

Labour Internationalist

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Who we are, What we stand for

We believe that the working class needs to rely on its own efforts, both at home and around the world, to defend its interests against a capitalist system that is determined to extract maximum profit regardless of the human and environmental cost.

We believe that the capitalist system, based on private ownership of the means of production, cannot be reformed and has to be abolished by means of a proletarian revolution that will introduce socialism.

We stand on the founding programme of the Fourth International, the *Transitional Programme*, which says in particular: "It is necessary to help the masses, in the process of their daily struggles, to find the bridge between their current demands and the programme of the socialist revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands which stem from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class, and invariably lead to the same conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

The working class's struggle against the capitalist system – on its own account as well as on behalf of all of the oppressed – needs to be united and based on class independence from capital and its national and international institutions.

This means defending the organisations which the workers have built, and helping the workers themselves to build new forms of organisation to carry out their struggle in ways which they decide on freely and which they control.

Often, this also means opposing those in the labour movement who ignore the mandate of their membership and co-operate with capitalism's plans, at the workplace, institutional or State level.

Labour Internationalist aims to be part of the fight against that process of integrating the working-class organisations into capitalism's plans.

Labour Internationalist therefore focuses on helping to advance the struggle by the working class in its own interests – locally, nationally and internationally.

Consistent with this view, *Labour Internationalist* defines itself as a forum of class struggle that is open to all individuals, groups and currents in the labour movement that are committed to political independence of the working class and to internationalism.

We need a workers' government that will fight for the specific demands of working people and the youth – Not for what we are told is possible within the limits of the capitalist system

EDITORIAL

Biden's recent European tour, which took him from the G7 meeting to the European Union and NATO, is highly significant.

He kept repeating that "*America is back*", his own version of Trump's "*America first*". During his tour, Biden made it clear that as far as US capitalism is concerned, it was about strengthening ties and ensuring that the major European powers maintain their unwavering submission to Washington.

In line with Trump's policy, he ordered the G7 summit to designate China as the main target and to support capitalism's offensive against state ownership in China. The G7's final communiqué went so far as to suggest that China is responsible for the global pandemic, calling for "*a Covid-19 Origins study, including (...) in China*", and warned Russia to "*stop its destabilising behaviour*".

In line with its mission, NATO faithfully hammered home the point, saying that the "*multifaceted threats [and] systemic competition from assertive and authoritarian powers*" such as China and Russia must be "*confronted*".

So it is pretty clear: "*America is back*", and in its name, Biden demands that its allies – especially Britain – fall in line. This is what the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world needs as it faces the crisis of the capitalist system, a crisis whose magnitude can be seen in the events in Palestine, Colombia, the Sahel, Chile and Peru, to name but the most recent.

Why did Biden need to tighten the screws? Because defending and promoting the US economy requires a further sharpening of international competition, even with its allies; but also because the screws are coming loose under the pressure of workers and peoples who are looking for ways and means to resist. Organised workers and oppressed peoples around the world are resisting against the same attacks on their basic democratic rights, their working and living conditions, and even on their very lives. They are facing the same attacks by the same capitalist system and "world order", implemented by governments of every political colour, including by those who traditionally claim to represent the interests of the workers, but who through their actions endorse capitalism's failed economic and political system.

The State of Israel's recent attacks on the Palestinian people in Gaza is nothing new. What is different this time is the united response by Arab and Jewish Israelis, rejecting the limits of what they are told is possible: the so-called "two-state solution". But what is also different is the scale of the anger and solidarity expressed by organised workers and activists for labour and democratic rights around the world, demonstrating once again that the class struggle against capitalism is international.

That resistance is being expressed here in the UK, where the crisis of the capitalist system is embodied

by the crisis of the Tory government and the British political institutions – including the Labour Party.

What happened in the UK on 6 May is another expression of this process. One important element was the Labour Party leadership's refusal to respect the result of the 2016 referendum, when large sectors of the working class rejected the call to vote Remain by the Labour Party and TUC leaderships and voted to leave both the European Union and its "free market" policies. Keir Starmer was one of the main organisers of a call for a second referendum by the LP, which was not resisted by then-party leader Jeremy Corbyn. This refusal to break with the EU, its institutions and its policies laid the foundation for Labour's "national unity" policy, which resulted in full support for the policy of a Tory government that has maintained the arsenal of anti-working-class provisions and regulations which had been put in place under the EU.

The decision of the Labour Party leadership to put the so-called "national interest" above the interests of the working class and youth is the key element of the workers' rejection of Labour on 6 May. A big part of Labour being defeated in Hartlepool and losing 327 council seats (and control of 8 local councils) was Starmer's failure to provide any opposition to the Tory government for the previous 15 months of the Covid-19 crisis, consistently siding with the capitalist institutions and turning his back on working people as they fought to survive; and even – as was the case with the teaching unions' refusal to re-open schools in unsafe health conditions – explicitly endorsing the government's attacks on organised workers. It is no accident that the Labour vote was strongest in areas where the local representation (e.g. Wales, Salford) was perceived to be responsive to what working people need.

It is this same process that recently resulted in a resounding defeat for the previous majority on UNISON's NEC, who had obediently supported the "national interest" position advocated by Starmer and thus gave a free pass to the Tory government by opposing any effective struggle on trade union demands – and therefore supporting the implementation of EU policies in the UK after Brexit.

This shift in the majority – unprecedented since UNISON was founded in 1993 – is a first step towards class independence imposed by the membership, who have faced decades of privatisation, cuts in public spending and the resulting cuts in jobs and wages.

The Time for Real Change campaign, which played a major role in the victory over a leadership taking orders from Starmer/Johnson and not from the membership, said in a statement: "*We are determined to change UNISON into a force that can protect and improve your terms and conditions at work.*"

This can only mean one thing: that the newly-elected NEC now stops aligning itself with what is needed by

finance capital and the bosses, and instead organises the fight for the satisfaction of the specific demands drawn up by the workers themselves.

From this point of view, one of the first tests will be the position taken by UNISON's new NEC on a demand as simple and clear as "no cuts in local budgets, whatever they are and wherever they come from".

In other words, it's about getting back to what a trade union is all about: fighting for what working people need, not what they are told is possible within the limits of the capitalist system.

And this is true for all organisations claiming to represent the working class.

Working people and youth in the UK, like working people and youth around the world, are refusing to pay the price for capitalism's crisis. The nurses who – together with their union, the RCN – are demanding an immediate wage increase of 12.5 percent, are right. The bus drivers at Go North West (Manchester), the

Thurrock refuse collectors, the Goodlord workers and so many others fighting against "fire and rehire" are right. And they are all right to expect their organisations to fight for their demands fully, without concessions.

What we need is a workers' government whose first action will be to satisfy the needs expressed by working people and the youth.

This requires fighting in all parts of the labour movement across the country – in Labour Party branches and CLPs, in LP-affiliated union branches, in local Trades Councils and community campaigns – for a government that serves the interests of the majority, a government that breaks with the capitalist system which can only serve the interests of a privileged minority.

This is what *Labour Internationalist* intends to be part of.

28 June

SNAPSHOTS OF THE CRISIS

3 May: Creeping privatisation of NHS continues

Labour Party analysis of NHS England's annual reports and summarised accounts shows that more than £96 billion of NHS funding has gone to non-NHS providers of care over the last decade, including private firms such as Virgin Care. Since the researchers found no available figures for 2011-12 and 2012-13, the real total for the decade is well over £100 billion. The amount of money flowing out of the NHS in England (covering planned operations, CT and other diagnostic scans, and community services such as district nursing) was £14.4 billion last year, representing 11.7 percent of the NHS's total operating budget for 2019-20, and a 72 percent increase compared to £8.4 billion in 2010. Without an increase in government funding to the NHS, the 4.7 million-strong waiting list of patients needing hospital treatment (mainly surgery) will force NHS England to use the private sector even more.

12 May: Private contractors in "test and trace" system evading NI contributions

In an article for *The Guardian*, Allyson Pollock, Clinical Professor

of Public Health at Newcastle University, exposes the evasion of employer contributions by the government's privatised "test and trace" system through the use of payroll companies or "mini-umbrella companies". She explains that the payslips of staff working as call handlers on contact tracing, in testing sites and in the Lighthouse laboratory in Milton Keynes state that they are being paid by companies they have never heard of, and every few months, or even weeks, they are shunted on to a new company's payroll. This process is designed to exploit a tax break known as "employment allowance", a discount on the employer NI contributions worth £4,000 per year for each staff member. As soon as the allowance is used up, staff are moved to a new mini-umbrella company. Meanwhile, as a result of being shifted between companies, workers face difficulties accruing holiday pay and may remain on an emergency tax code, meaning tax is overpaid and has to be reclaimed.

15 May: Estimated global Covid-19 death-toll is 7-13 million

Having conducted modelling based on available data for confirmed Covid-19 deaths, historic excess death rates and demographic

changes, *The Economist* estimates that there have been between 7 million and 13 million excess deaths worldwide during the pandemic. This study confirms that there is a significant worldwide gap between reported Covid-19 deaths and the number of excess deaths, most likely due to the fact that the official data tend to undercount deaths due to a lack of reporting and testing, especially in rural areas. In Azania/South Africa, for example, the official death-toll (i.e. where the deceased had a Covid-19 test and the death certificate states Covid-19 as the cause) is 55,000 deaths since 27 March 2020, but during the 12 months to 8 May 2021, the country saw 158,499 excess deaths. Public-health officials feel confident that 85-95 percent of those deaths were caused by the Covid-19 virus, almost three times the official number. According to the same modelling, around 1 million people are estimated to have died from Covid-19 in India so far, four times the official national death-toll of 258,000.

