In Whose Interest?

A monthly investigation into outside influences upon Britain

WHEN PEACEFUL DISSENT MEETS THE STATE



Your Average British Terrorist in 2026

Freedom of expression • Protest policing
The House of Lords • Reasons for Hope

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The right to dissent

Lesley Hilton

A democracy is tested not by its tolerance of popular opinions but by its treatment of those who dissent. It is easy to praise free speech when we agree with the speaker. The difficult test comes when we find the words objectionable, uncomfortable or politically inconvenient.

This issue asks how a peaceful placard can become the subject of terrorism legislation, why elderly and disabled people have been arrested for displaying words, and how courts, ministers and Parliament distinguish peaceful expression from criminal conduct. We must keep those distinctions clear. Property damage, threats and violence can be investigated under the law; holding a sign is a different act.

The powers of the state

The proscription of Palestine Action has sharpened questions about the breadth of the Terrorism Act 2000. The Government and courts have advanced reasons for the ban involving serious damage to property and the statutory definition of terrorism. Civil-liberties campaigners argue that the consequences for expression and association are disproportionate. Neither account should be replaced by slogans. Readers deserve to know what the law says and how it is used.

The state has a duty to protect the public. It also has a duty to protect the liberties of those who challenge it. Arrest, bail, delayed hearings and uncertainty can become punishments in themselves, even where a defendant has not been convicted.

One can question why, historically and even today, our laws prioritise property over people, but that will be a discussion for a future issue.

Who holds power to account?

We examine the independence of juries, the suffragettes and the uneasy relationship between protest and the courts. We look at unelected peers seeking to influence a minister over a concert, and at the difference between democratic scrutiny and private pressure.

The question running through these pages is not whether every protest is wise, or every campaigner correct. It is whether a country calling itself democratic can resist the temptation to criminalise peaceful dissent simply because the message is unpopular.

Palestine Action and the criminalisation of peaceful expression

A comparison with the policing of masked disruption at Dover



Rosa Mundi — satirical illustration of elderly and disabled protesters being arrested outside a courthouse.

One image has become familiar in Britain: pensioners, disabled people and other peaceful demonstrators being taken to police vans after displaying placards. Two people aged 71 were among those charged under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000 after a Westminster protest in July 2025. The allegation concerned the display of articles said to arouse reasonable suspicion of support for a proscribed organisation. It did not allege violence by those defendants. They are entitled to the presumption of innocence.

Now place beside that another image. On 5 September 2026, around 150 people, many masked and dressed in black, descended on Dover and blocked access to the port. The incident disrupted residents, workers and travellers. The Government later described some of the behaviour as intimidating and thuggish. Yet the official parliamentary account records that no arrests were made on the day. Investigations were said to be continuing.

Dover: a contrasting response



The two events were not identical. Police faced different circumstances, evidence and legal powers. A careful comparison cannot prove that every officer or force applies a political double standard. It does, however, raise a legitimate question about national priorities. Why are the most dramatic powers of the state being used so visibly against nonviolent political expression while masked disruption at a vital port ended without an arrest that day?

Palestine Action was added to the statutory list of proscribed organisations with effect from 5 July 2025. The Government said the group had crossed the legal threshold because of serious property damage and conduct it regarded as terrorism. The Terrorism Act definition can include serious damage to property where the required political purpose and intention to influence government or intimidate the public are present. The law does not require an intention to kill for every route through that definition. [3–5]

Proscription activated offences beyond taking part in damage. Section 12 prohibits inviting support for a proscribed organisation. Section 12(1A) also covers knowingly expressing a supportive opinion or belief while reckless as to whether listeners will be encouraged to support it. The maximum sentence on indictment is 14 years, not an automatic sentence. [4, 6]

Section 13 concerns wearing, carrying or displaying an article in public in circumstances arousing reasonable suspicion of membership or support. A placard can therefore become the alleged offence. The maximum custodial sentence under section 13 is six months. It is inaccurate to claim every placard defendant faces 14 years. [4, 7]

How a placard became a terrorism matter



Palestine Action was proscribed with effect from 5 July 2025. The Government argued that serious property damage and other conduct met the statutory terrorism threshold. The definition can include serious damage to property where the required political purpose and intention to influence government or intimidate the public are present.

Proscription also activates offences beyond criminal damage. Section 12 covers inviting support and, under subsection 1A, certain expressions of supportive opinion where the required knowledge and recklessness are proved. Section 13 concerns displaying an article in public in circumstances arousing reasonable suspicion of membership or support. A peaceful placard can therefore become the alleged offence.

