG? She would have been a more capable debater, undoubtedly. But in that case, the debate would have focused more on the direction of the European Union, and her close relationship with Israel-supporting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the majority are still with Connolly.

Why did she win?

We should not forget that mainstream journalists largely missed the boat. They were busy telling us over and over how this presidential election was "dull" and "uninspiring", while a movement was rapidly developing behind Connolly. For those who think real politics only takes place within the four walls of Leinster House, this was a boring campaign. But out in the real world, Catherine was motivating 1,500 young people to attend a fundraising gig at Vicar St., which was sold out in less than an hour, and rallies and meetings across the country were packed out on every occasion.

Much ink will now be spilt to avoid the most basic and simple conclusion: she won because the majority of people agree with her values, the values of the left, rather than those of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. A big majority support neutrality, support the right to housing, and aspire towards a more equal

and just society. They're horrified by the genocide in Gaza and want a president who is unambiguous about Palestinian freedom. Connolly's message of a movement working to build what she termed 'a new Republic' resonated deeply.

Young people were the energy and vitality of the campaign. In the final Red C poll, she polled 57% amongst 18-34 year olds compared to Humphreys' 17%. Amongst 35-54 year olds, she had 49%, and for over 55s, she was at 43%. The Irish Times interviewed 35 first-time voters, 29 were voting for Connolly, five were spoiling their vote, with only one voting for Humphreys! She also polled higher amongst women than men, and that was evident on the ground. Many in the campaign remarked on the similarities to the Repeal campaign for abortion rights — with young women as a driving force. Young people rejected the conservative parties and voted for someone who offered hope and an alternative.

The smear campaign was utterly ineffective and ultimately counterproductive for FG for a number of reasons. One is that Connolly never wavered in the face of the attacks. She didn't give an inch and made no apologies for her criticisms of European rearmament, nor for hiring a convict. The notion that her outspokenness would work against her made no sense considering our current, much-beloved President, Michael D. Higgins, is also a critic of US imperialism and government policy. The nature of the Presidency itself also created a terrain more favourable for the left. The President's lack of real power means people were free to vote for the progressive values they aspire to, without the establishment being able to credibly threaten dire economic implications.

Catherine's personal qualities also came to the fore in the campaign. 'Authentic' was the word that many ordinary people used to describe her. All the videos of her playing with kids and adults alike, from the keepie uppies and dribbling a basketball, to clips of her dancing a céilí and playing the piano, revealed a human side to her that people found

immensely appealing.

Another reason Catherine won by such a large margin is that a movement was energised around her. There is no precedent in recent history for a Presidential campaign to become a movement in this way. While Michael D. Higgins has proven to be an effective President, his 2018 campaign was actually supported by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, while he won in 2011 as a result of the collapse of support for Sean Gallagher after the final debate. The closest is the victory of Mary Robinson in 1990, backed by a coalition of Labour, the Workers Party and the Greens.

This was an insurgent, oppositional campaign organised by capable activists from the independent and party left. Over 15,000 people volunteered — the vast majority of whom were not members of any political party. Over half of those donated or became active in the campaign. This energy, combined with smart digital organising and social media messaging, meant that the Connolly campaign was far more effective than the Fine Gael campaign at meeting and discussing with voters. In every constituency, there was a significant amount of organised canvassing, on a level for a Presidential election that certainly hasn't been seen in decades.

Spoil the vote?

With the ultra-conservative Catholic right narrowly failing to get sufficient nominations from TDs or Senators to get on the ballot paper, the far-right ran an active 'Spoil The Vote' campaign. This is again a first for Irish politics.

The over 12% they scored in spoils is another warning — the far right have their claws and influence in working-class communities. Yet, experience of canvassing more hard-pressed working class areas proves that this is not a lost battle, but one to be engaged with. Most of those considering spoiling their ballot were open to being convinced that the best

protest was to defeat the political establishment. Deep community organising and trying to mobilise people in action on issues like the cost of living crisis will be essential in order not to cede these communities to the far-right.

Although the far right wasn't directly on the ballot, their rise and the increase in racist attacks and reactionary sentiment were undoubtedly a factor in the campaign. Many rightly saw supporting Connolly as a way of opposing the rightward political turn, which Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have both leaned into. Her victory is part of a counter-current to the rise of the far-right.

Connolly also stood out as a long-time campaigner for investment in the Gaeltacht and support for the Irish language. That she learned to speak fluent Irish well into her 40s underscored her commitment to the language and Gaeltacht communities. So, we should see her campaign as part of a new revival of the Irish language, seen in the popularity of Kneecap and other artists. This is part of forming a progressive identity of what it is to be Irish today, relating to our anti-colonial history, and in opposition to the narrow white nationalism of the far-right, who misuse the tricolour.

Socialist left — a key backbone of the campaign

The socialist left, in particular People Before Profit and independent left activists, were a crucial part of the Connolly campaign. Many of the key activists playing central roles nationally were veterans of previous successful left-led campaigns.

The decision of People Before Profit to throw itself into this campaign, despite the limitations of the position of Presidency, was vindicated by the dynamism of the campaign, the result and the opportunities that open up now. While the

level of activism on the ground was less than what might have been possible with a longer campaign, it nonetheless represents a crucial victory after a challenging general election and opens new opportunities.

Independent activists who may have been previously sceptical about PBP have noted the constructive and non-sectarian approach taken by PBP. They should consider joining PBP to work together to build it into a mass pluralist and ecosocialist party.

Those sections of the socialist left who gave grudging endorsements for Catherine while criticising PBP's engagement in the campaign will hopefully reflect on what happened and what they stood aside from. A left-right polarisation took place, and the left won. Thousands of new activists were mobilised for the first time and gained organising experience. Momentum that had slipped to the right has been regained by the left.

Other parties in the Connolly camp

The Connolly campaign also had a dynamic within the other parties that supported her. The Social Democrats were with PBP from the beginning in supporting Catherine Connolly. They helped to create a momentum amongst the left, which effectively left Labour and the Greens with a choice between supporting Connolly or not having any candidate. Social Democrat party members enthusiastically engaged at a local and national level.

Sinn Féin came on board the campaign relatively late, after considering running its own candidate. They qualitatively added to the campaign at a central and local level, working constructively, while also using it as an opportunity to repopularise Mary Lou McDonald as a future alternative Taoiseach. This was the first serious attempt to implement the strategy of a "progressive left republican bloc which respects"

the independence and autonomy of cooperating political parties", first <u>floated</u> after the last general election by the Sinn Féin national chairperson, Declan Kearney.

By any standard, it has been a success, not just with the victory of Catherine Connolly, but with a 5% jump in the polls for Sinn Féin. Working with others has proven effective at boosting support for SF. For Sinn Féin members and the leadership, the key question is whether they are now willing to rule out coalition with Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and put all their energy into a campaign for a left government.

For the Labour Party and the Greens, Connolly's campaign was polarising. It exposed and undermined their most right-wing sections. Former Labour leader Alan Kelly was wheeled out almost weekly by the media to declare his opposition to Catherine Connolly and his support for Fine Gael. The media reported wider disquiet amongst the parliamentary party, although it did not publicly materialise. With Connolly having won so decisively, Kelly's position is now weakened.

The same happened in the Green Party, with former TD Brian Leddin, resigning from the party in opposition to supporting Catherine Connolly, mostly it seems because of her opposition to war and imperialism. A smattering of others followed him out the door.

The diminishing of opposition to left co-operation in Labour and the Greens should make it easier for their leaderships to pursue this further if they wish. A major obstacle there, though, is that up until now, the progressive alliance proposed by both <u>Labour</u> and the <u>Greens</u> (overwhelmingly directed at the Social Democrats) has been to maximise the negotiating leverage of these parties in a future coalition with either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. That is not what those involved in the Connolly campaign are looking for — they rightly want to clear FF and FG out.

What next?

For the thousands of people who actively engaged in the Catherine Connolly campaign and for many more who passively supported it, the big question is: what next? Nobody believes that winning the Presidency is enough to change the country, given the very limited powers associated with it. Catherine Connolly will represent our values in the Presidency well and will prove to be a thorn in the side of the political establishment. Undoubtedly, the columns from commentators tuttuting about the President overstepping the limits of the role, which became so common under Michael D. Higgins, will continue.

But people understand that to effect the change we need, we need to win much more than the Presidency. The big lesson is that if the left unites and seeks to mobilise people, it can win. The dynamic of unity can create confidence and enthuse others to get involved. The question of a Left government once again comes increasingly centre stage.

