How Can Socialists Run Cities – will Mamdani show us the way?

Zohran Mamdani's election to Mayor of New York has been a badly-needed boost to the confidence of the left in the U.S. and beyond. It has also reignited debate about the strategic choices facing socialists elected to local government, and eventually to national governments too. A special, end-of-year issue of *Jacobin*, the U.S. left magazine, was devoted to lessons of municipal socialism, from Red Vienna and Milwaukee's 'sewer socialists' in the first half of the 20th century, to Communist-run cities in Italy or France after the defeat of fascism and Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council in the 1980s, facing off, quite literally across the River Thames, against what was then the far-right, Margaret Thatcher, in government.

These are debates that we, too, need to take seriously, as we seek to build Your Party Scotland as a real, socialist alternative, here in Glasgow and across the country.

One of the most suggestive contributions to the discussion draws on experiences of participatory democracy in Latin America and elsewhere, to argue that as mayor, 'Zohran Needs to Create Popular Assemblies' (*Jacobin* 12.22.2025. https://jacobin.com/2025/12/mamdani-popular-assemblies-democratic-socialism) to build a bottom-up political culture that empowers working people. In this article, Gabriel Hetland, who has done a lot of work with social movements in Venezuela and Bolivia, and Bhaskar Sunkara, the editor of *Jacobin*, point to the positives of governing with such assemblies. In the short term, it enables the social base to keep mobilising, which is vital to sustain a progressive administration that will inevitably be hemmed in by hostile elites and procedural

roadblocks, hindering its attempts to implement even its core, immediate, ‘affordability’ policies. In the process of these fights over housing and transport, childcare and the cost of groceries, it also begins to create new structures of power, increasing “the capacity of workers to collectively shape the decisions that shape their lives”, and “to lay the basis for a society beyond capitalism”.

Even without the aid of a crystal ball, it is not hard to see how a socialist administration in Glasgow City Council, or even in Holyrood, would confront many of the same obstacles, and need similar solutions, as it sought to seize back the cost-of-living agenda hijacked by Reform in Scotland, or even confront a far-right, Reform government in Westminster.

As Hetland and Sunkara make clear, the key point of assemblies or other forms of mass, participatory democracy, is to change the relationship between the governed and their government, shifting power back to the former. The forms this can take vary greatly. Even within Latin America, the early participatory budgets (PBs) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in the 1990s and early 2000s – cited here as one of the most successful examples – were very different from the communal councils and communes developed in Venezuela, or the more sporadic assemblies used in Bolivia, a few years later. Although not part of a wider revolutionary process, the scope of the powers in Porto Alegre was in fact much greater.

It would be foolish, from so far away, to pretend to offer much of an opinion on exactly what might work best in New York City. As these authors point out, it is more important to identify the underlying principles. It is these that will determine whether a given form of assembly democracy can effectively change the relations of power, and whether it really can, or even wants to, open up possible paths to a different kind of society.

The problem is that the principles they do identify are quite

slight and could lead in a rather different direction. This is not semantic quibbling: the gap between ‘affecting decisions’ and exercising sovereign power is the gap between supplicants and rulers, between consultation theatre and the embryo of workers’ self-government. They are significantly weaker than the four core principles adopted by the founders of Porto Alegre’s participatory budgeting. For example, Hetland and Sunkara talk about ordinary people having “real and meaningful opportunities to affect the decisions that shape their lives”, and counterpose this to the “participation without influence” that breeds cynicism about many exercises in participation that are merely consultative. This distinction is important, because many later versions of participatory budgeting were indeed consultations without real power. But the original Porto Alegre version was stronger still. Its second and third core principles were that (2) the PB should have *sovereign decision-making power*, and (3) that it should discuss *the whole budget*, not just a sliver of it. This sounds like a lot more than just ‘affecting’ decisions.

