

# Free Palestine – End the Genocide!

by our Arab Affairs  
correspondent

Israel has launched a new genocidal offensive against the Palestinians carpet bombing Gaza and unleashing their settler militias to spread terror in the occupied West Bank. Many believe that Israel is about to launch new ground offensives in Gaza and the West Bank to drive the Palestinians out and prepare the land for future Zionist settlement.

Israeli troops are carrying out their largest military operation in the West Bank in decades. Hundreds of Palestinian houses have been destroyed and around 40,000 Palestinian Arabs made homeless. More than 70 Palestinians have been killed since it began in late January and last week Zionist settlers brutally attacked Oscar-winning film director Hamdan Ballal in front of his home in the Hebron hills in the West Bank. All of this is done with the blessing of the USA and the rest of the NATO pack.

Israel's renewed offensive on the Gaza Strip continues relentlessly. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians have been slaughtered and more than 140,000 other displaced since last week. But the resistance is hitting back with rockets attacks on Zionist settlements in southern Israel. Yemen



tightens its blockade on Israeli and imperialist shipping in the Red Sea and stepping up its ballistic missile attacks warning that Tel Aviv's international airport is no longer safe for air traffic and that it will remain a target until the Israeli war on Gaza ends.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are now trapped in the rubble of what's left of the Gaza Strip and in desperate need of aid and shelter. The UN's humanitarian agency, OCHA, says "fleeing with only a few personal belongings, many people are now staying on the streets, in desperate need of food, drinking water, and shelter essentials".

Food stocks in the Gaza Strip are dwindling and there are only five days of flour left to keep bakeries running as Israel's nearly month-long blockade threatens to plunge the territory's two million people into hunger. And Gaza's remaining water system is also in peril, and will completely collapse if fuel supplies run out, all but cutting off people's access to clean water.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the head of the 'autonomous' Palestinian authority in the West Bank, condemned Israel for using access to water as a "tool of torture and displacement" to undermine development and entrench its occupation of the Palestinian territories. He called for an immediate ceasefire, unfettered aid access and Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while appealing for global support to establish a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In Israel over 100,000 people took to the streets of Tel Aviv to protest against the war. Marchers demanded a deal to bring home the remaining Israeli captives and declared they won't rest until Netanyahu is removed from office. Meanwhile opposition politicians and protest groups also slammed the decision of the Netanyahu government to resume its genocidal campaign particularly as it could risk the lives of the remaining Israeli prisoners held by the resistance in Gaza. The Democrats (Meretz and Labour

parties) leader, Yair Golan, called for renewed protests and accused

Netanyahu of "using the lives of our citizens and soldiers because he fears the public protests" while the communist-led Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) warned of the dangers and disastrous repercussions in the conflict arena, the countries of the region and the world.

Hadash and the Israeli communists said the attack and the forced displacement of Gaza residents is a crime against humanity and a serious violation of international law. "The fascist government has once again broken the ceasefire in the most appalling way, with air strikes that targeted refugee camps and other civilian locations, leading to the deaths of hundreds of people, including many children," they said.

## FUND

This week's postbag brought in a further £600 for the fighting fund, pushing the needle up to £1,625 – but our target is £3,500 so we've got a lot of work to do to get there. Many thanks to all our supporters who helped us on our way last week, including the Hereford reader who PayPal'd a tenner, the Dagenham supporter who donated £80, an old friend in Essex who sent in £100 and a Battersea comrade who gave us £8.

The spirit of rebellion is once again sweeping through the heartlands of imperialism, challenging bourgeois mind control by standing by the heroic Palestinian Arabs fighting the might of the Israeli army and the people of the Donbas who took up the gun to drive the fascists out of eastern Ukraine.

We need your help to keep going. We support the national liberation movements. We fight for peace and socialism. We say there is an answer to the crisis. We know it's socialism. Help us put it back on the workers' agenda by supporting the *New Worker*!

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# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Dream on Starmer!

The way Starmer tells it wages are growing faster than prices. “Jobs up. Inflation down. Interest rates down. NHS waiting lists down. Houses and infrastructure unblocked. Free breakfast clubs rolling out. National Living Wage increasing. National Minimum Wage increasing. Defence spending increased. Two million more NHS appointments delivered. Housebuilding to be at the highest level in 40 years. People to be £500 a year better off. The Tories blocked change for Britain. My Labour government is delivering it.” The reality on the street is another story. Homelessness, poverty and despair.

The Labour government wants to slash £6.4 billion from benefits spending by the end of the decade by making it harder to claim personal independent payments (PIP) and cutting universal credit (UC). The number of children living in poverty in the UK has reached a record high of almost 4.5 million. Charities say cuts to disability and incapacity benefits announced by the Labour Government will “push more disabled people into poverty and worsen people’s health”. Government estimates suggest welfare cuts will plunge thousands more children below the poverty line by the end of the decade. Oxfam, for example, said the figures were “as damning as they are heartbreaking”. Silvia Galandini, from the charity, said: “It is morally repugnant that children, disabled people and carers are the ones who are taking the hit. It is unconscionable that the government is cutting social security while wilfully ignoring the huge potential revenue of a tiny tax on the super-rich, one that is overwhelmingly backed by the British public.”

We’re in for another round of austerity – to pay for more missiles and nukes and above all to prop up end-game capitalism in Britain and the rest of Europe.

Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Independent bloc in Parliament, says people did not elect a Labour government to push 50,000 more children into poverty. But “ever since this Labour government was elected, they have chosen to balance the books off the backs of the poor”.

Meanwhile Starmer and the Brussels cabal are running round Europe promoting their “coalition of the willing” in a last ditch bid to get a seat at the peace conference where the future of Ukraine will be decided. But as far as the Americans and Russians are concerned there’s only going to be two seats at the bargaining table – and they’re reserved for Trump and Putin.

## Who killed JFK?

**Well, we all know it was Lee Harvey Oswald. The real question is why? Gunned down soon after his arrest, Oswald took that secret to his grave.**

The story has been retold in a legion of books, documentaries and Hollywood movies over the years. We’ve all heard about the “grassy knoll”, the “missing witness” and the “second shooter”. But we still don’t know all the answers. If it wasn’t the action of deranged madman, we have to ask who actually benefitted from Kennedy’s death. If it was a conspiracy, it was clearly 100 per cent successful. Kennedy was killed and the assassin silenced two days later.

Many hoped that the release of the last batch of secret Kennedy files by the Trump administration would finally end the speculation around the assassination of JFK. But they didn’t. The documents only seemed to confirm the report of the official 1964 Warren Commission that concluded that President Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald and that Oswald acted entirely alone.

Whether the assassination was the act of a lone sniper – and that’s certainly the view of Donald Trump – or indeed part of a wider plot will nevertheless continue to fire the countless conspiracy theories that claim that vested capitalist interests, the Mafia, the CIA, Castro or even the Soviets were behind John F Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1963.

# ‘Greater BRICS’ – a platform for consensus

by Evandro Menezes de Carvalho

**The first few months of the Trump administration have shaken up the chessboard of the international system. Some pieces on this board, which were accustomed to playing in certain positions, are being discarded or forced to assume new roles. Using chess as a metaphor, those who were once Queens are now being treated as Pawns while those who were seen as Rooks are beginning to be perceived as Kings. The game becomes even more challenging when those who believe they own the board frequently change the rules that everyone is accustomed to.**

It was believed for a long time that countries with similar regimes and shared political conceptions were naturally inclined toward solidarity – leading to the conciliation of interests when conflicts arose between them. On the other hand, in diverse state systems, the consequences would be the opposite, as countries would uphold values that are considered contradictory. In such diverse systems conflict would be the rule rather than the exception. BRICS, however, challenges this hackneyed concept.

Many believed that BRICS’s diversity was its weakness. Over time, however, BRICS has demonstrated that it is possible to establish a well-intentioned dialogue platform among different countries, leading to concrete initiatives capable of benefiting all the people involved. The most illustrative example of this ability to foster constructive consensus – not just in words – is the New Development Bank.