However, any attempt to develop an initiative which focuses only on the next general election is doomed to failure by allowing the energy and activism to dissipate. Playing the role of responsible government in waiting between 2020 and 2024 proved <u>calamitous</u> for Sinn Féin,

People who are suffering under the impact of repeated hikes in energy and grocery prices cannot wait. Those who are facing eviction or massive rent hikes under the government's new plans cannot wait. Those who want meaningful action for Palestine and defence of our neutrality cannot wait. Joint initiatives must be organised, together with unions and social movements — to defend the Triple Lock; to demand the full implementation of the Occupied Territories Bill before Christmas; to end the cost of living crisis through price controls and an end to profiteering; and to implement an

eviction ban alongside meaningful rent controls and public house building.

However, defensive struggles alone are insufficient. We need to raise people's sights for the possibility of a Left government for the first time in the history of the state. People Before Profit is proposing to other parties and individuals the organisation of a major conference of the Left in the New Year to discuss how left co-operation can be deepened with a view to presenting a clear choice in the next general election: Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, and those who would prop them up, versus a Left government.

All of this poses complicated questions to the socialist left. We understand that the capitalist system, where profit dominates, simply cannot deliver what people demand and need — the right to a home and a good life, a world without war and oppression, the right to a sustainable and liveable future for our children. We therefore will only enter a government that commits to a people-power strategy of mobilising from below to overcome the opposition of the powerful capitalist class and deliver ecosocialist change. That is far from the programme of the other major parties supporting Connolly.

Nonetheless, we actively want the rule of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael to end. We want a left government, even on a programme far weaker than the ecosocialist one we would advocate. We want this government and the approach of reforming capitalism to be tested before the masses. We are therefore open to participating in this dynamic towards a left government, including committing to vote to allow this government to be formed, despite the very significant limitations of the likely programme. The key condition for us is that we retain our right to independence, to put forward our own ecosocialist position, and continue strengthening our connections with communities to mobilise the power of people from below.

In 1843, Karl Marx provided useful guidance for socialists

approaching complicated situations:

"we do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles. We do not say to the world: Cease your struggles, they are foolish; we will give you the true slogan of struggle. We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it has to acquire, even if it does not want to."

Significant numbers of people are now anxious to take the next steps after the Connolly campaign to work towards getting rid of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and electing a left government. We should be right there, alongside them, organising and taking steps together, while using it as an opportunity to win people to the argument put forward by James Connolly in 1897:

"If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts will be in vain."

To win a truly new Republic, it will not be enough to replace the government or even to write a new Constitution. A socialist Republic with working people and the oppressed in power is needed.

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An historic victory for the left

Review — Great John Maclean Has Come Home to the Clyde by Donald Robertson

It is just over a hundred years since the death of Scotland's best-known revolutionary Marxist, John Maclean. intervening century, Maclean's standing and reputation has waxed and waned, often reflecting the prominence of the national question in Scotland, an issue with which Maclean is understandably - if sometimes one-sidedly - identified. Over the years, there have been a number of important biographies of Maclean; most notably perhaps, that of his daughter, Nan Milton, in 1973, and, more recently, a well-received account of Maclean's life and politics by Henry Bell which came out in 2018. In addition, there have been numerous smaller studies of Maclean, highlighting, for example, the influence of Irish Republicanism on the evolution of Maclean's politics, his attitude to the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and his advocacy of Scottish Republicanism (and flirtation with 'Celtic Communism'). Decades after his premature death - accelerated by the brutality he experienced during his frequent imprisonments for antiwar agitation -Maclean's legacy remains complex and contested.

Donald's Robertson's new biography, *Great John Maclean Has Come Home to the Clyde - The Life and Times of Scotland's Greatest Socialist*, is a welcome addition to the literature on Maclean which adds to our understanding of his life and politics in important ways. First it is a substantial work, which not only takes us through the events in Maclean's life, but also outlines the political and social context in a clear and detailed way. Readers unfamiliar with the events in Glasgow in the first decades of the 20th century are treated to an extensive account of 'Red Clydeside' and of the struggles in the community (most notably the Rent Strikes of

1915) and at the point of production (in particular, against 'dilution' and for the 40-hour week) which characterised the period, and in which Maclean played a key role. The main aspects of Maclean's political life are also brought out clearly. His focus on working-class political education, including his long-term project to establish an independent Labour College for Scotland and his legendary <u>lectures in</u> Marxist economics, conducted for well over a decade, where hundreds of working-class Scots were introduced to the foundational concepts of Marx's Capital. Equally, Maclean's phenomenal workload, his appearance at meetings and events throughout Britain, educating, agitating, and organising tirelessly against the bosses and their system, is outlined in detail. Above all, Maclean's internationalism international reputation), expressed most powerfully in his courageous opposition to the First World War and in his support for Irish Independence, and for which he paid such an enormous price in terms of his health and personal life, is highlighted.

Largely devoted to directly recounting Maclean's life and times, Robertson's biography avoids the controversies about Maclean which have tended to preoccupy the left (e.g. was Maclean's Scottish Republicanism a pragmatic response to the ebbing of the post-war upsurge or did it represent a prescient grasp of the importance of the national question? Was Maclean's advocacy of a distinct Scottish Communist Party the basis of his hostility to the nascent Communist Party of Great Britain or was it the other way around?). But if the author does not weigh in on these perennial debates, the book does bring out new material on Maclean's life which more than justifies its publication. First, Robertson has made skilful use of the newspaper archives of the time — and particularly that of the 'Glasgow Herald' - which are now available. This allows him to describe in detail the contemporary impact of Maclean, and more specifically detail the trials for sedition and under the 'Defence of the Realm Act' to which he was

repeatedly subjected. The best known quote from Maclean comes from one such trial, his famous <u>'Speech from the Dock'</u>, delivered at the High Court in Edinburgh in May 1918, with its immortal line "I am not here ... as the accused; I am here as the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot", but Robertson's research also sets out the 'evidence' laid against Maclean and highlights the lengths and means by which the authorities attempted to silence him and curb his influence.

Similarly, Robertson's access to the 'National Archives' for the relevant period throws new light on Maclean's significance and just how seriously the establishment took him and the movement he epitomised. In one of the most fascinating sections of the book, Robertson recounts the proceedings of the 'Imperial War Cabinet' held shortly after the armistice of 11th November 1918. The cabinet, which was chaired by Lloyd George, was made of Ministers from the UK, Canada, Australia, and South Africa as well as other leading officials. There were three items on its agenda on the 28th of November 1918; first, was it possible to prosecute the German Kaiser for war crimes? Second, what arrangements should be made to supply food to the war-torn continent? And third, what should be done about John Maclean, currently serving a term of hard labour in Peterhead Prison, and, more specifically, would it be prudent to release him? A debate ensued in which the pros and cons of releasing Maclean were considered. George Barnes, the Labour Party's representative in the War Cabinet, supported his release, highlighting that "[t]he continued agitation about John Maclean constitutes a serious danger for the government. Mass meetings have been held in many places, including London, and resolutions continue to pour in demanding his release" while others took the view that he should remain in prison. Of particular concern to the cabinet was the potential impact of releasing Maclean on the political situation in Ireland, and on the continued detention of leading members of Sinn Fein

such as Eamon de Valera. As it happened, the Irish authorities expressed no opposition to Maclean's release, and he was freed on Monday 2nd December. On his return to Glasgow, thousands of his supporters turned out to see him, his subsequent journey through the Glasgow city centre immortalised in Hamish Henderson's famous song "The John Maclean March".

Overall, Great John Maclean Has Come Home to the Clyde is a thorough and valuable addition to the literature on John Maclean. It reminds us of an important period when 'the Clyde ran Red' and highlights the mass appeal of Maclean's revolutionary message. While there are no easy answers for contemporary socialists in Maclean's story, his emphasis on popular socialist education; on the importance o f internationalism and anti-imperialism; on relating to the actual struggles of working class people both in and outwith the workplace; and, finally, his personal example of courage in the face of repression and adversity are all things we can and should learn from. Donald Robertson's new book should certainly help us do this.

Reviewed by Iain Gault, Donald Robertson's *Great John Maclean Has Come Home to the Clyde* is published by Resistance Books and is available here. A collection of Maclean's writings including this *Speech from the Dock* is available from the Marxist Internet Archive here.

Donald Robertson was born in Kinlochleven. He co-founded the Australian music and arts magazine *Roadrunner*, was the first editor of *Countdown* magazine, and is the author of books about rock music. He lives in Sydney and blogs at roadrunnertwice.com.au.

Rupture Magazine Issue 16 'Culture War'

Despite — or maybe because of — the overall weakness of the far left, there is no shortage of left-wing journals. Many are written by (and for?) academics and whilst these can often be informative and useful, their relevance to the actual struggles of the oppressed and exploited is not always clear. Others focus on more immediate issues but are often restricted to advancing a rather stale and narrow 'party line'. The existence of a journal which combines topical analysis with political relevance — in an attractive and readable format — is therefore something to be celebrated. *Rupture* is one such journal, and the comrades of <u>RISE</u> in Ireland deserve to be warmly congratulated for bringing it out.