What the law does not prohibit

Supporting Palestinian rights or opposing occupation is not automatically support for a proscribed organisation. Calling for Palestine Action to be deproscribed is not, by itself, an invitation to support it. Holding a belief alone does not establish the section 12(1A) offence: its statutory elements must be proved. Arrest or charge does not mean guilt.

The Punishment Begins Before Conviction

An arrest under terrorism legislation carries a stigma long before any verdict. Just being arrested for terrorism-related offences can prevent travel to some countries, re-entry to the UK, and even affect bank accounts and the ability to obtain insurance and credit. It can also lead to dismissal from your job, difficulty obtaining another job, and affect DBS status, especially for those needing enhanced DBS checks. All this without actually being convicted! This is why so many older people feel it is our duty to take action, as we perhaps have, in some ways, less to lose. For older or disabled people, custody and repeated court appearances can be particularly burdensome. An eventual acquittal cannot restore lost time or undo the anxiety.

Waiting for a hearing

For most of those arrested in 2025, uncertainty has continued for months. Those charged have often been given letters about court dates giving conflicting information: do not attend court; failure to attend court can lead to arrest from home; your case may be decided in your absence.

I attended Westminster Magistrates' Court on 30 July 2026 — my 77th birthday — only to be told the cases would not be heard. I was handed a letter changing the date to 26 October, while court staff warned verbally that this too would probably be postponed. Two subsequent letters moved the hearing to 19 January 2027. One gave my names in the right order; the other reversed my first and middle names.

The absurdities of police custody

An elderly woman arrested under terrorism legislation was asked whether she might be pregnant. Her reply? "Not unless it's another immaculate conception!"

At some police stations, regular medication may be withheld if no nurse is present — a serious concern for detainees who depend on it.

Some officers allow a book and pen into a cell; others object to the pen for fear it might be used to write on the walls. I told one of them:

"You may have arrested me for terrorism, but I am NOT a vandal!"

Release from the police cell is often in the early hours of the morning. As with others, I find the physical pain lasts for the following two or three days. It takes an effort of will not to be deterred from peaceful protest.

Such indignities and uncertainty can feel like punishment before conviction. Not every arrest is unlawful, nor every delay deliberate; but fairness, proportionality and the presumption of innocence must mean something in practice.


Why can't today's protesters behave like the suffragettes?
With apologies to Banksy
Rosa Mundi

The suffragettes, the courts and the right to protest

When the Court of Appeal upheld the proscription of Palestine Action on 15 June 2026, the Lady Chief Justice, Baroness Carr, delivered a judgment rejecting comparisons with the suffragettes. The court called the comparison "seriously flawed", arguing that Palestine Action's covert operations and property damage differed from the tradition of open civil disobedience.

But what do we remember about the suffragettes?

The history is more complicated than a procession of respectable women carrying banners. Millicent Fawcett's suffragists pursued constitutional campaigning. Emmeline Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union also used militant direct action: smashed windows, damage to property and, in some cases, arson and bombs. Imprisoned campaigners went on hunger strike and suffered forcible feeding. The 1913 "Cat and Mouse Act" allowed weakened hunger strikers to be released and then returned to prison.

Votes for women came in stages: in 1918, some women over 30 gained the parliamentary vote; equal voting rights with men at 21 followed in 1928. Many campaigners contributed to those victories. We should neither pretend all suffragettes were peaceful nor claim that militancy alone won the vote.

History's uncomfortable question

I once played Emmeline Pankhurst on stage. I also think of my mother-in-law, born in 1887, who reached adulthood without the parliamentary vote. These were not distant abstractions: the law decided who could be heard and who could be ignored.

The Court of Appeal was deciding a legal question under today's terrorism legislation, not passing a verdict on the suffrage movement. Its reasons deserve to be represented accurately. Nevertheless, the contrast invites a political question: why do we honour the disruptive campaigners of the past while sometimes treating contemporary dissent as a threat to the state?

Damaging property and peacefully holding a placard are not the same act. Nor should either be discussed without attention to evidence, individual responsibility and proportionate law. A democracy must make those distinctions without forgetting how often progress begins with people refusing to accept the rules of their day.

Source: Court of Appeal, Secretary of State v Ammori [2026] EWCA Civ 721, paragraphs 149–161 and 204–205. Representation of the People Acts 1918 and 1928.

Your rights and responsibilities as a juror

An independent jury is an essential safeguard of justice

Information for prospective and serving jurors in England and Wales - October 2026

1. You are entitled to ask questions

If you do not understand something during the trial, including a point of law, evidence or the judge's instructions, you may write a note to the judge and give it to the court usher. The judge will decide how to respond.