19 May: Government guarantees private profits from railways

The government publishes a white paper on the future of the railways. It plans to create a new public body

("Great British Railways") that will have control of rail infrastructure, planning and services, with private franchises replaced by contracts. With the main commercial risks taken on by the new public body, the private companies will just get paid for running the trains, which means they will only need to control their operating costs. In order to maximise profits, their only aim will therefore be to reduce costs, beginning with the cost of labour.

On 15 June, the four rail unions (RMT, ASLEF, TSSA and Unite) endorse an Enabling Framework Agreement (EFA) with Network Rail and the train operating companies (TOCs) within the framework of the government's Rail Industry Recovery Group (RIRG), aimed at cutting rail services and axing thousands of jobs to save up to £2 billion a year. The parties agree to "address efficiency and cost savings" as part of the government's plan to "rebuild and modernise" the railways, and "specifically address the workforce reforms and staff cost challenges the rail industry is facing". RMT General Secretary Mick Cash and TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes say they will not accept compulsory redundancies or changes to pension rights. However, the EFA provides for a voluntary redundancy scheme to encourage thousands to leave the industry. Also, under the EFA the current two-year pay-freeze for all but the lowest-paid rail workers (on £24,000 or less) is set to be extended, and sources have said the agreement effectively rules out strikes during 2021, while TOCs and Network Rail try to find cost savings. Detailed proposals at local levels will be drawn up by the end of October.

22 May: Government suppresses data on new Delta variant in schools

UNISON, teachers and scientists express their concern after data on the spread of the new Delta variant in schools is cut from a Public Health England report published on 13 May, just days before the

government lifts the rule on face coverings in schools.

On 8 June, with infections on the rise and new figures showing Covid-related absence up among schoolchildren in England, the National Education Union, UNISON, the GMB and Unite issue a joint statement demanding the immediate reintroduction of face coverings for students and staff in all areas of secondary schools, including classrooms.

24 May: More than 8,700 people died after catching Covid-19 in hospital

The Guardian publishes its analysis of data it obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from 81 of England's 126 acute hospital NHS trusts. These show that 32,307 people have probably or definitely contracted the disease while in hospital since March 2020, and 8,747 of them died. Forty-five NHS trusts refused to disclose their death figures, despite their legal obligation to do so under the FOIA. NHS leaders and senior doctors have long claimed that hospitals have struggled to stop Covid-19 from spreading because of shortages of single rooms, a lack of PPE and an inability to test staff and patients early in the pandemic.

25 May: Sainsbury's threaten 700 Argos workers with "fire and rehire"

More than 700 long-term office workers employed by Argos, which is now owned by Sainsbury's, are given the "choice" of accepting massive cuts to their pay and conditions or losing their jobs, under the company's "fire and rehire" plans. Under Sainsbury's plans, the affected Argos staff – spread across a variety of roles including payroll, IT, training, planning and management, and therefore not benefitting from a collective bargaining agreement – will be required to pay increased pension contributions, lose four days holiday a year, receive a lower level of death-in-service and lose car allowance and other benefits. Unite estimates that the affected workers will each lose between £1,600 and £3,600 a year.

26 May: Uber agrees to recognise GMB, but pay not covered by collective bargaining

Uber agrees to recognise the GMB for its 70,000 private hire drivers in the UK, but the agreement does not apply to around 30,000 delivery riders for the Uber Eats food service. Drivers will now be able to join the GMB to take part in collective bargaining on driver issues and concerns such as health & safety and pensions, but – crucially – not on pay.

31 May: Official travel data exposes government's lies over "secure borders"

While the government talks up its so-called "Freedom Day" of lifting its Covid restrictions on 21 June (subsequently postponed to 19 July), the Home Office releases data which show that more than 12 million people have flown into the UK since the start of the lockdown in March 2020, with 1.59 million people entering the country between January and April 2021 – while the UK's borders were supposed to be heavily restricted.

2 June: Employers can no longer mistreat staff who take part in industrial action

In a case brought by UNISON and care worker Fiona Mercer against the Alternative Futures Group, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) rules that disciplinary action against workers who go on strike will be unlawful. UK law had previously prevented employers from sacking staff involved in strike action or other workplace disputes, but not from disciplining or making life difficult for them. The EAT judges that the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 was not compliant with international human rights law, and has added wording to the 1992 Act so that striking workers are now protected.

11 June: Union grassroots express their resistance

In the election of UNISON's new National Executive Committee, the "Time for Real Change" slate and independent left candidates win 42

of 68 seats. This defeat for UNISON's right-wing leadership is an expression of resistance by grassroots union members to their leadership's alignment with Starmer's position of pandering to the Tory government. The new NEC's immediate task is to ensure that UNISON fights for what its members' need, not to settle for what is "possible".

This resistance is echoed in the results of the survey of members launched by the BFAWU ahead of its conference, held on 7-12 June: 53 percent of BFAWU members believe that the union should no longer be affiliated to the Labour Party, with only 7 percent feeling strongly that Labour today represents their values or their interests. In a statement dated 12 June, the BFAWU underlined the fact that 56 percent of members believed the union should maintain some kind of political link, saying: *"Our survey shows that our members are in favour of a political affiliation, it is just not the current Labour Party."*

Another expression of grassroots resistance is the large number of branch nominations received by Howard Beckett in the process to elect Unite's next General Secretary. In contrast with candidates Steve Turner and Sharon Graham, Beckett has been vocal in exposing the Starmer leadership's consistent betrayal of working-class interests during the pandemic. Following Beckett's withdrawal from the election in favour of Turner, it is still an open question whether Unite members will elect a General Secretary who will hold the Starmer leadership to account.

25 June: Only 14 percent of misleading lateral-flow tests accounted for

The latest National Audit Office (NAO) report on the government's privately-run "test and trace" system (falsely branded "NHS Test and Trace") says that it is still struggling with some *"fundamental parts"* of its role. Covering November 2020 to April 2021, the

NAO report says specifically that results from only 14 percent of the 691 million lateral-flow tests distributed to people across England (with the aim of helping people to return to workplaces) had been registered, meaning almost 600 million were unaccounted for. Meanwhile, the fierce criticism of the quick-result test by UK health experts is echoed by the US Food and Drug Agency (FDA), which on 11 June released a scathing review of the rapid test on which the UK government has based its multibillion-pound "Operation Moonshot" mass-testing programme. The FDA, which has not authorised the use of the test in the US, said that the performance of the test had not been established, presenting a risk to health, and that the tests should be thrown in the bin or returned to the California-based manufacturer Innova.

30 June: Life expectancy falls further in poorer parts of country

A report by Michael Marmot, Director of the UCL Institute for Health Equity and an eminent public health expert, reveals that the Covid-19 death rate in Greater Manchester was 25 percent higher than the England average during the year to March 2021, leading to *"jaw-dropping"* falls in life expectancy and widening social and health inequalities across the region over the past year. Marmot says that the deteriorating health equalities picture in the region and across similarly deprived areas of the country was a result of longstanding, avoidable socio-economic inequities and ethnic disadvantage, exacerbated by a decade of spending cuts and amplified by Covid-19 and the effect of prolonged lockdowns.

5 July: Lifting of restrictions driven by the need for profit, not science

At a press conference, Johnson says – not for the first time – that people will just have to put up with more *"inevitable"* Covid-19 deaths after his government lifts all current

restrictions: *"As we predicted in the roadmap, we're seeing cases rise fairly rapidly – and there could be 50,000 cases detected per day by the 19th and again as we predicted, we're seeing rising hospital admissions and we must reconcile ourselves sadly to more deaths from Covid."*

Condemning the government's *"neglectful and reckless decision-making"*, NEU Joint General Secretary Mary Bousted said: *"Schools and colleges are doing everything they can to keep young people and the wider community safe. We must seriously question the wisdom of the government's decision to take away so many safety measures. These mitigations are being removed at a time when cases are rising, school outbreaks are at the highest level all year and rising sharply, and children remain unvaccinated and at risk of transmitting the virus and suffering long Covid themselves."*

Over the following week, more and more scientists, health experts and officials of a wide range of organisations warn against the government's stated course of action, saying it goes against basic common sense as well as clear indications that more variants would be likely to emerge. Some claim that the new policy seems to be to allow new infections on top of vaccinations so that the country could reach *"herd immunity"*. In a press article, Dr Deepti Gurdasani, a clinical epidemiologist and Senior Lecturer in Machine Learning at Queen Mary University of London, says: *"The impact of these policies will be felt most by people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, marginalised or young. Herd immunity by infection is an active choice being made here. One that will lead to thousands of our young people becoming disabled, with future impacts we don't even fully understand. At a point in time when safe and effective vaccines are available for most. Why?"* Our answer: the government is prioritising capitalist profits over the health needs of the population.

NEWS FROM THE PICKET LINE

Questions still remain over “huge victory” at Go North West

When bus drivers (Unite members) at Go North West in Manchester voted in a mass meeting on 17 May to end their 11-week strike against the company’s attempt to “fire and rehire” them, their union declared this a “*huge victory*”. High-level negotiations in London with Go North West’s parent company, the Go Ahead Group, had resulted in an agreement whereby – according to Unite – the company will never use “fire and rehire” in any form.

The problem is that the union recommended a return to work by the 400 drivers without giving them the details of the agreement, apart from the headline withdrawal of “fire and rehire”. Three weeks later, they still didn’t know, with the Unite reps telling their members that aspects of the agreement which drivers found unacceptable would be taken up by the union when they returned to work – not exactly a winning tactic.