The latest number of the journal — Issue 16, Summer 2025 — contains a variety of articles, several of which focus on the so-called 'culture war' and on the need for the left to engage with and champion — not avoid or downplay — the struggles of the oppressed. These include a piece by Paul Murphy, TD, responding to a recent book with the somewhat ominous title 'Class War — Not Culture War'. In this article Murphy warns of the danger of 'economism' and reminds us of Lenin's dictum that, above all, socialists should aspire to be 'tribunes of the people'. It concludes:

"[t]he working class will not be unified on the basis of a rational appeal to put aside other issues and unite solely on the economic issues — but only on the basis of a consistent struggle against all oppression … [w]e cannot win the class war by abandoning the cultural front".

Other articles exploring the same theme include 'Stay Woke' by Comrade RS; 'Struggle Outside the Workplace — Women in the Vanguard' by Jess Spear; and a piece on the need for transinclusive feminism by a group of comrades from <u>Anti-Capitalist</u> Resistance.

In addition to the above, the current issue also includes a helpful introduction to the relevance of Gramsci to the development of socialist strategy by a comrade from the USA; an article on the shortcomings of some 'orthodox' interpretations of historical materialism; a short piece of creative writing; a review of the popular TV show 'Severance'; and, finally, an interview with an author of a new book on the political history of rap icon Tupac Shakur.

All in all, the latest issue of Rupture contains some great articles and these alone would justify a subscription but — and this is important too — the physical magazine is also beautifully designed — with lots of charming visuals — and it's clear that a lot of thought has been put into both its content and its appearance. At a time when many of us get almost all our political content online, the pleasure of a well-produced and attractive journal with good politics shouldn't been underestimated. Do yourself a favour and get hold of a copy!

Subscriptions to Rupture Magazine including free postage to Scotland, England and Cymru are available here

RISE is an Irish Revolutionary Marxist organisation and a Permanent Observer of the Fourth International.

Uprising or Dictatorship in Ecuador? International Solidarity Needed Now!

In the afternoon of Thursday, 18 September, the new, apparently right-wing leadership of CONAIE, Ecuador's powerful Indigenous movement, bowed to pressure and called an indefinite national strike — in protest at the removal of subsidies for diesel fuel, a move set to almost double the price of most basic necessities overnight.

On Friday morning, President Daniel Noboa announced plans to call a Constitutional Assembly to rewrite the Constitution — he'd been pushing for a series of reforms that would remove or weaken environmental and labour rights enshrined in the progressive Constitution of 2008, and allow him to invite U.S. troops to operate on Ecuadorean soil, supposedly in his 'war on drugs'.

Late on Friday night, President Noboa sent police to surround and evacuate the Constitutional Court as it deliberated on the constitutionality of his moves — it had recently ruled out of order several of his attempts in this direction.

Ecuador's social movements immediately called for a mobilisation on Saturday morning in defence of the Constitutional Court.

This latest standoff comes at the end of a week of mounting confrontation between the increasingly far-right government and Ecuador's social movements, with Indigenous communities in the lead.

Days of protest against a big mining project in southern Ecuador, which threatens the region's entire ecological balance, especially its water sources, culminated in a huge demonstration on Tuesday. Some 100,000 people marched through Cuenca, the country's third city. The government was forced to back off, suspending the project at least temporarily, while promising to press ahead with other big mining projects in communities like Palo Quemado and Las Naves, where both resistance and repression have been intense.

In parallel, the government announced the sharp increase in the price of diesel, as part of its deal with the International Monetary Fund. The reaction was similar to that of October 2019, when a fuel price hike triggered an Indigenous-led uprising. Strike action by transport unions was soon joined by Indigenous communities blocking highways and confronting the police. Students marched through the capital, Quito.

Repression has also increased. As the government continues to use its supposed war on drugs to justify its attacks on social movements, there have been gruesome reports of troops torturing detained activists. But the Indigenous movement has also been exercising its significant social power. When secret service agents apparently tried last month to run over Leonidas Iza — the former president of CONAIE and figurehead of radical resistance — they were promptly detained by the local community and submitted to Indigenous Justice, another right protected by the current Constitution. They were not harmed in any way, but they were subjected to several days of close questioning, in the course of which they revealed remarkable details of the security services' surveillance of social movements, including the use of infiltrators and fake iournalists. As a result of the agents' detention, Leonidas himself is now being charged with kidnapping.

The same Indigenous social power was on display on Thursday when the new President of CONAIE, Marlon Vargas, announced the indefinite nationwide stoppage. With regional stoppages and road blocks spreading in the days before, President Noboa had declared a state of emergency in several provinces. Now,

alongside the strike, Marlon Vargas declared a 'community emergency', meaning the army and police would not be allowed to enter any Indigenous community or territory.

This represents a significant shift in the balance of forces within the Indigenous movement. Only two months ago, Vargas was elected at the head of a coalition of centrist and overtly right-wing forces, promising to do business with the Noboa government and promote national unity. It seemed like a serious defeat for the radical forces in the Indigenous movement, led by Leonidas Iza. But in recent weeks, reality has undermined that 'unity'. The Amazonian section of CONAIE, Confeniae, which Vargas once led, and several provincial federations, announced they were breaking off relations with the government. Local communities were already taking direct action.

Events have been unfolding quickly and it is still too early to tell whether the national stoppage will develop into a full-blown rebellion, the third in six years. Much will depend on what happens within the leadership of the Indigenous movement. Nor is it yet clear how far President Noboa — who retains significant support among parts of the population, even though his popularity has fallen — will go in riding roughshod over Ecuador's already weak democratic institutions. This is not yet a dictatorship, as some on the left have been suggesting. But it may be heading in that direction.

In any case, the people of Ecuador need international solidarity — Now!

Iain Bruce, 20 September 2025

INTERNATIONAL DENUNCIATION OF THE ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE LEONIDAS IZA SALAZAR, LEADER OF THE INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT OF ECUADOR.

[Two years ago Ecosocialist Scotland had the privilege of supporting Leonidas Iza Salazar and his comrades during a visit to Scotland as part of a wider series of visits across Europe. The shocking news that an attempt has been made on his life has filled us with anger and a renewed spirit of solidarity with both Leonidas Iza himself and with the struggle of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador which he has championed. We reproduce below an English text of an statement issued in Spanish denouncing the attempt on Leonidas' life and registering on-going support with him. We would encourage all our friends and comrades to sign the statement which is available here]

The undersigned indigenous organizations of Abya Yala, trade union groups, social movements, political organizations, human rights defenders, feminist movements, student, environmental and alternative communication organizations and personalities defending social justice; we strongly reject the attempted assassination of the leader Leonidas Iza Salazar, leader of the Indigenous Movement of Ecuador. We denounce at the international level that these acts of persecution, surveillance and harassment directed against comrade Leonidas Iza, former president of CONAIE, are part of a plan that constitutes a State policy backed by the Intelligence Law of the national government of Daniel Noboa to restrict democratic freedoms and the legitimate right to protest.

In Ecuador and many parts of the world we are witnessing an offensive of great calamities and injustices against the popular majorities. The flip side of the neoliberal plan is the solidarity of the peoples, breaking the media siege and

achieving the broadest unity in defence of our most elementary rights. Leonidas you are not alone.