2. You must be satisfied that guilt has been proved

The accused is presumed innocent. The prosecution must prove guilt so that the jury is sure. The defendant does not have to prove innocence. If you are not sure of guilt after considering the evidence and the law, your verdict must be not guilty.

3. Your verdict is your responsibility

The judge explains the law. The jury decides the facts, assesses the evidence and reaches its verdict independently, following the judge's legal directions. No juror should be bullied or pressured into agreeing.

4. You may ask for further explanation

If a legal direction is confusing, evidence needs clarification or the jury needs assistance, send a written question through the usher. You do not have to pretend to understand.

5. You may raise concerns about another juror

If someone is acting improperly, introducing outside information, intimidating others or refusing to consider the evidence, report your concern promptly and privately to the judge through the usher.

6. You can request reasonable adjustments

Jurors with disabilities or health conditions may request assistance, including hearing loops, accessible facilities or appropriate alternative formats. Raise your needs with court staff.

7. Your deliberations are private

You must not disclose what was said in the jury room, including after the trial, except where the law permits reporting concerns to the proper authorities. Do not investigate the case independently, search online or discuss it with outsiders.

Continued on page 11: keeping an open mind, the jury's constitutional role and practical support.

At the courthouse



Rosa Mundi | The jury and the judge.

8. You must keep an open mind

Jurors may have personal, moral, religious or political beliefs. Their duty is to consider the case impartially, according to the evidence and law. If you believe you cannot do so, tell the court honestly.

9. The jury has an important constitutional role

Jury independence was famously defended in Bushell's Case (1670), following the trial of William Penn and William Mead. Jurors cannot ordinarily be punished merely because the court disagrees with their verdict. This does not remove the duty to follow the judge's legal directions.

10. Practical information and support

Employees are entitled to time off for jury service. Jurors may claim specified expenses and compensation for lost earnings within official limits. You can ask about deferral or excusal where the rules permit.

REMEMBER You may ask questions, request clarification and raise concerns. Make up your mind fairly, without intimidation or prejudice.

Sources and further information: GOV.UK, Jury service (gov.uk/jury-service); GOV.UK, Reasonable adjustments (gov.uk/jury-service/request-reasonable-adjustments); Judiciary, Crown Court Compendium Part I; Criminal Procedure Rules and Criminal Practice Directions (gov.uk).

General public information, not legal advice or an official court leaflet. Always follow the lawful directions of the court.

Three organisations, one vote

How Palestine Action was proscribed

When the then Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, announced plans to proscribe Palestine Action in June 2025, the government did not bring forward a parliamentary order dealing with Palestine Action alone.

Instead, it placed three organisations in one statutory instrument: Palestine Action, Maniacs Murder Cult and the Russian Imperial Movement.

The latter two were described by the government as violent extremist organisations associated with white supremacist ideologies. Palestine Action was known principally for direct action targeting companies and facilities connected with the supply of military equipment to Israel.

The government argued that Palestine Action's activities had crossed the statutory threshold for terrorism, citing serious criminal damage, intimidation and threats to national security. Opponents disputed whether proscription was a necessary or proportionate response, arguing that existing criminal law already covered offences such as criminal damage.

Three organisations - but only one decision

On 2 July 2025, the House of Commons voted on the Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2025. MPs could not remove Palestine Action from the instrument while approving the other two decisions: they had to accept or reject the whole package.

During the debate, Green MP Carla Denyer criticised the government's decision to combine the organisations. Liberal Democrat MP Lisa Smart also drew attention to the fact that the order could not be amended.

The Commons approved the order by 385 votes to 26. After the vote, Denyer asked whether future orders concerning unrelated organisations could be voted upon separately. Deputy Speaker Caroline Nokes explained that the Chair had no power to divide the contents of a statutory instrument.

The House of Lords considered the order on 3 July. Baroness Jenny Jones proposed a motion expressing regret at the proscription of Palestine Action, citing civil liberties and freedom of expression. Her amendment was defeated, and the Lords approved the order. Proscription took effect on 5 July 2025.

Why couldn't Parliament simply remove Palestine Action?

The instrument used the affirmative resolution procedure. Unlike a Bill, which MPs and peers can amend during its passage, this type of statutory instrument normally has to be approved or rejected as presented. Parliament cannot simply rewrite the list of organisations it contains.

This was not an absence of parliamentary authority altogether. It was a limitation of the particular procedure chosen. MPs who objected to one of the three components were not given separate votes.

Whether the government deliberately combined the groups to discourage opposition is a political interpretation, not an established fact about ministers' intentions. What is established is that several MPs objected publicly to precisely that consequence.

Routes to deproscription

Can Palestine Action be deproscribed?