It gradually emerged that concessions had been made by Unite over rotas (imposed flexibility) and reduced sickness pay, without other concerns (such as low basic pay and a lack of radios on some buses) being addressed. The net result is that the drivers, who took determined and united strike action for many weeks against the employer’s diktats, are now worse off, and the company has succeeded in cutting its costs at the workers’ expense. A huge victory?

United strike action by BFAWU and Unite members wins pay rise at Hovis

On 24 May, Hovis workers (BFAWU and Unite members) in Belfast voted to accept an improved pay offer from management and end their 11-day strike. The deal includes an 8 percent pay increase over two years, with the first increase backdated to January 2021.

Unite Regional Officer Sean McKeever said: “*This result is a huge victory for these workers – a victory won through determined all-out strike action which extended to eleven days. I wish to congratulate our members and those of the Baker’s union for their stand and their unity in pursuit of the demand for a fair pay increase; this demonstrates the benefit of collective organisation and a preparedness to take militant industrial action.*”

Nurses get training to mobilise for strike action

In early May, up to 25,000 nurses began training to help the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) force the government to improve its “*pitiful*” 1 percent NHS pay offer.

Dave Dawes, Chair of the RCN’s ruling council, said that the six-week activist course will help nurses channel the “*anger and frustration*” they feel into a mass mobilisation, and that they will help rouse the RCN’s 475,000-strong membership to vote in a ballot and undertake local campaigns to win public support. He added: “*If we are going to be balloting for industrial action later this year, which looks increasingly likely, this training will make a huge difference in what the turnout of the ballot will be. (...). No nurse wants to do industrial action. But if you’re going to do it and successfully, you*

need to have the majority of the workforce on your side and you need to have the majority of the public understanding what this is about.”

“A Labour-controlled council should not engage organisations that use fire and rehire”

Around 40 people joined a UNISON protest rally on 22 June outside the construction site of the new £73 million Aquatic Centre in Sandwell (West Midlands), being built for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The rally was called to highlight the “fire and rehire” of all staff undertaken by Sandwell Leisure Trust, the organisation set to run the Aquatic Centre.



Tony Barnsley, branch secretary for Sandwell UNISON, said: “*Forcing staff to move away from national pay, terms and conditions is totally unjustifiable when a new £73 million centre is being built and Sandwell Leisure Trust has millions in the bank. UNISON members will be striking again on 25 June (...). A Labour-controlled council should not engage organisations that use “fire and rehire” to run its leisure centres.*”

JDE coffee workers enter negotiations in “fire and rehire” dispute

Unite members at the Jacobs Douwe Egberts (JDE) coffee products plant in Banbury facing “fire and rehire”, who had voted by an 87 percent majority for industrial action, began a three-day strike on 26 May. It followed two previous 24-hour strikes, protests and an overtime ban since 1 May. JDE wants to replace the current final salary pension scheme with an inferior defined contribution scheme, with some workers losing up to £12,000 a year; the company had said that employees who didn’t sign up by 17 May to the new contracts would be issued with 12 weeks’ notice, effective from 7 June.

On 2 June, JDE issued “Section 188” notices (which enable an employer to fire and reinstate employees on worse terms and conditions) to workers refusing to sign new contracts, a move described by Unite as “*corporate gangsterism*”.

On 25 June, Unite announced it was entering “*two weeks of intensive talks in a bid to resolve the ‘fire and rehire’ dispute*”, during which the planned industrial action would be suspended and the workers would work normally. Meanwhile, JDE has agreed to push back the implementation of “fire and rehire” plans affecting the 291 employees until 13 September.

OPEN FORUM

The results of the various elections on 6 May and the by-elections in Hartlepool, Chesham & Amersham and Batley & Spen have demonstrated that the Labour Party is fast approaching a fork in the road that potentially will transform the political landscape in the UK.

How will the working class express its demands at the political/electoral level in the future?

We publish below three initial contributions to the debate on this question.

We invite our readers to tell us what they think.

Labour Internationalist

The 6 May local election results and aftermath

By Stefan Cholewka, GMATUC Secretary (personal capacity)

Starmer knows how to lose voters and fail to influence people. Just a day after his humiliating defeat in the Hartlepool by-election, his decision to sack Angela Rayner opened a new civil war within the party. His panicky and ill-timed move managed to overshadow a series of mayor results which played much better for Labour, thus ensuring the takeaway from the disastrous overall election results would be all about defeat and division. Only a truly forensic legal mind could achieve such a double-whammy.

Keir's knifework, plus leaks that even the loyal Shadow Cabinet members Anneliese Dodds and Lisa Nandy would be allegedly demoted or sacked in favour of Jess Phillips and Wes Streeting, tells you that the unreconstructed Blairites are in the driving seat and want war with the left. Peter Mandelson (and who thought it was a clever move to involve him in the Hartlepool election?) made this clear, speaking just after the result: to blame were Covid-19 and Corbyn, and that Labour had only been successful under Tony Blair. The uncomfortable facts are that Labour votes in Hartlepool fell from their level under Corbyn, and that a *Channel 4 News* poll showed Starmer as the most frequent reason given for not voting Labour. If anyone should take responsibility for this loss (and the loss of hundreds of council seats) it should be the leader.

Instead, he's turning on everyone else in a move which shows how weak and despicable he is. I have little time for Angela Rayner, who has been part of the witch-hunting of the left in the past year, but it is ludicrous to blame her for this. Starmer has spent the best part of a year agreeing with Johnson, offering time and time again to work with the Tories during the pandemic, voting with them, or abstaining to allow Tory policy through. Johnson's government has presided over 151,533 coronavirus deaths, massive scandals over Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) contracts, cronyism and sleaze. The Tories did not prepare for a pandemic crisis despite the Cygnus warning before the pandemic.

They were taken by surprise. There was no PPE, infected patients were transferred to care homes, where thousands of the elderly were allowed needlessly to die, and when, in a show of action, seven super Nightingale Hospitals were built, they were shut down and never used, since all the NHS staff that would have worked in them had been sacked. All that money was wasted.

The impact of Covid-19 was to obliterate the economy, and the working-class was plunged into abject poverty. "Fire and rehire" has become rife – bosses are given the green light to force the workforce onto inferior contracts or face the sack.

Food banks, starving children, millions of unemployed, mass debt, evictions and homelessness are now the norm. Starmer's response to this crisis has been to launch a national campaign that Johnson did not pay for the wallpaper in his Downing Street flat – not a burning issue for the working class! His refusal to champion the millions of people that were destroyed by the crisis and to take Johnson to task for the massive debt that the Tories dumped onto the people has led directly to the Hartlepool disaster for Labour. Conservative candidate Jill Mortimer won the seat by almost 7,000 votes and a 16 percent swing from Labour. Shadow Labour Minister Steve Reed said the result was "*absolutely shattering*". These results must be used to smash Labour's right wing.

To rub salt into the wound, the Tories have also won control of councils in Northumberland, Harlow, Redditch, Dudley and Nuneaton & Bedworth. It is obvious that Keir Starmer is a disaster for Labour, and that is unlikely to change. The Labour leadership's fixation on winning back "red wall" voters has ended in failure. The obsession with flags in Hartlepool – to the extent of putting out a St George's Day leaflet – clearly failed. Right-wing flag-wavers preferred the real thing, and left-wingers were turned off by it.

When people in the north east and elsewhere say that they feel patronised and ignored by Labour, they are right. There was a big Labour abstention in many

areas and very low turnouts for votes – this is partly explained by traditional Labour voters being disillusioned, but also by many on the left refusing to vote for Starmer. Labour won in London, but the Tories’ Shaun Bailey ran Sadiq Khan quite close. Unlike most of the other incumbent mayors, he didn’t increase his majority. Some of the opposition to Khan is clearly racist, but much of it is because he does little, tacks to the right, and does not lead big campaigns against Tory attacks – most noticeably over Transport for London.

The Tories’ success in the north east and west Midlands should be of serious concern to Labour, because it is clear that in those areas particularly, Labour voters do have somewhere else to go – some

are prepared to vote Tory, but still more just go on strike and won’t vote. Who can blame them, given that Labour is not offering them anything? Where Labour was more successful – especially in Greater Manchester and Wales – the candidates had a high profile and had been identified – in however limited a way – with standing up to the government.

Andy Burnham in Manchester made the point that he won all the “red wall” seats in Greater Manchester which elected Tory MPs in 2019, such as Leigh and Bury. Labour won similar seats in north Wales. Maybe this has something to do with visibly putting forward arguments and challenging the government over Covid-19.

10 May 2021

Just who does the Labour Party stand for these days?

By John Sweeney

In 2017, the Labour Party fought a General Election campaign around a manifesto that rejected the economics and politics of austerity. Labour’s strategy was encapsulated in the slogan “For the Many, not the Few”, at time Jeremy Corbyn was still the leader. He and Labour were committed to honouring the 2016 EU referendum result. The essential difference between 2017 and 2019 was the about-turn on respecting the 2016 that result. In 2017, the party gave a manifesto pledge that it intended to honour the 2016 referendum vote, and achieved the greatest post-war swing since 1945.

In early 2019, under pressure from a Shadow Cabinet filled almost entirely with pro-EU MP’s, Jeremy Corbyn capitulated and gave in to repeated demands for a second referendum. From that moment onwards, Labour made it clear they were ready to betray the millions of working-class men and women who had voted to leave the EU.

This naked attack on democracy was in contempt of an electorate that had voted by a majority of 1,269,501 to leave the EU. The result of this was the working class who had voted to leave felt both disenfranchised and betrayed. Labour lost the 2019 general election because it dismissed the voice of millions of working people, in order to placate the right-wing clique within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In the 2019 general election, Labour found itself in a position that can only be described as an oxymoron. It said it would try to secure a credible deal with EU, call for a second referendum, and would then actively campaign against the very deal they had negotiated. This ludicrous pronouncement was treated with the contempt it deserved, and led to the Conservatives securing a landslide victory.