FIRST SIGNATURES

Argentine Association of Jurists- Argentina./Association American Association of Jurists-Continental./Association American Jurists, Ecuador Branch./Indigenous Women by CIARENA-Mexico./Evita Mexico./Consortium Oaxaca-Argentina./Kurdistan Women's Movement in Abya Yala, Latin America./CTA autonomous- Argentina./Amazon Commune -Ecuador./Front o f organizations in struggle-Argentina./National Movement of Scientists Simón Bolívar (MOCIENSO) - Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Venezuela./FTS-UNLP- Argentina./University of Oxford-United Kingdom./CADTM-Belgium./Association of University Students of Haina (Aseuha) Dominican Republic./Handkerchiefs in Rebeldía-Argentina./Coordinadora de las Organizaciones de los Pueblos Indigenous People of Quito-COIQ-Ecuador./Observatory of Human Rights and nature — Pacayacu — Lago Agrio-Ecuador./Ecumenical Movement for the Human Rights — Quilmes Memory, Truth and Justice Collective-Argentina./CONULP - National Unified Committee of Struggle of Peru./Anticapitalist resistance-Gran Brittany./Ecosocialist Scotland-Scotland./Multisectorial Federal of the Republic Argentina./Eloy Alfaro Institute for Democracy-Mexico./Medical Society International of the ELAM-Ecuador./Quinto Suyo Switzerland-Peru- Switzerland./Support for the Kitu Kara People-Ecuador./Central University and Amawtay Wasi University- Ecuador./France Amérique Latine-France./Frutos de Nuestra Tierra-Ecuador./AMPDE- Ecuador./PTS DAUGHTERS - Argentina./New Meeting-Argentina./Center Intercultural Kapak-Ecuador./AGD UBA press secretary-Argentina./Assembly Popular of the Puna-Argentina./Network of politicians-Ecuador./Networking-Ecuador./School Permanent PRAIS-Chile./Eloy Alfaro Plurinational Association-Ecuador./Commune PRO-Ecuador./Fundación KapakEcuador./APEGECEA-Ecuador./Association. Argentina Uruguayan ecological economy-Argentina./ANKU native rights-Argentina./Whitman College USA.France Amérique Latine-France./Comité Daniel Gillard pour les Droits humains et de la Nature. Belgium/Marea Socialista and co-founder of Aporrea.org/ Other Voices in Education Venezuela, Brazil/.Ecosocialist Scotland-Scotland/Feminist Assembly of Latin Americans/Elam- Colombia/Community Communication Infórmate Pueblo- Ecuador/AnticapitalistasMiguel Urban Crespo-Spanish State/COMUNA CHAMI- Ecuador/Comunidad Shuar Consuelo Severino Samuel Sharupi Tapuy-Ecuador/UCIA- Ecuador/Supporting Ecuador and University of Utrecht-Ecuador/ Agroecological Network of the Austro- Ecuador.

Corbyn's New Party Risks Labour's Fatal Mistake — Why "Your Party" Needs Independent Wings, Not Branch Offices

Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana's newly announced "Your Party" is already raising concerns among Scottish left activists who warn the venture could collapse before it starts if it continues ignoring the national question. The harsh reality? Scotland's left has watched this movie before — and it always ends in failure.

Bella Caledonia sums it up: "Limited consideration of Scotland has taken place in this attempt to get a left of Labour

electoral challenge up and running," observes Democratic Left Scotland, while Richie Venton of the Scottish Socialist Party warns that "any new party that seeks to operate in Scotland must respect the right of the Scottish people to self-determination and must not be a mere branch office of a London-centric project.

This isn't just Scottish sensitivity — it's strategic necessity. The historical record is unforgiving: centralized left parties that ignore national questions don't just fail in Scotland, they fragment entirely. Spain's catastrophic left retreat in the 1990s offers a perfect case study of what happens when socialists dismiss plurinational realities.

The Spanish Warning: How Centralism Destroyed the Left

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) once dominated the left. The left magazine <u>Viento Sur</u> describes its failures. By the 1990s, it had become a "neoliberal force with progressive trappings," transforming into what critics called a "partycartel" that monopolized politics through state financing while abandoning its working-class identity. But PSOE's fatal error wasn't just embracing neoliberalism — it was promoting a divisive "theory of two national communities" that alienated Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia.

In the Basque Country, PSOE manufactured a false division between communities, casting Basques as "bourgeois and racist" nationalists opposed to "working-class, socialist, and universalist" speakers of Castilian Spanish. This strategy poisoned dialogue and drove communities apart. This wasn't just bad politics — it was organizational suicide.

Izquierda Unida (IU), formed as a left alternative to PSOE, repeated the same mistakes. Despite its anti-capitalist rhetoric, IU struggled with a chronic inability to accept the plurinational reality of the Spanish state. Strong centralist currents within IU viewed national demands as "sectarian" or

"right-wing," fatally undermining the party's ability to build genuine grassroots support in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia.

The results were devastating. In Galicia, the rise of the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) captured the "vote of discontent" while IU's components struggled to reach even 3% of the vote. The lesson couldn't be clearer: Spain's alternative left faces a binary choice: either genuinely champion the distinct national identities and self-determination rights of its regions, or accept political marginalization and eventual collapse.

Scotland's Clear Message: Autonomy Works, Branch Offices Don't

Scottish left parties have learned this lesson the hard way. The most successful examples — the Scottish Socialist Party and Scottish Greens — operate as genuinely independent entities, not subordinate branches of UK-wide organizations.

The Scottish Greens emerged in 1990 when the former UK Green Party deliberately separated into two independent parties. Today, they're completely separate and unique with their own leaders, membership, and policies. Their strong support for Scottish independence isn't incidental — it's integral to their identity and success.

Similarly, the <u>Scottish Socialist Party</u> formed in 1998 from the Scottish Socialist Alliance, explicitly as a distinct Scottish entity. The SSP unequivocally supports independence, framing it through "internationalist rather than nationalist concerns" and advocating for a "Scottish socialist republic."

Contrast this with parties that maintained centralized structures. The Respect Party, "established in London" with no distinct Scottish presence, made virtually no impact north of the border and even lost supporters in England who opposed its organising north of the border. The pattern is clear: Scottish voters reject "branch office" politics.

Ross Greer, the Scottish Green MSP, put it bluntly: "The idea of a new London-based party trying to establish a 'branch office' in Scotland without a clear understanding of our distinct political context is deeply concerning."

Why "Your Party" Risks Disaster

Troubling early indicators suggest "Your Party" risks repeating these historical errors. Scottish commentators describe the initial launch as "badly bungled and incoherent," with conflicting reports about organizational structure and minimal Scottish input.

Helena from 'No Justice' <u>captures</u> the frustration: Rolling out "Jeremy Corbyn as a 'left-leader' and harking back (uncritically) to how wonderful he was" isn't "serious politics." The party risks being dismissed as nostalgic English leftism that ignores Scottish political realities.

Most critically, "Your Party" has yet to clarify its position on Scottish self-determination—a silence that Scottish activists are already interpreting as indifference. This isn't a minor oversight — it's a deal-breaker for many. As Ross Greer notes, "Scotland needs a strong, independent voice on the left, not another Westminster-controlled outfit."

The electoral arithmetic is brutal. Connor Beaton warns that attempting to contest Holyrood elections without broad engagement could "end up like RISE in 2016, winning a derisory share of the vote which then contributes to the whole project's collapse."

The Platform for Socialism and Independence

The good news is that Scottish socialists are already organizing to prevent this disaster. The recently launched Platform for Socialism and Independence brings together Aberdeen Marxist Caucus, the Republican Socialist Platform, Scottish Socialist Youth, and Socialists for Independence. It

represents exactly the kind of proactive intervention needed. Rather than waiting for "Your Party" to impose a structure from London, these groups are engaging strategically while maintaining core principles around independence and Scottish autonomy.

The Path Forward: Embrace Plurinationalism

Jamie Driscoll, involved in "Your Party's" formation, seems to understand the stakes, emphasizing "significant autonomy in the nations and regions" and rejecting a "top-down London-run party." But good intentions aren't enough — organizational structure matters.

Based on successful precedents, "Your Party" needs to:

- Unequivocally support Scottish self-determination— not as a tactical position, but as a foundational principle. The Spanish experience shows that half-measures create "artificial barriers of incommunication."
- Foster genuine autonomy— Scottish and Welsh wings must have their own leadership, decision-making structures, and tailored political programmes. The Scottish Greens' model of formal separation or the SSP's autonomous development offer proven templates.
- Build grassroots power first— Instead of immediate Holyrood campaigns, focus on local organizing and council elections in 2027. This allows time to develop genuine Scottish leadership and avoid the "excessive politicismo" that doomed Spain's IU.
- Engage existing Scottish movements— Work with independence campaigns, climate justice groups, Palestine solidarity, and other progressive forces rather than competing with them.

Learning from Failure in the Spanish State

The Spanish left's 1990s retreat wasn't inevitable — it resulted from strategic choices that prioritized institutional

power over grassroots organizing and centralized control over plurinational democracy. These same pressures exist today.

"Your Party" can succeed, but only if it learns from these failures. The choice is stark: embrace genuine autonomy for Scotland and Wales, or watch another promising left initiative fragment on the rocks of unresolved national questions.

The Scottish left has been clear about what it needs. The question is whether Corbyn and Sultana are listening — or whether they're destined to repeat the mistakes that have buried left parties across Europe.

As Richie Venton warns: "We've seen countless attempts to build left-wing unity in Scotland only to see them fail because of a lack of understanding of the Scottish political landscape and the need for a genuinely independent Scottish socialist movement."

This is "Your Party's" moment of truth. The early warning signs are flashing red, but the fatal mistakes haven't been locked in yet. Corbyn and Sultana can still demonstrate they understand what every successful Scottish left party has learned: revolutionary democracy means unequivocally supporting self-determination. The choice is stark—act now to embrace genuine Scottish autonomy, or watch another promising left initiative fragment on familiar rocks.