Yes. Existing legislation already allows it. Section 3(3)(b) of the Terrorism Act 2000 empowers the Home Secretary to remove an organisation from the proscribed list by order. Section 4 allows an affected person or organisation to apply for deproscription; section 5 provides an appeal route through the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission following refusal.

Parliament could also legislate to reform the proscription system, including how organisations are assessed, reviewed or removed. New primary legislation is not legally necessary simply to make deproscription possible. It could, however, improve the system of parliamentary scrutiny or the removal process.

The courts have also intervened

On 13 February 2026, the High Court ruled in favour of Palestine Action co-founder Huda Ammori's challenge to the decision. On 15 June 2026, the Court of Appeal overturned that ruling and held the Home Secretary's decision lawful. As at 12 October 2026, Palestine Action remains on the government's proscribed list.

A question of democratic scrutiny

Should a government be permitted to combine unrelated proscription decisions in a single vote? Should MPs consider each organisation separately? Should proscription orders receive automatic periodic review? How should Parliament balance national security with expression, association and peaceful protest?

Whatever one's view of Palestine Action, these are questions about executive powers, parliamentary scrutiny and safeguards for civil liberties.

The central lesson: Parliament could reject the 2025 order but could not amend it. Parliament can change the law, and existing law already contains a route to deproscription.

SOURCE NOTES

Home Office, Three groups to be proscribed (1 July 2025)

House of Commons Hansard (2 July 2025)

Commons vote and point of order

House of Lords (3 July 2025)

Terrorism Act 2000, Part II

Court of Appeal, Ammori [2026] EWCA Civ 721

House of Commons Library

Saved article dated 12 October 2026. Update its court section alongside the main report before publication.

ROSA MUNDI



Satire · A request to the Home Secretary, not a parliamentary vote to ban a show.

Reporting described a letter from 50 peers asking the Home Secretary to revoke Macklemore's travel authorisation. Their stated objection concerned fundraising for the Palestinian Youth Movement, one of the concert's beneficiaries.

Macklemore's Wembley concert went ahead on 30 October, according to NME's report published the following day. The peers' intervention was a request to the Government, not a parliamentary vote banning the show.

Source note carried with the supplied artwork: Telegraph reporting, 24 October; NME, 31 October. The fuller investigation follows.

Fifty peers tried to mute Macklemore

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood deserves credit for not yielding to an extraordinary attempt at political censorship. Fifty unelected members of the House of Lords asked her to revoke or cancel Macklemore's permission to enter Britain before his Free Palestine concert. The request failed: he performed at Wembley Arena on 30 October.

What the peers wanted

The letter was organised by Lord Walney. Its stated objection concerned the Palestine Youth Movement (PYM), which the peers accused of glorifying terrorism and intimidating elected representatives. Those allegations are contested and must not be presented as findings of fact.

The peers invoked the Home Secretary's power to exclude someone whose presence is judged not conducive to the public good. That power is real, but it is not a political mute button. Home Office guidance requires reasonable, evidence-based and proportionate decisions. Published reports did not allege that Macklemore had endorsed Hamas, committed a crime or encouraged violence.

The Wembley beneficiary list included PYM alongside Medical Aid for Palestinians, Gaza Soup Kitchen, HEAL Palestine, the Palestine Children's Relief Fund and UNRWA USA. No public breakdown showed what share, if any, would go to each. The peers sought to stop the whole concert over their objections to one organisation.

Fifty peers, one question

What should happen when unelected legislators seek to persuade a minister to exclude an artist because they object to a concert's beneficiaries? The public should see who approached the Home Secretary, the evidence offered and the grounds on which exclusion was sought. Scrutiny matters when those applying pressure can influence legislation without winning election to the second chamber.

The missing letter

The editor of this magazine has submitted an FOI request asking for full wording of the letter and names of all those who were signatories to the letter.

The request was submitted to the Home Office on 3 November 2026, reference FOI2026/15955. Until the full document is obtained, we will not publish a speculative list or attribute signatures without documentary confirmation. The proposed feature on signatories and declared interests is held over.

The peers made representations to a minister; they did not vote to ban the concert. Further reporting will follow the Home Office response.

Sources: Jewish News, 28 October; NME, 31 October; Independent concert report; Home Office exclusion guidance; OVO Arena Wembley event listing. Editor's FOI record.