The recent expansions of BRICS demonstrate its vitality and credibility on the international relations chessboard. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates joined the BRICS bloc. In January of this year, Brazil announced the official admission of Indonesia as a full member. The ‘Greater BRICS’ proves the success of this heterogeneous plat-

form of countries united around common objectives, particularly the reform of global governance institutions and the deepening of South–South co-operation.

Greater BRICS comprises 46 per cent of the world’s population and has a global GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) close to 40 per cent, exceeding the global GDP in PPP of the G7 countries, which is approximately 30 per cent. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Nigeria joined BRICS as “partner countries”.

This modality of membership was created during the Kazan Summit in October 2024. The legitimacy of the Greater BRICS bloc is further reinforced by the fact that more than 30 countries are interested in joining the bloc.

Greater BRICS has demonstrated its strong appeal to developing countries. Its most significant asset lies in its respect for the principle of sovereign equality and its advocacy for a more democratic international system. The focus is not on imposing rules or values but on promoting a more inclusive international order by respecting and valuing the differences of each country, including those in the cultural arena. Greater BRICS is the materialisation of the dream of a fairer, more peaceful international system. We must nourish this dream even while

acknowledging the difficulties of the real world. Brazil’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mauro Vieira, said: “BRICS represents a new vision of global governance – one that prioritises inclusion, equity and co-operation over hegemony, injustice, inequality and unilateralism.”

The theme of the next summit, to be held in Brazil, highlights the strengthening of Global South co-operation for more inclusive and sustainable governance. The agenda proposed by the Brazilian presidency includes facilitating trade and investment among BRICS countries, including payment methods and discussions on the impacts of AI and climate change on the labour market. Global health co-operation and the institutional development of BRICS are also on the agenda and deserve our attention. Because it is more representative of humanity as a whole and driven by the spirit of co-operation that unites Global South countries, the results of the 17<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit could have more positive impacts on humanity than the G20 has been able to offer.

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*Global Times*



## Workers' Notes

### Unrest on the campus

by New Worker correspondent

This week at the Canterbury-based University of Kent staff went on strike in protest at Management failing to rule out compulsory job cuts. The University and College Union (UCU) say the university is facing “a regular cycle of cuts to staff, courses and restructures, all of which impact the livelihoods and workloads of staff who work tirelessly to support students, conduct outstanding research and scholarship, and keep the university going”.

Negotiations earlier this year saw management extend a promise of no compulsory redundancies to academic teaching staff until next December. This does not however, apply to professional services staff such as student support, marketing and library staff, who are often also UCU members.

UCU general secretary Jo Grady said: “Our members are on strike today because the University of Kent has refused to rule out compulsory redundancies or protect staff workloads. Management now needs to work with us to protect jobs and student provision. Professional services staff are vital to the functioning of the university and to the educational experience we want all our students to receive. Until management rules out compulsory job cuts, our members have our full backing in taking this action.”

This is not a unique case. At Sheffield Hallam university staff walked out on Monday and Tuesday after management decided to withhold part of their wages for seven months by refusing to implement the 2024/25 pay award of 2.7 per cent due in August 2024. This would cost an average of £100 per month once pension costs are factored in.

Initially Management claimed it could not afford to implement the award, but it did so when UCU won its strike

## A Pilgrimage for Palestine

by New Worker correspondent

Acclaimed playwright Peter Oswald embarked on a 150-mile pilgrimage for Palestine on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Leaving Bristol at the start, Peter was presented with a key by Feda Shahien of The Red Line and The Women in Black from Bournemouth. It is the key to the house in Palestine of Feda's grandmother, from which she was evicted by the Israelis. Peter will carry the key to Parliament Square in London. There he will hand it over to a Palestinian girl dressed in tra-



ditional Palestinian clothing.

Pilgrim Peter is carrying a ‘tear’ made of Bristol blue glass, to be woven into a dress – a symbolic ‘weave from tears the dress of impossible’ – in London. At exhibitions all over the country people have woven ‘tears’ of various materials into the dress. Over halfway there and Peter's already raised over £10,000 for the Hands Up Project, a charity that's been working with Palestinian schools in Gaza and the Israeli occupied West Bank.

This has been achieved at sell-out events in towns all along the route to London.

In Bath local organiser Dionne McCulloch read out a poem specially written for the event by celebrated writer Max Porter. Also speaking poetry at this event and in Bradford on Avon was former Oxford Professor of Poetry Alice Oswald.

In Bradford-on-Avon Peter spoke to local children at an ex-

hibition of illustrated poems by children from Gaza. Carrying the flag of Palestine, the Pilgrim for Palestine attracted some vitriol but overwhelmingly the response has been supportive. The ‘pil-

grimage’ has been covered by the global Al Jazeera Arab TV channel, and the *Independent* and London *Evening Standard* have featured articles about the pilgrimage.

Further north, on the banks of the beautiful silvery Tay, the University of Dundee, has a £30 million deficit, which Management hope to correct with 632 job cuts with its present eight academic schools folded into three faculties, research activities will be particularly badly hit.

In November, the institution announced it was facing a financial crisis due to factors including “a severe drop in international student recruitment, ongoing structural underfunding of higher education, cost increases [and] inflationary pressures”.

ballot, but they refuse to pay staff money due last August. Hallam is the only university in Yorkshire and Humber that refused to implement the award. At the same time Hallam management are carrying on with a £220 million satellite London campus at Brent Cross.

Another strike against redundancies took place on Wednesday at the University of East Anglia (UEA). Here the issue is redundancies where almost one in six staff are at risk: 190 jobs are set to go. A business case published in November announced that Management intends to cut at least 30 staff in the faculty of medicine & health sciences, 25 in the science faculty, 22 in arts & humanities, with at least 90 from various departments and professional services.

This comes on top of 400 staff leaving in 2023 due to a £40 million deficit. No wonder an overwhelming 82 per cent of the university's UCU members voted for strike action and action short of a strike this time round. The local UCU co-chair Nadine Zubair said: “We will use our strike day to celebrate staff, to remind the employer that we are the university, that we matter, and that we have a clear and unified voice. There is a real power in coming together and acting as a collective in these moments of crisis, and we need to act together to support all our colleagues who are ‘at risk’ of redundancy.”

The same spirit is evident at the University of Bradford where staff have overwhelmingly backed industrial action over plans to cut more than 300 jobs, including the closure of chemistry and film & television courses as part of £13 million cuts package. Again, Management blames a reduction in the number of international students, UCU notes the vice-chancellor “earns” £293,000 annually and that “the cuts being threatened would also have a devastating impact on businesses that rely on trade with university staff and students. The academic vandalism Bradford's management is embarking upon not only affects the university, but all the people of Bradford, and we call upon constituency MPs, council leaders and councillors to stand with our members to protect jobs and our communities.”

# PILGRIMAGE 4 PALESTINE ROUTE

## BRISTOL

18-30 MARCH 2025

INFO@BRISTOLPALESTINEALLIANCE.ORG

The hands up project BPA

DATE	LOCATION
18 MAR	BATH
19 MAR	BRADFORD ON AVON
20 MAR	DEVIZES
21 MAR	PEWSEY
22 MAR	HUNGERFORD
23 MAR	NEWBURY
24 MAR	ALDERMASTON WHARF
25 MAR	READING
26 MAR	HURLEY
27 MAR	MAIDENHEAD
28 MAR	WEST DRAYTON
29 MAR	ALPERTON
30 MAR	PARLIAMENT SQUARE

## LONDON

hibition of illustrated poems by children from Gaza. Carrying the flag of Palestine, the Pilgrim for Palestine attracted some vitriol but overwhelmingly the response has been supportive. The ‘pil-

grimage’ has been covered by the global Al Jazeera Arab TV channel, and the *Independent* and London *Evening Standard* have featured articles about the pilgrimage.

Liverpool, Reading, University of South Wales and York have all announced similar plans. The Office for Students (OfS) estimated that over 70 per cent of English universities are expected to operate at a financial loss in 2025 to 2026 so worse is to come.

North of the border, cuts at the University of Edinburgh have been panned as “off the scale” by UCU. The Principal announced he was seeking cuts of £140 million, through both voluntary and compulsory redundancies. He blamed “income for teaching not rising in line with costs, steeply rising utilities prices, inflation, recent unexpected announcements on national insurance contributions, and a rise in employment costs” as well as “a reduction in the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for international students”. He said nothing of his £342,000 basic salary.