Reposted from Red Mole Substack

Building a global movement

against genocide in Palestine

A global movement of solidarity has emerged in response to the barbarity of the new genocide against the Palestinian people. Despite intense repression, this movement is bringing together millions across the world.

For 77 years, imperialists have been trying to destroy and drive out the Palestinian people, exploiting the horrific genocide of the Jews in World War II to justify dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Since October 2023, Israel has been trying to destroy Palestinian life in Gaza, to replicate the Nakba of 1948, committing itself in turn to a genocide without parallel in the 21st century. Meanwhile, settlers are stepping up their attacks in the West Bank, Palestinians inside the green line face greater discrimination than before and Israel has carried out military attacks against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran.

The direct participation or deep complicity of most of the Western imperialist powers is now clear, as is that of the Arab countries that are "normalizing" their relations with the genocidal state, while in many other countries, the ruling classes make polite criticisms but distance themselves from any real resistance. All this in the name of a sickening "right of Israel to defend itself," which attempts to portray the aggressor as the victim and vice versa.

Resistance in the face of repression

Fortunately, in much of the world, millions have mobilized to demand an end to the massacres, the blockade of Gaza, and sanctions against Israel. They have faced ruthless repression, including bans, imprisonment, police and judicial attacks, and false accusations of antisemitism.

The March for Gaza and the Soumud Convoy attempted to break

the blockade of Gaza and bring aid to the Palestinians. The repression they were met with in Egypt and Libya showed the appalling complicity of those regimes. Thousands were beaten, intimidated, arrested, and sent back to their countries of origin, with little response from their governments.

The Freedom Flotillas, carrying world-renowned personalities, also attempted, more symbolically, to break the blockade. It succeeded in further highlighting the Zionist state's total contempt for international law, its contempt for truth and any limit to its jurisdiction, symbolizing its unlimited colonialism.

In a number of countries, it is simply forbidden to express solidarity and assert demands, like in Algeria, where the government claims to support Palestine but prevents solidarity from being expressed.

In the United States and elsewhere, protests and occupations have been banned or attacked violently by the state. University teachers have been sacked for supporting the movement. Students and people of colour, especially anyone from the Middle East, have been particular targets of repression.

Criminalization of solidarity organizations is another key tactic. The British government declared the direct action movement Palestine Action to be a terrorist organization, support for which is a criminal offence — lawyers, vicars and other notables were all arrested at an immediate protest action. The French state has been threatening to dissolve Urgence Palestine since April but has not yet done so perhaps because of a major international campaign of objections.

In Germany, tens of thousands of people who have mobilized are facing relentless repression. False accusations of antisemitism are being used to ban demonstrations, shut down media outlets, and discredit the entire movement. While the

weaponisation of antisemitism is a particular problem in Germany, it is used against the movement everywhere — including against Jewish organizations asserting "Not in our name".

In the state of Israel, even if a large majority of the Jewish population supports the action of the army, there is a reaction against the war crimes committed to the Palestinians, the actions of the settlers in the West Bank and the policy led by the far-right government of Netanyahu, in particular the criminal will to expel the population of Gaza.

Hypocrisy is rife as governments attack and criminalize all demonstrations of support and solidarity for the Palestinian resistance of whatever limited form — such as chants at a music festival — yet refuse to condemn and take sanctions against Israel.

But it is, of course, in Palestine that repression is most intense. In the West Bank, attacks have intensified in recent months, with daily attacks by settlers against Palestinians and the destruction of homes. It has also emerged that Israel has armed and financially supported Palestinian gangs and jihadist groups in order to undermine the resistance in Gaza from within.

The massacres in Gaza continue; in one month, more than 600 Palestinians were killed while waiting for food aid. Food distribution points are death traps. Several studies now suggest that hundreds of thousands of Gazans have died in the last two years.

Palestinian resistance is a key to the global situation

The Palestinian people are resisting the second Nakba and their expulsion from their territory with the means at their disposal. So far, despite famine, terrible living conditions, and murderous attacks, they are standing their ground, refusing to disappear, and defending themselves.

The international solidarity movement has helped to expose the reality and scale of the genocide. It has mobilized millions, and the boycott divestment and sanctions campaign together with mass mobilizations can isolate this criminal regime as has happened before, for example for apartheid South Africa

This movement will not stop.

The fate of the Palestinian people is intimately linked to that of all oppressed peoples and the fight against global imperialist ambitions. We are living in a period of growing inter-imperialist contradictions but one which has limits too. Russia for example did not back Iran when Israel launched military attacks against it. The Israeli and US attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, and the complicity of Arab states point to the fact that the imperialist powers, led by the US, want to strengthen their domination over every inch of the globe in a period of intense economic and ecological crisis. And the Middle East remains one of the — if not the central — strategic battlefield.

Preventing the continuation of colonization in Palestine, pushing back Israel and the United States, and liberating Palestine from imperialism are key points in the global shift in the balance of power that we must build to change the world. Therefore, the Fourth International calls for redoubled efforts to build a global movement against genocide and for the liberation of Palestine, through mass and workers' action in particular. We will work to ensure that, on the occasion of 7 October 2025, broad mobilizations contribute to changing the balance of forces.

Free Palestine, Palestine will free us all!

From Ukraine to Palestine occupation is a crime!

Trump's first six months: A threat to our planet and its peoples

The election of Trump represents the coming to power of a neofascist leadership in the main imperialist country of the world, who is actively fuelling the genocide of the Palestinian people. This represents a further shift to the right in the international balance of forces, and strengthens the Orbans, Modis, Melonis, Bolsanaros and others.

Since assuming office on January 19, 2025, after winning a close election with a plurality of the popular vote, the Trump presidency has pursued a deeply reactionary agenda, threatening democratic rights in the US and aggression for the rest of the world. Trump also represents a particularly virulent threat to the US working class and oppressed communities throughout the world. One of his main fronts is his attacks on LGBTIQ*, particularly trans people, which is in line with large parts of the international far right including Putin. This is part of Trump's general reactionary social agenda with vicious attacks on racialized minorities, women's reproductive rights, migrants, climate change denial, hostility to democratic rights, readiness to use violence, a contempt for democratic processes and checks and balances, and a drive for total power.

The generalization of trade tariffs is an ideological obsession of Donald Trump, and this announcement was a show of imperial force from the first days of his mandate. But fears

of internal economic impacts and announced retaliations, notably from the BRICS, made Washington step back and contributed to the crisis of hegemony of US imperialism. The 50% tax on Brazil's imports in US, with openly political purposes "punishes" the Brazilian government to pave the way for Bolsonaro and others coup plotters to escape lawsuits. Contradictorily, the measure opened a new and positive political moment in the country.

His drive for total power aided and abetted by the Republican party and a section of the US judiciary makes him a would-be authoritarian and neo-fascist, and strengthens the hands of the far right worldwide. While opposition has not been banned and democratic rights not completely eliminated -indicators of neo-fascism- the tendency in that direction is clear.

The US has long been the biggest abuser of fossil fuels. Under Trump the US has left the ineffectual COP international climate change association, has given the green light to oil companies to increase fossil fuel extraction and use, and US regulatory documents have been scrubbed of all reference to climate change.

The Trump administration has launched a particularly cruel police-military campaign of persecution and deportation against millions of migrants, mostly Latin Americans and South Asians. With its cynical rhetoric equating all immigrant workers with criminals, it has turned El Salvador into a Guantánamo for hire. This campaign emboldens the most reactionary white supremacist forces.

Trump's attacks against elite US universities cynically accuse them of antisemitism for insufficiently cracking down on pro-Palestinian protests. This repression has chilled the Palestine Solidarity movement and the rights of free speech. The labelling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations as antisemitic serves to cover up the real antisemitism nourished by Trump's racist speech and policy. Trump and his allies recently passed a reactionary budget giving enormous tax benefits to the ultra rich paid directly by cuts to Medicaid, a program of government health insurance used by seventy-one million people, and food stamps for the poorest.

Trump's open threats to annex the Panama canal, Canada, and Greenland represent a return to naked nineteenth century imperialism. On Ukraine, Trump is seeking a predatory deal with Putin (with whom he shares many far-right ideological ideas) to share out areas of influence at the expense of the people who are the victims of the Russian state's colonial war.

After the political shock in the European powers faced with the disengagement rhetoric from Trump on NATO, this alliance recovered its historical place — the scenario of European subordination — when Trump used it to show European obedience to US orders for the increase of arms expenditure.

While the America First policy guides Trump's bellicosity to its allies, the recent attack on Iran reminds us that the US will not hesitate to use military force where its interests are threatened.

Trump continues Biden's and all US presidents' military and political support for Israel. His threat to empty the Gaza strip of its inhabitants and turn the area into a luxury resort would be a crime of world historic importance.