The first of the Porto Alegre core principles was that (1) the PB should be based on *direct, universal participation*. The basic building block was mass, local assemblies, where *all* citizens could take part – there were no delegates at this level of the process, and certainly no algorithms performing random selection or sortition – and where they could debate and decide on the main priorities. An elected PB Council would then work out the nuts and bolts. This partly overlaps with Hetland and Sunkara’s second principle, where they talk about creating spaces “to foster meaningful deliberation”. As they rightly observe, this “is how non-elites learn to govern themselves”, bringing working-class communities together across the divides of race, gender and language that often separate them. This is the essence of collective action, and it upends the isolation and atomisation that underpins most of our capitalist societies.

The fourth Porto Alegre principle was that (4) the PB process should be *self-regulating*. Its shape and procedures, its rules, would not be decided by anyone else or laid down in legislation by some other body. The assemblies and their elected council would work out the rules and keep changing them along the way as needed. There is at least a potential contradiction between this fundamental autonomy and the third principle our authors suggest for the new Mamdani administration. They talk about the need for a "deliberate design" to avoid the participatory space reproducing inequalities of confidence and political experience, or becoming dominated by existing activists.

These are issues that have drawn attention within our own process of launching Your Party. Certainly, most would agree on the importance of taking steps to make political spaces – in this case the assemblies of participatory democracy – as accessible as possible, in relation to physical accessibility, child care, procedures, language, tone and so on. The problem is that these needs have also been used to justify a 'deliberate design' drawn up somewhere else according to criteria decided by no-one quite knows who. And this in turn raises suspicions of algorithms shaping representative samples, sortition and digital plebiscites. Such instruments, whose roots lie more in marketing and management studies, tend to reproduce the prevailing isolation of individuals, rather than foster the kinds of collective action that alone can begin to reverse the relations of power.

It is worth remembering that most of the core group that 'invented' the Porto Alegre experience saw themselves as revolutionary socialists. They were members of the *Democracia Socialista* current in the Workers Party (PT), which was then the Brazilian section of the Fourth International. When they suddenly found themselves at the head of the city hall administration in a medium-sized state capital, they asked themselves how they could use this to move towards a

revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state. And the first experience they turned to for possible inspiration was the Paris Commune.

Their conception of the participatory budget, and more broadly of direct, assembly-based democracy, was developed with this in mind. As a co-thinker of theirs in France, Catherine Samary, later put it, participatory democracy can be revolutionary if it permanently challenges the existing structures of the bourgeois state. If it ceases to challenge them, if it merely complements or 'extends' the processes of existing representative democracy, it becomes merely reformist and can easily be co-opted as a block to radical change and in effect a prop for the status quo.

Anyone who has endured a local council's 'community engagement' session already knows where this leads: sticky notes on flip charts, facilitators with lanyards, and outcomes decided months ago by officers now nodding gravely at your contributions. That is why, not long after the successes of the early, radical participatory budget in Porto Alegre, the World Bank was soon promoting a watered-down, consultative version as a pillar of 'good governance' in the Global South. Although the situation in New York today may be very different, similar dilemmas, and dangers, are likely face any attempts by the new mayor to open up popular assemblies and spaces for participatory democracy. We should pay close attention because, with a bit of luck, we might later have to deal with parallel problems here in Glasgow.

Iain Bruce is a member of Your Party in Glasgow North and the author of 'The Porto Alegre Alternative: direct democracy in action'

Stop the War's Ukraine Betrayal: When 'Anti-Imperialism' Becomes Apologetics for Empire

The contradiction is not subtle. It screams from every Stop the War Coalition meeting, every leaflet, every carefully calibrated press release. When Israel bombards Gaza, the StWC mobilises hundreds of thousands, demands comprehensive sanctions, calls for arms embargoes, and platforms the Palestinian Ambassador as the authentic voice of his people's resistance. When Russia bombards Ukraine, the same Coalition organises static demonstrations of a few hundred, opposes sanctions as 'collective punishment,' demands an end to arms supplies, and platforms a marginal pacifist representing perhaps a dozen Ukrainians as the authentic voice of their people's desire for surrender.

