



Iran: Peace
will give
the people a
chance

Steve Bishop



Turkey's
imperial
ambitions

İbrahim Can Usta
& Murat Akad



Africa: Coup
challenge to
democracy

Jeremy Cronin

Liberation

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Unite
Fight
Zionist
racism
and savage
capitalism

Bassam Al-Salhi



A residential tower in
Gaza destroyed by
Israeli bombardment
in October 2023
Photo: UNRWA/
Creative Commons

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Down But Not Out!

A desperate US is becoming more aggressive in its quest to consolidate hegemony. Trump's behaviour threatens geo-political stability and increases the danger of war

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ALL AROUND the world, the domination, even influence, of imperialism has evidently been in decline for some years now. In attempts to shore up its hegemony, US imperialism along with its allies and proxies are being challenged on many fronts - especially so in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the countries collectively comprising the Global South.

Only last Sunday, African leaders meeting in Algiers repeated their calls for colonial-era crimes to be formally recognised, criminalised, and properly compensated via an African Union-backed reparations process, along with the defining of colonisation as a crime against humanity.

However, it is also clear that the US in its desperation is becoming more aggressive in its greed-driven quest to consolidate a hegemony over raw materials, energy supplies, as well as untapped and emerging markets globally through the imposition of terms in trade and world politics.

As a counterbalance to this trend, the formation of BRICS two decades ago has been celebrated as a potential democratic response by countries across five continents. And it is surely no coincidence that three key founding members of BRICS — Brazil, India, and South Africa — have come under particular pressure from the current Trump administration, through the imposition of illogical tariffs and other measures, testing whether they might waiver.

Meanwhile, countries like Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia are offered a strategic partnership with US in an attempt to entice them onboard with Trump's 'vision' of a "New Middle East". Elsewhere in that troubled region, the criminal apartheid regime in Tel Aviv continues to pursue its rotten designs of a "Greater Israel" with the backing and complicity of both the US and British governments. Over the past year, this has been borne witness to in the efforts of Trump and NATO to reshape the region and bludgeon it into pliancy with Lebanon, Syria, and Iran having suffered repeated bloody attacks, as well as continued mal-interference in their sovereign affairs.

This has been accompanied by a discernible erosion of democratic and human rights in many countries across the Middle East region and African continent, with the advent of military coups, counter coups, and the imposition of emergency powers, martial law, suspension of civilian governance — and the suppression of civil liberties and progressive currents that these inevitably entail.

Those countries daring to resist US machinations and forging their own paths and courses of developments, such as the People's Republic of China, face open and unrelenting hostility from the US and its allies backed up with non-too-subtle military brinksmanship.

The egotistical, erratic, and unpredictable behaviour of Trump in office is pushing the US into more belligerent actions which threaten geo-political stability and increase the danger of war. Thus, Venezuela currently stares down the biggest US military buildup in its region since the 1989 intervention in Panama.

Furthermore, Trump has undermined international institutions like the UN and COP, continued to menace South Africa with false allegations of a "white genocide", while cosyng up to an ultra-right Japanese government in its ratcheting-up of hostility towards China.

These current situations and many more undoubtedly pose real challenges to the forces of peace, democracy, and social justice worldwide and their resolve - though the mass campaigns of international solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their most basic of rights are an example of the antidote...

Such unity in action and principled solidarity to defend liberty, human and democratic rights, and social justice are needed more than ever.

The US empire is in decline, but its death throes cannot come at the expense of the blood and suffering of the people of any land!

Jamshid Ahmadi
Editor

Liberation / news

Leishman: Britain must face up to its historic role in ongoing Gaza crisis

BRIAN LEISHMAN MP joined MPs roundly attacking the Government for its failures to address the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, putting the issue into a wider context of occupation and imperialism.

The parliamentary chair of Liberation told MPs in a debate in Westminster Hall last month: "Britain owes a historical debt to the Palestinian people. With the Balfour declaration, the British mandate of 1922 to 1948, and the confiscation of land and the suppression of freedom and human rights that followed, Britain paved the way for today's apartheid living conditions. Now, our current role is to perpetuate and normalise the ongoing occupation and colonisation of Palestine.

He continued: "I am afraid that Britain cannot truthfully say that we are fulfilling our humanitarian obligations when we continue to sell arms to a state that commits genocide. We are in the scandalous position where we train IDF soldiers—soldiers of an army that commits war crimes. We will not tell our people what we are facilitating from RAF Akrotiri, hiding behind the veil of national security and secrecy. The military support we continue to give Israel makes a mockery of our humanitarian obligations."

During a debate secured by Irene Campbell MP for North Ayrshire and Arran on November 24, Leishman also criticised the UK government for continuing to trade with "Netanyahu's murderous regime" which he said has "by design, crippled the Palestinian economy" creating a dependency "for goods, for produce and ultimately for survival...Israel consistently uses economic terrorism as a tool of subjugation", and by "continuing to trade with Israel, we are complicit in the ongoing colonisation of Palestine, and in making Palestinians reliant on Israel."

Fresh back from a visit to the West Bank where he attended Ramallah Congress on the Decolonization of Palestine, bringing together scholars, diplomats and movement leaders from



around the world will come together for the inaugural, Leishman told MPs that he had "heard about the slow strangulation of education. Israel continues to segregate Palestinian education by way of armed checkpoints: roadblocks that stop children and students from going to school, college or university in the West Bank."

"Meanwhile, in Gaza, school often consists of teachers taking classes in tents, which are used as makeshift classrooms because schools have been relentlessly bombed. In trying to fragment and ultimately eradicate education, Israel is trying to suppress Palestinian national identity and suppress the ability of people to organise and resist the occupation of their land.

By allowing that to happen, Britain and others are not fulfilling humanitarian obligations."

"We all know that there are players in the international community who will always strive to maintain a capitalist and imperialist agenda at the expense of humanitarian needs. The stark truth is that Britain is both complicit in and guilty of that."

The debate was prompted by the petition "Urgently fulfil humanitarian obligations to Gaza" signed by just under 200,000 people and saw around two dozen MPs speak - the vast majority critical of the government - in what was one of the liveliest debates in Westminster Hall this year.

Call for book reviewers

LIBERATION regularly publishes reviews of books on geopolitics, history and occasionally a novel where it deals with political issues in the Global South.

Thanks for our team of Liberation members who do the reviews! Interested in a reviewing a book for us? Or a film, play or exhibition? Get in touch: info@liberationorg.co.uk

Check the review out at: liberationorg.co.uk/book-reviews.

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**United Nations
Human Rights
Day 2025**

Westminster
December 11

Scan to register




Join us for UN Human Rights Day in Parliament

LIBERATION MEMBERS and supporters are urged to register for an event in parliament on December 11 to mark UN Human Rights Day.

The Liberation event will be an opportunity to learn and debate the impact of UK, US and European foreign policy on human rights around the world with speeches from experts and activists on Sudan, Palestine, Western Sahara.

Speakers include: Dr Ameena Al Rashid, Sudanese activist and advisor to the UN, Mark Luetchford chair, Western Sahara Campaign UK. It will be chaired by Brian Leishman MP, Liberation parliamentary chair. Further speakers to be announced.

The event aims to engage MPs over human rights issues and how changes to both foreign and domestic government policies and practices can address them.

It is essential to register for this event for security reasons and to ensure you get a seat. Scan QR code or visit liberationorg.co.uk

Palestine / comment

The genocide reflects the peak convergence of Zionism's racist project with savage capitalism. This model is a template for imperialism's response to other peoples based on the concept of 'peace through strength', the entrenchment of regional hegemony that relies on military bases, the acquisition of vast wealth from the Gulf states and the pursuit of a New Middle East that minimises the role of Russia and China



Unite to fight Zionist racism and savage capitalism

Bassam Al-Salhi sets out the immediate tasks of the Palestinian people, their longer term goals and emphasises the importance of the growing international solidarity movement



A Palestine solidarity march in New York in October showing solidarity with the flotilla. Picture credit: Pamela Drew/ Creative Commons

LET'S START with the immediate situation. 17 November 2025 saw the UN Security Council pass the US-backed resolution endorsing the Trump plan for Gaza. On the Security Council only China and Russia opposed – China noting that it ignored all UN resolutions on the rights of a Palestinian State. The resolution failed to carry forward either the call in the previous Saudi-French resolution for a two-state solution or the Algerian, Chinese and Russian proposals that honoured the historic UN texts defining pre-1967 territories and sustaining the right of return of refugees.

Security Council resolution

The passage of the resolution through the UN Security Council therefore goes further than its immediate demands. It threatens all existing UN decisions that have sought to defend the legal standing of a Palestinian state.

So also does its implementation. This is placed outside any monitoring, control or supervision by the United Nations (UN). It sanctions the creation of new territorial entities of an unknown character and extent under the authority of a joint US-Israeli body.

The US and Israel have taken advantage of the dire circumstances faced by the Palestinian people within the Gaza strip under threat of a resumed genocide if the US proposals were not accepted.

