

THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE: A WORKERS' ISSUE

SPSC TU Network Newsletter | October 2026

SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT ANALYSIS | ED SHEERAN | PROSPECT REPORT +

TRADE UNIONS ON TRACK

to derail CAF



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Upcoming Events

WORKERS' COALITION FOR

HALF-DAY WORKSHOP
ON ORGANISING

PALESTINE

12:00-17:00, NOVEMBER 7TH
16 ALBION ST, GLASGOW

<https://luma.com/njzinsvc>



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EDITORIAL

TRADE UNIONS ON TRACK TO DERAIL CAF



HUSSEIN EZZEDINE
Scottish PSC TU Officer
Edinburgh Branch

In a significant development, rail unions ASLEF, RMT and **TSSA**, along with the **STUC**, have intervened in September **over the shortlisting of Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles S.A. (CAF)** to manufacture ScotRail's new train fleet. Due to high membership density, these unions represent almost the entire workforce.

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TRADE UNIONS ON TRACK TO DERAIL CAF by Hussein Ezzedine

CAF is a key player in the Jerusalem Light Rail project, linking illegal settlements with occupied East Jerusalem, and is therefore on the [United Nations database](#) of companies identified as involved in activities connected with illegal settlements.

The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), which coordinates the global BDS movement, has long [identified CAF](#) as a main target for boycott. ASLEF, the train drivers' union, has [made its position clear](#): members will not drive these trains.

Kevin Lindsay, ASLEF Scotland Organiser, told the Transport Minister: "This matter is of very grave concern to ASLEF. We, alongside other rail unions and the STUC, have adopted a position of BDS towards Israel. Unlike some, if we adopt a policy, we see it through. That means if this company was to end up winning this contract, we would boycott those trains. We will not drive trains operated by a company that is complicit in war crimes."

Gordon Martin, RMT Scotland Organiser, advised: "As Transport Minister, you have the power to intervene, and I would urge you to act as a matter of urgency to remove CAF from the shortlist to manufacture the new ScotRail suburban train fleet. Failure to do so will mean the Scottish Government is guilty of deliberately refusing to use its powers to uphold the principles of international law in support of the Palestinian people."

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TSSA General Secretary, Maryam Eslamdoust, offered full support: "The Scottish Government should think again and make it clear that no train across Scotland's railways should be built by a company involved in any way with the expansion of illegal settlements. To do otherwise would be both to ignore and to increase the suffering of the Palestinian people. Our union stands in solidarity with ASLEF members in Scotland and fully supports the position they have taken."

STUC Deputy General Secretary Dave Moxham stated: "It would be unconscionable that a company which is deeply involved in the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements should receive funds from the Scottish taxpayer."

Workers are putting solidarity into practice and using their collective voice to challenge complicity.

LANDMARK VOTES

ScotRail is, fortunately, no longer in private hands and is operated by Scottish Rail Holdings Limited (SRH), an arms-length company owned and controlled by the Scottish Government.

In 2025, the Scottish Parliament adopted BDS policy. A **further motion came to Parliament** on 16 September 2026. MSPs again voted to agree: "That the Parliament believes that a company's involvement in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian Territories constitutes grave profe-

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ssional misconduct and should, as a result, automatically disqualify that company, together with any parent company or subsidiary, from eligibility for public procurement and all forms of support from the Scottish Government.”

ALL ABOARD FOR ACTION

On the same day that this commitment was made, the TUC made a historic decision, bringing the England and Wales federation into line with the STUC, with delegates voting to **endorse BDS** for the first time.

Progress is being made. Policy matters, but its significance comes when it is given practical meaning. The power workers have when they organise collectively has been clearly demonstrated. The lesson is clear: we do not have to accept complicity as inevitable.

SOLIDARITY WITH RAIL WORKERS

When workers take a stand, they need solidarity from the wider solidarity movement. We must stand with them.