Moving forward to 2021 and the Hartlepool by-election (a seat which voted overwhelmingly to leave

the EU), such was the mistrust of Labour that it lost a seat it had held for 57 years, with a 16-percent swing to the Conservative Party. This was compounded with the loss of Pendle, Maidstone, Cornwall, Nottinghamshire, Basildon, Northumberland, Dudley, and Nuneaton & Bedworth councils from “no overall control”. All the above are a consequence of Labour’s position on the EU. Many fear that if Labour is ever re-elected, it would seek to re-join the EU. “Remain” is finished, and there is every indication it might take the Labour Party with it.

If Labour is to win back the support of working people, particularly in those regions that were taken for granted, it must face up to some harsh realities. This means recognising that “Leave” won in 2016, it won the Brexit general election in 2021 under the slogan “Let’s get Brexit done”.

Starmer has deserted many voters who were inspired to vote Labour in 2017. Starmer is doing even worse than Labour did in 2019. Just who does the Labour Party stand for these days? Here is a provisional and incomplete list of people and groups abandoned by Starmer’s Labour:

- The working classes in the former “red wall” seats. MPs from these constituencies warned that Labour’s Brexit policy at the last general election risked catastrophe. They were ignored. This policy was largely crafted by Starmer and manoeuvred through Conference by the party’s right wing.
- Many trade unions and trade unionists in the wider labour movement of which the Labour Party is only one section. Some are sufficiently annoyed to withdraw funding. Unite, Labour’s biggest union contributor, has not paid anything for around a year.
- The ethnic communities. Labour members in Kensington, close to Grenfell, were told that if

they invited a Black activist to talk without first being vetted by the Labour Party's central office, there would be wholesale suspensions. Some Black members will no longer campaign for Starmer's party, because they feel that their interests and concerns and the discrimination against them are no longer taken seriously.

- The young. They are excluded from political and economic arrangements stacked in favour of asset owners, investors and the managerial class. Now Starmer, a tool of the political establishment, has slammed the door in their faces again.
- Anyone who dares to dream of a better world. Starmer's Labour values tidiness and respectability above all. It is all about control. Under his leadership, socialism is an alien concept.

Without the above, what remains, what electoral coalition can be built without these groups? Starmer has led the party into catastrophe. No doubt, Blair, Mandelson and people like them will spin the narrative so that this is anyone's fault except their own.

For the last 16 years, the remnants of New Labour have shown quite clearly that they are incapable of either winning or opposing the Tories effectively. However, through ruthless sabotage, they are able to prevent any left-wing grouping within the Labour Party from winning.

The really important thing for the right wing is to be in control of the party. Starmer and his extremely authoritarian General Secretary can enforce the appearance of party unity by suspending or

threatening to suspend anyone who disagrees with them. So far, around one-third of Constituency Labour Parties have expressed a lack of confidence in the new leadership.

Just four short years ago, many people were able to hope that a better and fairer society might just be possible. That was the reason for the large rise in membership and the vote share in 2017. Then, it was snatched from them. That is the important issue in British politics today: the people who have been cheated and excluded for decades and for whom Starmer will do next to nothing.

It might – just might – be possible to still create a new electoral coalition of the excluded and the dispossessed. But not while the party's machinery is still dominated by people who want to return to the glory days of New Labour, with its strategy of "building on" Thatcherism and ignoring the working class because, in Mandelson's memorable phrase, "*they have nowhere else to go*".

Well, they've gone. Rather than asking why former Labour voters no longer vote for the party, the LP would learn more if it asked Labour voters why they still do.

The Labour Party seems to have forgotten why it came into being in the first place, and the causes it pursued back then are the same as now, because successive Tory governments have taken the UK back to almost where it was 100 years ago. Unless the party once again understands the meaning and essence of what it stands for, the Party of Labour, and above all, advances the interests of all working people, it may well become a footnote in the history books.

9 May 2021

Where next for the Labour Party under Starmer? Where next for the working class?

By John Caseman, Unite and Labour Party member

The poor election results of the Labour Party (LP) in last two months have highlighted the debate on what the Labour Party stands for today, who it actually represents, and the way forward for organised workers and working people in general.

Broadly speaking, two basic elements underpinned the LP results in the various elections (Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, local council and metro mayoral elections in England, and the Hartlepool parliamentary by-election on 6 May; the by-elections in Chesham & Amersham and Batley & Spen, on 13 May and 1 July respectively).

Firstly, the LP leadership's refusal to respect the result of the 2016 Brexit referendum, when many workers expressed their rejection of institutional politics and their wish for an end to anti-working-class austerity by voting to leave both the European Union and its

"free market" policies. This drove the more recent rejection of Labour by working-class voters at the ballot -box, or simply abstention.

Secondly, the LP paid the electoral price for its leadership's decision to put a so-called "national interest" above the interests and immediate needs of working people for the last 18 months; in practice, not presenting any opposition to the Tory government's measures, and barely taking any public position on issues that are important to working people and youth. According to various analysts of the 6 May results, where the LP was perceived to be genuinely listening to its historic voting base, its vote remained solid or even increased (e.g. Wales, Salford, Manchester, London).

Following on from its betrayal of the working-class Brexit vote and the empty space where LP policy and

opposition should be, it is now clear that the response of the Starmer leadership is to continue on its chosen course, which first and foremost involves continuing to purge from the LP those activists most involved in standing up for working-class interests, through open-ended suspension or simple expulsion.

In the months leading up to the 6 May elections, the LP apparatus suspended elected officials and entire CLPs around the country, also suspending and arbitrarily deselecting local election candidates who had been democratically selected by their parties, often replacing them with candidates who had been rejected by their local parties or even deselected as councillors. This prevented any effective organisation of local election campaigns in those areas, and also resulted in tens of thousands of members either boycotting the party or leaving it altogether.

More recently, Labour's London Regional Office arbitrarily announced in early June that the London Regional conference would be brought forward from November to the end of July. As stated in an email sent in late June by 26 London branch secretaries to Greater London Labour Party Regional Director Amy Fodé, in practice (given notice periods and deadlines) this move disenfranchises 96 percent of the London membership from taking any position that would be addressed by the regional conference – thereby giving a free hand to anyone who wants to push through rule changes or policies that would likely be rejected in a genuinely representative vote.

Another recent development is the expulsion of the Vice-chair of Truro and Falmouth CLP explicitly for membership of Socialist Appeal, despite this grouping operating within the LP on the same basis as internal right-wing pressure groups like Labour First and Progress – which face no equivalent threat of expulsion.

The response of the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs (for instance, during its online "Rally for Socialism" on 12 May) has been: "*Stay in the party and fight, carry on fighting for socialist policies*". But how are activists supposed to fight, when the party apparatus has torn up the rule book and is trampling on basic party democracy, and in practice is preventing dissenting members from attending party meetings and gagging them when they do attend?

This begs the question: what is the Starmer leadership's course designed to achieve in terms of party democracy and organisation? There are several elements that need further consideration.

A relatively minor element – which attracts far more importance in the mainstream media, focused as it is on the "optics" of institutional party politics – is the personal aspect of the Labour Party leadership's failures. Starmer is a barrister who only became an MP in 2015, displaying little political nous and certainly no affinity with what drives people to become labour activists. Despite being then-party leader Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Minister for Brexit, Starmer was one of the main organisers of the call for a second referendum by the LP, which was not

resisted by Corbyn. By betraying Labour-supporting Leave voters, Starmer himself therefore played a big part in preparing the ground for the 2019 general election defeat. He also betrayed Corbyn personally in July 2016, and lied to the party members in order to get elected party leader in 2020.

But Starmer's personal shortcomings are only important in terms of the political vacuum they create. Through his actions – the Rayner episode; the hasty post-6 May reshuffle after telling the BBC on 4 May that he "takes full responsibility for everything the Labour Party does under his leadership"; declaring the result of the Batley & Spen by-election "*a fantastic victory*", when Labour lost 41 percent of its support overall and alienated most of the local Muslim Labour voters – Starmer has worsened the balance of forces against him.



This explains the re-appearance of Blair and Mandelson after 6 May. When Blair very publicly called for a "*total deconstruction and reconstruction of the LP*" (*New Statesman*, 11 May), he was providing Starmer with a political life-raft (for now...) and at the same time insuring against Starmer's personal weakness and weak political position in a bid to complete the New Labour project: break the LP-trade union link, replace union funding with funding by rich individual donors and big business, place policy-making exclusively in the hands of the party apparatus, and align the party more closely with capitalism's needs (proving to the Establishment that the Labour leader will be "a safe pair of hands").

We are already seeing evidence of this: two days after the "fantastic victory" in Batley & Spen, Labour unveiled its "new post-Brexit economic vision for the UK" with a "strongly patriotic" focus on domestic production and trade. Having briefed all the mainstream media on this "*major new policy*", the only interview given by Starmer's new Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves was to the Tory-supporting *Sunday Telegraph*, which chose her following statement as its headline: "*Business is incredibly important to creating wealth, and we are on its side.*"

The revived focus on Blair and a New New Labour project overlaps with the Compass Labour project: follow through with the purge of any left-wing element from the LP, regardless of the immediate electoral cost and loss of members, then pursue a German-style "grand coalition" strategy of

“progressive” anti-Tory electoral alliances with the Greens, LibDems and any other centrist element that is convenient for achieving governmental power...while serving the capitalists’ interests.