Opposition to Security Council

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), at its executive meeting, decided to give its support to the amendments proposed by the Palestinian Mission to the UN and submitted to the US and other UN members. These reiterated the points made by China, Russia and Algeria none of which were covered by the US spokesperson in their statement to the UN Security Council.

Speaking both as General Secretary of the Palestinian People's Party and as a member of the Executive Committee of the PLO, I repeat

our support for these amendments and our opposition to the position taken by the UN Security Council. This obliterates all former UN positions on the restoration of Palestinian territories as they existed prior to 1967 including its capital Jerusalem and the political and legal integrity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip along with the legal status of the Palestinian Authority and the State of Palestine.

A confrontation with genocide

How therefore, after this reverse, should we define this current phase of the Palestinian people's struggle?

It is now a direct confrontation with genocide, its consequences and the ongoing risk of its repetition. This reality represents an advanced stage in the evolution of Zionism's racist ideology based on ethnic cleansing and transfer. This evolution has been enabled by an increasingly savage capitalism expressed in the unbridled aggression of its military, financial and monopolistic elites. The interests of these elites are increasingly pursued through brute force promoted under the title of 'peace through strength'.

The people of Gaza have seen these policies carried through by siege, starvation, the systematic destruction of schools, universities, hospitals and homes and the denial of humanitarian aid. One key objective has been to destroy the limited gains secured by the Palestinian people over recent years, primarily the international recognition of their state and legitimate rights.

The Trump administration, the occupation government and their collaborators seek to obscure the issues of accountability and transitional justice. It does so to delude the world into giving credence to Trump's plan and his self-aggrandising rhetoric as a peacemaker in order to bypass the crimes that have been committed.

The greatest challenge in this situation is for our peoples to maintain their steadfastness on their land and resist the drive to break their will – the ultimate goal of genocide.

International solidarity

The ideology and practice of genocide has, however, sparked an unparalleled international protest movement. This movement has evolved from protests at incidents of genocide to a more fundamental re-evaluation of the political and historical narrative. The international protest movement demonstrates a recognition of the deep entanglement between the genocidal state and the political, economic and ideological elites elsewhere in the world.

Correspondingly this struggle against genocide is increasingly seen as inseparable from the struggle of all humanity for liberation and social justice, for those who reject savage capitalism and its contempt for international law and its double standards. This shift empowers the Palestinian people. They are now armed by this popular will at an international level.

The experience and diversity of international solidarity movements is evolving through thousands upon thousands of creative initiatives, of boycotting and the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement and through legal and criminal prosecution. It is beginning to achieve the same momentum at that seen in South Africa or Vietnam. In this process the role of Left and Communist forces is vital in proposing the slogans for the international solidarity movement, unifying it, organising it and building alliances.

This is the most reliable way of forcing Israel and the US to retreat and thereby re-secure the commitment of the UN to enforce the rights of the Palestinian people.

Resistance inside Palestine

Workers and youth compose the bedrock of resistance. Their work is multifaceted. It is focused on protecting the national will against all attempts to break it. They work to counter attempts to re-engineer our society by placing the enhancement of social solidarity and the protection of civil peace at its core. This includes transforming international solidarity into a means of national steadfastness – notably by linking economic and subsistence aid projects to the rebuilding of the national economy and deepening its social and cooperative character, challenging the savagery of capitalist exploitation in all its forms.

Social movements and youth play a leading part in developing this role. The influence of the new generations of youth is growing at all levels, led by Generation Z.

The role of US imperialism

The current genocide reflects the peak convergence of Zionism's racist project with savage capitalism – now at the height of its battle for continued hegemony. This model stands as a template for imperialism's response to other peoples based on the concept of 'peace through strength', the entrenchment of regional hegemony that relies on military bases, the acquisition of vast wealth from the Gulf states and the pursuit of a "New Middle East" that minimises the role of Russia and China.

The United States has sought to secure these goals through Israel. In turn the dominant Israeli elites – the most extreme, those benefiting from settlement, arms technology and arms manufacturing – have exploited this collaboration to cover up their own crises. They have leveraged the expansive racist nature of Israel's societal structure and political ideology to prolong their control – pre-emptively dealing with the changes in the world order, namely the erosion of unipolar hegemony resulting from the growing role of Russia and China and organisations associated with them, the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Immediate tasks

Finally, we have an obligation, in uniting our people to undertake the next stage of struggle, to deal with some immediate issues that can strengthen our unity. We have therefore unitarily set out demands on five issues. These are:

- The prosecution of those responsible for genocide as inseparable from the rights of victims to compensation.
- The establishment of a clear agenda for advance towards sovereignty, independence and the return of refugees and exiles
- The lifting of demands for the payment of taxes, financial penalties and commercial debts from the communities that have suffered as victims of genocide in Gaza and in the West Bank and particularly the children of the Jenin, Tulkarm and Nour Shams refugee camps.
- On the West Bank and Jerusalem an end to the protection given by the Israeli state and army to the growing attacks on villages, farms and refugee camps
- The adoption of a strategy to ensure financial resilience for Palestinian governmental and community institutions to remedy the sharp decline of educational and social provision since 7 October 2023 along with the loss of employment and financial support for families and children.

Bassam Al-Salhi is Secretary-General of the Palestinian People's Party and member of the Executive Committee of the PLO. This article is based on a conversation between Liberation and Bassam Al-Salhi.

Iran / analysis

The future of Iran ultimately must lie with its people and their resistance to the theocratic dictatorship, opposition to the pressures of external intervention and the demands for a non-aligned democratic Iran. Opposing war against Iran is the first step in this process and one which should be a priority for international solidarity work in the coming year

Peace will give the people a chance

The attacks upon Iran, by Israel and the United States in June 2025, contravened all previously established international norms. Notwithstanding Donald Trump recently raising hopes of overcoming the current diplomatic impasse, history demonstrates that the fears of the Iranian people of further military action are legitimate, writes Steve Bishop

THE RIGHT to life is a basic human right which is invariably jeopardised in a war situation and undermined entirely when that war has no legal basis or legitimacy. The attacks upon Iran, by Israel and the United States in June 2025, constituted such a war and the associated assassination of key military and scientific personnel further contravened all previously established international norms.

However, international norms are not constraints upon the behaviour of either the Israeli military or the United States, with actions sanctioned by the leadership of both nations over many decades illustrating that any notion of a 'rules based international order' is closer than ever to being a fiction than a reality.

In the case of the United States the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria can testify to this in the Middle East. Interference in the affairs of Latin American nations is accepted by US ruling circles as an integral part of US foreign policy. The ongoing illegal blockade of Cuba and the present threat to Venezuela being current examples. The encirclement of Russia by NATO, fuelling war in Ukraine, along with threatening talk of military action to restrain China, all reinforce the US perception of itself as the policeman of international capital.

For Israel the main focus has been upon Pal-

estine, though conflict with other Arab nations, notably Egypt and Jordan, has been deemed necessary by Israel to flex its military muscles at certain points.

The emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, following the revolution which overthrew the Shah in 1979, and its persistence as a focus for the development of political Islam has increasingly been seen as a threat by Israel. The United States has been equally concerned with the turn of events following 1979 and was instrumental in encouraging the attack upon Iran by Iraq in 1980, which led to the Iran-Iraq war raging from 1980-1988.

The war did not dislodge the Iranian dictatorship but encouraged the intensification of the arrest, torture and execution of dissident voices inside Iran and a consolidation of its control of the state by the medieval theocracy. The fragile alliance with Iraq, having served its purpose soon saw the US perform a volte face, eventually resulting in the downfall of former ally Saddam Hussein and the fragmentation of Iraq as a functioning state following the invasion of 2003.

It is against this background that the legitimate fears of the Iranian people of further military action must be viewed. Since the attack upon Iran in June the regime in the Islamic Republic is reported to have significantly

increased missile production with a view to generating enough capability to overwhelm Israeli missile defences. Inside Iranian ruling circles the threat of renewed conflict is widely considered high, with some officials and experts suggesting that another war is "only a matter of time".

Such thinking is fuelled, not only by the desire of the regime to increase its defence capability, but also by reports from reliable Israeli sources that Israel aims to topple the existing regime in Tehran by the end of the term of US President Donald Trump in 2029. Israeli security sources indicate that Israel is preparing to respond "much more aggressively" and for hostilities to last longer than the June conflict.

The religious zealots in the Israeli government view Iran as an existential threat and, in spite of the degrading of the network of Iran's proxies in the Middle East notably Hamas and Hezbollah, the ultimate goal remains the elimination of the regime in Iran itself. Iran's continued enrichment of uranium and increase in missile production are seen as sufficient justification for such an approach.

The current situation is exacerbated by the diplomatic impasse which has existed since the June attacks with efforts to resume nuclear talks between the US and Iran floundering, removing a key channel for de-escalation.