Democracy and pressure

Is the Palestinian Youth Movement next

PYM has denied celebrating terrorism or having links to terrorist organisations. It is not currently listed by the Home Office as a proscribed organisation. The allegations made in the peers' letter should therefore be reported as allegations, not as established findings. Controversial rhetoric can be criticised without pretending that criticism itself completes the statutory test for proscription. [1, 7]

We are concerned that the Macklemore letter may become a rehearsal for a more serious campaign. Having failed to exclude the artist, some of the same voices may next press the Home Secretary to proscribe PYM itself. No such campaign by all 50 signatories has been proved, and we do not say that it has. We do say that the language of terrorism and intimidation used in the letter makes the risk foreseeable. The public, Parliament and the press should watch carefully for any move from accusation to proscription.

The lesson of Palestine Action is that proscription changes far more than the legal position of an organisation. It can expose peaceful supporters, journalists, fundraisers and demonstrators to terrorism powers. Any proposal concerning PYM would therefore require published evidence, meaningful parliamentary scrutiny and a rigorous assessment of free expression and association - not a private letter from unelected legislators.

The wider democratic failure

This episode also illustrates why Britain should replace the House of Lords. The remaining hereditary peers lost their automatic seats in April 2026, but the chamber is still composed of appointed life peers and 26 Church of England bishops. Its members can influence ministers and legislation for life without ever asking the public for a vote. [8, 9]

Expertise and scrutiny are valuable, but appointment is not democracy. We favour a genuinely representative second chamber elected for fixed terms by proportional representation, with nations and regions fairly represented, strict rules on outside interests and no seat granted simply because of religious office. Such a chamber could revise legislation and restrain executive power while possessing democratic legitimacy of its own.

For now, the immediate verdict is simple. The public bought the tickets. The concert went ahead. The attempt to silence it failed. We congratulate the Home Secretary for not giving in - and we ask all 50 signatories to come out from behind the collective number and put their names, evidence and interests before the country.

SOURCES AND VERIFICATION

1 Jewish News Fifty peers call for Macklemore to be barred from the UK 28 October 2026; 2 NME Macklemore London Free Palestine finale 31 October 2026; 3 Independent Macklemore concludes sold-out London show 31 October 2026; 4 Home Office Electronic Travel Authorisation rules; 5 Home Office Exclusion from the UK guidance; 6 OVO Arena Wembley Macklemore event and beneficiary list; 7 Home Office Proscribed organisations list; 8 House of Commons Library Peerages and membership of the House of Lords April 2026; 9 UK Parliament How members of the House of Lords are appointed; 10 UK Parliament Current Register of Lords Interests named peers checked 2 November 2026; 11 UK Lawyers for Israel Patron list and mission statement; Editorial verification The complete letter and full list of 50 signatories were not publicly available in the sources checked. Relevant interests are reported as context and are not presented as proof of causation or wrongdoing.

LOCAL POLITICS

Holborn and St Pancras

Labour holds the seat; Greens make a substantial advance

Labour retained Holborn and St Pancras in the parliamentary by-election held on **8 October 2026**. Sagal Abdi-Wali, the leader of Camden Council, won **12,292 votes (45.2%)**. Green Party leader Zack Polanski came second with **8,928 (32.8%)**. The Labour majority was **3,364** votes.

The Greens increased their vote share by about **22.4 percentage points** compared with the 2024 general election. That is a striking improvement in a seat with a long Labour history. It demonstrates that a substantial number of voters were prepared to consider a different voice on the left.

How should we read the result?

There are two legitimate readings. Labour won a clear majority of votes over its nearest rival and held the seat despite a high-profile challenge. But the Green vote was also far stronger than in 2024. Both facts belong in the account.

Some might have expected Labour to win by more, given that its candidate was already leader of the local council. Others will point out that a sitting council leader has an advantage but that a by-election is never a direct replay of a general election. The Greens did not win; nor did they fail to make a significant advance.

The turnout was about **38.8%**, considerably below the 2024 general election. Low turnout limits any sweeping claims about what the whole constituency thinks.

Sources: UK Parliament, 9 October 2026 (parliament.uk/business/news/2026/october-2026/sagal-abdi-wali-elected-as-member-of-parliament-for-holborn-and-st-pancras/); UK Parliament official election result (members.parliament.uk/member/5484/electionresult); ITV News, 9 October 2026.

A welcome result from America

We welcome the Democrats? victory in both chambers of Congress in the 3 November US midterms: a welcome check on Trump?s power, and a fresh opportunity to demand accountability.

Source: Associated Press and Reuters, checked 5 November 2026.