This is not inconsistency. It is consistency of a particularly cynical kind.

The Political Roots of the Betrayal

Understanding the StWC's position requires understanding its organisational DNA. The Coalition is not a pacifist organisation in any meaningful sense. It emerged in 2001 as a political vehicle jointly controlled by the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party of Britain, with the strategic

orientation shaped by figures like Lindsey German, Andrew Murray, and John Rees. Its founding premise was straightforward: the primary threat to world peace is American imperialism and its British junior partner. All other questions are subordinate to this axiom.

The Coalition's intellectual bankruptcy finds its clearest contemporary expression in figures like Chris Bambery, who served as the SWP's national organiser for years before departing. Writing in Counterfire in August 2025, Bambery argued that 'US-Russia peace talks would be a good plan' and dismissed those who support Ukrainian victory as believing in a 'pipedream.' He accused critics of wanting 'war to the last Ukrainian': a Kremlin talking point deployed without irony. Most revealing was his insistence that 'the war in Ukraine did not begin with Putin's criminal invasion' but with 'highly contested elections' in 2013. The provocation narrative in its purest form.

And the practical conclusion of this 'realism'? That the Ukrainian people should accept dismemberment because Chris Bambery has decided resistance is futile. That Putin should be brought 'in from the cold' while Ukrainian cities burn. This is not anti-imperialism. It is capitulation dressed in radical vocabulary.

The problem, of course, is that this axiom produces grotesque results when applied mechanically to every conflict. If the main enemy is always at home, then every conflict involving Western powers must be opposed from the Western side regardless of who is dying, who is conquering, who is being colonised. The Syrian revolutionaries crushed between Assad's barrel bombs and Russian airstrikes? Dismissed as NATO proxies. The Ukrainians resisting annexation? Cannon fodder for Washington's geopolitical games.

No, worse than dismissed. Actively denied the means of self-defence.

What ‘Stop the War’ Actually Means

The StWC’s 2023 AGM resolution states it plainly: opposition to ‘the Russian invasion of February 2022’ coupled with opposition to ‘the reckless policy of expanding NATO and US hegemony which preceded and to an extent provoked it.’ Notice the grammatical structure. The invasion gets three words of condemnation. NATO provocation gets an entire explanatory clause. The framing distributes culpability, transforming a war of colonial aggression into a shared responsibility, a tragedy with fault on all sides.

And what follows from this framing? The Coalition opposes arms transfers to Ukraine, arguing that weapons merely ‘protract’ the conflict. It opposes sanctions on Russia, arguing they constitute ‘collective punishment’ of ordinary Russians and fuel the cost-of-living crisis at home. It demands an immediate ceasefire: a robber’s peace that freezes Russian troops in occupied territory, rewards annexation, and broadcasts to every aspiring imperial aggressor that conquest works if you can outlast Western attention spans.

By opposing both military aid and economic sanctions, the StWC opposes every coercive measure available to pressure Russia. All that remains is ‘diplomacy,’ by which they mean Ukrainian capitulation dressed in the language of peace. Gilbert Achcar’s analysis in International Viewpoint demonstrates precisely how this works: Trump and Putin’s bilateral framework carves Ukraine up for their own imperialist interests, demanding significant portions of Ukrainian territory and resources without offering genuine security guarantees. The principle of ‘Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine’ means nothing to those who have already decided that Ukrainian resistance is a pipedream.

When Solidarity Becomes Selective

The contrast with Gaza could not be starker. Here the StWC deploys every tool it refuses Ukraine. Comprehensive sanctions? Essential. Arms embargo? Immediate. Economic isolation? The only non-violent mechanism to force compliance with international law. The ‘collective punishment’ argument deployed against Russian sanctions vanishes entirely. The concern about prolonging conflict through material support evaporates.