It is an open secret among MPs that Labour’s right wing believe Starmer is a dud who will never win a general election, and they plan to keep him in post until they can change the party’s leadership rules at the next LP Conference to ensure that one of their own succeeds him before a general election.

Meanwhile, as Starmer and his cabal pursue their course, they will necessarily create the conditions for splitting the LP, providing the political space for various proposals for new regroupments or new(ish) parties. The main characteristic of this new political landscape would therefore be fragmentation.

This begs the question of the role of the trade unions. The GMB and UNISON recently elected General Secretaries who are said to be prepared to accommodate the Starmer leadership on its chosen course, and Unite may follow suit. But, given the demonstrations of resistance by organised workers in recent months despite the LP leadership’s betrayals, their members may well have a different view, creating their own pressure on their own leaderships. Related to the question of the trade unions’ role in the LP is the party’s social composition. A detailed study conducted just after the June 2017 general election by the Party Members Project (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council) showed that 77 percent of LP members were classified as ABC1, i.e. upper or middle class, compared to a national average of 62 percent. They were also overwhelmingly white (96 percent) and old (56 percent over the age of 55, and

just 16 percent under the age of 34); although there was a healthy gender split and fairly even distribution around the country, with the exception of Scotland (only 5 percent). This reflects the gradual decline in trade union membership since its peak in 1979, but also the evolution of the LP since New Labour consciously weakened the LP-trade union link and discouraged trade union activism by maintaining and reinforcing Thatcher’s anti-trade union legislation.

So looking ahead, one crucial issue will be: how will the direct class struggle by grassroots union members be expressed at the political level? How might a radical transformation of the LP under Starmer (or his successor) affect this and the social composition of any splits/regroupments? And what about the electoral response of traditional Labour voters?

It would be easy to simply say: why should any worker or youth give a monkey’s toss about the LP’s internal machinations? It is certainly true that a Labour Party that remains part of the capitalist institutional political process (Lenin famously characterised the LP as a “*bourgeois workers’ party*”) will not provide a government that delivers what the workers and youth need.

So, at least part of the answer to that specific question is that right now, until and unless the working class has political representation that is independent of the capitalists, we need to address the fact that the LP leadership is at the very least turning its back on the working class, and at worst is actively planning and working to destroy the LP as the party of the organised working class.

INTERNATIONAL



FRANCE

Macron is in the ultra-minority; he has to go, and take his policies with him, right now!

Excerpts from a statement by the Democratic Independent Workers Party (POID) on the regional elections on 20 and 27 June, published in *IWC Newsletter* No.191, 2 July 2021

The second round of the regional and *département*-level elections (1) confirmed the first: Macron is in the ultra-minority. In the first round, his candidate lists received the votes of 3 percent of registered voters. In those places where they received enough votes to qualify for the second round, they finished last. If

democracy means majority rule, then the majority has spoken: “Out with Macron and his policies, right now, straight away!”

Looking beyond Macron, the institutional parties have all lost millions of votes compared to the previous election. (...)

Between the two rounds, the leaders of the institutional parties hammered out the same message: "Voters, get a grip, wake up, vote!". The result: the abstention rate was the same as in the first round. They were the ultra-minority on 20 June, ultra-minority they remained on 27 June.

But a majority expressed themselves "in the negative" on 20 and 27 June. By refusing to vote for Macron, the right and the far-right, this majority has tagged the government as being illegitimate, together with the pensions reform it wants to relaunch, its attack on unemployment insurance, and the job-cutting plans it is encouraging.

Made up of the vast majority of blue-collar workers, white-collar workers and young people, this majority was also left unconvinced by the appeals made by the leaders of the "left" parties to rally "in the name of democracy" behind Muselier, former government minister under Chirac and LR candidate, against Mariani, former government minister under Sarkozy and RN candidate (2) in the PACA (3) region. They rejected the fallacious theory of voting for capitalist parties as a bulwark against the far-right. (...)

This majority has not only expressed itself through mass abstention. Via the increasing number of strikes throughout the country, it is declaring the working-class demands to maintain jobs, to ban lay-offs and job-cuts, to provide the necessary funding for education, healthcare and public services, and to reject a lowering of wages and an increase in working hours.

On the evening of the regional elections, many leaders of the institutional parties stated: "Now, the next step is the presidential election."

Who are they kidding? They pretend not to have understood, but facts are facts: what was rejected on 20 and 27 June was not only Macron, but more generally the system and the institutions that concentrate all power in the hands of a President of the Republic, acting as the servant of the capitalists.

It is the Fifth Republic that has been rejected, the Fifth Republic which gives all powers to a minority of exploiters and profiteers. If democracy means majority rule, then it requires that the power to make decisions be returned to this majority. It therefore demands that the capitalist Fifth Republic be replaced by the Republic of the majority, the Republic of the workers and the youth.

The urgent need is for the people to take into their own hands the power to decide. The urgent need is to elect a Constituent Assembly that repeals the Fifth Republic and all the anti-working-class, anti-social and anti-democratic counter-reforms, confiscating the hundreds of billions of capitalist profits and applying them to the urgent needs of working people, to healthcare, to the youth, to employment. Yes, a Constituent Assembly that takes into its own hands the power to decide on urgent measures to preserve jobs and public services and to ban lay-offs and job-cuts altogether.

As far as those who stand on the ground of democracy are concerned, there is no other solution. (...)

**Democratic Independent Workers Party
7.00pm, Monday, 28 June**

(1) A *département* is an administrative political unit roughly equivalent to a province or county, located between the local *commune* level and the regional level. There are 96 *départements* in metropolitan France, which today are grouped together to form 18 regional units, plus 5 overseas *départements*, which are also classified as regions.

(2) LR: *Les Républicains* [The Republicans], the latest version of Chirac's UMP, is the main party of the bourgeoisie. RN: *Rassemblement National* [National Rally] is the rebranded far-right National Front party of Le Pen.

(3) Short for Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur [Provence-Alps-French Riviera], also known since 2017 as *Région Sud* [South Region].

INDIA

Open Letter to the UK Prime Minister

UK labour movement representatives, activists, academics and community organisations call for the Covid-19 vaccine patents to be put in the public domain to help the Indian people

The Open Letter reprinted below was prompted specifically by an international appeal on the situation in India co-signed by Nambiath Vasudevan, President of the New Trade Union Initiative and one of the co-ordinators of the International Workers' Committee Against War and Exploitation (IWC) ("A human tragedy is taking place in India", published in *IWC Newsletter* No.185, 4 May 2021, and reprinted in *Labour Internationalist* Issue No.17, April 2021).

There was an informal exchange between some of the labour movement activists in the UK and Ireland who received the appeal. They then agreed to draft the Open Letter and circulate it in the British labour movement, starting with their personal contacts.

When the Open Letter was emailed to Prime Minister Boris Johnson on 4 June (a delegation to 10 Downing Street was not possible under the Covid-19 measures) it had been signed by 14 organisations and 255

individuals, made up of a cross-section of trade union officials and members (at the national, regional and local levels), Trades Council officers and delegates, local councillors, community organisers, Labour Party members, academics and others from all over the UK.

In recent months, there have been several other open letters addressed to the governments of the UK, US and India by prominent public figures, business leaders, academics, economists and trade unions, all calling for a temporary waiver of the Covid-19 vaccine patents during the pandemic.

In addition, on 20 May Labour's Shadow Cabinet sent a letter (signed by Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry on their behalf) to the Trade Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Health Secretary and Business Secretary, urging the Tory government to engage constructively with US proposals at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for a waiver of vaccine patents, as part of a 10-point "*plan to transform global vaccine production*" by "*working in partnership*" with the pharmaceutical industry.

What sets this Open Letter apart is that – unlike all the others and Labour's 10-point plan – it calls on the UK

government to "*immediately take all legal and technical measures to ensure that not only are British vaccine patents placed in the public domain, but that the necessary transfers of technology to enable India to manufacture vaccines are arranged without delay*".

In other words, the key demand is that the peoples' health must be prioritised over profit: the vaccine patents must be put in the public domain right away, accompanied by the necessary transfers of technology for vaccine manufacture, rather than asking for a temporary suspension of profit-making by the big pharmaceutical companies at the expense of people's lives.

Discussion is now underway on how to follow up on the first phase of this Open Letter initiative, which *Labour Internationalist* endorses fully. We will keep our readers informed of all further developments in the campaign to put pressure on the UK government to place the vaccine patents in the public domain.

Labour Internationalist

For further information on the campaign, email makevaccinepatentspublic@aol.com

Open Letter to the Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

The news received from Indian trade unionists is absolutely appalling. The whole world is witnessing a real tragedy in India.

Every day, the number of people infected with Covid-19 is increasing. Whoever gets a bed in hospital is considered lucky. The death-toll is soaring because of the lack of hospital beds, medicines and oxygen. The health system has collapsed; there are not enough doctors and paramedics to cope with the growing demand.

India is regarded as the "pharmacy of the world", and a large proportion of the generic drugs used worldwide are produced in India. But today, the Indian population has no access to vaccines, to the most essential medicines, or even to oxygen.

There is no doubt that the Modi government is responsible.

But your government also bears responsibility, when we know that for months you have – in agreement with a number of governments including the US administration – blocked any proposal at the World Trade Organisation to place the vaccine patents in the public domain, evidently in order to protect the huge profits of the big pharmaceutical companies.

Prime Minister, we demand that the British government immediately takes all legal and technical measures to ensure that not only are British vaccine patents placed in the public domain, but that the necessary transfers of technology to enable India to manufacture vaccines are arranged without delay.

The lives of millions of people are at stake.