The threat of war, likely to be launched by Israel with the backing of the United States, is clearly the most urgent and pressing issue facing the Iranian people. Wider escalation across the Middle East, which could follow, would be disastrous not only for the people of Iran but would bring closer the prospect of worldwide conflict, given the geo-political significance of Iran for both Russia and China.

In parallel, the debate over access to nuclear facilities attacked in the June assault by the United States continues, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently passing a resolution requesting access to sites in Fordo and Natanz, which were hit in the strikes. Iran's resistance to further inspections of these sites, though it has allowed access to others, is fuelled by the reluctance of the IAEA to condemn the June attacks.

In response to the IAEA resolution Iranian ambassador to the IAEA, Reza Najafi, told reporters that, "I'm afraid the resolution will have its own consequences". Asked what those were, he said, "We will announce the consequences later."

Recent pronouncements from the United States suggest that President Donald Trump may be willing to break the current diplomatic impasse, claiming that Tehran is seeking a diplomatic resolution with Washington, which has sought the dismantlement of its nuclear programme.

"I am totally open to it, and we're talking to them," Trump said.

"And we start a process. But it would be a nice thing to have a deal with Iran. And we could have done it before the war, but that didn't work out. And something will happen there, I think."

The actions of the US in giving Israel the green light to attack Iran when negotiations were ongoing, and the subsequent US role in attacking nuclear sites, make it difficult to take Trump's words at face value. There is no doubt that a section of the corrupt leadership in Tehran realises that its survival depends upon some rapprochement with the West, while more hardline factions are reluctant to engage



A strike by workers at Kavir Steel Complex, Isfahan province, central Iran over unpaid wages and (above right) a trike by steelworkers in Ahvaz city, Khuzestan province, Iran

in anything they would regard as compromise.

Perhaps the only certainty in the current situation is that the main losers are the Iranian people who, as well as the threat of external intervention, are also having to struggle with the impact of international sanctions, endemic corruption within the state and widespread economic mismanagement.

The response of Iranian workers to the collapsing political and economic environment they face has been to increase their demand for recognition, fair pay and employment rights. Strike action in the oil industry, the transport sector, the public sector and amongst pensioners has demonstrated the extent of internal resistance to the policies of the regime.

The regime continues to respond with the arrest, imprisonment and torture of trade union, cultural and academic activists, underlining its inability to fulfil the needs of its people and resort only to force to maintain its position.

The future of Iran ultimately must lie with its people and their resistance to the theocratic dictatorship, opposition to the pressures of external intervention and the demands for a non-aligned democratic Iran. Opposing war against Iran is the first step in this process and one which should be a priority for international solidarity work in the coming year. Only peace will give the people of Iran the chance they deserve.

Steve Bishop is an EC member of CODIR (Committee for the Defence of Iranian People's Rights), the Solidarity organisation campaigning for peace and progress in Iran. Steve is a member of Liberation and a regular contributor to Liberation Journal.

Turkey / analysis

Peace-lovers in Turkey have consistently been demanding Turkey's immediate disengagement from NATO. They have been warning the government about the dangers of the illusion of Turkey "growing" by extending its borders. If coveting the lands of other countries is morally indefensible, it is also politically reckless, as it risks triggering developments that may lead Turkey to disaster under the guidance of warmongering imperialists and greedy capitalists

Neo-ottomanism – an imperialist project

How Ankara has been trying to upgrade its position within the imperialist hierarchy and the dangers this presents to the Turks as well as people in the wider Middle East. By **İbrahim Can Usta** and **Murat Akad**



WHEN the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, it followed a foreign policy strictly in line with the expectations of Western imperialism. The NATO summit in 2004, organised in Turkey, reaffirmed the country's role in the imperialist hierarchy.

Neo-Ottomanism, an illusion

With the Arab Spring, formerly latent tensions between AKP and Western imperialism became apparent. Turkey started to benefit from a relatively autonomous foreign policy more frequently. The AKP government was actively involved in the regime change in Iraq, as well as in the subsequent civil war in Libya. From 2011 on, Ankara had been openly supporting many Islamist groups fighting against the Assad government in Syria.

The foreign policy approach known as "Neo-Ottomanism" characterised Turkey's diplomatic agenda under the AKP rule. Claiming to inherit the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the AKP government developed a discourse of ownership over all the lands once ruled by the Ottomans. During this period, President Erdoğan gained an undeserved international fame even among left-wing circles around the world, who portrayed him as a representative of oppressed nations and AKP as an anti-imperialist party. Soon, speculations began about whether Turkey would exit NATO. In fact, Erdoğan's "anti-imperialist" illusion was based on a superficial and incomplete understanding of imperialism as a discursive practice limited to the actions of the United States (US).

Capitalism in Turkey had attained a considerable economic level by the 2010s. Apparent weakening of the US hegemony encouraged AKP to assist new ventures for Turkish capitalism in Russia, China, Africa and other countries. Moreover, the imperial legacy and AKP's Islamist discourse provided the government with a political toolset calling for taking greater initiatives in foreign policy. Meanwhile, Western countries had been challenging AKP's unrivalled political dominance by efforts to create realistic alternatives to him. In return, there were open polemics with the USA, the EU, and Israel. The tension usually went beyond mere rhetoric as Turkey developed its economic ties with China, purchased the S-400 missile system from Russia, and signed a contract with Russia for the construction of a nuclear power plant.

A multifaceted political agenda

AKP has been pursuing a counter-revolutionary mission since its rise to power. Adoption of religious elements in education, bureaucracy, and daily life is accompanied by political ar-

rests, censorship of the press, persecution of journalists, and relentless attacks on the working class. The government's political attacks against the principles and institutions of the secular republican regime in Turkey formed a suitable basis for Neo-Ottomanism. Praising the Ottoman legacy within the country provided a source of legitimacy for expansionist attempts in foreign policy.

The Neo-Ottoman policy may evoke a nostalgic longing for the pre-Republican past or for previous centuries, but it was rooted in contemporary political needs. By the time AKP consolidated its political hold in the 2010s, Turkey's advanced capitalist economy was seeking to expand beyond its borders and create new spheres of influence. Ankara aspired to upgrade its position within the imperialist hierarchy. In fact, Turkey had always been more than a passive actor blindly following every directive from the US, Germany, or Britain. The rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow was primarily aimed at strengthening AKP's bargaining position against his Western allies.

AKP's bargaining with Western imperialism reached its limits when Turkey and Russia came into open conflict in Libya, Syria, and the Caucasus. In Ukraine, Turkey's initially balanced stance gradually evolved into more active support for Kyiv. Israel's recent attacks on Iran formed another reminder of the axes of

Turkey's foreign policy. Despite the government's balanced official stance, pro-AKP media gave place to statements expressing a deep hostility against Iran, the historical representative of Shia Islam since the sixteenth century. Some writers proposed maintaining an equal distance from both warring sides, both of which were Turkey's key regional rivals.

Neo-Ottomanism is based on the simultaneous concurrence and partnership between pro-imperialist powers in the region. As seen recently, this policy includes enlarging the Turkish bourgeoisie's sphere of influence at the expense of rival actors and serving imperialist aggressions against the interests of Russia, China, and Iran at the same time. In different contexts, pro-US actors such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan may become partners or rivals to Turkey according to the long-term interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie.

An imperialist project

Turkey's expansionist aspirations are based on imperialist attempts to reshape the Middle East. Neo-Ottomanism cannot be reduced to Turkish irredentism. As borders, balances, and alliances shift in the Middle East, the Turkish bourgeoisie is striving to carve out new spheres of influence for itself. Even the apparent rapprochement with Russia eventually served Western imperialism since it granted Turkey the role of a transmission belt between Western powers and their enemies. The interdependence between NATO and Turkish capitalism is not an exception but a precondition of Neo-Ottomanism.

Turkish exporters cannot imagine isolation from the European market. Likewise, no foreign enterprise will easily do away with their investments in Turkey. NATO membership is not only a military engagement, but it has also been a key pillar of Turkish capitalism since 1952.

There are at least 28 NATO bases operating in Turkey, and Ankara has virtually no authority over the military systems and heavy weaponry stationed at these bases. Dozens of military bases in Turkey are at the service of imperialism through NATO treaties and various bilateral agreements, which constantly

pose the risk of dragging Turkey into wars and conflicts at the expense of the people's will. The existence of US-controlled nuclear missiles in Turkey is another reason for stress for the people, whose security is not ensured but is at risk because of these weapons.

Since the presidential elections in 2023, AKP has moved to restore ties with the leading imperialist actors: signing a \$23 billion deal with the U.S. for the sale and modernisation of F-16s, ratification of Finland and Sweden's NATO membership faster than expected, sending additional Turkish troops to Kosovo as part of NATO forces, and recently signing a \$7 billion deal with the UK to purchase 20 Eurofighter Typhoon jets. Regarding Gaza, AKP maintained a dual policy by adopting a pro-Palestinian stance on the surface but refusing to fully cut political and economic ties with Israel, and even helping neutralise more radical elements within Hamas. Moreover, Turkey remained silent in the face of Israel's attacks on Lebanon and Iran. Turkey's participation in US-Israel-UK operations in Syria dealt another setback to the Palestinian resistance.