Arab representation reshapes the Israeli election

A welcome democratic gain and a test for the opposition

L Hilton · Saved draft dated 2 November 2026

The most hopeful result of Israel's election is also the one some politicians are trying to present as a danger. The Joint List and Ra'am have won 19 of the Knesset's 120 seats, almost double the Arab-led parties' previous representation of 10. That record deserves an unqualified welcome. Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel voted in strength and changed the parliamentary balance. Their participation is democracy working, not democracy under threat. [1-3]

The result in brief

Within the Arab led total The Joint List won 11 seats and Ra'am won 8. Likud remains the largest single party with 27 seats, followed by Gadi Eisenkot's Yashar with 21. No bloc has the 61 seats needed to govern. The count is complete, but the statutory presentation of the official results to President Isaac Herzog is scheduled for 4 November. [1]

A welcome democratic gain

For decades, Palestinian Arab citizens have been citizens of a state that defines itself primarily in Jewish national terms, while their communities have faced discrimination in land, planning, public spending and political discourse. Nineteen seats do not remove that inequality. They do, however, make it harder to pretend that one fifth of the population can be treated as a permanent political afterthought.

The result is especially welcome because it was achieved despite attempts to turn Arab voting itself into a source of alarm. Benjamin Netanyahu warned of an Arab voter surge. After the count, Likud figures alleged that Arab parties had stolen the election. Election officials rejected claims of systematic damage to the integrity of the poll and said inquiries would not alter the result. President Herzog rightly insisted that any specific allegation must be investigated without tarnishing an entire community exercising its democratic right. [3-5]

Representation must lead to influence

The arithmetic is simple. Netanyahu's bloc has 53 seats. The main opposition has 48. Add the 19 seats held by Arab-led parties and Netanyahu's opponents could command 67 seats, comfortably above the 61 required. But arithmetic is not yet an agreement. Several Jewish-led opposition parties have ruled out depending on Ra'am or the Joint List.

That is the real democratic test. Parties are entitled to reject a coalition partner because of policy, programme or conduct. Yet treating elected Arab representatives as automatically illegitimate because of the community they represent turns equal voting rights into second-class political influence. It says, in effect, that Arab citizens may vote, but Jewish-majority parties will decide whether their votes are permitted to matter.

Joint List leader Yousef Jabareen has described the result as a historic opportunity and indicated that his alliance is ready to work with the opposition to remove Netanyahu. Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas has already shown that Arab-led parties can participate in practical parliamentary cooperation. Ra'am's new parliamentary group even includes Yoav Segalovitz, a Jewish former police officer, offering a small but useful example of politics crossing communal boundaries. [2, 6]

A rebuke to racism but not yet a change of government

The result is a rebuke to the politics of exclusion associated with Netanyahu and his far-right allies, including Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. Their parties remain powerful, and Netanyahu remains prime minister while negotiations continue. Arab representation has improved; Arab equality has not suddenly been achieved.

Nor should a change of prime minister be confused with justice for all Palestinians. Citizens of Israel can vote in this election. Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and most Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem do not generally vote for the government that exercises decisive power over their lives. Gaza's population also has no vote in the Knesset. The democratic advance represented by 19 Arab-led seats exists alongside that much larger democratic deficit.

The choice facing the opposition

Gadi Eisenkot and the other opposition leaders now have to decide what they mean by change. If they want to replace Netanyahu but refuse even to negotiate seriously with the representatives of Arab citizens, they will preserve the central exclusion on which Netanyahu has long relied.

A coalition agreement need not erase real differences over security, national identity, religion or the future of Israel and Palestine. Democracy does not require unanimity. It requires political equals to bargain with one another rather than declaring an entire electorate untouchable.

Continued on page 23: our editorial view, representation graphic and sources.

PEACE IN PRACTICE

Combatants for Peace

From former enemies to partners for justice

What happens when people who once took part in a conflict decide that violence cannot provide a lasting answer? Combatants for Peace (CfP), a joint Israeli-Palestinian movement founded in 2006 by former combatants from both sides, offers one answer: organise together, oppose occupation and work through nonviolent action for freedom, equality and peace.

More than dialogue

CfP describes its purpose as co-resistance to the Israeli occupation, not simply encouraging Israelis and Palestinians to become friends. Its activities include joint field work, public advocacy, educational projects and opportunities for people separated by conflict to meet and listen. The movement brings together people whose experiences and political circumstances are profoundly unequal; it does not claim that talking alone will end those inequalities.

Remembering together

Every year, CfP and the Parents Circle-Families Forum organise a joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day ceremony, where bereaved families from both communities commemorate those they have lost. Their 21st ceremony took place on 20 April 2026 under the theme "We Are the Day After". CfP also holds a joint Nakba remembrance ceremony acknowledging the mass displacement of Palestinians associated with the events of 1948. Its seventh ceremony took place on 15 May 2026. Recognising Palestinian history is therefore part of the organisation's public work, not an afterthought.