Demand the Scottish Government & ScotRail: **DROP CAF!**

Our pre-populated letter to Stephen Flynn, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, and Joanne Maguire, MD of Scotland, will take less than a minute of your time.

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THE PRO-PALESTINE MOVEMENT'S ROLE IN OPPOSING THE FAR-RIGHT

by NATALIE REID

Scottish Socialist Party National Co-Spokesperson



Photo: Matt Sime

Anti-migrant demonstrations are sweeping the nation. From Glasgow to Portsmouth, we've seen an increase in right-wing-led activity that often turns hostile and even violent. Alongside this street-level volatility, we've seen right-wing political gains in Germany, France, Argentina and beyond. As the voices that seek to divide us grow louder, it's important to keep Palestine on the agenda – not as a distraction from fighting the far-right, but as a key component of that struggle.

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OPPOSING THE FAR-RIGHT by Natalie Reid

THE FAR-RIGHT HYPOCRISY

Those of us involved in the pro-Palestine movement are no strangers to attacks and accusations from the far-right. Whether it be online comments or in-person aggression at demonstrations and other public events, calling for an end to genocide seems to awaken their anger in a way that feels intense and personal, but why are the far-right so opposed to a movement that stands against genocide?

Trying to find consistency in the arguments opposing the Palestine solidarity movement could drive anyone to distraction. Half the time we are accused of abandoning more local issues, such as homelessness or food poverty, in favour of some “far-off plight,” while the rest of the time, we’re accused of collecting causes like trinkets – treating them like trends that we pick up and drop whenever the mood strikes us.

The idea that by supporting Palestine, we are choosing not to help others closer to home is ridiculous. The make-up of the solidarity movement across Scotland consists predominantly of community organisers, trade unionists, health workers, and political activists, many of whom have a long track record of supporting multiple causes both here and abroad. Not to mention the scores of everyday people, simply moved by the horrors we've witnessed before our eyes these past three years. The idea that the Palestine movement is a trend rings equally hollow. Have we not shown up every week, rain or shine, to make our voices heard?

As socialists, we understand the frustrations felt by the working class. Bills get higher whilst wages stagnate; cash-strapped communities feel abandoned. The issues are legitimate, but the so-called solutions offered up by the likes of Farage and Yaxley are willfully misleading.

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OPPOSING THE FAR-RIGHT by Natalie Reid

It's a classic tactic from the ruling classes: to divide and conquer

As a socialist, I value the principles of international solidarity. We stand with the oppressed wherever they may be. Not only that, but we recognise that if the ruling class is willing to treat one group of people so appallingly, then no one is safe. An attack on one is an attack on us all.

ZIONISM IS RACISM

Many of those who seek to brand the Palestine movement as antisemitic are nowhere to be seen when true antisemitism raises its head; in fact, they are often the cause of it. One day you'll see them cry antisemitism against a Palestine demo; the next you'll see them throwing up a Nazi salute at a "stop the boats" gathering.

They use the very real issue of antisemitism as a shield, not to protect the Jewish community, but to shut down any meaningful debate. This, alongside the blatant Islamophobia that has been allowed to grow, unchecked by governments and the media, creates an imbalance that has allowed a mistrust of Muslims to take root in the UK.

Zionism is racism. At their core, both have a focus on dehumanising the "other" to the point that violence against them becomes acceptable or even necessary. By challenging the fallacies of Zionism, we can dismantle the very building blocks of the racist arguments the far right uses to gain a foothold in our communities.

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OPPOSING THE FAR-RIGHT by Natalie Reid

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

It has been said that the fight for Gaza is the fight for the very soul of humanity. Thousands of dead children should not be a left or right issue. And those who don't believe the fate of Gaza is intrinsically linked to their own haven't been paying enough attention. A world that allows a regime to commit war crimes with total impunity should worry us all.

With the rise of surveillance technology, increased risk of food shortages, and an ever more powerful police force, the truth is that we are all closer to the receiving end of a violent authoritarian state than we are to joining the billionaire (or even the millionaire) class.