As Scottish students on undergraduate courses do not pay tuition fees on their home turf, these universities rely on income from the Scottish government and the high tuition fees charged to international students, the latter is becoming more of a deterrent.

The UCU said some of the

university's assets of £3.1 billion should be used to save jobs. Reasonably, UCU queried how Management had got into a position where it was looking for cuts of this magnitude. UCU members have passed a “no confidence” vote on the principal and senior management team. In addition, a UCU consultative ballot saw 75 per cent vote for strike action if the threat of redundancy is not withdrawn.

Further north, on the banks of the beautiful silvery Tay, the University of Dundee, has a £30 million deficit, which Management hope to correct with 632 job cuts with its present eight academic schools folded into three faculties, research activities will be particularly badly hit.

In November, the institution announced it was facing a financial crisis due to factors including “a severe drop in international student recruitment, ongoing structural underfunding of higher education, cost increases [and] inflationary pressures”.

Because the city votes SNP the Scottish Government has given it a £22 million bail-out. Jo Grady, who must be getting tired of making such announcements,

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said: "We are clear that there is an alternative to sacking staff and cutting courses, student support and vital educational provision in this city, and we'll continue to do all we can to save jobs and preserve education in Dundee."

Needless to say, some were angry at Dundee getting so much money as it means they are getting 88 per cent of the £25 million pot leaving just three million for the other 19 Scottish universities. Ferdinand von Prondzynski, former principal of Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, said "this leaves a completely irrelevant amount of money for the rest of the system" adding: "What the current situation shows is that the funding framework for Scottish universities is completely inadequate, making it inevitable that some universities will experience existential threats."

## Unite at War

by New Worker  
correspondent

**Readers of a sensitive nature should perhaps skip this news item because it deals with particularly brutal subject: a dispute between nominally left-wing factions in a major British union.**

The union in question is Unite, where open warfare has broken out on the Union's Ex-

ecutive Committee over the issue of the union's controversial hotel and conference centre in Birmingham. This was supposed to have cost £7 million but by 2021 costs amounted to £96.5 million. Much of the work was carried out by a company based in former General Secretary Len McCluskey's native Liverpool, which made an estimated £15 million profit. Defenders of the project say rising costs were due to enhancements to the project agreed by the union, and by insisting on proper trade terms and conditions. They say it is a worthwhile long-term investment.

In her successful 2021 campaign to become the union's first woman general secretary, Sharon Graham promised an internal inquiry. In that contest she faced three opponents: the right-winger Gerard Coyne, and two on the left – Howard Beckett and Steve Turner. Beckett was McCluskey's first choice, but he stood down so as not to split the left vote. His second choice was Turner, who declared that: "The union didn't need an 'attack dog' but someone who could work with Starmer and do deals 'behind the scenes'." Graham refused to stand down and ultimately triumphed with 37.8 per cent of the vote on a miserable nine per cent turnout.

At present the KC-led inquiry commissioned by Sharon Graham is slowly underway. It has identified a missing £14 million that has been described as a

"mystery" and does not feature in the project's final accounts. An interim report is due soon.

These are the issues that caused Andy Green, Chair of Unite's EC and an ally of Graham, to write to union representatives claiming that: "A number of EC members linked to the old leadership are currently engaged in deliberate attempts to undermine our union...these actions appear designed to frustrate the independent investigations into potential corruption surrounding our Birmingham Hotel & Affiliated Services and to divert attention from the findings."

"Let's be clear. It is fact that our members were overcharged by tens of millions of pounds for the Birmingham Hotel project. A development built by friends of the previous General Secretary, Len McCluskey. People who have now been arrested by the Police on a separate matter."

"It is also fact that Len McCluskey's Legal Director (and later Finance Director) Howard Beckett is now part of a criminal investigation into suspected offences of bribery, fraud and money laundering and that his offices were subject to a police raid."

As a result, Green was "convinced that this is why a group that is apparently called the United Left (UL) supporters' group on the EC have chosen this time to do everything possible to disrupt the business of our union". Green was formerly of the UL faction

but once elected he's favoured Graham.

He claims that this issue diverts attention from the duty of representing members and takes aim at one of the defeated leadership candidates campaign manager and attacks United Left for failing to attend EC meetings.

There was a quick response to Green's message. The EC Vice Chair posted a message on UL social media entitled "Statement from the majority of the Unite Executive Council" stating that Green was guilty of "inaccuracies and misrepresentations". It was pointed out that Unite EC voted to remove Green from his position by 31–28 with one abstention. Green refused to accept this as legitimate as it did not meet the required two-thirds majority and issued his message in his capacity as Chair after the vote. This was the third such attempt to remove Green.

He was accused of a "persistent refusal to accept motions brought to the EC and his obstruction of attempts to gain greater financial oversight and accountability, particularly in relation to financial matters", citing a plan to increase officer and staff pay, costing more than £7 million, without EC approval.

The Vice-Chair denied that are they are preventing the investigations reaching a conclusion and added that the EC majority have sent a legal "Letter Before Action" to Green and demand he

steps aside to allow a new Chair to be elected.

The EC majority group announced that they will "adjourn our participation" on the EC because Green has not resigned. "For over one and half years, numerous EC members have been raising serious concerns about the lack of governance, scrutiny, transparency of finances and financial decision making within our union" and not had satisfactory answers.

"We have given the General Secretary a number of opportunities to resolve this and to respect the majority of the EC, as per the rules of our union, but her refusal and the continuation of an inquorate EC led by the ex-Chair, have meant we have needed to take this action. We repeatedly confirmed that we would return immediately to the meeting, upon confirmation that the ex-Chair would respect the democratic will of the EC and stand aside."

Unite's recent support for Starmer's plans for increased military spending will go down well with its members in these industries but will anger others in the NHS and local government. Graham and Green are explicit in their opposition to an arms embargo on Israel or persuading workers to refuse to handle arms intended for genocide. She has also come under attack for not allowing union premises to be used for campaigns and film showings about Palestine.

**20 years ago  
this week  
in the New Worker**

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

**LABOUR is holding its lead in the polls in the run-up to the coming election but only because it has jettisoned some of its most unpopular policies – for now.**

*These include cuts to public sector pensions and the deeply unpopular Bill to pave the way for compulsory identity cards. Everybody knows these policies will be revived once the election is over.*

*Chancellor Gordon Brown a week ago produced a budget that was superficially appealing but actually gave away very little. Many of his apparently generous*

*handouts to families and to pensioners will shrink or disappear after means testing is applied.*

*For example, the £200 awarded to pensioners to help pay their council tax will not bring any benefit at all to those who are already claiming council tax rebate. Only those who are better off are liable to pay the full rate will get the full £200. The same principle applies to the family credits.*

*But Brown has succeeded in convincing many that they will be better off with him in charge of the economy than the Tories.*

*Tory leader Michael Howard continues to campaign by appealing to the worst fears and prejudices of the electorate, picking on vulnerable sections of the community to demonise gypsies, asylum seekers and women in need of abortions. He has raised the profile of the Tory party in the gutter press but not, it seems, in the opinion polls.*

*Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has been faced with a*

*damning report on the lack of success of the trials of the part-privatised city academies and with the Jamie Oliver campaign that has exposed the horrendous condition of school dinners.*

*Both Kelly and Blair have met Oliver and promised to introduce minimum standards for school food – but with no extra budget. They say they will introduce better training for school dinner ladies and improve school kitchens.*

*It sounds good but the small print says this plan of action will take 15 years to accomplish. During that time, a new generation of young people will grow up malnourished with a host of health complaints that will see them die before their parents – unless the Government can be forced to take stronger, faster action.*

*A few schools have succeeded in raising food standards by dismissing the privatised suppliers of the appalling food and using the money to do their own catering.*



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fascism: reflections for debate

by Weverton Brito

**Vice President of the Brazilian Centre for Solidarity with the Peoples and Struggle for Peace (Cebrapaz)**

**Nazi-fascist ideas were so powerful, so influential, and caused so many traumas and disasters in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that they continue to strongly impact today's far-right currents. One of these strands has once again taken command of the world's leading imperialist power, the USA, under the leadership of Donald Trump.**

The legitimate concern for theoretical rigour raises an important question however: is it correct to label the most significant elements of the modern far-right as fascist?