FIRST SIGNATORIES

Organisations:

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU); Rochdale Metropolitan Borough TUC; Islington TUC; King's Lynn & District TUC; Edinburgh TUC; Glasgow TUC; Bolton & District TUC; Manchester TUC; Wigan & District TUC; Liverpool Unite NW/567 Community Branch; Liverpool Unite NW/0538 Branch; Merseyside Fans Supporting Foodbanks; Merseyside Anti-Fascist Network; UK Hazards Campaign, Greater Manchester Hazards Centre; Zero Covid campaign;

Individuals (personal capacity):

Sarah Woodley, General Secretary, BFAWU; **Ian Hodson**, National President, BFAWU; **Steve Hedley**, Senior Assistant General Secretary, RMT; **Roger McKenzie**, Assistant General Secretary, UNISON; **Sian Stockham**, Senior Vice President, UNISON; **Carlo**

Morelli, President, UCU Scotland; **Dr Douglas Chalmers**, Immediate Past President, UCU Scotland; **Billy Hayes**, former General Secretary, CWU; **John McNally**, former Vice-President, PCS; **Amarjite (AJ) Singh**, former President, Wales TUC, Secretary, CWU South East Wales Amal Branch, member of Sikhs of Wales; **Jane Stewart**, Unite Executive Council; **Tom Murphy**, Unite Executive Council, Secretary, London Print Branch; **Andy Green**, Unite Executive Council; **Jane Doolan**, UNISON NEC; **Paul Holmes**, UNISON NEC; **Dan Sartin**, UNISON NEC; **Andrea Egan**, UNISON NEC and Bolton Branch; **Helen Davies**, UNISON NEC; **Polly Smith**, UNISON NEC; **Karen Reissman**, UNISON NEC and Greater Manchester Mental Health Branch; **Saoirse Fanning**, UNISON NEC; **Tony Wright**, UNISON NEC; **Paula Carlyle**, UNISON NEC; **Stephen Smellie**, UNISON NEC; **Hugo Pierre**, UNISON NEC and Camden branch; **Cllr Angela Hamilton**, UNISON NEC; **Tracey Wainwright**, UNISON NEC; **Jim McFarlane**, UNISON NEC and Secretary, Dundee City Branch; **Kate Ramsden**, UNISON NEC; **Kevin Jackson**, UNISON NEC; **Luisete Batista**, UNISON NEC; **Alan Gibson**, NUJ NEC; **Steve Jones**, CWU NEC and Tottenham CLP London; **Murray Sackwild**, NEU NEC, Secretary, West Essex District; **Patrick Murphy**, NEU NEC, District and Branch Secretary, Leeds NEU; **Lucia Collins**, NIPSA General Council member; **Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis**, BMA council member; **Jonathan Dunning**, ex-UNISON NEC member; **Bernadette Gallagher**, ex-UNISON NEC (retired); **Paul Busby**, Secretary, North Yorkshire NEU; **Angela Roberts**, UNISON Cymru Wales NEC and Ambulance Branch; **Cllr Jane Gebbie**, Deputy Convenor, UNISON Cymru Wales and Secretary, Neath & Port Talbot Branch; **Jan Tomlinson**, Assistant Convenor, UNISON Cymru Wales and Secretary, North Wales Health Branch; **John Hughes**, Regional Treasurer, UNISON Cymru Wales and Secretary, Bridgend Branch; **Katie Hall**, Chair, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum and Cardiff University Branch; **Raul Lopez-Mateu**, Vice Chair, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum; **Lisa Walters**, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum; **Isabelle Riar**, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum; **Kay Laudan**, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum; **Ben Gregory**, UNISON Cymru Wales International Forum; **Gawain Little**, Chair of International Committee, NEU; **Hugh McDyer**, UNISON Regional Organiser; **Michelle Smith**, NW Regional Organiser, Unite; **Dave Kelly**, NW Regional Organiser, Unite; **Angela Brannigan**, NW Regional Organiser, Unite; **Rachael Boothroyd**, NW Regional Organiser, Unite; **Steve Acheson**, NW Regional Organiser, Unite; **Richie Venton**, national workplace organiser, Scottish Socialist Party; **John HENDY QC**;

James Parker, Secretary, Berkshire County Association of Trades Councils and Unite Community BOB Branch; **Stephen Hall**, President, Greater Manchester Association of Trades Union Councils (GMATUC); **Stefan Cholewka**, Secretary, GMATUC; **George Binette**, Chair, Camden TUC; **Mick Gilgunn**, Chair, Islington TUC; **Ray Barkley**, Treasurer, Slough TUC and Secretary, Slough Unite SE/6235; **Nick Williams**, Secretary, Wisbech, March & District TUC and Unite Community; **Mike Arnott**, Secretary, Dundee TUC; **Nina Hammill**, Secretary, Crewe & District TUC; **Steve Murphy**, Secretary, Knowsley TUC; **Cllr Jo Rust**, Secretary, King's Lynn & District TUC, independent councillor for Springwood ward on King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council; **Margaret K. Taylor**, Treasurer, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough TUC; **Kevin Allsop**, Secretary, Bolton & District TUC; **Carol Coleman**, Secretary, Wigan & District TUC; **Nigel Johnson**, PCS delegate to Bridgwater TUC; **Sue Dockett**, UNISON (retired) and Wisbech, March & District TUC; **Irene Henson**, Unite Community and member of Wisbech, March & District TUC; **Peter Durrant**, Unite Community and King's Lynn & District TUC; **Sam Gipson**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **John Hunt**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **Dave Dennis**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **Ian Barton**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **Linda Cox**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **David Cox**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **Fabia Pollard**, King's Lynn & District TUC; **Ieuan Einion**, former Campaigns manager, Newcastle TUC; **Ian Allinson**, EC member, Manchester TUC;

Gary Harris, President, Islington & Haringey GMB; **Vince Mills**, Chair, West of Scotland Education Branch, Unite; **Arthur Nicoll**, Co-Chair, Dundee City UNISON; **Fiona Monkman**, Chair, Islington UNISON; **Mike Calvert**, Deputy Branch Secretary, Islington UNISON; **Diana James**, Assistant Secretary, Islington UNISON; **Sharron Nicoll**, Equality Officer and Vice Chair, Knowsley UNISON LG Branch; **Gassimu Jah**, Black Members Secretary, Islington UNISON; **Kevin Ward**, UNISON officer, Middlesex University; **Phil Lewis**, Chair of London Hazards & Workstress Steering Group, Camden UNISON Health & Safety Officer; **Sean Fox**, Joint Branch Secretary, Haringey UNISON; **Ruth Cashman**, Co-Branch Secretary, Lambeth UNISON; **Sandy Nicoll**, Secretary, SOAS UNISON; **Mary Lancaster**, Secretary, Ealing UNISON; **Tony Phillips**, Secretary, London Fire Brigade UNISON; **Lilly Boulby**, UNISON NEC candidate and Young Members Officer, Sheffield Teaching Hospital; **Amerit Rait**, Treasurer, West London Healthcare UNISON; **Leon Fisher**, Chair, UNISON Bedfordshire Health; **Ian Mckendrick**, Communications Officer, Oxfordshire UNISON Health Branch; **Mark Carter**, Secretary, Dorset Rail RMT; **Jenny Cooper**, Brent District Joint Secretary, NEU; **Mark Hollinrake**, PCS DWP Filestores Branch Organiser and shop steward; **Dr Sophia Lycouris** UCU Equalities Officer, University of Edinburgh; **Mark Gillan**, EIS-FELA Deputy Branch Secretary; **Jim Philp**, Secretary, Fife & District Branch RMT; **Dania Thomas**, Equalities Rep, UCU University of Glasgow; **Ken Muller**, Press Officer, Islington NEU; **Bobby Haddock**, Secretary, Islington Unite and works convener repairs service; **Katrina Coomber**, Assistant Secretary, UNISON Cwm Taff Morgannwg Health Board branch; **Phil Wiseman**, Secretary, Liverpool NW/0538 Unite; **Jordan David**, Treasurer, Liverpool Walton CLP and PCS rep; **Glen Williams**, Secretary, Sefton UNISON, Liverpool; **Rajmil Fischman**, UCU, Keele University branch;

Councillor Sarah James, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, Haringey Council; **Cllr Noah Tucker**, Labour Councillor, London Borough of Haringey; **Cllr Dr James Chiriyankadanth**, Labour Councillor, London Borough of Haringey; **Cllr Makbule Gunes**, Tottenham CLP and Haringey Council; **Cllr Preston Tabois**, Haringey Council, Unite and Tottenham CLP; **Cllr Ruth Gordon**, Tottenham Hale branch, Tottenham CLP; **Cllr Richard Foote**, London Borough of Hounslow; **Cllr Ihtesham Malik Afzal**, London Borough of Brent; **Cllr Alan Gibbons**, Warbreck Ward, Liverpool City Council and Secretary, Liverpool Walton CLP; **Cllr Graham Campbell**, Convenor, SNP Socialists, member of Musicians Union Scotland & Northern Ireland Committee; **Cllr Lila Bennett**, Liverpool City Council, Vice Chair, Liverpool West Derby CLP and Unite member; **Cllr Gerard Woodhouse**, County ward, Liverpool City Council; **Cllr Barbara Murray**, Yew Tree ward, Liverpool City Council and NASUWT; **Cllr Ann O'Byrne**, Liverpool City Council Labour Group, Warbreck Ward; **Cllr Sam Gorst**, Cressington Ward, Liverpool City Council, Garston and Halewood CLP, POA union H&S rep, Unite member; **Cllr Lindsay Melia**, Fazakerley Ward, Liverpool City Council; **Antony Rimmer**, Liverpool 47 surcharged Councillor, socialist and trade unionist; **Felicity Dowling**, Liverpool 47 surcharged Councillor, Left Unity UK;