The StWC claims it cannot mobilise for Ukraine because the British public won’t march against Russian aggression. And yet: 400,000 people marched against Iraq in 2003. 800,000 have marched for Gaza since October 2023. The infrastructure is there: local groups, trade union affiliates, faith community liaisons. The capacity is proven. The Coalition’s choice is not incapacity but refusal. *And the Ukrainian trade unionists asking for solidarity? They receive invitations to send video messages that are never played.*

The defenders of this position have their arguments. They will tell you that sanctions on Russia serve inter-imperialist rivalry while BDS against Israel represents grassroots demand from the oppressed. They will tell you that arming Ukraine strengthens NATO while disarming Israel weakens settler colonialism. But notice what these arguments share: they reduce every question to the relationship between the conflict and American power. Ukrainian agency disappears. The forty million people fighting for national survival become merely instruments in a great power chess game.

Who Speaks for Ukraine?

Perhaps nothing reveals the bankruptcy of the StWC's position more clearly than its choice of Ukrainian voices. The Coalition claims to amplify the voices of victims. In practice, it exercises rigorous curation.

For Palestine, the StWC platforms Husam Zomlot, the Palestinian Ambassador to the UK, a figure representing the official national movement and articulating robust support for resistance. For Ukraine, the Coalition elevates Yurii Sheliazhenko, executive secretary of something called the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement. Sheliazhenko argues that Ukrainians should refuse to fight, that 'both sides' share blame for the violence. Investigative reports suggest his movement may consist of a handful of active members. He faces legal trouble in Ukraine for his stance, which the StWC frames as evidence of Zelensky's authoritarianism rather than as evidence that he represents approximately nobody.

This false pacifism is egocentric at its core, as the Fourth International's 2023 World Congress resolution noted: it prioritises opposing one's own national government over genuine solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Worse, it refuses to recognise the imperialist character of Putin's war, preferring instead to present it as a defensive response to NATO expansion. Sheliazhenko is its perfect avatar: a figure who tells Ukrainians to stop fighting while offering nothing that might actually stop Russian shells. No wonder Ukrainian and Russian socialists themselves reject this framing. They understand what the Western 'peace' left cannot bring itself to say: approving arms transfers to Ukraine is not warmongering. It is elementary solidarity.

Meanwhile, the Coalition has refused to platform representatives from the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine or the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine. Both

support the war effort. Both have called for international arms supplies. Both represent the organised working class of Ukraine, the social force that any socialist movement should prioritise. But their message is inconvenient, so they remain unheard at StWC events.

Apply the same standard to Palestine. If the StWC treated Gaza as it treats Ukraine, it would search for Palestinian pacifists who condemn Hamas and call for immediate surrender to stop the bombing. It would platform them as the authentic voice of the Palestinian people. It would dismiss the mainstream national movement as proxies for regional powers. The absurdity is obvious.

The Labour Movement Fractures

The StWC's Ukraine position has produced a significant split in the British trade union movement. Unlike Iraq or Gaza, where unions were generally united, Ukraine has created genuine contestation.

The GMB, ASLEF, and NUM have passed motions supporting arms for Ukraine and affiliating with the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. They view the war as a fight against fascism and support the right of self-defence. In 2024, the University and College Union congress voted to overturn a previous StWC-aligned position, backing Ukrainian resistance instead. This is significant. The StWC's influence on Ukraine is waning within organised labour even as its influence on Gaza remains hegemonic.

The debates at TUC congress have been fierce. Delegates accuse the leadership of applying double standards: supporting arms for Ukraine while demanding an embargo for Israel, or opposing arms for Ukraine while supporting sanctions on Israel. And the TUC leadership's response to these contradictions? Procedural manoeuvres to avoid votes. The contradiction cannot be

resolved because it is structural. It flows from a framework that categorises conflicts by their relationship to Washington rather than by the rights of the peoples involved.