Clearly, not all conservative or right-wing movements can be lumped into the category of fascism. Such a mistake would lead antifascists to commit tactical errors, such as failing to exploit contradictions that could weaken and isolate the enemy, distancing them from potential temporary allies. Nevertheless, it is vital to correctly understand what we are facing; otherwise, there is a risk of adopting insufficient measures.

## What is fascism?

The core definition of fascism, as formulated by the International Communist Movement and particularly by Georgi Dimitrov in his famous report presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist International in 1935, remains strikingly relevant. It was summarised in the *Short Philosophical Dictionary* (Rosental & Iudin), published by the Soviet state: "Fascism is the most reactionary and openly terrorist form of the dictatorship of financial capital, established by the imperialist bourgeoisie to crush

the resistance of workers and all progressive elements in society. The rise of fascism is proof that the bourgeoisie can no longer impose its interests through the routine means of normal bourgeois democracy".

For Brazilian Marxist Leandro Konder, in his book *Introduction to Fascism* (1977), some of the main characteristics of fascism include: anti-communism, charismatic leadership, authoritarianism, militarism, chauvinism, massive propaganda, irrationalism, and the use of violence as a political method.

Greek theorist Nicos Poulantzas, on the other hand, argues that the defining aspect of fascism is the existence of a politically mobilised mass base, differentiating it from other authoritarian expressions such as military dictatorships, which rely on occasional mass support, or Bonapartist dictatorships, which also depend on a charismatic leader and have a mass base but do not evolve into an organised social force.

Even considering the most well-known definitions of fascism, it is almost impossible to separate fascism from contemporary far-right movements, as we inevitably find in their platforms and/or practices some – if not all – of the essential elements of fascism. The only significant exception today is anti-Semitism, which has become residual among fascists, largely because Israel has become one of the global capitals of the far right.

From a political standpoint, attempting to separate the most significant elements of today's far right from 21<sup>st</sup>-Century fascism – or, as some prefer, neo-fascism – is a futile effort. The modern far right and fascism are, at best, Siamese twins, connected by the brain and the heart, both born from the same "bitch" as Brecht would put it: capitalism in its imperialist stage.



• The Mussolini era: fascist youth give the Roman salute.

What we are facing today, embodied in the leadership of Donald Trump, is 21<sup>st</sup> Century fascism. A fascism that does not dare to speak its name, yet fascism nonetheless, as it possesses all the essential attributes of classical fascism. This will be explored in this series of three articles.

Expecting today's fascism to be identical in every respect to what we might call the 'original' fascism reflects a schematic mindset, one that Lenin had already criticised: "The phenomenon is always richer than the law...and therefore, any law is limited, incomplete, and approximate."

Let us turn to history to understand, in broad strokes, how this phenomenon has evolved up to the present day.

## Yesterday's Fascism

The term 'fascist' gained prominence in 1919 when Benito Mussolini created his armed militias, the Fasci Italiani di Combattimento, a merger of two groups that had referred to themselves as "fascists" since 1915. The Fasci Italiani di Combattimento later gave rise to the National Fascist Party, which seized power in 1922.

The word fascio (plural: fasci) means 'bundle', referring to the fasces – an ancient symbol of power in the Roman Empire. This symbolism was part of Mussolini's mythological narrative to make Italy relive the grandeur of Ancient Rome.

Mussolini had been a socialist activist before radically changing his stance at the outbreak of the First World War. He enthusiastically supported Italy's participation in the war and increasingly adopted a virulent anti-Marx-

ist, chauvinist and reactionary position.

The 'founding fathers' of fascism, Mussolini and Hitler, clearly defined the foundational purpose of fascism: the fight against communism.

Mussolini declared that anti-communism was the soul of fascism, but he did not consider that sufficient. To mobilise the masses, he cynically argued, it was necessary to create a myth: "Denying Bolshevism is necessary, but something must be affirmed. We created our myth. A myth is a faith, it is a passion. It does not have to be a reality...our myth is the nation, our myth is the greatness of the nation!"

What was happening in Italy was closely followed in Germany by Adolf Hitler, a young man with a deeply prejudiced and conservative mentality. In 1921, he assumed the leadership of a party founded the previous year: the National Socialist German Workers' Party, abbreviated as NAZI from the first two syllables of Nationalsozialistische in German.

Hitler idolised Mussolini and Fascist Italy. It was a beacon to follow. In 1925, he enthusiastically stated in his book *Mein Kampf* that "the struggle being waged by Fascist Italy against the three main weapons of Judaism... the banning of secret Masonic lodges, the persecution of the internationalist press, as well as the constant battle against international Marxism, on the other hand, the constant consolidation of Fascist doctrine, will enable, over the years, the Italian government to increasingly serve the interests of its people without fear of the Jewish hydra".

In the context of the great economic crisis triggered in 1929, known as the New York Stock Market Crash or the Great Depression, the fascist movement gained momentum worldwide, and Hitler rose to

*continued on page 6...*



...continued from page 5  
power in 1933.

Dimitrov characterised Nazism as follows: "The most reactionary form of fascism is the German type. It has the audacity to call itself National Socialism, despite having nothing in common with socialism. Hitlerian fascism is not just bourgeois nationalism; it is brutal chauvinism. It is a system of government based on political banditry, a system of provocations and torture against the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasant masses, the petty bourgeoisie, and intellectuals. It is medieval cruelty and barbarism, unbridled aggression against other peoples and countries."

In Hitler's case, the mobilising myth of national greatness was combined with the myth of the "Jewish conspiracy" widely spread through the first 'fake news' produced on an industrial scale: the book *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which allegedly revealed Jewish plans for world domination. The difference between him and Mussolini was that Hitler genuinely believed in his myths.

The Nazis' anti-Semitism was far more virulent than that of Fascist Italy, which only adopted anti-Jewish laws 16 years after Mussolini came to power, and even then, due to some degree of German pressure. Aside from a few nuances (such as this one), however, Hitler shared almost everything with the ideology of Italian fascism: the concept of Lebensraum (*spazio vitale* in Italian) to justify the invasion of sovereign countries, as well as fierce anti-communism. Marxism, for Hitler, was the 'weapon' of Judaism: "Over the brain and soul of decent people, the fear



• Two of a kind – Mussolini and Hitler.

of Judaism, the weapon of Marxists, gradually descends like a nightmare." (*Mein Kampf*).

The rebirth of Germany was only possible by eradicating Marxism: "Invincible, however, seem the millions who oppose national resurgence due to political convictions, invincible as long as their Marxist ideas are not combated, torn from their hearts and minds." (*Mein Kampf*).

So why the red colour in the Nazi flag? Hitler himself responds with unusual cynicism

(cynicism, by the way, is one of the timeless characteristics of fascism): "The red colour of our posters was chosen by us after precise and deep reflection, with the aim of provoking the Left, of enraging it and inducing it to attend our assemblies; all of this, if only to allow us to come into contact and speak with these people." (*Mein Kampf*).

This also indirectly reveals why the word "socialism" was in the name of his party, which becomes clear in another

passage of the same book: "Only the red colour of our posters made them flock to our meeting halls. The bourgeoisie was horrified that we had also adopted the red of the Bolsheviks, suspecting behind this some ambiguous attitude. The nationalist circles of Germany whispered among themselves the same suspicion, that deep down, we were nothing but a kind of Marxists, perhaps simply masked Marxists or, rather, socialists... How many good laughs

we had at the expense of these idiots and cowards". (*Mein Kampf*).

Revealing once again the genesis of his ideology, Hitler, as early as 1925, foretold the defeat of Bolshevism, saying that Germany "casts its gaze to the lands of the East": "Destiny itself seems to indicate the direction to us. By abandoning Russia to Bolshevism, fate has stripped the Russian people of the educated class that created and ensured its existence as a state. The organisation of a Rus-

sian state was not the result of the Slavic political capacity in Russia but a marvellous example of the efficiency of Germanic elements as state-builders within an inferior race." (*Mein Kampf*).