Working under pressure

These efforts are not easy. A November 2025 report in Le Monde described young participants in CfP "freedom schools" confronting painful differences in their experiences, fears and memories. Activists also face movement restrictions, insecurity and hostility. A survey reported by The Jerusalem Post in April 2025 found that 87% of 221 respondents from CfP and the Parents Circle said they had not considered abandoning their peace work since the escalation of violence. That is a survey of participating activists, not of either population as a whole.

Why their work matters

Combatants for Peace cannot by itself bring about a political settlement, end military occupation or secure accountability. Its importance is that Israelis and Palestinians are working together while explicitly challenging the structures that deny Palestinians freedom and equality. Amid so much public discussion of what governments and armed groups do, these civilian efforts deserve scrutiny and attention too.

FIND OUT MORE

Combatants for Peace: www.cfpeace.org (organisation, mission and activities); American Friends of Combatants for Peace: www.afcfp.org/2026-joint-nakba-remembrance-ceremony (15 May 2026 event); American Friends of Combatants for Peace: www.afcfp.org/2026-joint-memorial-day-ceremony (20 April 2026 event); Le Monde, 28 November 2025: "The difficult conversations between Israeli and Palestinian peace activists"; The Jerusalem Post, April 2025: "Israeli and Palestinian peace activists refuse to give up on dialogue"

Money, money, money

What is it really worth?

A pound coin, a banknote, a bar of gold and a Bitcoin can all be given a price. But what makes any of them valuable? The answer is not as simple as the number printed on a note or displayed on a screen.

Money is a promise

Most modern money is “fiat” money: it is not redeemable for a fixed quantity of gold. It works because people accept it in payment, taxes are assessed in it, and institutions maintain systems for banking, accounting and settlement. Trust in those institutions matters, as do inflation, interest rates and the real goods and services money can buy.

A bank balance is not a pile of banknotes waiting in a vault. Commercial banks create deposits when they lend, subject to regulation and the wider monetary system. That does not mean money is imaginary; it means the system rests on rules, obligations and confidence.

Gold: substance and symbolism

Gold has properties that made it useful across centuries: it is scarce, durable, workable and resistant to corrosion. It also has industrial uses and an appeal in jewellery. Yet its market price is not simply the value of those physical uses. It is shaped by investment demand, fear, fashion and the supply of money.

Years ago, checking the daily gold price could be a practical part of a job: the cost of precious-metal contacts in electrical relays changed with the market. That experience is a reminder that some materials have specific uses even while speculation pushes their prices far beyond their manufacturing value.

Value, wealth and inequality

Bitcoin: a price without a promise?

Bitcoin is not issued by a central bank and its supply follows rules in computer code. Supporters value its limited issuance and ability to transfer ownership without relying on a conventional banking system. Critics point to its price volatility, energy use, speculative trading and the difficulty of treating it as a dependable unit for wages or everyday purchases.

Money, money, money — continued

Its price can be enormous without guaranteeing a stable purchasing power. Scarcity alone does not create the necessities of life: food, housing, clean water, healthcare and the work that makes them available.

Could we barter instead?

Barter can work in small exchanges, but it requires each party to want what the other offers at the same moment. Money allows trade across distance and time. A good currency helps people plan; a badly managed one can destroy savings and wages.

What is wealth for?

There is a deeper question than whether gold, sterling or Bitcoin rises this week. A society may be wealthy in financial assets and poor in secure homes, public services or clean air. The distribution of resources matters as much as the headline total.