Doreen McNally, Liverpool Unite NW567 Community Branch; **Lesley Mahmood**, Save Liverpool Women's Hospital; **Janet Newsham**, Chair, UK Hazards Campaign; **Hilda Palmer**, Facilitator of Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) and Greater Manchester Hazards Centre; **Chris Williamson**, founder of Resist and ex-Labour MP; **Charles Charalambous**, Editor, *Labour*

Internationalist and Unite member; **John Pickard**, Editor, *Left Horizons*; **Rob Sewell**, Editor, *Socialist Appeal*; **Julie James**, Liverpool; **Karen Woolrich**, Unite and Nurses United; **Phil Maxwell**, film maker, Liverpool; **Paul Filby**, Liverpool Wavertree CLP; **Graham Manley**, Liverpool Wavertree CLP, Unite; **Karen Evans**, Liverpool Wavertree CLP; **Suzanne Volante**, EC member, Liverpool Walton CLP; **Susan Dykes**, EC member, Liverpool Walton CLP; **Pauline Gibbons**, Unite and Liverpool Walton CLP; **Karen Bellion**, Liverpool Walton CLP and Unite (retired); **John Nelson**, Unite and Liverpool Walton CLP; **Lucy Carrasco**, Liverpool Walton CLP; **Glenys Perry**, Disability Officer, Walton CLP; **Tim Hayden**, Chair, Liverpool Riverside CLP; **Louise Leitch**, Women's Officer, Liverpool Riverside CLP; **Sara Whiteside**, Liverpool Riverside CLP; **Alice Bennett**, Chair, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP, Chair of Liverpool Momentum, Unite branch NW357; **Dorothy Gregory**, Vice-Chair Membership, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP; **Steve Hayden**, Secretary, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP; **Sue Ferguson**, Treasurer, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP; **Val Colvin**, UNISON and Women's Officer, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP; **Rona Jones**, Liverpool Garston and Halewood CLP; **Nick Phillips**, Unite the Union, London; **Henry Mott**, Southwark Unite; **Julia Ayache**, Nottingham; **Michael Loughlin**, Liverpool; **Prof Richard Seaford**, University of Exeter; **Raphael Salkie**, Emeritus Professor, University of Brighton and UCU member; **Dr Hannah Wilkinson**, Lecturer in Criminology, School of Social, Political and Global Studies, Keele University; **Prof Susan Michie**, FAcSS, FMedSci, University College London; **Michael Edwards**, Hon Prof UCL, UCU member; **Robert West**, Professor Emeritus of Health Psychology, Institute of Epidemiology and Healthcare, University College London; **Dr Ghazala Mir**, Associate Professor of Health Equity and Inclusion, University of Leeds; **John Sweeney**, London Labour Party and trade union activist, Chair of Workers Against the EU; **Dr Fiona English**, Executive Committee member, Tottenham CLP, London; **Annie McDonald**, Haringey ward Chair, Tottenham CLP; **Kishore Kukendrarajah**, Tottenham CLP; **Therese O'Meara**, Tottenham Labour; **Carmel Cadden**, Tottenham CLP; **Clare Davies**, Tottenham CLP; **Shiraz Durrani**, Tottenham CLP; **Mike Hodges**, Tottenham CLP; **Nick Rogers**, Tottenham CLP; **Manuel Ruiz-Adame**, Tottenham CLP; **Graham Knight**, Unite and Tottenham CLP; **Amanda MacLean**, Tottenham CLP; **Paul Lefley**; **Avril Baker**, Stroud Green LP branch, Hornsey and Wood Green CLP; **Chris Clarke**, Hornsey and Wood Green CLP; **Celia Dignan**, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Noeleen Grattan**, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Malcolm Kennedy**, Unite and Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Gareth Mostyn**, UNISON and Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Ranil Hewavisenti**, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Jill Pack**, Hornsey & Wood Green CLP; **Keith Dobie**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Mumtaz Khan**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Joanna Bornat**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Nick Davidson**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Steve Ballard**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Phil Rose**, Haringey & Barnet Unite Community; **Prof Emeritus John Pinkerton**, Child & Family Social Work, Queen's University Belfast; **Briony Densham**, Islington UNISON; **Dr Nat Queen**, University of Birmingham and UCU member; **Richard Gill**, Islington UNISON; **Mark Still**, RMT; **Roger Silverman**, Newham Socialist Labour; **Laura Mulvey**, Birkbeck College and UCU; **Dianne Foulkes**, Keele UCU Branch employee; **Dr Rich Moth**, Liverpool Hope University; **Steve McKenzie**, Unite; **Julia Simpkins**, Bolton NEU; **Ailsa Naumann**, UNISON Oxford University and College Branch; **Florence Hill**, Bolton UNISON (retired); **Geoff Jelly**, UNISON (retired); **Dr Josephine Berry**, Goldsmiths, University of London; **John Snelling**, UNISON (retired); **Liz Brennan**, Cambridge City & South Cambs UNISON; **Marika Smith**, Unite (retired); **Ali Miles**, Unite Community and Camberwell & Peckham CLP; **Jacqui Brown**, UNISON (retired); **Brian Lawton**, UNISON, New City College London; **John Dunning**, NUM (retired); **Chelley Ryan**, Labour Party; **Mina Rodgers**; **Karen Michael**, Retired member/LGBT Officer, Norfolk County UNISON; **Emma Francis**, UCU; **Jean Wood**, Leeds; **Paul Lawlor**, Gloucester CLP; **Jane Wright**, Islington UNISON; **Jackie Yems**, Unite and Streatham CLP; **Micaela Bartrum**, UNISON and Labour Party member; **Peter Winderler**, member of NEU and the International Socialist League; **June Simmons**, Women's Officer, Brentwood and Ongar CLP; **Cathy Wilson**, Unite Community NW567; **Kneale Faragher**, Social Media Officer, Liverpool West Derby CLP; **Ed Bober**, Chair, Morpeth Branch LP; **Craig Johnston**, RMT; **John Carr**, Liverpool UNISON (retired); **Brandon Spivey**, N/O publishing group; **Sheelagh Goldsmith**; **Rachel Lever**, Labour Party and Unite Community; **Dr Josephine Berry**, Goldsmiths, University of London; **Letty Draper**, GMB Liverpool; **Jo Thomas**, Clwyd West CLP and Unite; **Georgina Ryan**, South Yorkshire NUJ and Sheffield Central CLP; **Eric Olson**, Professor of Philosophy, University of Sheffield; **Maggi Myland**, Barnet UNISON (retired); **Trina Coomber**, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UNISON Health Branch; **Nicola Redwood**, Walthamstow CLP and Unite; **Prof E A Brett**, London School of Economics; **Beverley Kenyon**, CWU; **Joe Hale**, Swansea Bay UNISON Health Branch;

Letter to the signatories of the Open Letter from Nambiath Vasudevan

Comrades,

On behalf of the International Workers' Committee (IWC), constituted as the result of an International Conference Against War, Exploitation and Precarious Work in Mumbai of which I was one of the organisers, I signed with my comrade Daniel Gluckstein, National Secretary of the Democratic Independent Worker's Party (POID) of France, an appeal to the international labour movement to mobilise in solidarity with the Indian people so badly hit by the pandemic.

I am myself a trade unionist in India since 1971. Presently, I am the national President of the New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI), the independent Indian

federation of trade unions, and Joint Convenor of the Trade Union Solidarity Committee of Mumbai.

Therefore, as a trade unionist, I think your endorsement of our appeal and your Open Letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson is a very important display of working-class internationalism, and wish to inform you that we value your support immensely, as that will go a long way in the struggle of Indian workers for a better life.

All my greetings to all those who have endorsed the open letter to Boris Johnson.

N. Vasudevan

PALESTINE

Solidarity with the Palestinian people! The class struggle against capitalism is international!

During the month of May, workers around the world followed the situation in Palestine and expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people, and their anger at the attacks by the State of Israel with imperialism's complicity. But they also drew lessons from it: in the worst of conditions, the working class can and will fight back and demonstrate its capacity for changing the situation by organising its own mobilisation.

Nakba Day (15 May) was marked by solidarity protests and action around the world. Reports from IWC correspondents (including from the United States, Morocco, Portugal, Italy, Canada, Pakistan and Azania/South Africa) on the action taken on and around 15 May were published in *IWC Newsletter* No. 187 (21 May 2021).

In **the UK**, an estimated 100,000 people marched in London to the Israeli embassy. Demonstrations also took place in Birmingham, Coventry, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh and other UK towns and cities. The London demonstration was organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Friends of al-Aqsa, Palestinian Forum in Britain, Stop the War Coalition, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Muslim Association of Britain. A spokesperson said: *"The bombardment of Gaza, which is killing civilians including children, is a war crime. It is occurring in the context of the illegal forced displacement of families in Jerusalem and attacks on Palestinian citizens of Israel by far-right groups including illegal settlers from the West Bank. The UK government is complicit in these acts as long as it continues to offer Israel military, diplomatic and financial support."*

Lindsay German, Convenor of Stop the War, said: *"Israel is ethnically cleansing Jerusalem. The whole of the Palestinian people have stood up and been joined by huge demonstrations across the world. This is not just Israel. It's Britain and the US. At the beginning of the week, Biden blocked a resolution calling for a ceasefire. Biden changed his mind because there was a general strike in Palestine. We say to our government: "Stop arming Israel". And to the pathetic Starmer leadership of the Labour Party "Stop supporting Israel, start supporting Palestine!"*

In the **United States**, massive demonstrations took place in Chicago on 16 May, and in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Francisco and Los Angeles on 15 May. The demonstrators chanted *"We want justice! We want justice!"* and *"Free Palestine!"*, but also – referencing the Black Lives Matter slogan – *"Palestinian Lives Matter"* and *"I can't breathe since 1948"* (echoing the last words of George Floyd). Others called for an immediate halt to US aid to Israel (US\$3.8 billion in

annual military aid and US\$8 billion in loans guaranteed by Washington).