The Democratic party has shown itself to be totally ineffective in opposing Trump. This is mostly because the Democratic party serves the same 1% as the Republicans.

The huge and enthusiastic rallies of AOC and Bernie Sanders reflect the depth of anti-Trump sentiment. The recent victory of Mamdani in the New York City Democratic Party primary also represents a challenge to the Democratic Party establishment and his progressive social agenda shows the potential to elect

progressive and anti-capitalist public officials A mass anti-Trump movement in the streets has arisen over the last few months. Millions have participated in thousands of anti-Trump demonstrations in thousands of cities and towns across the country. Immigrant workers have been at the forefront of this resistance. These demonstrations encourage those resisting far-right governments around the world.

The Bureau of the Fourth International solidarizes with the growing anti-Trump movement.

Down with the Trump regime!

Down with all US threats to other countries and peoples!

Hail the heroic protests in Los Angeles!

Stop US fossil fuel expansion!

Stop the war on migrants!

Self-determination for Ukraine!

Stop US support for the Israeli genocide in Gaza!

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

13 July 2025

British government declares Palestine Action terrorists

The Labour government at Westminster proscribing Palestine

Action as a terrorist organisation is a ridiculous undemocratic move by a government that only exists to perpetuate war and capitalism, argues Simon Hannah

Two Palestine Action members damaged some war planes at a UK air base in protest against the genocide in Gaza and the escalation of the conflict into Iran. This led immediately to the government taking steps to put the protest group on a par with Al-Qaeda or Islamic State. A frightening overreach.

This coming from ex human rights lawyer Kier Starmer, a man who defended protestors who broke into an RAF base in 2003 and damaged planes in protest against the war in Iraq. Now his government is saying that people who throw paint at military aircraft are in the same category as those that fly commercial airlines into civilian buildings as happened in 9/11.

And Yvette Cooper, the Home Secretary, who stood up in parliament wearing suffragette ribbons to celebrate the fight for women to get the vote — the same movement that carried out direct action protests and caused all kinds of 'nuisance' for the governments of the day. What do they say about the liberals? They support every social movement apart from the present one.

A solidarity protest in London was attacked by the police with several arrests made on spurious grounds. The police were clearly spoiling for a fight and saw the government's proposed ban as an excuse to do what they wanted.

Earlier in the day the chief of the Met Police Sir Mark Rowley had issued an outrageous statement saying the planned solidarity action left him "shocked and frustrated" that people would come out in support of Palestine Action. Shut up Sir Rowley, it isn't your place to offer opinions on whether people should attend demonstrations or not.

The Labour government has kept the Tories draconian anti protest laws and sought to expand them. They have presided

over the prosecution of peaceful protestors on conspiracy charges, landing them five years in prison (before they reduced that on appeal) — the longest prison sentence for non-violent protest ever handed down.

They are also going after the Irish rap group Kneecap for 'supporting terrorism' by allegedly having a Hezbollah flag on display at a gig. This government is one of the most illiberal ones for many years — targeting musicians for waving a flag is another example of the dangerous overreach of these policepoliticians.

Reactionary wave

The clamp down on protest rights is happening as part of a global reactionary wave, a move towards authoritarian regimes that clamp down on civil and political rights and are seeking to roll back the gains of the last 50 years around women, LGBT and Black people's rights.

As late capitalism gets worse, with greater wealth inequality, collapsing public services and horrific genocidal violence, more governments are imposing harsher laws and restrictions on our freedoms. They can see that social crises are growing but the politicians in power only want to protect the interests of a small group in society — the billionaires and capitalists.

The far right — normally free speech advocates when it comes to say anything racist or transphobic — back these moves, seeing them for what they are — an attack on working people and progressive voices fighting for a better world. The far right pose as anti establishment fighters but they are in reality just fighting on behalf of their super rich pay masters like Elon Musk and Arron Banks.

Diversion

Of course the proscription of Palestine Action is also to

focus attention away from the genocide in Gaza and the escalation of war in Iran. Israel is effectively a rogue state, completely ignoring any principles of international law and expanding the war from Gaza to Iran on the spurious grounds that Iran might be developing weapons of mass destruction (those of us around in 2003 for the Iraq war movement will remember this same rhetoric!)

We are fighting for a better world for all and we won't let government proscriptions or police violence or far right terror threat intimidate us. There are some many struggles against the crises of late capitalism and they are growing. We can link these struggles up to point to how capitalism and class society based on hierarchies of wealth and power are at the root cause of so many of these issues.

Some people say they want to leave the country. The reality is there are not many countries in the world that are not heading in this authoritarian direction. We have to fight where we are, working together to build powerful social movements and political parties that can contest for power to overthrow the capitalists and their state.

Simon Hannah is a socialist, a union activist, and the author of A Party with Socialists in it: a history of the Labour Left, Can't Pay, Won't Pay: the fight to stop the poll tax, and System Crash: an activist guide to making revolution.

Published on 24 June 2025 by Anti-Capitalist Resistance

Stop Israel Now! Executive

Bureau of the Fourth International, 13 June 2025

Israel's unprecedented attack on Iran is a direct result of the impunity it has enjoyed while carrying out a live-streamed genocide in Palestine over the past 20 months. Under the false pretext of "self-defense," Israel has escalated its long-standing policy of Palestinian erasure into full-scale genocide. Now, it extends that aggression by bombing Iran, claiming to defend itself from a hypothetical nuclear threat—despite not being a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and remaining unaccountable for its own nuclear arsenal.

This impunity is made possible by the United States and other governments that continue to arm Israel—supplying weapons, funding, and political cover as it carries out mass atrocities across the region. The U.S. has emphasized that Israel acted unilaterally in its strike on Iran and has denied any involvement while being the primary supplier of the weapons used in this attack. Alongside other governments that arm and shield Israel, the U.S. is complicit in enabling Israel's expanding aggression across the region. They are all partners in atrocity.

This belligerence has not only claimed civilian lives, but it also threatens the long and courageous struggle of the Iranian people against a repressive regime, of which the latest high point was the movement "Woman, Life, Freedom". History shows clearly: there is no path to democracy under the shadow of war.

We stand firmly with the people of Iran—both in their ongoing resistance to dictatorship and in their right to live free from foreign military aggression. We denounce Israel's attack on Iran and demand international pressure to stop its reckless regional escalation now.

We urgently demand:

Hands off Iran!

An immediate end to regional escalation! Solidarity with political prisoners and human rights defenders in Iran, and vigilance against further repression by the regime.

As we have done for months, we continue to demand:

Sanctions on Israel now! An immediate end to all arms trade with Israel! Global mobilization to stop the genocide in Palestine!

Statement by the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International, 13 June 2025

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What do you know about us? by 'Somebody's Sister'

A note: If you feel like this article is addressing you, then it is. It's not my problem if you don't like seeing yourself in the mirror. To those who do know us and stand with us, I send comradely regards.

It's a question I find myself asking often enough, but it's been rattling around in my brain with especially violent force in the days since that accursed Supreme Court decision:

What do you know about us?

I ask you sincerely. What do you actually know of or about

trans people, trans communities, trans culture? I don't ask this facetiously. I really want to know- Do you actually, genuinely, know any of us?

And I don't mean passing acquaintances in your work, neighbourhood, political organisation, etc., nor do I mean the *idea* of trans people you have from some Twitter posts or newspaper articles.

Do you have any trans friends? Trans relatives? Do you talk with them and listen to them? And I don't mean talking at them or pretending to listen. Do you know how we speak, how we joke, how we love, how we grieve? Do you know about our farreaching networks of friends and polycules, of our dumb injokes, our vernaculars, our tastes in fashion, our traditions of knowledge-sharing and mutual aid, our often-shrouded history of defiant existence and struggle?

Our history and community brims with wonderful writers, musicians, comedians, game developers, scientists, filmmakers, artisans, actors, programmers, activists, artists- Do you even know a single one of their names?

When the Supreme Court judgement went out, did you speak with any of us and hear our sorrow and disappointment, our fear for the future?

I ask because the news doesn't show this. At best, they have on a couple people from a charity or the Green Party, if you're lucky an actual trans person, to offer a quick snippet or quote, and then it's back to the gender-criticals, the ideologues and the cynical politicians. We are mostly just discussed, never truly spoken with.

And it shows! The discourse about us is conducted in terms of grotesque stereotypes and ridiculous "what-if" situations. I've seen the idea of us that gender-critical slopheads in Twitter threads and newspaper columns hold to, an absurd caricature that would be hilarious if it wasn't influencing

policy and assisting the rise of the far right. The trans people that exist in their heads are creepy, slovenly, asocial and predatory- essentially, inhuman creatures beyond empathy. And yet, it's these imaginary, stereotypical trans people, imaginary trans women specifically, that all the "legitimate concerns" are premised on.