The people of Palestine have never given up. They refuse to be erased. In the face of genocide, they still show resilience and still manage to find joy amid the destruction. The very least we can do is remain resolute at their side.



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THINKING OUT LOUD... ART IS POLITICAL



KERRIS DUFFY
Scottish PSC Organiser
Edinburgh Branch

Over the last few weeks, we've watched as Ed Sheeran so willingly threw his friend and co-worker Macklemore under the bus for shouting "Free Palestine" on stage at the Loop Tour. All to appease a billionaire and protect Israel.

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THINKING OUT LOUD... ART IS POLITICAL by Kerris Duffy

Reading Sheeran's subsequent statements was enraging. In the span of a week, the singer felt comfortable enough to endorse Robert Kraft's demand to sack Macklemore, even as four more Palestinians, including a child, were killed by an Israeli drone strike in Jabalia. When Sheeran returned to the stage, he doubled down on his position, repeatedly calling it a "conflict."

This is a gross misrepresentation of a situation where an occupying power, Israel, currently holds 351 Palestinian children and young people in military prisons. Prisons where, in 2025, torture by medical neglect and starvation killed 17-year-old Walid Khalid.

Despite Ed Sheeran's cowardice, however, I am filled with hope as a musician and arts industry worker. Watching the mass exodus of performers dropping out of this tour has been incredible. It marks another shift in the culture where lower-billed musicians exercise their right as workers to put solidarity above personal gain.

In a statement announcing his decision to leave Sheeran's tour, Irish singer-songwriter Aaron Rowe referenced his Irish heritage and Ireland's shared history with Palestine. On the occasion, he said he could not continue to be part of a tour that allowed a billionaire to use their power to silence anyone who speaks out against Israel's genocide — sentiments echoed by fellow artists who also dropped out from the tour.

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This was powerful for many reasons. Most importantly, it was an unambiguous show of solidarity with Palestinians. But it was also a display of workers' action happening on a very public, visible stage. By choosing to leave the tour in solidarity with Macklemore (essentially their co-worker), these performers are setting a positive precedent for musicians everywhere battling their own Ed Sheerans and Robert Krafts in the music industry.

Ironically, in his initial statement, Sheeran cited a potential loss of income for his band, supporting acts and backstage crew as a reason for agreeing to drop Macklemore. The irony is that by doing so, he is directly contributing to an existing culture that sees musicians blacklisted and lose work for exercising their right to freedom of speech.

In 2023, Palestinian-Canadian artist Nemahsis was dropped from her record label days after the events of October 7th. Her crime? Being Palestinian and sharing pro-Palestine content. Since Oct 7th, the silencing of Palestinian and Pro-Palestine artists has intensified.

Tours have been cancelled, work visas have been revoked, and festival slots pulled because of their vocal support for the Palestinian cause. This is because, at all levels, the music industry is full of Robert Krafts. From promoters to public funding bodies, the people who hold the purse strings feel entitled to dictate what musicians can and cannot say.

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THINKING OUT LOUD... ART IS POLITICAL by Kerris Duffy

Artists losing work is not the headline, but it's an important part of the story

The zionist lobby's influence on the entertainment industry cannot be ignored. For decades, pro-Israeli groups have launched campaigns aimed at silencing and smearing Palestinian and pro-Palestine artists – queue Kneecap's entire career. Until recently, those campaigns have been so successful, they have undoubtedly contributed to Israel's ability to act with impunity. Still, despite the risk to life and livelihood, Palestinian musicians continue to create, and pro-Palestine musicians continue to act and speak up.

As arts industry workers, our duty is to intensify all efforts. Not only to protect our right to freedom of expression, but also to create sustainable networks beyond the traditional avenues to empower and protect artists. It's also our duty as artists to normalise politics in art.