Turkey not only joined the new NATO war concept at the Vilnius Summit but also declared to host NATO's next summit in 2026 in Ankara. Turkey's contribution to Trump's Gaza plan to turn it into a modern colony is supported by the country's decision to reduce energy imports from Russia and increase cooperation with the United States.

Peace-lovers in Turkey have consistently been demanding Turkey's immediate disengagement from NATO. They continue to warn the government about the dangers of the illusion of Turkey "growing" by extending its borders. If coveting the lands of other countries is morally indefensible, it is also politically reckless, as it risks triggering developments that may lead Turkey to disaster under the guidance of warmongering imperialists and greedy capitalists

The Peace Committee of Turkey was founded in 2016. Based in the Middle East, it has focused on the developments in this region that directly affects Turkey. The Committee is an active member of the World Peace Council. Both Usta and Akad are members of the Committee's board.



Pallab Sengupta / interview

The World Peace Council is intensifying its campaigns to expose ongoing wars, NATO expansion, and the growing militarisation of international relations. We are organising international conferences, solidarity missions, and coordinated global actions with member organisations to highlight the human cost of conflicts and mobilise public opinion. A key part of this work includes our long-standing solidarity with the people of Palestine



Path to true peace in Palestine

Pallab Sengupta started his life of progressive activism in the late 1960s when graduating from Raja Peary Mohan College. He was jailed during the historic student unrest against imposing governor rule in West Bengal in 1967. He joined the All-India Student Federation and the CPI. Sengupta also played an important role in the world student-youth movement as Vice President of the International Union of Students in Prague and General Secretary of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Hungary. He then worked for the All-India Peace and Solidarity Council, becoming Secretary General in 2002. In 2022 he was elected as President of the World Peace Council, the largest peace organisation in the world. Liberation caught up with Pallab to discuss the conflicts, search for justice and fulfillment of self-determination for Palestine and the wider Middle East

Liberation: Let's start with an issue which has concerned people everywhere since the start of the year: In light of the Trump administration's efforts to uphold United States (US) global dominance in the face of its declining hegemony, what are the principal threats to international peace within the evolving multipolar world order?

The main threat to international peace arises from the US attempt to maintain global dominance despite the clear shift toward a multipolar world. Washington's militarisation of international relations, NATO's expansion into new regions, the weaponisation of sanctions, and efforts to limit the sovereign development paths of other nations have added significantly to global instability. Instead of adapting to a more democratic and plural global environment, the US continues to rely on coercive measures and proxy confrontations, which hinder peaceful conflict resolution, fuel arms races, and intensify regional tensions.

At the same time, the growing influence of platforms such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and other emerging multilateral frameworks highlights a global demand for a more balanced and inclusive order. These groupings promote dialogue, economic cooperation, and respect for sovereignty—principles vital for stability and sustainable development. Their rise presents real opportunities for more equitable global cooperation and collective security. However, these opportunities can be fully realised only if all major powers, including the US, commit to genuine multilateralism and uphold international law.

Liberation: What are the potential outcomes of the so-called 20-point Trump Peace Plan for Gaza, particularly in terms of ensuring protection for Palestinians from Israeli genocidal actions and supporting their pursuit of independence and self-determination?

The so-called peace plan does not address the core issues of the Israeli occupation. While presented as a roadmap for stability, it largely reinforces Israel's military and political control, offering no meaningful guarantees for Palestinian safety or rights. Without an immediate end to Israeli genocidal actions, full withdrawal from occupied territories, and recognition of Palestinian sovereignty, any plan will remain cosmetic. True peace requires end-

ing the blockade, ensuring international protection for civilians, and upholding the Palestinian people's right to independence, return, and self-determination under international law.

Liberation: How would you assess the current situation in the Middle East, in the light of the joint Israeli-US attack on Iran in June 2025 and the ongoing Palestinian struggle for a two-state solution, which continues to face opposition from both Israel and the US?

The joint Israeli-US strike on Iran in June 2025 has dangerously escalated regional tensions and further destabilised the Middle East. It reflects a continued strategy of "New Middle East" imposing geopolitical control rather than resolving underlying conflicts. Meanwhile, the Palestinian struggle for statehood remains blocked by Israel's refusal to accept a two-state solution and the US policy of shielding Israeli aggression. The region will remain volatile as long as occupation, sanctions, and unilateral military actions replace diplomacy. A comprehensive and just peace must centre on Palestinian rights, regional sovereignty, and the rejection of external intervention.

Liberation: China has repeatedly called for dialogue and genuine diplomacy to be given a chance to assist the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Do you agree that China can potentially play a greater role in promoting peace globally?

China's consistent call for dialogue, multilateralism, and respect for the UN Charter stands in contrast to the militarised policies of the Western powers. Its role in facilitating the Iran-Saudi rapprochement demonstrated the constructive potential of non-hegemonic diplomacy. China can indeed contribute more to global peace by expanding initiatives based on economic cooperation, conflict mediation, and support for development without political conditions. However, peace depends on collective global action, not one country alone; China's role must complement a broader rejection of unilateralism and militarism.

Liberation: To what extent is Trump capable of achieving his stated goal of ending the Russia-Ukraine war, and what are the key obstacles to a lasting peace?

Ending the conflict requires addressing its root causes: NATO's eastward expansion, Ukraine's militarisation, and the refusal to consider Russia's security concerns. While Trump claims he can end the war quickly, any genuine peace demands negotiations that respect the security and sovereignty of all parties. The key obstacles include entrenched US strategic interests, the NATO military agenda, and the influence of arms lobbies that profit from prolonging conflict. A lasting settlement must come through diplomacy, neutrality guarantees, and a European security framework free from bloc confrontation.

Liberation: What should be the central priority for progressive forces and movements in responding to today's emerging critical threats?

Progressive movements must prioritise building a broad international front against imperialist wars, militarisation, and the erosion of democratic rights. Recent mobilisations across Europe—where large sections of society have taken to the streets opposing war escalation and calling for diplomatic solutions—demonstrate

the growing global solidarity and the crucial role played by progressive forces. These actions reflect a wider public demand for peace, social justice, and alternatives to austerity and militarised policies.

The struggle for peace is inseparable from efforts to confront economic inequality, resource plunder, racism, and neoliberal policies that deepen global injustice. Strengthening solidarity among peoples, defending national sovereignty, and promoting a just world order based on cooperation rather than domination are central tasks. At the same time, progressive forces must actively counter disinformation, challenge narratives that justify conflict, and cultivate an informed and engaged public committed to peace, justice, and internationalism.

Liberation: What initiatives is the World Peace Council (WPC) undertaking to raise awareness about ongoing wars and promote joint actions for the achievement and endurance of global peace, and what major challenges does it currently face?

The WPC is intensifying its campaigns to expose ongoing wars, NATO expansion, and the growing militarisation of international relations. We are organising international conferences, solidarity missions, and coordinated global actions with member organisations to highlight the human cost of conflicts and mobilise public opinion. A key part of this work includes our long-standing solidarity with the people of Palestine, whose struggle for justice and self-determination remains a central concern of the global peace movement. We also focus on youth engagement, anti-nuclear initiatives, and strengthening regional peace efforts.

However, our work faces major challenges: the dominance of corporate media narratives, shrinking democratic space in many countries, and the vast resources available to pro-war forces. Despite these obstacles, the WPC remains firmly committed to uniting peace-loving peoples in the struggle for a world free from aggression, occupation, and exploitation.

Liberation: Comrade Pallab, we thank you for your time and patience in answering our questions. Do you have any final remarks for our readers and those in Britain that campaign for peace and disarmament?

The progressive people of Britain have played a vital and consistent role in the struggle for peace and solidarity with Palestine, standing firmly against war, occupation, and apartheid. From mass mobilisations bringing hundreds of thousands onto the streets of London and cities across the country, to sustained campaigns by trade unions, student organisations, faith groups, and cultural figures, Britain's solidarity movement has become one of the most powerful voices for Palestinian rights in Europe. Progressive forces have challenged the complicity of the British government in Israeli aggression, demanded an immediate ceasefire, called for an end to arms sales to Israel, and supported campaigns for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) as a peaceful democratic tool.

They have worked to amplify Palestinian voices in the media, academia, and Parliament, while defending the right to protest in the face of attempts to criminalise dissent. In doing so, the progressive people of Britain uphold a proud tradition of internationalism, rooted in the belief that peace, justice, and national liberation are inseparable, and that solidarity with Palestine is a moral imperative for all those committed to human rights and global peace.