In other words, according to Hitler, by expelling the "educated class" from power, the communists purged Russia of its "Germanic elements," making it an easy prey.

Exactly 20 years after the publication of *Mein Kampf*, in April 1945, the Nazi leader, then confined in his bunker, with the Red Army of the "inferior race" occupying almost all of Berlin, confided in his followers, lamenting not having secured an alliance with England, as such an alliance would have allowed him to fully pursue "the objective of my life and the reason for the rise of National Socialism: the extermination of Bolshevism".

## Imperialism without a mask

Another common point between Mussolini and Hitler: both rose to power with the support of massive movements and the enthusiastic backing and financing of the economic and political elites of Italy, Germany, and other parts of the world. Nazism, for example, garnered the admiration of the magnate Henry Ford, who became one of the financiers of the Nazi party and was decorated by the German government with the Order of Merit of the German Eagle on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1938.

Regarding international politics, fascism has innovated in relation to other forms of expansionism. The Europeans

• The Nazi "master race"...





sought to justify colonialism as an expedition to convert pagans to Christianity and civilise the savages. Manifest Destiny, the ideology behind US expansion across the Americas, conveyed more or less the same idea: that Americans, as legitimate Anglo-Saxons, were

destined by God to civilise the continent. Fascism, on the other hand, virtually dispensed with global legitimising justifications. The invasion of territories previously belonging to free peoples was justified solely by Italy's and Germany's particular interests in securing their *spazio vitale*

and *lebensraum* period.

This is precisely how one of the most famous historians of Nazism, Joachim Fest – a conservative of the old school – defined it: “What made Hitler a new phenomenon in history was the fact that he never had any civilisational notion. The world's con-

quering powers – from ancient Rome to the Holy Roman Empire, Napoleonic France, or the British Empire – always claimed, however tenuously, the promise of peace, progress, and freedom for humanity. Hitler, on the contrary, abandoned any ornamentation in his con-

quest and expansion of power, considering it unnecessary even for mere theatric.”

Recently, Donald Trump simultaneously threatened the sovereignty of three allied countries: he wants to take the Panama Canal from Panama and Greenland from Den-

mark. As for Canada, Trump wants the entire country. The American magnate also made no pretence, justifying annexation simply, in his own words: “We need them for our economic security.”

(To be continued)

# Steven Knight: poet of the savagery of capitalism

by Dennis Broe

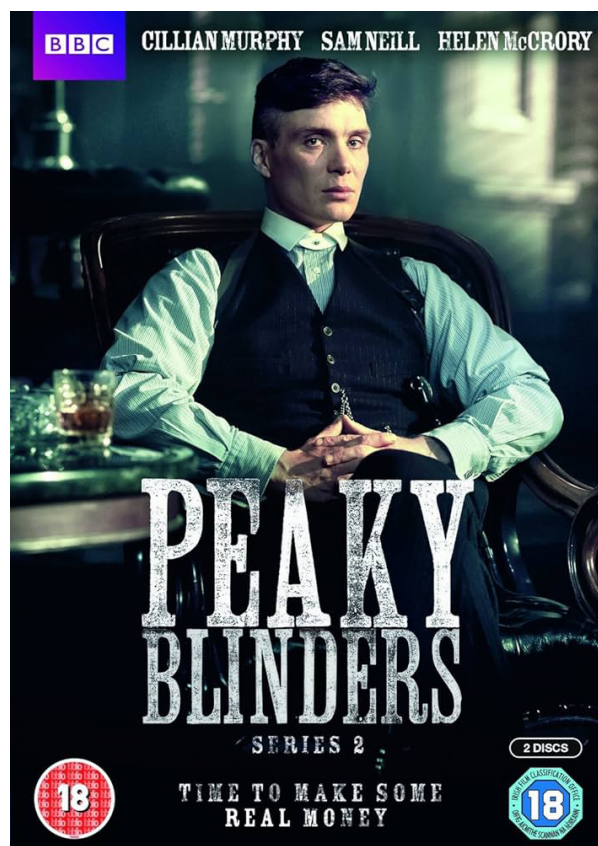
**As Trump and Musk unleash a new kind of barbarism and open class war on American workers based around the cuts to domestic spending and the renewal of the tax giveaway to the billionaires, it is especially worthwhile to revisit and acknowledge the work of Stephen Knight who through a series of series has charted the brutality of the British ruling class in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

Knight's most famous, though not necessarily his most trenchant, series is *Peaky Blinders*. The Peakys are a family gang in Birmingham in the 1920s whose mixed heritage of outsiders – Irish and Roma – forced them to claw their way up the ladder to a final hard-won respectability. The two brothers, the lead characters, were both damaged in the First World War trenches, and the series was the first to deal specifically not only with the effects on the home front of that war but also to locate those effects as necessary results of its barbarity, where the European ruling classes ordered their workers to the trenches to kill

each other and a whole generation of poets and artists on both sides were either murdered or mentally destroyed in the onslaught. Just as, in the present, European leaders are threatening to send this generation of their own youth to die on the killing fields of Ukraine.

Knight's other works, though, charting 19<sup>th</sup> Century exploitation, are equally compelling. They encompass the crudity of the ultimate capitalist Ebenezer Scrooge in his particularly harsh version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*; the damage to the colonies and to those who perpetrated this cruelty in Tom Hardy's East India Company slaver returned to the homeland in *Taboo*; and the destruction of intimate relationships in the wake of a social climber again in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Knight's emphasis on the sordid is not for the sake of it, just to rub it in the audiences' face, as are some American 'realist' productions, but rather to brutally and individually describe the horrors of this naked class system, which in the present is tearing off its liberal veil.

Knight's latest outing may be his most truculent. *A Thousand Blows*



recounts a partially true story of a Jamaican boxer, Hezekiah Moskow, and his relationship with Mary Carr, the 'Queen' of a gang of all-female thieves in London's working class melting pot, the East End, in the 1880s. The 'savagery' of the East End is constantly contrasted to the 'civilised' West End, where the profits of 19<sup>th</sup> Century British mercantile and factory capitalism, wage slavery at home and actual slavery abroad, have accrued.

Hezekiah befriends a Chinese store owner, Mr

Lao, based partially on his knowledge of Chinese from his mother's side in Jamaica. As the story unfolds, we learn that both families were victims of repression. Hezekiah watches his father be mowed down by British redcoats in a peaceful uprising, and Mr Lao later reveals he has lost his family to Qing Dynasty violence, as representatives from both oppressor countries meet in London.

Lurking in the shadows is an anarchist, the lover of one of the women in Mary's gang, but

he is given short shrift and quickly escorted off the scene, with Mary explaining that unlike him, she is “an honest criminal”. Knight is not here disparaging revolution, but rather trying to point to how difficult real change is in such a rigidly and racially structured class society where the working class has its own means and customs for survival but also becomes at times an inverse of the ruling class as Mary is ‘Queen’ of her gang, the Forty Elephants.

The series is also a boxing series and as such is the most class-conscious boxing narrative since John Garfield's '40s noir *Body and Soul*. In the ring the Jamaican Hezekiah is faster and more agile than his Anglo opponents, à la Muhammed Ali, but also, when he must summon the strength to beat a skilled opponent, driven by his anger at his treatment by this system. He is initially called to London to be a “lion tamer” but he then discovers that instead he is to be the African lion in an overtly racist menagerie.

In detailing a Black man's rise through the ring, and the actual and enduring antagonism that surrounds that rise,

Knight is providing an alternative to woke fairy tales such as *Bridgerton*, where, without a struggle, Africans share power in a corporate equity version of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain. Knight is more interested in hard-won, actual equality than fake corporate quackery.

Mary and Hezekiah's path is fraught with danger everywhere they turn, not only from the class above them but also from the resentment of their own peers as they refuse to accept their place. The series is also good at exposing sham diplomacy as the highest-level meeting of Chinese and British royalty ends with Mary and her thieves discovering that the monarchy are greater scam artists than they could ever hope to be.

Such is a series full of contradictions with the sleight being that of too much anticipation in the final episodes of a second season, which thankfully has already been commissioned as a continuing part of Knight's exposure of the debilitating effects of a capitalism whose coarser side only reveals the brutality that underlies its 'sophisticated' veneer.