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BURNHAM AND PALESTINE: PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE



COLIN SUTHERLAND
UNISON

City of Edinburgh Branch

In his ascent to the posts of Labour Party leader and Prime Minister, Andy Burnham has succeeded Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak, each of whom had not only failed to oppose the genocide in Gaza, but also provided political, economic and military support for the Israeli state as it slaughtered

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PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE by Colin Sutherland

thousands of people, while turning cities and refugee camps into uninhabitable ruins and rubble. And while they were providing support for genocide, they took time to smear and repress dissent here, culminating in the proscription of Palestine Action, simply because it was, as described by the celebrated independent American journalist Max Blumenthal, “the most effective Palestine solidarity group in the world.”

Apart from providing a more effective media presence than that of the androidal and hopelessly unsympathetic Starmer, what has our new prime minister done so far in the 2½ months he has been in office to meet Britain’s obligations to prevent the mass murder and destruction of a people, and what should we expect him to do based on his actions so far? The answer, of course, is that he has done little and we shouldn’t expect anything of substance from him.

Recognising the damage done to the Labour Party in electoral terms, his social media apology for Gaza on July 9th took place before he’d officially taken up his new office. This spoke to the immediate importance, for Burnham and his team, of winning back the liberal middle-class voters, students and members of Britain’s Muslim communities, who had abandoned the Labour government in public opinion.

Burnham prefaced his statement by returning us to October 7th, replete with the ritual condemnation of Hamas, before going on to express his worry about the rise in antisemitism and his concern for Jewish communities living in fear.

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This was a clear signal to corporate power, the arms industry, and the mainstream media that what he was undertaking was a necessary adjustment, not a change of direction. Both in this statement and subsequently, we can see that this is the case. His identification of the Netanyahu government and West Bank settlers as being the limit of the problem allows him rhetorical room to cover for the fact that it will largely be business as usual.

The sanctioning of settlers and particular Israeli government ministers, along with further tokenistic limitations on arms export licences, won't seriously affect Britain's ongoing support for the Zionist project. So, don't expect the Israeli arms company that manufactures the killer drones being used to terrorise, kill and maim in Gaza, Elbit Systems, to have its plants in this country shut down any time soon. Don't expect there to be an end to the economic, political and military cooperation of which the actual manufacture of Israeli weapons in this country is a part.

It is also the case that criticism of such minimal shifts in policy by leading Israelis, including by Netanyahu himself, and their supporters here, will actually aid Burnham's purpose, because it will add to the perception that he wishes to create as widely as he can that something concrete is being done.

For all his sincerity, this is politics at its most calculating and cynical. Burnham, lest we forget, is a Friend of Israel, who declared in his 2015 bid for the Labour Party leadership that the first place he would have visited, if elected, was Israel. Not that we need to see him as actually sincere, even in this.

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He is a self-serving politician who understands that, to achieve his own ends, he has to align himself with the interests of corporate power, principally driven through Washington. This is practically a matter of instinct for a politician schooled in the Blairite brand of transatlantic political expediency.

The logic of all this is that repression of dissent and protest is actually likely to be widened and increased under Burnham. This is because, if he is to succeed in his manoeuvre, the need to silence voices opposing the criminal hypocrisy of what he and his government are doing becomes all the greater. This, of course, has to be resisted.

By the time of publication, activists will have gathered at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool on Sunday 27th and will have conducted another sign-bearing protest, opposing genocide and declaring support for Palestine Action. Burnham and his government will do nothing meaningful of their own accord, but we should understand that even the cynical and miserably inadequate measures they have taken in recent weeks have been as a result of pressure. This pressure, resulting from the refusal on the part of people of conscience and principle to be deflected from the truth, or to acquiesce in the face of criminal state complicity, not only needs to be maintained, but intensified.