While more and more trade union organisations in the US passed resolutions and issued statements of support for the Palestinian people, on 4 June hundreds of labour and community activists gathered in the west coast Port of Oakland and blocked access to the *Volans*, a ship operated by the Israeli ZIM shipping company. Dockers (members of ILWU Local 10 and Local 34) refused to cross the picket line, which was jointly organised by the Arab Resource Organizing Committee and the Stop ZIM Action Committee. ILWU Local 10 president Trent Willis highlighted the link between the racism expressed against the Palestinians as well as against Black Americans in the US.



Picketing of ZIM-operated ship at the Port of Oakland

In **Azania/South Africa**, demonstrations took place in Cape Town and Johannesburg. On 21 May, several hundred workers in the port of Durban, supported by almost all the labour organisations of KwaZulu province (including SAFTU and COSATU), marched in support of the dockworkers and their union SATAWU, which had called for a strike to refuse to load a ship belonging to ZIM. The demonstrators sang songs from the Black people's struggle against the Apartheid regime, and carried banners and placards saying *"Stop Apartheid!"*, *"Save Gaza!"* and *"Palestinian Blood is Our Blood!"*

In **Pakistan**, the All-Pakistan Trade Union Federation held a protest rally on 15 May against the State of Israel's brutal attack on Palestinian men, women and children: *"The working class stand with the Palestinian people. We want a free Palestine. Israel's barbaric attack on Palestine is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"*.

In **Canada**, there were numerous demonstrations in major cities like Ottawa, where *"participants demanded that the government ban arms sales to Israel"*.

In **Australia**, “thousands demonstrated for a free Palestine in Sydney and Melbourne” (*The Guardian*, 15 May).

In **Algeria**, Palestinian flags were flown in the demonstrations 14 May.

In **Tunisia**, demonstrators in several cities chanted: “*Tunisians support Palestine*” and “*The people want to criminalise normalisation with Israel*”.

The strength of the protests in **Egypt** forced the bloody regime of Field Marshal el-Sisi to announce the opening of the Rafah crossing to the Gaza Strip on 15 May, to allow the injured to be evacuated.

Massive demonstrations also took place in **Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey** and Baghdad (**Iraq**).

Thousands also demonstrated in Berlin (**Germany**) on 15 May, despite threats by the Merkel government to penalise support for the Palestinians, and in Brussels (**Belgium**).

In **France**, where the Macron government had banned demonstrations of solidarity, tens of thousands of protesters gathered in dozens of cities across the country on 15 May.

Palestinian trade unions call for immediate and urgent action by trade unions internationally

Call to Action

(22 May 2021)

As Israel’s settler mobs and occupation forces continue a campaign of violence and ethnic cleansing against Palestinians in Gaza, Sheikh Jarrah, Lydd and Haifa – Palestinian workers bear the brunt of this violence, and we are at the forefront of the struggle for our liberation.

This week, Palestinian activists and trade unions held a General Strike across historic Palestine. This is the first strike in recent history to bring together Palestinians no matter where we are located.

In order to achieve our liberation, however, we require the solidarity of our comrades and friends in the trade union movement internationally. As Israel escalates its attacks and brutality, we need this solidarity more than ever, and we need it urgently in order to restrain Israel’s war machine from continuing its massacres even further.

We call on you to stand with us, to speak out, to take action. As trade unions internationally, we have a proud tradition of standing up against oppression. We have the power to halt support for racist regimes. The global trade union movement has always played a key and inspiring role in its courageous commitment to human rights and adoption of concrete, ground-breaking, labour-led sanctions against oppressive regimes. The trade union boycott of Apartheid South Africa stands out as a bright example of this tradition of effective solidarity.

In the spirit of internationalism and solidarity, we are calling on trade unions to:

1. Issue clear public statements of solidarity with the Palestinian people, and express support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel to bring it in line with its obligations under international law.

2. Participate in future general strikes called by Palestinian popular organizations and trade unions by holding protests and vigils on these dates.

3. Take immediate and concrete steps to ensure that unions themselves are not complicit in supporting and sustaining Israeli oppression, e.g., by divesting pension funds from firms complicit in the Israeli occupation, encouraging workers to refuse to handle Israeli goods and/or supporting members refusing to build Israeli weapons.

Signed by:

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions,
Gaza

General Union of Palestinian Women

Professional Associations/Federations including:

Palestine Dental Association

Palestinian Bar Association

Palestine Doctors Association

Palestinian Pharmacists Syndicate

Agricultural Engineers Association

General Union of Health Services Workers

General Union of Agricultural and Food
Industries Workers

General Union of Service and Private Business
Workers

General Union of Construction Workers

General Union of Textile and Garment Workers

Syndicate of Workers in Popular and Civil
Organisations

Veterinary Association

Palestine New Federation of Trade Unions

General Federation of Independent Trade
Unions

Excerpts from the editorial in *The Economist*, 29 May 2021

Two states or one? The peace process has become an obstacle to progress

(...) Palestinian territory in the West Bank is an archipelago in an expanding sea of Israeli settlements that are illegal under international law. Gaza is a solitary island, cut off by an Israeli and Egyptian blockade. The Palestinian Authority was supposed to be a government in waiting. Young Palestinians look on it as the agent of Israel's occupation, even as they laud Hamas, (...) for standing up to Israel.

In place of the stagnant two-state effort, the new Palestinian vision is to demand individual rights in one state. (...) Even Israeli Arabs complain of inequality and rose up during the fighting in Gaza. (...)

This cannot last. The Oslo fig-leaf lets Israel claim that the occupation will be undone in a final deal. (...) But 54 years after the Six-Day War, the idea of a temporary occupation rings increasingly hollow. (...)

Many critics of Israeli policy, including some liberal Jews, now compare the Palestinians' treatment to apartheid. (...)

More than 1,000 Israeli Jews say: "Stop Israel's Apartheid!" An Open Letter to the International Community

<https://jews4decolonization.wordpress.com/>
[#IsraelisAgainstApartheid](#)

We, Jewish Israelis, oppose the actions of the Israeli government and hereby declare our commitment to act against them. We refuse to accept the Jewish-supremacist regime and call upon the international community to immediately intervene in defence of the Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, the Galilee, the Negev, al-Lydd, Yafa, Ramleh, Haifa and throughout historic Palestine.

Jewish supremacy is the cornerstone of the Israeli regime, and its consistent objective is to transfer and obliterate the Palestinian people, their history, and their national identity. This objective manifests in continued acts of ethnic cleansing by means of evictions and home demolitions, brutal military occupation, denial of civil and human rights, and legislation of a series of racist laws culminating in the Nation-State Bill, defining the State as "the Nation State of the Jewish People", and them only.

All the above effectively form an Apartheid regime creating Bantustan-like and Ghetto-like areas for Palestinian native communities. We believe that Zionism is an unethical principle of governance that inherently leads to a racist Apartheid regime that has been committing war crimes and denying basic human rights from Palestinians for over seven decades.

Such crimes and violations include: the destruction of hundreds of towns and villages and depopulating them of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, alongside the active prevention of return of refugees; the systematic expropriation of Palestinians' lands and transferring them to Jewish ownership under the auspices of the

state; the occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights and the application of a colonizing military regime, ruling over millions of Palestinians; the gradual annexation of the territories occupied in 1967 by violently engineering demographics; the ongoing siege on the Gaza strip and persistent massacres of the Gazan population by the Israeli Air Force; political persecution of Palestinians throughout Palestine and the ongoing incitement against the political leadership and society at large. All of these atrocities take place due to the impunity Israel receives from the international community and especially the United States.

In recent weeks, the Israeli government has up-scaled its attempts to seize Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem (especially in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood) and house Jewish settlers in them with the aim of completing the Judaization of the city that began in 1967. During the month of Ramadan, Israeli forces intensified their violent onslaught on the Al Aqsa Mosque compound while giving settlers the green light to vandalize and physically harm Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and throughout the '48 territories. Mobs of settlers are acting under the auspices, and in coordination with the Israeli police. Israeli media is taking part in the unhinged incitement against Arab citizens of Israel. As a result, the Jewish mobs receive impunity for their violence, while hundreds of Palestinian citizens of Israel are arrested for protecting their homes and communities, or simply for being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

As we write this statement, Israel is committing yet another massacre in the Gaza ghetto. Israel has declined several third-party offers to negotiate a cease-fire agreement with Hamas officials, and has continued to bomb neighbourhoods in Gaza. The inhumane siege on approximately two million people continues.

As individuals who belong to the side of the oppressor, and that have tried for years to shift public opinion in Israel in order to change the foundations of the current regime, we have long come to the conclusion

that it is impossible to change the Jewish supremacist regime without external intervention.

We call upon the international community to intervene immediately in order to stop Israel's current aggressions, to adopt the demands of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement; to work towards the actualization of the Palestinian Right of Return and to bring about historic justice; to reach a just and democratic solution for all, based on the decolonization of the region and founding a state of all its citizens.

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In the new issue:



EDITORIAL NOTES

Appendices

- Statement by the OCRFI dated 14 May 2021: Stop the massacre of the Palestinian people!
- Excerpts from the report given to the OCRFI Steering Committee on 20 May 2021

EUROPE: The difficult return of the Maastricht criteria

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