People's World  
(USA)

## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

The US imperialists and their south Korean puppets recently staged the 'Freedom Shield 2025' war exercise against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The war exercises ran from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> March. These aggressive and provocative war exercises that are nothing but a rehearsal for the invasion of the DPRK took place despite talk of "improved relations" with the DPRK by Trump and some speculation about DPRK-US summits or DPRK-US negotiations. It shows that the talk of peace by the new administration of the USA is just talk!

The DPRK Foreign Ministry on the 10<sup>th</sup> March commented: "Lurking behind the above-said war exercises, traditionally staged by the US and the ROK [south Korea], is the persistent and unchangeable aggression ambition of the USA, which seeks to propagate the American-style view on value and the Yankee-style liberal democracy into the inviolable territory of a sovereign state and finally to overthrow the DPRK government and its social system, just seen through the operational name 'Freedom Shield', and of the ROK following the USA."

What was noteworthy about 'Freedom Shield 2025' was that it was greater in depth and scope than before. It also included a joint special warfare drill to destroy the DPRK's alleged "secret underground tunnel network" and removing the DPRK's nuclear weapons

by mobilising armoured and special warfare forces, reconnaissance drones and artificial intelligence attack robots.

Moreover, 12 pro-American countries that were members of the so-called 'UN Command' in south Korea participated in the exercises. These countries were: Belgium, Canada, Colombia, France, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and our shame Britain.

At a time when the UK is facing spending cuts and council tax is being increased, it is shameful that taxpayers' money is being wasted on military exercises on the other side of the world that have nothing to do with Britain. Britain should not be party to US aggression against People's Korea. The shameful past of the UK with regard to Korea should not be repeated.

**Dermot Hudson  
London**

### Dear Comrades

As our roads and pathways crumble, hospital waiting lists extend to years, welfare benefits are slashed and everlasting austerity becomes the norm, people realise that something is seriously wrong. Even politically naïve members of the Labour Party must question why their leadership has no political strategy that differs in any real way from that of the Tories to deal with a growing crisis that is causing hardship and anxiety for many.

Our Prime Minister appears unconcerned as he becomes more and more obsessed with foreign affairs. There is plenty of money to keep the imperialist proxy war going in Ukraine and for increasing military spending. There is no money for meeting Britain's desperate needs.

It appears to me that his obsession for war-mongering is driven by a desire to curry favour and ingratiate

himself with the crazy Brussels bureaucrats so that Britain may return to the EU. At the same time his support for increasing the military budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP would please the Americans. What about the people of Britain?

There are a number of obvious reasons for Britain's decline since the Second World War. They include the break-up of the colonial system that had for centuries enabled the country to rape and plunder the world. De-industrialisation accompanied by a lack of innovation and investment for growth has made Britain uncompetitive. This has been made worse by an unbelievable level of incompetence by successive bourgeois governments and the decision to sell off the family silver by Mrs Thatcher. Many of our economic problems are of course symptoms of the crisis of capitalism itself.

The Labour Party, still a part of the traditional labour movement, has sadly deteriorated into behaving more like a bourgeois party under its current leadership. It remains as a charade that plays a role in creating the illusion of democracy. The adoption of Marxism is the only way forward for Britain to overcome its problems and for its people to flourish.

**John Maryon  
Suffolk**

### Dear Comrades

In continuation of its bloody approach and fascist aggression, the Zionist occupation government broke the ceasefire agreement, resuming the genocidal war against our people in the Gaza Strip, in flagrant defiance of all international laws and conventions, and in persistence in the policy of killing, destruction, displacement and starvation.

This new crime, which comes in the context of the

ongoing crimes against our people, proves once again that the Zionist occupation continues its misleading approach within the framework of its racist policy, using formal agreements as a cover for its crimes. This confirms that any solutions or agreements with this usurping entity remain mere illusions unless there are international guarantors, far from the blatant bias represented by the United States, the main supporter of the crimes of occupation against our people. The occupation Government, led by fascist and racist forces, continues to commit massacres against unarmed civilians, targeting children, women and the elderly, in a desperate attempt to break the will of our resistant people.

We in the Palestinian Communist Party condemn in the strongest terms this ongoing crime against our people in Gaza, and we affirm the following:

- The need to escalate the popular struggle and resistance in all its forms in the face of the occupation and its liquidation plans on the entire land of historic Palestine.
- Call for the widest international solidarity campaign to expose the crimes of the occupation, and press for its accountability before international courts.
- Reject any liquidation projects or false agreements that attempt to circumvent the inalienable rights of our people, foremost of which is their right to return and self-determination.
- Strengthening the unity of the national ranks and the resistance as the most powerful weapon in the face of Zionist aggression, and thwarting its plans aimed at sowing division and division.
- Calling on the progres-

*continued on page 9...*

## Diary

### Check the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Stop the War Coalition websites for emergency Gaza protests across the country.

#### UNTIL 25 APRIL

Wellcome Collection: *Hard Graft: Work, Health and Rights*. Free exhibition. 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE.

#### UNTIL JUNE 2025

Townsend Theatre Productions: *Behold Ye Ramblers*. Touring play by Neil Gore. See TTP website for details of venues.

#### UNTIL 15 JULY

Tate Britain: *Artists Against Fascism and War*. Exhibition at Millbank, London SW1P 4RG.

#### UNTIL 25 JUL

Working Class Movement Library: *Collectors, The Cameraman, The Poets and the Pits: Miners' Strike 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition*. Afternoons. WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

#### SAT 29 MAR – FRI 2 MAY

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Screen Cuba, Film festival: London and elsewhere. Full details and booking at: <https://screencuba.uk/>

#### SAT 29 MAR

Stand Up To Racism: We demand change – Summit of resistance conference. Central London (venue still to be confirmed).

#### SAT 29 MAR

Arise A Festival of Left Ideas: Socialism or Barbarism Day School. 10:30–16:30, London. Three venues in Farringdon, London. Book on Eventbrite.

#### MON 31 MAR

Korean Friendship Association: Film Night. Showing of *72 Hours* 19:00–20:30. Register at [juche007@gmail.com](mailto:juche007@gmail.com)

#### TUE 1 APRIL

Stop the War Coalition: Welfare not Warfare, Stop Starmer's Militarism, Defend the Right to Protest! Rally 18:30, Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

#### THUR 3 APRIL

Socialist History Society: James Crossley on AL Morton: Life in the Radical Tradition. 19:00, Zoom meeting. Register on SHS website.

#### FRI 4 APRIL

National Education Union: Building Support for Removal of All Asbestos from Schools. 16:00–18:30, Suite 5&6 at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London

WC1H 9BD.

#### SAT 5 APRIL

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Don't Buy Apartheid. Protests outside supermarkets selling Israeli-associated products. See PSC website for details of nationwide events.

#### SAT 5 APRIL

British Group for the Study of the Juche Idea and Korean Friendship Association: 113<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung and the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of *On The Juche Idea*. 14:00–17:00, Chadswell Centre, Harrison Street, London WC1H 8JF.

#### SAT 5–THUR 24 APRIL

Serpentine Gallery: *The British East India Company on Trial*. Ambika P3, 35 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5LS. Book on the gallery's website.

#### MON 7 APRIL

Global Justice Now: Tzeporah Berman of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. 18:30–20:00, Kennington Park Community Centre, London SE11 5SY. Book on GJN website.

#### MON 14–FRI 25 APRIL

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Camp protesting against US nuclear weapons returning to Britain. RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 9PS. Includes an online international seminar on 'Analysing and Resisting US Nuclear Expansion' on Thursday 24 April. Contact [info@lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk](mailto:info@lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk)

#### MONDAY 28 APRIL

Workers Memorial Day: See TUC website for nationwide local events.

#### WED 30 APRIL

Working Class Movement Library: Adam Canwell Corn on Do workers need protecting from AI? Details to follow.

#### THUR 1 MAY

International Workers' Day. London rally: Assemble 12:00 for March to Trafalgar Square. See TUC and STUC websites for other events to 5 May.