Africa / analysis

Across most of Africa, in varying degrees, earlier democratic developmental prospects have been stymied by debt peonage, structural adjustment programmes, and the emergence of corrupt comprador elites. At best, where the façade of democracy is retained, there is often mere electoral rotation among rival elites typically backed by one or another external power

Military coups and the challenge of democracy

What lies behind the military take-overs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and the recent ouster of the Madagascan president Rajoelina? And does this mean the people are rejecting democracy and embracing the generals, asks **Jeremy Cronin**



WHAT ARE we to make of the military take-overs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger between 2020 and 2023, and the recent ouster of the Madagascan president Rajoelina in October? A 2024 survey of 39 African countries by the Ghana-based Afrobarometer was greeted by much of the mainstream media with misleading headlines like “Support for democracy ebbing in Africa”.

In fact, the survey found Africans overwhelmingly want democracy. But it did find opposition to military rule had weakened by 11 percent across most African countries, and dramatically in Mali and Burkina Faso (by 40 and 36 percent respectively). More than half of Africans (53 percent) say they are willing to accept a military takeover if elected leaders “abuse power for their own ends”.

Does this mean a rejection of democracy, or a concern for the quality of democracy?

It isn't just in Africa that citizens are expressing discontent about the state of their “democracies”. A Danish NGO (the Alliance of Democracies) conducts annual worldwide surveys on democracy perception in more than 50 countries. AoD is not exactly left-leaning. Its paradigmatic starting point is rooted in the hegemonic Western assumption of a world characterised by liberal democracies pitted against governments selectively labelled “authoritarian” (China, for instance, but Saudi Arabia not so much). However, AoD's own findings on citizens' perceptions challenge this simplistic binary.

In China, according to its 2024 report, respondents have overwhelmingly positive views of their political system - 92 percent say democracy is important to them; 79 percent say their country is democratic; and 91 percent say their government serves the interests of most people rather than a small group. This last-mentioned statistic contrasts with the US (42 percent), France (43 percent) and the UK (40 percent).

The Chinese system (“whole-process people's democracy”) is based on wide consultation from the local level up and on coop-

eration rather than electoral party competition. I am not suggesting the Chinese system, rooted in its own history and realities, is flawless or a ready-made universal model. Indeed, the Chinese insist their democracy is work in progress, not a timeless model to be applied formulaically elsewhere.

Across most of Africa, in varying degrees, earlier democratic developmental prospects have been stymied by debt peonage, structural adjustment programs, and the emergence of corrupt comprador elites. At best, where the façade of democracy is retained, there is often mere electoral rotation among rival elites typically backed by one or another external power. In practice, in many cases, the call to “restore democracy” from the African Union, for instance, that routinely follows military take-overs, without any mention of the austerity-debt shackles and the destabilising role of imperialism, amounts to a call for the restoration of what is failing citizens.

This is the general context of military coups in West Africa in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (through 2020 to 2023), and the ousting of Madagascan President Rajoelina in October this year.

The three West African countries are landlocked neighbours. After independence in the 1960s they suffered decades of French neo-colonial domination. Trade unions were suppressed and popular leaders like Thomas Sankara were assassinated. The forced adoption of the CFA franc, issued and regulated by the French Treasury, limited any sovereign control over monetary and fiscal policy. French companies dominated the mining sector but were only taxed in France, with revenue lost to the actual countries endowed with the mineral resources. The former colonies were even expected to recompense France for infrastructure previously built by African forced labour for the use of colonial surplus extraction. After the end of the Cold War, French Africa policy shifted with neoliberal “conditionalities” tying aid to “democratic” reforms.

NATO's 2011 illegal military intervention in Libya exacerbated the simmering regional Sahelian crisis. At the time Libya was bombed, it had the highest Human Development Index on the continent and was involved in regional infrastructure development. The destruction of the Libyan state has unleashed a flood of illegal arms trading and a growing jihadist insurgency. After 2011, despite French and US military expansion in the region, jihadism increased significantly. At a popular level the French and US military were seen to be protecting their own geopolitical and economic interests not ordinary citizens.

Deepening poverty and a burgeoning, underemployed youth population, and general immiseration added to the mix. These were the propulsive forces behind the series of military take-overs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger between 2020 and 2023. All were enthusiastically welcomed on the streets.

A strong anti-imperialism has been asserted by the new military leaderships. The legacy of pan-Africanism and of Thomas Sankara is

evoked. French diplomats and military have been expelled and the three states are working closely together. In Mali, where the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung reports nine out of ten respondents consider the country is moving in the right direction, the interim president Colonel Assimi Goïta is actively seeking to rebuild a grassroots democracy based in part on indigenous traditions. The Burkinabe junta leader, 37-year-old Captain Ibrahim Traoré is widely popular through Africa and the African diaspora. In a 2023 Russia-Africa summit he told African leaders to “stop behaving like puppets who dance every time the imperialists pull the strings.” Traoré's government has set up a state-owned mining company requiring foreign firms (including new Russian companies) to give it a 15 percent stake in their local operations and to transfer skills. With Chinese assistance Burkina Faso has begun assembling electric cars. In April even the IMF noted “commendable progress” in raising revenue, and increasing spending on education, health and social protection.

However, despite widespread popular support, the long legacy of underdevelopment has left grave vulnerabilities and challenges. Imperialist powers like France and the US are not sitting idly by. There was a recent assassination attempt on Traoré. Popular support and mobilisation will remain the principal pillar for the defence and consolidation of these initiatives.

The military takeovers in West Africa were primarily propelled by the deep insecurity caused by Sahelian jihadist insurgency, and popular dissatisfaction with a predatory French military presence that failed to provide security even for the basics of electoral democracy – in many regions polling stations couldn't open, ballots couldn't be distributed.

While sharing many of the same underlying structural features of its West African counterparts, the October uprising in Madagascar had a different ideological colouring. It was more specifically directed at an incumbent, corrupt domestic political elite. The turning point came when an armed forces unit headed by Colonel Randrianirina joined the youth protesters and ousted president Rajoelina. Waves of mass protest initially over electricity and water shortages had spread through all urban centres in the island. They were mobilised by internet-savvy youth styling themselves as “Gen Z Mada” emulating counterparts in Sri Lanka, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal and Bangladesh. They marched under a version of the skull-and-crossbones Gen Z flag with the addition of a traditional Malagasy workers' straw hat.

The youth movement's horizontalism, its fluid mobility and absence of visible leadership, protected it from decapitation. But this strength is also a vulnerability. In the absence of strong party political and trade union organisation, in the absence of an effective programmatic perspective beyond a condemnation of corruption and the call for dignity and respect for human rights, the ouster of Rajoelina could see popular energies captured by old or new elites.

It's too early in the West African and Madagascar cases to confidently predict medium term outcomes. One thing is clear though – calling for a return to “liberal democracy” while remaining silent about imperialist-imposed debt, austerity and grave social insecurity carries no popular traction.

Jeremy Cronin is a veteran South African Communist Party Central Committee and Politburo member, former SACP deputy general secretary, former government deputy minister, and former political prisoner during apartheid rule. He is also a noted poet and writer.

Ousted Madagascar president Andy Rajoelina
Picture Credit: UNCTAD/Creative Commons



Western Sahara / Africa's last colony

The UK was the only permanent member of the UN Security Council to clearly uphold the Saharawi right to self-determination. However, on June 1 2025, the Labour government changed position. In a joint UK-Morocco communique, then Foreign Secretary David Lammy attempted to improve the prospects for UK contracts with Morocco by expressing support for what Morocco calls its 'autonomy plan' – effectively Moroccan annexation of Western Sahara

WESTERN SAHARA, the last colony in Africa, may soon disappear—not through decolonisation, but by the abandonment of the Saharawi people by western 'democracies'. After Morocco and Mauritania invaded Western Sahara in 1975, the contemporary Saharawi struggle began. Fleeing Saharawi, congregating in makeshift refugee camps, were attacked by air with napalm and phosphorus bombs—leaving those who escaped to Southern Algeria to live in exile in desert camps, and those in the occupied territory under repressive occupation.

Many in Britain associate Morocco with adventurous holiday destinations, yet few recognise it as a brutal occupying force. Despite being recognised and reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice, countless UN resolutions, the European Court of Justice, and the African Court on Human and People's Rights—Morocco has defied international law for the last 50 years, denying the Saharawi people their right to self-determination for half a century.

Solidarity in Britain works through multiple organisations, providing support in different arenas. Adala UK observes and reports the systematic human rights violations perpetrated against Saharawis in Moroccan-occupied territory; Sandblast and Olive Branch UK empower Saharawi voices through creative projects in the refugee camps; Western Sahara Support Group aids self-sufficiency efforts of a cooperative run farm in the El Aaiun camp; and Western Sahara Campaign UK (WSC) generates political support for the Saharawi peoples' rights.