Legitimate concerns. Let's linger on that term for a moment. I can think about some other "legitimate concerns":

The "legitimate concerns" of parents about homosexuals "influencing" their children.

The "legitimate concerns" of Israeli settlers about the "dangers" posed by dispossessed Palestinians.

The "legitimate concerns" of racists all over Europe about Syrian, Afghan, Eritrean, Sudanese, Kurdish and other refugees constituting a force of "fighting-age men" ready to undermine their host country.

And do you remember Emmett Till?

The road to his brutal murder, and the lynching of countless others, was paved with the "legitimate concerns" of white people about "threatening", "lustful" black people, "concerns" that were just the outward justifications for stereotypes, bigotry, and hatred.

It's all stereotypes, it's all horseshit! It's always horseshit! And you know it. We have seen it all before, past and present, as one group of bigots fearmongers about another marginalised group, and it's no different with trans people. You might hide behind your "legitimate concerns", but the truth is that you have more in common with the lynch mob and the settler on the West Bank than any real fighter for human justice.

The trans community as it genuinely exists does not deserve to

be demonised like this, just as the concrete, genuine human beings underneath abstractions and umbrella terms like "refugee" or "homosexual" do not deserve to be the victims of prejudice as they try to live decent, dignified lives. Neither me nor the man from Syria should have to answer for *your* ignorance. We just want to live our lives without someone else's boot on our necks.

Lets face it, whatever legal finery and rhetorical flourishes this offensive against trans people is being draped in, it stems at its core from simple, brutish feelings of disgust. Our enemies are disgusted by us. Or, to put it another way, they pretend that their disgust for us can be hidden by some concocted political or moral ideal. Women with penises give them the ick, and it really does just boil down to that. Never mind that many of us want rid of our dicks at the earliest convenience, and many of us already have vaginas.

Not that genitals are necessarily the ultimate definers of my or any trans woman's womanhood, by the way. Are your genitals the be-all-and-end-all of your womanhood? Or does some man think so? Excuse me- Hasn't the feminist movement been fighting for centuries to destroy a patriarchal tyranny upheld by biological essentialism? And anyhow: My genitals are only of significance to me and my partners- The rest of you can fuck off and stop being so bloody nosey!

And yet we have to face the consequences for everyone else's creepy obsession with our genitals- And the transphobes call us perverts? The nerve!

On the subject of patriarchal domination, let me take this opportunity to point out my own speck of blood on the banner. I've been assaulted by a man on public transport, and I've been sexually assaulted by a man on the street. Do I have to certify my suffering, my oppression by the patriarchy to you, to gain some kind of solidarity and sisterhood?

Let's stop bullshitting. If a man wants to rape a woman, he doesn't go to the ridiculous contrivance of transitioning to be a woman first- What kind of cartoony secret-disguise nonsense do you think rapists operate by? A rapist breaks whatever boundaries he wants- If he wants to force his way into a women's toilet and sexually assault women, he'll try it. If you bothered to know any of us, you'd know that trans women are victims of this too. We are also assaulted, raped and murdered by men, whether in public or in private. The patriarchy aims to control, exploit and mutilate *all* women, cis or trans.

And yet, you consider me and my trans siblings the threat to women's safety, the obstacle to feminist gains? Fuck off and get a grip. Have a good think and realise who your real enemy is. Trust me, he wants me dead too.

The answer to rape culture and patriarchy is not the toilet gestapo. The answer is a united feminist movement that protects and uplifts all targets of the patriarchy, no matter whether they are cis or trans. Feminist comrades in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil understand this far better than us, and it's no surprise that their feminist movements are bold, powerful and truly inclusive, while ours here is tiny, weak and demoralised.

I'm tired and hurt, and the quiet burning rage I feel at the collapse I'm seeing around me is so palpable, and has made my hands shake with such fury, that it has been hard to set my thoughts out in greater detail or length. I am going to end here for now, but first:

I must say specifically, to all the useful idiots, fairweather friends, grifters, cynics, opportunists and cowards of the left who skipped out on trans liberation, ignored our struggle, or bought into the culture war offensive against us: I despise you, and if you even bother to read and digest the thoughts of a single trans person about the destruction you've

assisted by ignorant omission or conscious activity, then I hope you feel sick to your gut with shame for the rest of your life. I hope the guilt chases you forever. You are serving as the "left" wing of a movement for segregation and social murder and I will never consider you a comrade of mine. Ever.

I don't care how you feel about what I've just said. I care about the trans people who will be harassed, beaten, sexually assaulted and killed in public places, who will face discrimination in workplaces, who will feel like they need to go back into the closet to live. Many trans people, despairing of everything, will take their lives in the years to come, and we both know this- don't you dare be a shitebag and deny it. It is a deeply horrible thing to acknowledge that there are sisters of mine, dear cherished friends, who may not live to see all of this bullshit repealed and sorted. We trans people will do our best to help each other get through this and avoid as much of that as possible. It's going to be a long and painful road, but we will endure it, just as we always do, no matter the circumstances. Do not forget- Once, many decades ago, using bonfires, camps and mass graves, Hitler's men tried to wipe us from the face of the Earth.

And yet, they failed. Trans people will never disappear.

But will the bulk of the left be much help to us in defeating this next round of repression and social murder? After witnessing the way the last few years have played out, I can only laugh at that notion. And the laughter is hollow and bitter.

You have failed not just trans people, but all of us. And when the far right goes after abortion or gay rights next, I honestly doubt you'll understand the connection between all of these assaults on civil rights, and the role the anti-trans offensive has played in galvanising them all.

After all, what the fuck do you know about us?

Review — Against the Crisis: Economy and Ecology in a Burning World by Ståle Holgersen

Amongst the most overused terms in politics and journalism, 'crisis' must be a strong contender for the top spot. A quick glance at today's news headlines reveals — amongst others — a nightlife crisis, a tariff crisis, a cholera crisis, a housing crisis, and — heaven forbid — an injury crisis at a leading football club! More specifically, for the Marxist left, the notion of 'the capitalist crisis' has played an important role in our collective political imaginary. How many times have we heard something to the effect that "as the crisis deepens", the working class will shed its illusions and in due course will rally to the socialist cause? Stale Holgersen recent book, Against the Crisis, takes issue with both the conceptual confusion surrounding the concept of crisis and, more importantly, at the notion that capitalist crises should be conceived as opportunities for the left.

In relation to the first point, Holgersen proposes a working definition of crisis which comprises three essential elements, as he writes, "Crises are events that 1) come relatively quickly, 2) are embedded in underlying structures and processes, and 3) have negative effects on people or nature" (p.5) Thus, as a consequence, he is sceptical about the

concept of a 'permacrisis' (the Financial Times' word of the year 2022). As to the second, he stresses the role that crises play in sustaining the system and the political difficulties that they pose for the left:

"While crises can — in theory — help us to reveal and expose capitalism's weaknesses and problems, they are also — in the actual political economy — central to the reproduction of capitalism. Crises are a good starting point for criticising capitalism, but they also make it harder to actually overthrow the system"; (p.10) moreover,

"If opportunities — as defined in textbooks — are occasions or situations that make it possible to do something you want or have to do, and if opportunities — as conventionally understood — entail moments of excitement, optimism and hopefulness, and chances for advancement, then we must refrain from referring to crises as opportunities for the working class, the environmental movement or the political left" (p.16).

'Make the Rich Pay for the Crisis!' may be an attractive slogan but, as Holgersen points out, it is rarely the case that they ever actually do.

Against the Crisis focusses on the nature of the recurrent economic crises under capitalism and on the overarching issue of the ecological crisis. One of the main strengths of the book is how it analyses the specifics of each of these, their similarities and differences, and the complex relationship between them. Holgersen takes issue with the (reassuring?) view that the ecological crisis, in itself, poses a threat to the continued existence of capitalism. Paraphrasing Lenin he wryly observes, "[It] is more likely ... that the last capitalist will sell a jug of gasoline to his last customer in a world on fire; or that the last capitalist will order workers to use the latest technology to produce even more survival kits" (p.106).

In attempting to understand these economic and ecological crises, Holgersen applies an approach which combines both empirical data and structural analysis by way of a series 'abstractions'. Thus crises, Holgersen argues, need to be understood simultaneously (1) at the 'surface level' (e.g. a financial crisis), which is in turn related to (2) the concrete organisation of nature/capitalism (e.g. 'neoliberalism'), rooted in (3) the crisis tendencies of the system (e.g. the increase in the 'organic composition of capital') which are finally associated with (4) the profitdriven nature of the system and (5) ultimately, with the underlying contradiction between use-value and exchange value which characterises the capitalist system as a whole. It is at these, more fundamental levels of abstraction, that both the economic and the ecological crises - despite their specificities and important differences — can conceptualised as different manifestations of the same systemic imperatives and contradictions.