#### SAT 3 MAY

Socialist History Society: Hugh Davie on The Organisation of the Soviet Army in the Second World War. 14:00, Marx Memorial Library.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday.

You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email [party@NCP.clara.net](mailto:party@NCP.clara.net)



...continued from page 8

sive and revolutionary forces in the world to take firm positions against the criminal policies of the occupation, and to stop all forms of support and complicity with it.

We in the Palestinian Communist Party affirm that our people, who have made great sacrifices, will not be broken by the Zionist war machine and will continue their struggle until liberation, return and the establishment of their independent State on all their national soil with a united Jerusalem as its capital.

*Glory and immortality to our righteous martyrs!*

*Freedom for our valiant captives!*

*Victory for our people in their just battle against occupation and colonialism!*

**Palestinian Communist Party**

**Dear Comrades**

Vanity Fair Corporation was a large American-based multi-national clothes manufacturer. Lee Jeans was the company's most successful brand.

In 1972 it opened a plant in Greenock in the West of Scotland. The area suffered from de-industrialisation, so there were a range of financial incentives intended to induce firms to open up for business locally.

By 1981 there were 18 unemployed people for every job vacancy that was advertised in Greenock. Female unemployment was 13.3 per cent. And it was in January that year that the firm told shop steward Helen Monaghan that, despite healthy order books, the factory would be closing. The firm blamed the high rate of the pound and the alleged unprofitability of the plant. Some 240 jobs looked set to be lost. The workers felt however, that the factory was still feasible and that it was a case of corporate greed.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1981

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they gathered in the factory canteen and the occupation of the site began. Shamefully their union, the National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers (NUTGW), distanced themselves completely from the occupation. However, workers in local shipyards, car plants etc were totally supportive. So too was the general public.

Then on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1981 the *Greenock Telegraph* reported that there had been a management buyout. The workers would be hired by a new firm. 'Inverwear Limited'.

The workers had been vindicated. They had successfully taken on a multinational. They resumed work and they joined the TGWU!

It is an episode that sadly rarely features in accounts of working-class struggle – but it is one we should remember.

**Alan Stewart  
Wakefield**

# Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

## The Beginning of the End

No sooner had former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon declared that she was standing down from Holyrood than it was announced that she was no longer the focus of Operation Branchform into the £600,000 missing from SNP finances. The SNP's Treasurer at the time, MSP Colin Beattie was also cleared in the same police statement. Not so fortunate is Peter 'Mr Sturgeon' Murrell, the former CEO for 20 years and the one-time husband of the same former First Minister.

Predictably Ms Sturgeon said "I don't think there was a scrap of evidence that I had done anything wrong" and lamented that "to have something like this hanging over me for almost two years now has been difficult, it's been frustrating".

Not all nationalists share Sturgeon's joy. One of the fringe groups, Salvo, is looking into a private prosecution against Sturgeon and Beattie. The same people have noticed that the Crown Office was much more eager to prosecute Alex Salmond on much flimsier evidence and wonder why Murrell was left to carry the can alone.

Some have asked why Police Scotland spent two years and millions of pounds of taxpayers' money investigating the matter only to let it drop. However, this does not mean Operation Branchform is completely finished. Popcorn sales will increase during

Mr Sturgeon's trial...

## By-Election Latest

The SNP can take some encouragement from the three most recent by-elections. In a contest caused by the death of the incumbent at the Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh ward of West Lothian, the SNP held on to a seat previously won in a by-election. On a 25 per cent turnout the victors secured 31.8, Labour 29.2, Reform 18.7, the Tories 7.5, Liberal Democrat 5.3, Greens 4.3, with Alba coming last on 3.1 per cent on first preference votes.

In Glasgow's Southside Central, Nicola Sturgeon's election agent returned to the council winning a contest caused by the death of a Labour councillor. On an 18.7 per cent turnout the SNP secured 30 per cent of the first preference votes, a decline of 4.2 per cent from last time round. Coming second on 27.4 was Labour, which declined by 4.1 per cent. The Greens did well on 21.5 per cent, while the Scottish Socialist Party came to unexpected life on 7.2 per cent. Reform got a modest 5.9 per cent, but they still beat the Liberal Democrats, Tories and UKIP.

In North East Glasgow the by-election was called because the successful Labour candidate in an earlier by-election failed to resign as a council employee fast enough. Unsurprisingly irate voters turned to the SNP. On a pathetic turnout of 13.2 per cent the SNP secured 34.5 per cent, a decline of 8.1 from the previous by-election. Labour got 28.7, a dramatic but unexpected fall of 15.3 per cent. Reform got a now standard 23.6 per cent, with the Tories, Greens, TUSC, Liberal Democrat and UKIP amongst the also-rans. The two results strengthen the SNP's hold

on the council, albeit depending on their frenemies, the Greens.

## More Farewells

The low Tory vote in all cases demonstrates the wisdom of former Tory leader and football referee Douglas Ross who has join the flight from Holyrood by becoming the 30<sup>th</sup> MSP to stand down.

His reason was that he hopes to stand for Westminster, where he has previously represented Moray. But his enemies are afoot, recalling his actions at the last general election when he elbowed out the seriously ill incumbent David Duguid to stand in the Aberdeenshire North & Moray East seat – which he lost to the nationalists.

Another party leader departing is Labour's Richard Leonard. He was elected during the reign of Jeremy Corbyn in 2017, just one year after becoming a Regional List MSP, but was deposed by Sir Keir Starmer who had him replaced by Anas Sarwar in 2021. His former employer, the GMB, was also behind his defenestration. His parting shot was a discreet attack on Starmer by declaring that workers at the Grangemouth refinery and women affected by

raising the pension age had been "badly let down by those in power".

Leonard's greatest achievement was perhaps to win the 2022 Holyrood Garden Party & Political Awards for a speech demanding a pardon for miners arrested in the 1984–85 miners' strike, although he has been successful as Convenor of Holyrood's Public Audit Committee in embarrassing SNP ministers.

Fergus Ewing, a prominent member of the Ewing clan, is also on the move. The son of Winnie Ewing, the nationalist icon who won the SNP's first seat in the Westminster parliament back in 1967, has long been a thorn in the side of the SNP in the Scottish parliament. He was most famous for advocating the duelling of the main north-south road, the A9, in the face of Green opposition. His parting shot was to say that although the SNP was part of his very soul, it was "no longer the party for all of Scotland...I cannot stand before people and defend the record which I'm afraid is one of failure on the key promises made to my constituents and the Highlands".

He may be back as an Independent; his sister, however, remains as Deputy Presiding Officer to maintain the family dynasty.

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# China's next steps in 2025

by New Worker  
correspondent

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined other communists, academics and businessmen at a symposium at the Chinese embassy last week that looked to the future following the conclusion of the annual meeting of China's highest civic bodies. There, in Beijing, the annual legislative sessions of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People's Congress (NPC) was the focus of discussions on the way forward for the people's government and the 1.4 billion people it represents.

The 'two sessions' are always significant events in the Chinese people's political life, bringing together thousands of deputies and delegates from every corner of the country and all walks of life. Their proposals are aimed at solving everyday issues to build a better life for the people.

Ambassador Zheng Ze-



• Ambassador Zheng opens the symposium.

guang said that given the evolving international and domestic landscape this year's Two Sessions attracted even greater attention and carried profound significance.

The Two Sessions demonstrated the Chinese people's confidence, resolve, and their spirit of unity and readiness to take action. They also projected China's main economic and social development targets and outlined a series of

important policy measures.

The Chinese leadership made it clear that challenges arising from reform and opening up can only be solved by pressing ahead with reform and opening up, demonstrating a firm determination to address the risks and obstacles on the path ahead. The Two Sessions also highlighted the unique advantages of China's political system. They serve as a vivid practice of 'whole-process

people's democracy' under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

The British representatives at the symposium acknowledged that with increasing global uncertainties and instabilities, the current international landscape is undergoing its most profound changes since the end of the Second World War.

As Andy Brooks noted: "The new Trump administration has changed tack in

a bid to end Biden's proxy war against Russia and establish a new detente with the Kremlin. This decision reflects the needs and demands of the wing of the American ruling class that wants to cut its losses in Ukraine to enable them to strengthen their grip over the Middle East in their efforts to control the entire global energy market.