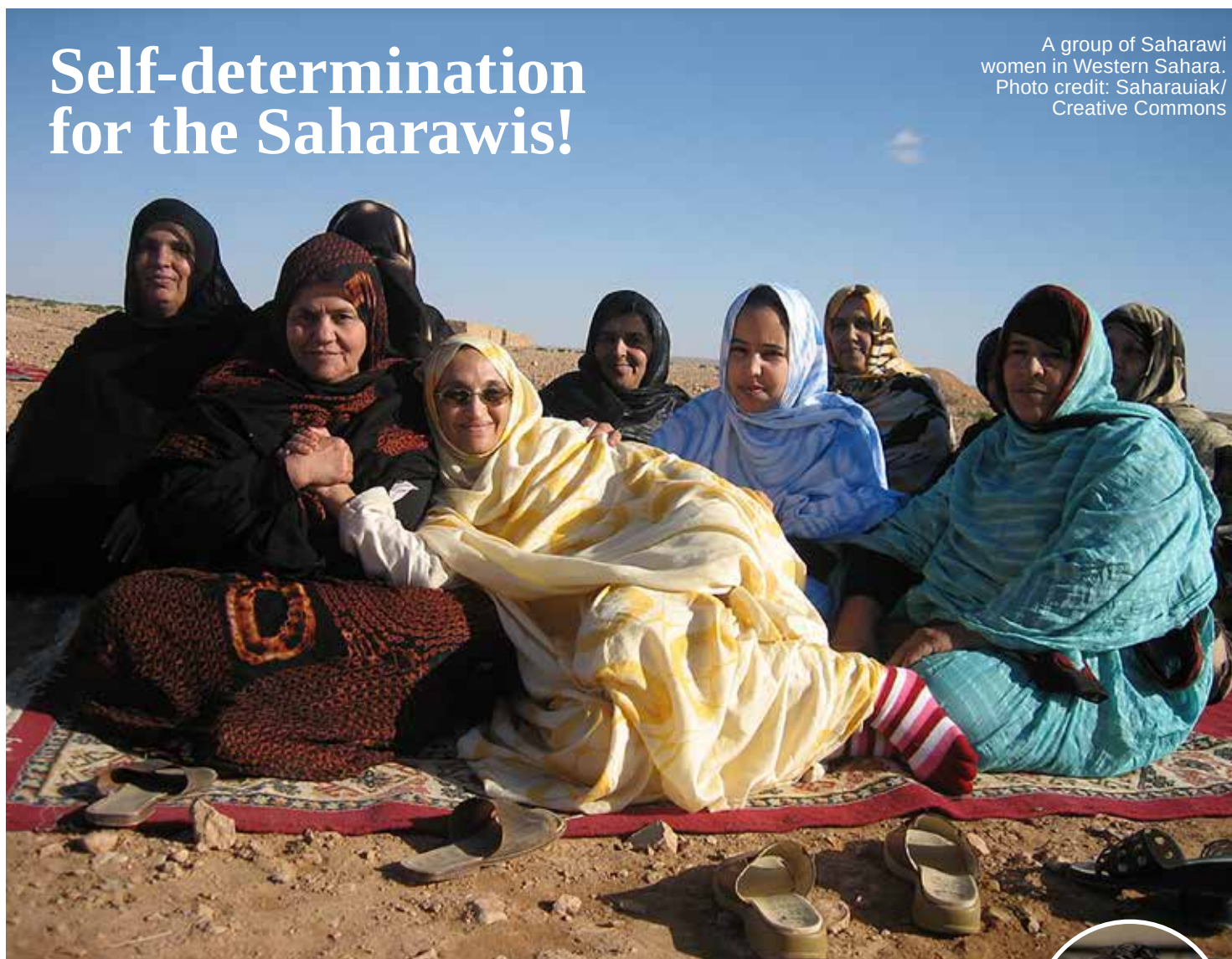
Political solidarity with the Saharawi plight spans back four decades—to 1985. Originally backed by a Haldane Society of Social Lawyers report of those fleeing conflict, alongside Labour figures who spoke out against Moroccan aggression and/or visited the camps—including Basil Davidson, Fenner Brockway, and Alf Lomas, as well as MPs/MEPs including Peter Hain, Glenda Jackson, Gerald Kaufman, Neil and Glenys Kinnock and others, WSC has worked to champion the Saharawi people by advocating for their right to self-determination and human rights.

WSC has received support from the TUC, Unison, Unite, GMB, FBU, the NEU and BFAWU over the years, rightly concerned with the non-existent workers' rights of Saharawis under occupation, including the right to organise independent trade unions. Allied MPs have also advocated for Western Sahara through the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Western Sahara.

Britain's role in efforts to resolve this conflict have come under recent scrutiny. Previous governments defined the territorial status of Western Sahara to be "undetermined", stating support for "UN-led efforts to reach a just, lasting, and mutually-acceptable political solution, based on compromise, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara", standing as the only permanent member of the UN Security Council to clearly uphold the Saharawi right to self-determination.

However, on June 1, 2025, the Labour government changed position. In a joint UK-Morocco communique, David Lammy attempted to improve the prospects for UK contracts with Morocco by expressing support for what Morocco calls its 'autonomy plan' – effectively Moroccan annexation of Western Sahara. The government's announcement that it now considers the Moroccan Autonomy Proposal (MAP) to be "the most credible, viable and pragmatic basis for a lasting resolution to the

Self-determination for the Saharawis!



A group of Saharawi women in Western Sahara. Photo credit: Saharaiak/Creative Commons

Morocco has defied international law for the last 50 years, denying the Saharawi people their right to self-determination for half a century. Ollie Mills on the history and context and what Liberation members and supporters can do to show solidarity



dispute", coupled with references to untapped trade and investment opportunities, signals an alarming shift. Whilst the government assures that their endorsement of the MAP is conditional on Moroccan commitments to expand on how self-determination can be achieved through a seemingly contradictory proposal, this move can be seen as the UK placing profits before principles, backing a Moroccan proposal for its annexation of Western Sahara, and riding rough-shod over the rights of the Saharawi people.

When 16 years of armed conflict was followed by a UN-brokered ceasefire agreement in 1991, many saw the creation of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to be cause for hope. The only small glimmer of hope has been a British minister, Hamish Falconer, meeting with his opposite number in Polisario for the first time in 50 years. However, looking back on the decades of stalled progress that followed, it is clear that renewed political will for a solution is needed. Security Council negotiations in October followed the UK's policy shift, where further backsliding took place. Whilst Resolution 2797(2025) renewed its mandate for an additional year, its adoption was not unanimous. China, Pakistan, and the Russian

Federation all abstained from voting, Algeria refused to participate in protest, and the Polisario Front described the text as a "dangerous and unprecedented departure" which "undermine[s] the foundations of the UN peace process in Western Sahara".

Within this context, WSC have worked to use the 50th anniversary, marked in November, to strengthen solidarity with and awareness of the Saharawi struggle. Recent activities, including an exhibition, created together with Olive Branch Arts UK, and a reception in Westminster, both aimed to centre Saharawi voices in the heart of British politics, along with a trade union roundtable hosted by Unison, which covered discussion of the latest developments in conflict resolution efforts, the fallout from the MINURSO renewal, and the expropriation of natural resources by companies operating with Morocco in the occupied territory. A delegation from Polisario visited London from these events and met with FCDO officials as well as supporters.

Never before has the UN Security Council rewarded a country for its unprovoked invasion and occupation of a neighbouring territory, in violation of the principles of the UN Charter and the International Court of Justice. This struggle is not solely limited to the lives and

liberties of future generations of Saharawi. We stand at an inflection point, where we either fight for a world in which conflicts can be peacefully resolved by rules based on fairness and justice, or concede to one in which matters are determined by who has more power.

WSC continues to advocate for the rights of the Saharawi people, and looks to hold the government to account over its new policy direction. As such, WSC asks Liberation to join us in writing to MPs, to press the government to go further in its support for the Saharawi people. Please write to your MP and ask them to write to Hamish Falconer MP, Under-Secretary of State, FCDO. Include these key points—such as demanding that the UK:

- Promote a political, democratic way forward by emphasising its support for the rule of international law and maintaining a focus on self-determination,
- Protect human rights in the upcoming Dialogue, by calling on Morocco to stop blocking visits to Western Sahara by UN High Commissioners, and;
- Demand an end to the illegal extraction of natural resources from Western Sahara.

Ollie Mills is campaign officer at Western Sahara Campaign UK.

Sudan / comment

External interventions that have beset our country over the past six years all converge toward a single objective: thwarting of the Sudanese Revolution of December 2018, hollowing it of substance and imposing a dependent political set-up that protects US interests and those of the other three countries - Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates - that, despite their differing direct interests, make up the quartet motivated towards this end



US imperialist arrogance: from Gaza to Sudan

'Soft statements' and formal appeals must be transforming into practical steps to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors for the population, deliver aid, and conduct neutral and independent investigations into all the abuses and crimes committed in the conflict wracking our country. The criticism and condemnations issued by governments must be followed by concrete actions, writes Fathi El-Fadl



THE EXTREME atrocities being perpetrated by the militia of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) against civilians in Al Fasher, North Darfur's capital, following the planned withdrawal of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) has brought the plight of the Sudanese people to the world's attention.

However, observers were puzzled by the United States President Donald Trump's statement in which he thanked the Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during the latter's visit to the White House on Tuesday 18 November, for bringing the Sudanese crisis to his attention. This was an entirely disingenuous gesture on the part of Trump, a false nod to the disastrous situation in Sudan to appease his guest pursuant to the lucrative commercial and financial deals signed by the two.