What Genuine Internationalism Requires

The Fourth International has maintained a different position. We support Ukraine's right to self-determination and its material capacity to exercise that right, including through weapons supplies. Not because we endorse NATO's geopolitical strategies, but because we recognise that national liberation struggles do not wait for ideologically pure sponsors. The Ukrainian people have the right to defend themselves with whatever weapons are available.

This does not mean uncritical support for the Zelensky government. Ukrainian workers, trade unionists, feminists, and social movements are fighting on two fronts: against Russian invasion and against their own government's neoliberal policies. Our solidarity must support their independent organising, not subordinate them to either Russian imperialism or Western geopolitical interests.

We reject the campist logic that treats Russia as part of an 'anti-imperialist' bloc merely because it opposes the United States. Putin's vision of 'multipolarity' is not a progressive alternative but one where only a limited number of large states will have any voice in the international arena: competing capitalist authoritarianisms carving up spheres of influence. This reasoning led the StWC to silence over Assad's barrel bombs. It leads them now to effective solidarity with Putin's colonial war. The enemy of my enemy is not my friend when that enemy is crushing another people under tanks.

Ernest Mandel emphasised throughout his work that socialist

internationalism means supporting the material interests of workers and oppressed peoples everywhere, not aligning with lesser imperial powers against greater ones. The StWC has abandoned this tradition. It has become, in practice, an organisation that mobilises against Western-backed violence while demobilising against violence that Washington opposes.

The Gatekeepers

The Stop the War Coalition remains the gatekeeper of mass anti-war protest in Britain. It has the infrastructure, the union affiliations, the historical credibility from 2003. But its gatekeeping is highly selective. The gates open wide for those fighting US allies. They remain firmly shut for those fighting US rivals.

This is not anti-imperialism. It is campism dressed in anti-imperialist clothing. It measures every struggle not by the rights of the peoples involved but by its relationship to American hegemony. And in Ukraine, that measurement has led to a position functionally indistinguishable from calling for Ukrainian defeat.

Chris Bambery offers the quiet part out loud: bilateral US-Russia negotiations, Ukrainian 'realism' about territorial losses, an end to the 'pipedream' of victory, bringing Putin 'in from the cold.' He even celebrates Trump's nuclear diplomacy while Ukrainian cities burn. The StWC wraps the same message in more careful language, but the destination is identical. A robber's peace. Ukrainian dismemberment. And the message to every future aggressor that the Western left will provide ideological cover for conquest, so long as the conqueror is not aligned with Washington.

The Ukrainian working class deserves better from the British left. So do the Russian anti-war activists facing prison for opposing Putin's war. So do all of us who believe that

international solidarity means something more than tactical positioning against Washington.

The StWC had a choice. It chose wrong. The task now falls to others to build the genuine internationalist movement that both Ukraine and Palestine deserve.

Duncan Chapel, Red Mole Substack, 8 December 2025

COP 30: Entrenching the crisis of climate politics

As the dust settles after COP30 in Belém, the scale of the failure becomes impossible to ignore. The world is on a path toward catastrophic warming, ecological systems are collapsing, and millions across the Global South face annihilation, not in the distant future, but today. The world's political and economic elites arrived in the Amazon to negotiate when the 1.5°C target had already slipped out of reach, and they left with little more than symbolic gestures. No binding emissions cuts. No serious plan to phase out fossil fuels. No meaningful climate finance for adaptation. No accountability for the destruction already unleashed.

The gap between official international climate policy and the lived reality of a warming world has never been wider. In Belém, that gap became a chasm.

The world is heading towards roughly 2.8°C of warming by the end of the century. This is not a scenario compatible with human dignity – or even, for many, with life itself. Rising seas, extreme heat, drought, and flooding are eroding food security, displacing communities, and driving inequality to

historic heights. The economic costs of climate disasters are skyrocketing, but the social and human costs are immeasurable: lives lost, livelihoods shattered, ecosystems irreversibly damaged.