If you are interested in more information about the Lift the Ban campaign, or perhaps interested in either supporting or participating in future actions, details can be found at [Defend Our Juries.](#)

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SPECIAL REPORT

PROSPECT'S BIENNIAL CONFERENCE



Edinburgh PROSPECT Representative Delegate Report

From the 6th to the 9th of June 2026, Prospect's Biennial conference was held in Brighton, where a swathe of motions were debated and voted on, which would determine the Union's direction and policy over the next two years. These included votes on pay and job conditions, workplace safety, AI, trans rights, union democracy and international solidarity.

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PROSPECT'S BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Prospect is a large union with around 160,000 members, representing industries including science and technology, energy, arts, heritage, sound, light and media, civil servants, and the weapons and military-technology industry. With such a diversity of industries represented in one union, divisions and disagreements on union policy exist, presenting tensions and fractures in our lines of solidarity.

Crucially, this year, two motions for Palestine got through to the national conference submitted by the Post Production and Facilities Branch: motion 26, for a “two-way arms embargo on Israel,” and 27, to “end trade with companies involved and complicit in Genocide.”

Motion 26 specifically calls on the Prospect to campaign for a two-way trade embargo with Israel, no exports and no imports, without exceptions, and calls on the leadership to write a letter to the UK Government demanding this. Motion 27 mirrors these calls, directing the union to write to the UK government, demanding that no public money is spent on contracts and trade with companies that profit from Israel's genocide on Palestine.

In the context of Conference 2024, where a motion calling for an arms embargo on Israel was voted against, a bittersweet feeling of shock and joy was felt throughout the room when both motions were voted in, with spirited speeches from the Post Productions Branch and various reps in favour of these motions (and only two delegates speaking against). And the hard work of members and reps throughout the union over the past two years – workers in the union across sectors, including

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PROSPECT'S BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

the arms industry, voted to demand an arms embargo on Israel. Falling in line with the wider UK Trade Union movement, especially since the recent successful TUC 2026 motion "Palestine: support for boycott, divestment and sanctions."

Delegate Giovanni Todeschini, who moved the motions 26 and 27, stated:

"It is a testament to the tenacity of the pro-Palestine movement that there is finally a cultural shift so seismic that people are now ashamed to be publicly associated with the toxic brand of Israel. But at what immense cost of human lives, and how long it took.

This is only a victory of position: motions can be ignored or retracted at any time. Factories won't stop producing fighter jet components, and the BBC won't suddenly feel comfortable with the word genocide. What must follow are real practical measures, from Prospect members demanding their workplaces break ties with Israel, and calling on the union to support them in this struggle.

Palestine has become so much more than a real-world location: it is where the ugly mask of Capitalism slips; it is the moral test of our time, where we see who's still got humanity and who's lost it. I hope we're still in time to save it as an actual place, for the Palestinian people to live in peace, before it is reduced to a distant ideal we once fought for. We will never be free until Palestine is free."

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UNITE'S ACTIVIST FORUM

by **KEVIN ROBERTSON**

Unite Member

SPSC BDS Divestment Co-ordinator

Just over 30 Unite activist lay members gathered in the union's Glasgow headquarters at the end of August 2026 to examine and make proposals for the implementation of the union's previous resolutions and policy statements in support of Palestine.

The Activists' Forum was organised by Unite's Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) following concerted pressure by several lay members for the union to turn the words of support into meaningful action.

The gathered activist from around the country represented sectors across the economy such as; local government, health, arms industry, government departments, hospitality and service sector.

Members were asked to consider and recommend actions that could be carried out by the SEC and many passionate and well-informed contributions were made and issues discussed using the union's public commitments to Palestinians as their basis.

The results of, and recommendations from, the Forum covered many separate sections including engagement with the BDS campaign, training and information for rank-and-file members, collaboration with nationally recognised Palestine campaign organisations, and links with other trade unions internationally.

A full report with specific recommendations will be presented to the SEC of the union over the coming months and, once agreed, will become the basis of all campaign organising around Palestine by Unite across Scotland.