Holgersen applies this overall framework to a number of specific issues associated with crises under capitalism. Above all, he underlines the essential class dimensions of such crises. Far from us all being in the 'same boat', crises are caused by one class but typically paid for by another. More broadly he writes,

"[t]hat class struggle intensifies during crises of capitalism may sound like a dream to the left, who might be more than happy to welcome some extra class struggle. But most of this is nothing to cheer about. This is class struggle from above, subtly and quietly, often with murderous efficiency" (p.142).

Against the Crisis also includes a very useful discussion of the relationship between racism, fascism and capitalist crises. For Holgersen racism is a permanent feature of such crises, a predictable response "within a capitalism built for centuries on colonialism and imperialism", but "[w]here racism is the rule, fascism is the exception; if racism is the eternal answer to crisis, fascism is the exceptional solution" (p.187) and "[f]ascism is a solution when it seems that the crises will not be able to reproduce capitalism. In other words, fascism becomes a possibility when the basic hypothesis of this book is challenged. Fascism is the shock therapy when capitalism really needs to change in order to survive" (p.194).

Holgersen applies a variety of theoretical frameworks to help illuminate the nature of capitalist crises, drawing on both the Trotskyist tradition, especially the work of Ernest Mandel and Daniel Bensaid, and on the 'left eurocommunism' of Nicos Poulantzas, and specifically, on the latter's concept of the 'relative autonomy' of the capitalist state. This represents a potentially innovative fusion of traditions that have traditionally between somewhat remote and indeed hostile to each other; the resumption of a dialogue that briefly took place in the late 1970's and was subsequently lost to history, not least by the virtual disappearance of the 'left eurocommunism' perspective by the early 1980's[i].

However, whilst Holgersen's book is theoretically rich and stimulating, in a refreshing contrast with much current leftwing theorising, it also focusses on the practical responses which capitalist crises demand of the left. Paralleling the analytical abstractions that he employs to understand the nature of crises; he distinguishes between three 'levels' around which the left should formulate such a response. In particular, he distinguishes between (1) crisis management (2) crisis policy and (3) crisis critique and argues convincingly that then left needs all of the above. In fact, it is the weakness of the left at the level of crisis management/policy, in contrast to its relative sophistication at the level of crisis critique, which leaves us vulnerable to collapsing into essentially 'Keynesian' solutions to when the crisis actually hits. Holgersen rightly stresses the urgent need for the left to develop its own distinctive and credible

crisis policies and proposes several possible sources for these; including a renewed programme of 'transitional demands', the advocacy of anti-capitalist 'structural reforms' and a strategy which operates simultaneously 'in and against' the capitalist state. As he notes:

"Crisis and its causes are something we must fight against. Rather than opportunities we look forward to exploring, or moments when the fight for socialism is put on hold, the crises are problems we must solve" (p.19).

Overall, Against the Crisis is a fascinating and rewarding read providing useful material on a host of topics. If I have one reservation about the book it would be that whilst correctly stressing the 'destructive functionality' of cyclical crises under capitalism and their essential role in ensuring the reproduction of the system, it is not at all at clear that similar considerations apply to the more long-term 'organic' downturns of the system which can and do span numerous cyclical 'booms' and 'bursts'. It is not of course that Holgersen is unaware of the distinction here and in fact discusses it at various points, but perhaps the relationship between these different 'crises' (indeed whether the latter is correctly regarded as a 'crisis' in the sense that Holgersen defines the term) could have been explored more thoroughly. The 'functionality' of capitalism's cyclical undulations makes much more intuitive sense than those of its 'long downturns', especially when the latter - for example in the case of the 'Great Depression' of the 1920's and 30's - required a cataclysmic world war to finally resolve. In a similar vein, whilst there is no guarantee that any particular crisis will be the 'final' crisis of capitalism, it doesn't follow that we can't or shouldn't talk in terms of an overall systemic decline.

Notwithstanding this, Holgersen's overall thesis is thoughtful, important, and timely. We can't rely on the crisis of capitalism to deliver the transition to socialism; on the contrary, it is only by finding the political resources to struggle effectively 'against the crisis' that we will find our way to a better society. Although crises typically and paradoxically strengthen the system, the ultimate challenge is, as Holgersen concludes, to definitively 'falsify' this very thesis.

[i] See 'L'État et la transition au socialisme. Interview de Nicos Poulantzas par Henri Weber', *Critique communiste* (the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire journal), no. 16, June 1977 translated to English as 'The State and the Transition to Socialism', in *The Poulantzas Reader*, ed by James Martin (Verso, 2008) pp. 334-360

Reviewed by Iain Gault, Against the Crisis: Economy and Ecology in a Burning World is published by Verso and is available here

There is a *Scotonomics* You Tube interview with Holgersen which outlines the main themes of the book and which is well worth a look. It can be accessed <u>here</u>

Ståle Holgersen is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at Stockholm University, Sweden. He is a member of two research collectives: the Zetkin Collective (ecosocialist group working on political ecologies of the far right) published White Skin, Black Fuel on Verso in 2021 and Fundament (a housing research collective) published Kris i Bostadsfrågan on Daidalos in 2023.

Review - For the Earth to

Live: The Case for Ecosocialism by Allan Todd

"For the Earth to Live" is a compelling and essential read for anyone seeking a radical and comprehensive understanding of the interconnected ecological and social crises facing our world. Written by Allan Todd, with a foreword by Professor Julia Steinberger, it emerges as an unapologetic and passionately argued case for ecosocialism.

The book distinguishes itself by its direct and unwavering commitment to ecosocialist principles, boldly asserting the necessity of uniting ecological concerns with socialist solutions. In an era often characterised by cautious and diluted discourse, "For the Earth to Live" offers a bracingly clear analysis and position, advocating for a political direction that is uncompromisingly pro-ecology and prosocialism. It actively seeks to combine "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will," drawing on the wisdom of Antonio Gramsci to provide both a stark awakening to the realities of our situation and a powerful call to action.

A significant strength of this work lies in its well-informed and thoroughly cited analysis. Todd presents a treasure-trove of political, historical, and scientific evidence to contextualise the climate, biodiversity, and health threats we face within our prevailing political and economic systems. The book is structured logically, building from an exposition of ecological dangers to examining political and economic threats, culminating in a powerful argument for revolutionary ecosocialist politics as the necessary response. The extensive referencing provides readers with an excellent foundation for further exploration and independent understanding.

"For the Earth to Live" makes a significant contribution by aiming to articulate a majoritarian perspective for

ecosocialism. It moves beyond the notion of ecosocialism as a fringe ideology, presenting it as the potential "political home of the majority of humans on planet earth" and of the rest of life on Earth. This book offers a more accessible pathway for arguing for ecosocialism as a vital project for the 99 percent.

Furthermore, the book actively seeks to counter the understandable despair that can arise when confronting the severity of the ecological and political challenges. By promoting Gramsci's "optimism of the will," it encourages readers to see "horizons even in the darkest night," fostering the determination needed to continue the struggle for a better future. It explicitly states that ecosocialism offers the "best hope for replacing today's 'old order' with a new one".

The author doesn't shy away from highlighting the dire warnings from climate, ecological, and pandemic-health science reports, illustrating the interconnected crises facing our environment and the failures of current political responses. The book also touches upon the historical context of humanity's relationship with nature, including the more harmonious approaches found in Indigenous societies, suggesting important ways forward.

In conclusion, "For the Earth to Live" is a vital and inspiring contribution to the literature on ecosocialism. It combines a rigorous and well-researched analysis with a passionate and hopeful call to action. By directly confronting the crises of our time and offering a clear and compelling alternative, this book will likely be an essential resource for activists, scholars, and anyone seeking a pathway towards an ecologically sustainable and socially just world. It encourages readers to embrace "optimism of the will" grounded in a clear understanding of the challenges, ultimately arguing that our best chance for the Earth to live lies with ecosocialism.

Reviewed by Duncan Chapel, "For the Earth to Live" is published by Resistance Books and is available here.

Allan Todd is an ecosocialist/environmental and anti-fascist activist. He is a member of Anti-Capitalist Resistance and Extinction Rebellion North Lakes (Cumbria), and is the author of Revolutions 1789-1917 (CUP), Trotsky: The Passionate Revolutionary (Pen & Sword), Ecosocialism Not Extinction (Resistance Books), and Che Guevara: The Romantic Revolutionary (Pen & Sword).

Allan will speaking about the book at a free event in Glasgow at 7pm on 21st May 2025. For further details of the event and to reserve a copy of the book see Mount Florida Books