Trump's approach to the Sudanese war follows the same pattern used towards the genocidal war in Gaza.

On 11 November, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution proposed by the US establishing a temporary intervention force to stabilise the Gaza Strip. The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour, while Russia and China abstained.

Resolution 2803 reflects a wholly US vision and signals new shifts in the global balance of power. The abstention of Russia and China should not be misread as neutrality but rather it reveals a web of understanding and converging interests among imperialist powers shaping the international order - and through which these forces are redrawing spheres of influence and reallocating roles across our region, the Middle East.

The main aim of this US plan is to dismantle the Palestinian resistance movement, suppress their national struggle and put an end to the Palestinian people establishing their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital (the two-state solution). It is a direct continuation of the broader US imperial project known as the 'Greater Middle East' - a project targeting the entire region, Sudan included.

It is no secret that the external interventions that have beset our country over the past six years all converge toward a single objective. This objective is the ultimate thwarting of the Sudanese Revolution, which erupted in December 2018, hollowing it of substance and imposing a dependent political set-up that protects US interests and those of the other three countries - Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates - that, despite their differing direct interests, make up the quartet motivated towards this end.

The current military confrontation between the allies of yesterday in Sudan is not merely a

military struggle for power, rather it represents a complex scene of conflict between the parasitic wings of capitalism within the country over power and resources. These forces have amassed their wealth and privileges through corruption and the exploitation of power to loot resources, using armed conflict and terrorism to reinforce their dominance. Both sides are indeed encouraged and supported to continue the war to serve the interest of the regional powers which share the goals of imperialism that the December Revolution must be aborted.

What we witness today is an extension of a policy entrenched since the first Darfur massacres in 2003. Therefore, confronting these crimes demands immediate and firm accountability for those responsible for issuing and executing the orders. It goes beyond the culprit whose hands are stained with blood. Justice must reach governments who supplied arms, rendered diplomatic support, and intervened directly in the military confrontation in our country.

Egypt and Turkey have recently sent their military planes to bombard targets in the areas controlled by the RSF militia. However, tens of thousands of civilians lost their lives as a result. The Islamic Republic of Iran also continues to intervene through training militias, supplying arms, and ammunition. The US administration is well-aware of these documented interventions, yet still they turn a blind eye.

The US has played a role in convening talks in Jeddah, Switzerland, and New York. This flurry of activity however is aimed at managing the crisis, rather than resolving it, steering its course in line with the US strategy in the region. This farce reached its peak when the US President claimed he would now pay attention to the crisis in Sudan, supposedly based on the information and appeals of the Saudi Crown Prince.

This farce becomes even clearer with references to "rare minerals". It is not only Sudan's mineral wealth that is at stake, but also its strategic location, fertile agricultural lands, water supply, and livestock resources - all core motives behind the US and Saudi push.

The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) and other democratic and patriotic forces have repeatedly stressed that this war is not merely an internal conflict, but a regional, international, and imperial project aimed at weakening the Sudanese nation. This would clear the way for fragmentation and division, draining the country's resources, as well as enable the violating of its national sovereignty, with the help of local forces that opposed the December Revolution from its earliest days.

In its statement, the SCP Politburo called for international solidarity. It addressed the

patriotic and progressive organisations, foremost among them the communist and labour parties, as well as human rights organisations, to act together to help fetter the hands of the criminals. The statement further stressed the importance of common people's actions to stop the catastrophic war.

In the same statement, the SCP called for transforming "soft statements" and formal appeals into practical steps to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors for the population, deliver aid, and conduct neutral and independent investigations into all the abuses and crimes committed in the conflict wracking our country. The criticism and condemnations issued by governments must be followed by concrete actions: imposing political, economic, and diplomatic sanctions on the perpetrators of these crimes; banning of military and logistical support to the criminal belligerents; and referring their crimes to independent international and local judicial mechanisms.

All this must be combined with hard work inside Sudan. The Sudanese revolutionary and democratic forces must advance their united actions. The ongoing dialogue between the Forces for Radical Change (FRC) and the Resistance Committees must agree a common programme and action. Cooperation with the growing trade union movement is vital for the success of building a united people's front that will play the decisive role in confronting the enemies, dismantling their repressive organs, defeating their conspiracies, obtaining justice for the victims, as well as freedom, peace, and social justice for the people of Sudan.

The failure to protect unarmed civilians and the withdrawal of the SAF from Al Fasher, is an irresponsible act deserving condemnation and accountability. The primary and most important duty of the army is to protect citizens and the homeland and not to escape and leave innocent civilians to face the brutalities of the RSF militia.

The continuation of systematic violence in the country is a result of all the wars our country has endured, marked by barbarity and the failure to bring perpetrators to justice. Impunity has never been an exception, rather it is the norm and the central reason for the recurrence of these crimes. The ongoing absence of accountability has recreated an environment that allows the perpetration once more of genocide and war crimes against the unfortunate population of cities, towns, and villages once they are abandoned by one side in the conflict.

The basic and righteous demands of the Sudanese people include:

- An immediate ceasefire, the declaration of a humanitarian truce, and a complete opening of the humanitarian corridor to all affected areas, ensuring the safety of the convoys, and holding accountable all who committed, ordered, or contributed to these crimes.

- A swift, independent, and transparent international investigation into war crimes.

- Urgent solidarity actions from the democratic forces, human rights organisations, and progressive activists to pressure the international community to halt any support or political or military complicity with the parties responsible for crimes against civilians.

Fathi El-Fadl is a progressive Sudanese politician, convenor of the Sudan Peace and Solidarity Council, and vice president of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR) – a London-based non-profit organisation that promotes international trade union rights through research and advocacy service.

Liberation hero / Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim

In 1952, against the backdrop of a society still deeply conservative and traditional, as well as suffering under the yoke of British imperialism, Comrade Fatima and her companions embarked on a courageous campaign of consciousness-raising when they co-founded the Sudanese Women's Union. Today, as the SWU continues along her path, it stands as the living and breathing testament to a true revolution against oppression and injustice

Champion of freedom and equality in Sudan

Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim's lifelong struggle was an enduring example and lesson for generations to come - one that proved how conviction and a principled commitment can reshape reality and lay the foundations for a better future for so many, writes **Ghada Makky Abdalkreem**

FATIMA AHMED IBRAHIM'S lifelong struggle was never a personal the journey of one individual in and of itself; it was an enduring example and lesson for generations to come - one that proved how conviction and a principled commitment can reshape reality and lay the foundations for a better future for so many. Today, as the Sudanese Women's Union (SWU) continues along her path, it stands as the living and breathing testament to a true revolution against oppression and injustice, as well as the guardian of the hard-won gains for which this remarkable woman sacrificed so much.

Comrade Fatima did not write these pages of history for herself alone; she wrote for every Sudanese woman and citizen who believes in justice and freedom. Her legacy remains a guiding light for all who aspire to a society that is equal, fair, and truly free.

Born in 1928 in the city of Omdurman to an educated family that instilled in her a deep sense of awareness and justice, Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim displayed signs of leadership and her vision from an early age. She led the first girls' strike at the historic Omdurman Girls' Secondary School - a pioneering institution that played a decisive role in educating young women and producing the trailblazers to come of the Sudanese national movement.

In 1952, against the backdrop of a society still deeply conservative and traditional, as well as suffering under the yoke of British imperialism, Comrade Fatima and her companions embarked on a courageous campaign of consciousness-raising when they co-founded the SWU. She was elected as its president four years later. It was the first organised women's movement in the country and encompassed a social and political revolution in every sense.

Comrade Fatima also became the editor-in-chief of the SWU's newspaper, 'Sawt al-Mara' ('Women's Voice'), which had a prominent role in Sudan's national resistance movement.

The SWU worked to expand women's access to education, combat violence and oppression, as well as organise seminars and campaigns reaching schools, villages, and marketplaces. For the first time in contemporary Sudan, it asserted that women's issues were not merely peripheral concerns, but questions of national importance and a vision for the future.

Comrade Fatima joined the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) in 1954 and soon went on to become the first woman to serve on its Central Committee. The SCP offered her a crucial intellectual and political platform, which served to strengthen the women's movement in Sudan as well as place justice and equality at the core of the national liberation project. With this support, feminist awareness expanded, and women's rights became a central part of political and social discourse. Indeed, it is often

remarked that one could not separate Comrade Fatima's feminism from her political activism, and vice versa - the two were so inextricably intertwined.

Meanwhile, Sudan gained its independence on 1 January 1956, following the expiry of a three-year transitional period agreed between Britain and Egypt in 1953 - Sudan having been part of the 'Anglo-Egyptian Condominium' up until then, a period stretching back to 1899 and the end of the Mahdist Insurrection.

However, immediate post-colonial civilian governance was brief and upended completely in November 1958 when General Ibrahim Abboud staged a military coup d'état.