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CALL TO ACTION

SCOTTISH WORKERS: ORGANISE AHEAD OF NOVEMBER WEEK OF ACTION FOR PALESTINE



Photo: Gabi Nogueira

Palestinian trade unions and labour federations have **called on workers and trade unions internationally,** including in Scotland, to organise solidarity actions between Friday 20 November and Sunday 29 November 2026, leading up to the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

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CALL TO ACTION

We need to start building for this action now!

A half-day organising event will be held in Glasgow
Saturday, 7 November, to help prepare
workers and trade unionists

Held under the banner of **Workers' Coalition for Palestine**, the first event in a series of quarterly workshops, the **Half Day Workshop** is a follow-up to the Scottish Workers: Day School for Palestine, which was held by SPSC and **Workers for a Free Palestine** back in April. The session will focus on organising in the workplace, giving you an opportunity to:

- Workshop your own campaign strategies and common obstacles.
- Coordinate concrete plans for the week of worker action.

Whether your background is in unions, communities, or you are brand new to organising, all levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged.

The international call urges workers and trade unions to build solidarity with Palestinian workers, challenge institutional and corporate relationships that contribute to Israel's occupation, apartheid and actions in Gaza, and develop practical campaigns in workplaces.

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CALL TO ACTION

Among the measures proposed in the international call are:

- Organise, join and amplify global peaceful actions marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 20-29 November.
- Adopt ethical procurement (**EPP**) and, where applicable, ethical investment policies (**EIP**) excluding corporations implicated in grave human rights violations, including in Palestine.
- Pressure corporations and institutions to end complicity by terminating contracts that directly or indirectly support Israel's atrocity crimes and adopting EPP/EIP.
- Reject racist agreements with Israel that enable the substitution and further oppression of Palestinian workers.
- Escalate economic, academic, cultural and sports **BDS campaigns**.
- Peacefully disrupt and block military, energy and dual-use supplies to Israel by:
 - Identifying and stopping illegal transfers by sea, land or air; pressuring states to enforce international obligations and complicit corporations to act.
 - Refusing to handle Israeli or Israeli-bound military, energy and dual-use cargo.

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CALL TO ACTION

- Pressure governments to fulfil their legal obligations following the 2024 ICJ rulings, including, as urged by **UN human rights experts** by imposing a “*full arms embargo; ending arms agreements, imports, exports and transfers, including dual-use items; and suspending/cancelling economic, trade and academic relations that may contribute to Israel’s unlawful presence and apartheid regime in the occupied Palestinian territory.*”
- Cut all ties with Israel’s colonial Histadrut federation and expel it and similarly complicit Israeli unions and associations (academic, medical, etc.) from international fora.
- Declare your union an **Apartheid-Free Zone** (AFZ), ending corporate and institutional complicity with systems of oppression, particularly Israel’s regime of apartheid and genocide against Palestinians.

Have a think about what you can do, register and join us in Glasgow to start organising for action!

Saturday 7th November 2026
12:00-17:00

UNISON Office, 16 Albion Street, Glasgow, G1 1LH
<https://luma.com/njzinsvc>

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REST IN POWER: NAOMI JUNNOR

This month, we've been incredibly saddened by the sudden passing of comrade Naomi Junnor, a trade unionist, anti-racist and Palestine solidarity activist, who was never afraid to speak truth to power and bring these areas of work together.



An outspoken Jewish anti-Zionist, Naomi lost support and contact with many family members due to her unwavering solidarity and commitment to the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Her courage and defiance ran deep, and her voice will keep resonating within both the Scottish workers' and Palestinian solidarity movements alike.

Naomi was an active member of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, a member of our Trade Union Working Group, a Unison organiser and a dear friend whose presence, warmth and hilarious personality will be greatly missed not only by us personally, but by the wider movement as well. Rest in power, comrade.

A funeral Service will be held on Friday 9th October from 2 pm at the Hurlet Crematorium, Glasgow Road, G53 7TH. All friends are respectfully invited.

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Photo: Scottish PSC Archive

GET INVOLVED

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