These worsening crises play out in a world shaped by neoliberal austerity and debt dependency. Countries battling climate shocks are forced to cut social spending, privatise public goods, and surrender sovereignty to creditors. Governments continue pouring billions into militaries, fossil fuel subsidies, and the enrichment of corporate elites. The current political economy accelerates both warming and war.

The growing irrelevance of the COP

COP30 offered no mechanisms for enforcement, no firm deadlines, and no clear pathways to keep warming below 1.5°C. Nor did it include a fossil-fuel phase-out; oil-producing nations blocked binding language, and the final deal focused on voluntary road maps instead. What it did offer was an expanded space for corporate actors, carbon traders, and mining interests seeking to greenwash extractivist projects.

What is staring society in the face – and what too few scientists are willing to acknowledge – is that the climate-crisis regime cannot be separated from the logic of capitalism. So-called “green transitions” simply open new arenas for profit while remaining embedded in the same global system of accumulation. Renewable energy may be expanding, but it does not replace fossil fuels; it merely adds to an energy expansion rather than driving a real transition.

Climate summits have become a “safety valve” for capital. They offer the illusion of action, while allowing the core exploitative relations to continue. For workers and communities already suffering climate breakdown, it is indisputable that the COP has failed them.

The Just Transition heist

COP 30 adopted the Belem Action Mechanism for a Global Just Transition (BAM) – a proposed new institutional arrangement under the UNFCCC designed to address the current fragmentation and inadequacy of global just transition efforts. Trade unionists and workers should have no illusions about this mechanism. It has no finances or concrete plans to protect workers and communities affected by energy and other decarbonising initiatives. There are no resources for a re-industrialisation in harmony with the protection of nature. So workers and other vulnerable sectors will simply be left behind. Words and policies in COP statements are a dime a dozen. Reality is harsher.

Why mass movements matter – and why institutions don't

If COP30 cannot deliver the mechanisms for decarbonisation or social protection, then the hope must lie in movements of people: workers, peasants, indigenous people, women, youth, and the urban poor. Outside of a global mass movement rooted in national realities, the necessary steps to confront the climate crisis will not occur. Yet such a movement cannot be built if it fails to address the immediate needs of the working classes and the poor. The fight for climate protection and ecological justice must therefore begin with the fight for life itself – for clean water, decent housing, jobs, food, and security against the elements.

Right-wing climate denialists exploit the desperation of the poor to drive a wedge between ordinary people and climate action. They present environmentalism as a threat to livelihoods rather than the path to survival. To win the majority, our movement must link ecological transformation with social justice. We must demand the redistribution of wealth and power away from the billionaire class, big tech,

and ruling elites who plunder the planet for profit.

By Brian Ashley, First Published in Amandla!, 25 November 2025

Brian Ashley is a member of Zabalaza for Socialism and serves on the Amandla! editorial collective

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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.

Subverta, 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 CO_2. 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 re-popularise 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 floated 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 Labour and the Greens (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 tut-tutting 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 calamitous 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.

Paul Murphy is an Eco-socialist TD for People Before Profit in Dublin South West and a member of RISE

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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. In the 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 lectures in 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 (and 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 'Speech from the Dock', 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 of 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 RISE 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 trans-inclusive feminism by a group of comrades from *Anti-Capitalist* 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 journalists. 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./Consortium Oaxaca- Mexico./Evita Movement-Argentina./Kurdistan Women's Movement in Abya Yala, Latin America./CTA autonomous- Argentina./Amazon Commune-Ecuador./Front of 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 women politicians-Ecuador./Networking-Ecuador./School Permanent PRAIS-Chile./Eloy Alfaro Plurinational Association-Ecuador./Commune PRO-Ecuador./Fundación Kapak-Ecuador./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 Viento Sur describes its failures. By the 1990s, it had become a "neoliberal force with progressive trappings," transforming into what critics called a "party-cartel" 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 Scottish Socialist Party 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' captures 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!

13 July 2025

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

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 far-reaching networks of friends and polycules, of our dumb in-jokes, 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?

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