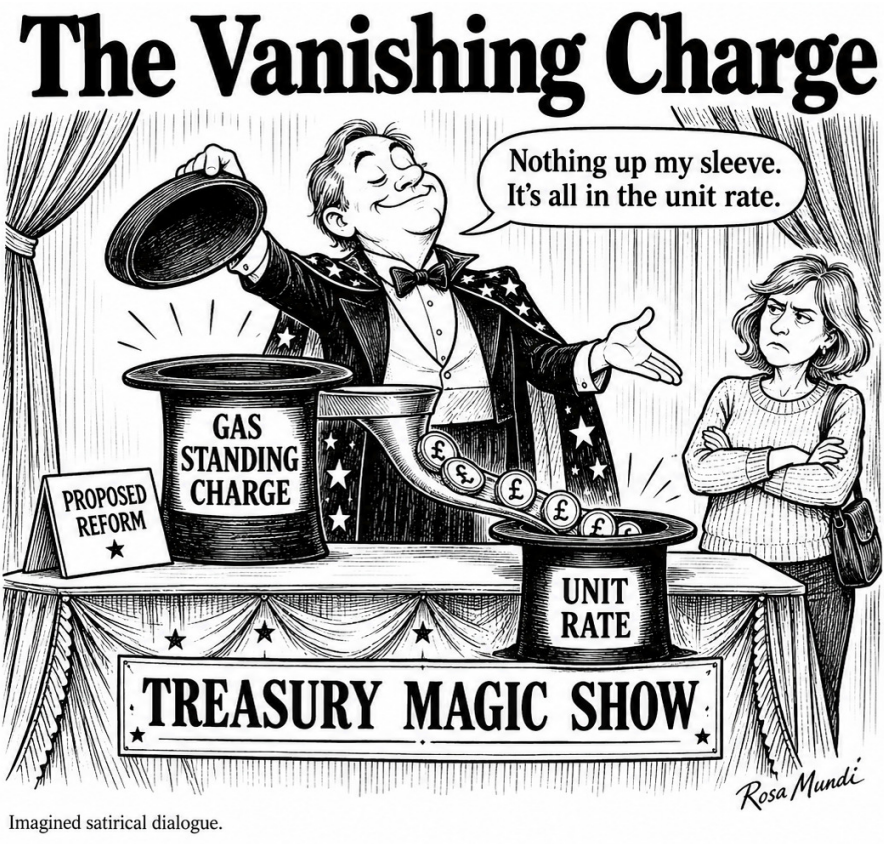
Natural resources are finite. Using oil, gas and other materials without considering the people who come after us is a kind of borrowing from children and grandchildren who cannot yet vote. Investment in renewable energy, efficient buildings and water conservation is therefore not merely an environmental preference; it is a matter of intergenerational fairness.

The value of money should finally be judged by what it enables people to do: live with dignity, care for others, create and preserve things of worth. A currency is a tool. Human welfare is the purpose.

In whose interest? When financial wealth increases, ask who benefits — and who bears the costs.



ROSA MUNDI



Imagined satirical dialogue.

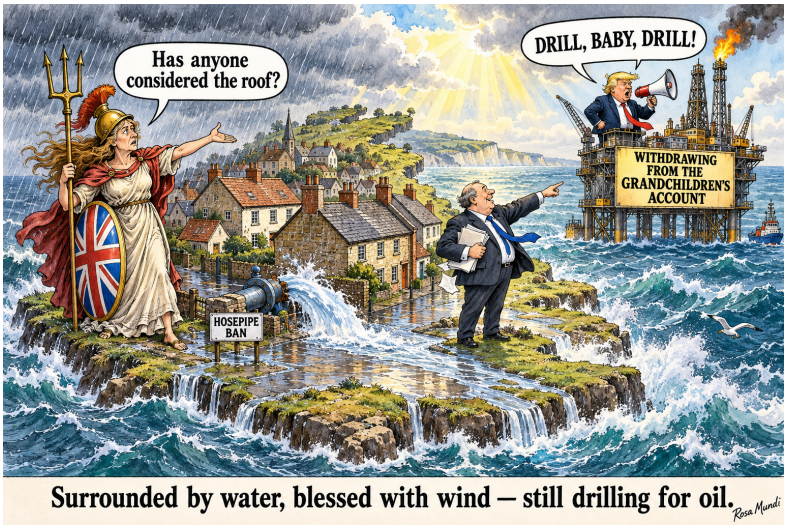
Satire · Standing charges and the price per unit are different parts of an energy bill.

The Government has asked Ofgem to remove standing charges from household gas bills, potentially from 2027. The costs those charges cover would move into the price paid for each unit of gas.

Lower gas users are expected to benefit, but the effect on each bill would depend on consumption. The Government acknowledges that some vulnerable households cannot avoid high gas use and says targeted protection will follow. The reform has been announced; it is not yet in operation.

Source note carried with the supplied artwork: Government energy-bills announcement, 28 October 2026.

A laugh in serious times



Rosa Mundi · Britannia: Has anyone considered the roof?

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Cartoons by Rosa Mundi

MAIN REPORT SOURCES [PAGES 4-8]

1 Crown Prosecution Service Three charged for displaying support for proscribed terrorist group 7 August 2025

2 House of Commons Dover and Portsmouth Protests 7 September 2026

3 Terrorism Act 2000 Sections 1 and 3

4 Home Office Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations Palestine Action entry

5 Proscribed Organisations Amendment Order 2025 Explanatory memorandum

6 Terrorism Act 2000 Section 12

7 Terrorism Act 2000 Section 13

8 R v ABJ and R v BDN 2026 UKSC 8

9 Pwr v Director of Public Prosecutions 2022 UKSC 2

10 Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Statement following Dover protest

11 European Convention on Human Rights Articles 10 and 11

12 United Nations special procedures Communication on Palestine Action proscription

13 Supreme Court Ammori v Secretary of State for the Home Department UKSC 2026 0099