In 1965, Comrade Fatima became the first woman elected to parliament in Sudan. There, she and her colleagues fought for the passing of landmark legislation, which covered: the right of women to work in any field; equal pay for equal work; paid maternity leave; provision of nurseries; protection of women from arbitrary dismissal; advancement of women's agency, political participation, and candidacy; initial reforms to personal status laws; and opposition to entrenched domestic and societal coercion and violence against women.

These reforms constituted a true legal revolution and laid the groundwork for a new era in the advancement of Sudanese women. These advancements are still looked back upon as a golden era among Sudanese women and progressives, but unfortunately one that would prove short-lived.

Comrade Fatima bravely confronted successive military dictatorships, enduring arrest, imprisonment, and relentless persecution for her outspokenness and tireless activism.

Abboud's military dictatorship was eventually ousted to make way for a civilian provisional government in November 1964.

In May 1969, Colonel Gafar an-Nimeiry seized power in another military coup. While relations between the Nimeiry regime and the SCP were initially positive, the situation soon soured and Nimeiry turned violently on the Party and its supporters.

In one of the darkest chapters of her life, Comrade Ibrahim's beloved husband - the prominent and respected labour leader, Al-Shafi' Ahmed Al-Sheikh - was brutally tortured, sentenced to death by a military tribunal (with the verdict personally approved by Nimeiry) and hanged on 28 July 1971. Before being executed, Al-Sheikh threw the noose around his neck and shouted, "Long live the Sudanese people! Long live the working class!" She bore this devastating personal loss yet refused to yield. Instead, she transformed grief into strength and sorrow into resilience.

Deeply connected to ordinary people, she travelled widely across Sudan, meeting women and men, and conversing with them in their



own languages and dialects. The Sudanese people loved her genuinely, for she was their true voice and the bearer of a heart that mirrored their own.

Alongside her political activism, Comrade Fatima produced pioneering works that became foundational texts in Sudanese feminist thought, including:

'Our Path to Liberation'; 'Our Harvest Over Twenty Years'; 'Issues of the Working Sudanese Woman'; 'Arab Women and Patterns of Social Change'; and 'It Is Time for Change, But...!'

Her contributions earned her international acclaim, most notably the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights (1993) and the Ibn Rushd Prize for Freedom of Thought (2006).

In 1991, Comrade Fatima ascended to the presidency of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), achieving a historic precedent as the first woman from both the Middle East and Africa to occupy this distinguished and influential role.

Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim left us with the powerful message that struggle does not end with the passing of its icons, and that freedom is never granted - it must be fought for every single day.

She taught us that retreat is betrayal, silence is complicity in injustice, and that when a woman believes in her own power, she be-

comes capable of rewriting history.

Comrade Fatima passed away in 2017 in London, but her spirit endures - in every woman who refuses oppression, in every voice raised in the name of justice.

Today, the Sudanese Women's Union - an inherently revolutionary political and social movement - continues to carry her torch aloft, spreading awareness, resisting violence and oppression, defending human and democratic rights, and steadfastly protecting gains achieved through years of tears and sacrifice.

Our Union's continuity is far more than a mere organisational legacy - it is the extension of Comrade Fatima's very indefatigable spirit, and a declaration that her struggle for equality and social justice is far from over.

Indeed, her zaghroua and resounding cry echoed throughout the protests that became the Sudanese Revolution just one year after her passing.

We, the new generation, remain resolutely on the path paved by Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, the slightly statured toub-enveloped woman with such a huge presence, guided by the courage and conviction of a heart that never broke.

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Liberation / in Parliament



War and Peace

Prime Minister Keir Starmer visits BAE Systems
Photo credit: Number 10/
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People’s living standards will not be improved through a programme of militarism. The UK government is pursuing a politics that creates a world where the attitude is ‘to hell with your neighbour,’ writes **Brian Leishman MP**



AT THE START of 2025, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock forward by a second. We are currently sitting at 89 seconds to midnight - the closest that humanity has ever been to the end of the world.

Political turmoil is a truly global issue. Over the last decade and a half, we have had a domestic programme of deadly austerity that has immiserated communities all over the UK.

Then, a pandemic which created an explosion in wealth inequality, with the very richest in society unable to spend their money whilst millions were left to survive on 80% of their salary. Then, we had a manufactured cost of living crisis which served to further exaggerate inequality, as the many in our society have become poorer whilst the few - corporations and their shareholders - have enjoyed eye-watering profits and dividends.

It is no wonder UK citizens feel such disenfranchisement, disengagement, and despair. Austerity, and the inevitable consequences that follow it, have led to a rapid deterioration in living standards. The social fabric of our country has been ripped apart.

Like 410 other Labour Party members, I was elected in 2024 on a manifesto of “change” and to provide “national renewal”. The need to break away from the austere policies of the last 14 years was clear – we saw a combination of impotent politicians who allowed, and even encouraged, capitalism to run riot, making political decisions which led to our society of gross inequality and deepening poverty. It is an incredible truth that life is like this in the world’s sixth largest economy.

Now we are 17 months into a new Government, the change being offered has, so far at least, not been transformative in its nature. Whilst the pursuit of economic growth is, of course, laudable, how the Government plan

to achieve it is not. It is fair to say that, during my time in Parliament, I have been at odds with my own party on a lot of different issues.

But one of the most worrying policy decisions is in the ideology that the route to improving people’s living standards runs through a programme of militarism. At best, this is misguided, and, at worst, it further jeopardises global safety. It is the Prime Minister’s belief that by increasing defence spending, then we will drive economic growth and at the same time, keep us safe from perceived threats. But instead of perceived threats, what about actual threats?

Along with growing inequality, we see worsening climate breakdown and escalating global tensions. Apartheid living conditions, oppression, persecution and genocides are all being committed. And, instead of reassessing the UK’s attitude to foreign policy, the Government has adopted the narrative of war and militarism which will see a substantial increase in defence spending.

Looking at the Government’s Strategic Defence Review, with its goal of making the UK a “Defence Industrial Powerhouse”, it shows that domestic austerity and inequality are inextricably linked to capitalism and imperialism. In Westminster, politicians from different parties are queuing up to extol the virtues of private capital as being the solution to improving people’s living standards and keeping us safe.

The most powerful politicians in the country are painting a very bleak picture. The Chancellor warns that the world is changing. The Secretary of State for Defence warns that warfare is changing. The Prime Minister has declared that “Britain must become a battle ready, armour clad nation”. This huge effort to convince the public that being on a perpetual war footing is not only necessary but that it will keep us safe, is Orwellian.

This political rhetoric is not designed to keep

us safe. Instead, it is a tactic to exploit fear. A tactic to promote private capital and imperial interests. By spending tens of billions of pounds on this drive to rearmament, it shows that arms manufacturers are being allowed an extraordinary influence on procurement and British decision taking. Arms manufacturers have embedded themselves in Government and have done so for decades - proving that austerity is linked to capitalism, which is linked to imperialism.

Once upon a time, approximately a third of the globe was pink - signifying lands which were part of the British Empire. Of course, some will say that Empire was a civilising force, a moral and noble mission even. But there are others who say that to defend imperialism is to attempt to try and justify the exploitation of people and their resources. To airbrush from history the violence which was committed in the aim of expanding British capitalist influence through empire building.

Today, British foreign policy is not formed, shaped or even debated within the corridors of Whitehall. Imperial hegemonic power now lies with the United States, with Britain subordinated to American dominance. President Trump has cut billions of dollars from American International Development. The White House says that the Trump Administration will cut Government spending that is woke, weaponised and wasteful. \$3 billion from USAID, \$800 million from international peacekeeping operations and more than \$300 million to encourage democratic values and practices in other countries. All cut. And it is in Britain’s willing subservience that we see us aping America’s attitude to international aid.

As ending austerity and increasing domestic spending to improve living standards has been deemed less worthy when

compared to funding the global arms trade, the decision to cut our Overseas Development Aid was portrayed as a direct choice between guaranteeing security at home or helping some of the most impoverished people in the world. Those living in the gravest of danger.

By following America’s lead and cutting our own Overseas Development Aid budget, Britain is contributing to the growing danger faced by the most vulnerable people in the world. And we further compound this by continuing to sell arms to nation states which abuse human rights. This is politics that divide people, that sows discord and disharmony, that creates division and a world where the attitude is “to hell with your neighbour”. That is not a foreign policy that this country should ever adopt.

Not only is this immoral brand of politics the antithesis of the socialist tradition of internationalism, but it is also a totally false economy, because our increased militarism will lead to conflict, not peace, to the already fragile democracies of the world crumbling and the inevitable displacement of people. By choosing rearmament over a transformative domestic policy and, an ethical foreign policy, just so that corporations can make obscene profits and shareholders get their dividends, will not make Britain a more equal country or the world a safer place.

It will mean that, in January 2026, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists will move the second hand once again, closer to midnight.

Brian Leishman is MP for Alloa & Grangemouth, Scottish Labour Party, and parliamentary chair of Liberation.