"Spurning the United Nations some of the Trump team talk a 'new Yalta' that

would redefine the world into spheres of influence while retaining the lion's share for American imperialism. At the same time the Trump administration seeks to 'Make America Great Again', largely at the expense of its own allies, and boost American manufacturing through tariffs and protectionism while using secret diplomacy and economic blackmail to achieve its goals.

"Both the Russian and American sides are clearly working towards a win-win agreement over Ukraine. If that ends the war with a peace settlement that recognises the rights of the Crimeans, southern Ukrainians and the people of the Donbas to live in the Russian Federation well and good. But secret diplomacy is rarely the best pathway to peace.

"In these turbulent times China is a stabilising force ready to defend world peace. People's China has taken the lead in helping to build the economies of the Global South while working for peace and harmony throughout the world."

## Take Action for Palestine now!

by New Worker  
correspondent

Protesters rallied in London last weekend in support of Palestine. At least four separate demonstrations took place across central London over the weekend, including an emergency 'End the Genocide' protest outside the Israeli embassy on Saturday.

"Israel has renewed its genocidal assault on Gaza. We must take action for Palestine now" said the demonstration's organisers, the Palestine Soli-



• Outside the Israeli embassy.

darity Campaign. And all over the country solidarity campaigners joined hands with unions and peace campaigners to call for an end to the fighting and justice for the Palestinian Arabs.

In Bristol, protesters rallied outside Barclays to denounce the bank's "complicity in the genocide of Palestine". In Manchester, around 150 people took part in a hastily organised emergency protest backed by the Stop the War movement while others joined similar events in Edinburgh and Glasgow.



# Cuban leader meets Kevin Costner

by Ed Newman

Miguel Diaz-Canel welcomed Kevin Costner to Cuba last week. The American actor, director and producer is in Havana exploring underwater archaeology for one of his new projects.

"It is a pleasure to meet you and your visit to Cuba is a source of enormous satisfaction. You are greatly admired by the Cuban people, who have closely followed your stay in our country these past few days," the Cuban leader told the famous actor when they met at the



Palace of the Revolution in Havana.

This is Kevin Costner's second trip to the Cuban capital. The first was in April 2001 when he met Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban Revolution. On that occasion, he travelled to Havana to present the film *13 Days* about the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, in which he played the leading role of Kenneth O'Donnell, one of US President John F Kennedy's key aides at the time.

• Kevin Costner with Miguel Diaz-Canel.

## Indian Communists meet in Southall

by New Worker correspondent

After an absence of nearly three decades, the red flags of the working-class movement returned to the stage of the Southall auditorium in London – a venue historically graced by revolutionary leaders such as Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet. It was here that the comrades of martyred freedom-fighter Bhagat Singh: Pandit Kishori Lal and Shiv Varma, once inspired audiences with tales of India's glorious freedom struggle. It was also where the late Prime Minister VP Singh vehemently criticised the corruption of an electoral democracy subservient to capitalism.

The 20<sup>th</sup> conference of the Association of Indian Communists (AIC),



which is the wing of the Communist Party of India (M) in Britain and Ireland, was held in the Sitaram Yechury Nagar at Southall in London on 15–16 March 2025. Some 110 delegates from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland

attended.

The red Party flag was hoisted by the veteran leader Ajit Singh Dosanjh, aged 93. Various committees were elected, followed by the condolence resolution and floral tributes to martyrs.

The conference was inaugurated by CPI(M) Politbureau member Ashok Dhawale, who dealt with the political challenges in the world, in India and in Britain. He pinpointed the dangers of imperialism and Zionism in the interna-

tional sphere, and that of corporate Hindutva represented by the RSS-BJP in India and also in Britain. He called for re-forging the unity of all secular forces, while at the same time concentrating on greatly enhancing the independent strength of the CPI(M) and the Left forces.

AIC Secretary Harsev Bains then placed the Report. Twenty delegates, one from each branch, enriched the report with their experiences, criticisms and suggestions. The Report was unanimously adopted. Three resolutions, on Workers' Rights, on Cuba and on Palestine, were adopted.

The conference unanimously elected a 19-member Executive Committee (EC), with two women. Four more seats were left vacant to co-opt young comrades, specifically young wom-

en. Two delegates to the 24<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in Madurai were also elected. Janesh Nair was unanimously elected as the new AIC Secretary, replacing Harsev Bains, who had completed three terms as Secretary.

In his concluding remarks, Ashok Dhawale commended the delegates for a united and successful conference. Emphasising the organisational tasks ahead, he highlighted three essential qualities of a good communist, as articulated by Lenin: being a militant agitator, an effective propagandist, and an excellent organiser. These qualities, he stressed, are vital for building the Party and realising the goal of strengthening the AIC as a pan-Indian organisation of the proletariat. The conference concluded with unity and enthusiasm.



# Tesla sales slump in Europe

by Ed Newman

**Tesla's European sales dropped 49 per cent year-on-year in January and February, despite rising registrations of electric vehicles (EVs).**

New Tesla registrations in the EU fell to 19,046 in the first two months of the year from at least 37,000 in the same period of 2024, according to a report published last week by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA).

The lobby group noted that the US-based EV manufacturer is struggling to keep pace with competitors while the political controversy around owner Elon Musk is also affecting sales. Tesla's struggles saw its market share drop from 2.1 per cent to 1.1 per cent.

In February alone, Tesla registrations



• Anti-Musk protest in New York.

commanded 1.8 per cent of the total market and 10.3 per cent of the Battery-Electric Vehicle market, down from 2.8 per cent and 21.6 per cent, respectively, in the same month last year.

The American company's ageing models are viewed as one

reason for the dip, as traditional automakers and new Chinese manufacturers launch newer and cheaper EVs.

Meanwhile, CEO Elon Musk has been criticised for offering vocal and financial support to far-right groups in Europe. His

role in the administration of President Donald Trump, who is threatening Europe with trade wars, is also viewed as a factor.

Growing boycott movements aimed at Tesla have risen up in the EU as well as in the USA, with Tesla dealerships vandalised

and the company's share price dropping sharply.

EV sales in the EU grew by 28.4 per cent in January and February but there is concern that the sector needs more support.

ACEA Director-General Sigrid de

Vries said the sales figures show that demand for EVs "remains below the level needed for the transition to zero-emission mobility to progress". He called for tax and purchasing incentives for consumers and further investment in recharging stations. Brussels is, meanwhile, preparing to ease emission reduction targets.

Still, hybrid-electric vehicles remained the most significant market segment in the first two months of the year, rising to 594,059 registrations, or a 35.2 per cent market share.

Electrified vehicles – either battery-electric (BEV), hybrid (HEV) or plug-in hybrids (PHEV) – sold in the European bloc accounted for 58.4 per cent of all passenger car registrations in February, up from 48.2 per cent a year earlier.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

# JFK Files spark new coup theory

by Ekaterina Blinova

**Former right-wing Australian MP and journalist, George Christensen, believes Anglophone intelligence agencies quietly buried damning evidence behind John F Kennedy's murder. Does he have reason to think so?**

Christensen drew attention to Australia's request to remove any mention of its involvement in communica-

tions related to threats against JFK or his assassination.

In 1968 Australian intelligence chief Charles Spry requested that the Warren Commission document CD-971 – reportedly concerning 1963 calls to the American embassy in Canberra about a "\$100,000 bounty on Kennedy's head" – remain classified.

Although the CIA dismissed these calls as nonsensical,

it agreed with Spry that there was "every reason" to keep them secret. The files were declassified in 1976, but portions of the text remained redacted.

Another call was made to a British reporter in Cambridge just 25 minutes before Kennedy was shot, suggesting someone overseas had prior knowledge. British intelligence informed their US counterparts about the call, but both agencies then buried

the information.

Christensen links these exchanges to a document stating that, a day after the assassination, ex-intelligence operative Gary Underhill claimed a small CIA clique was behind it. He was found dead six months later.

The journalist further claims that Underhill had ties to Interarmco, a CIA-backed arms dealer, and notes that Interarmco was linked to the store where Lee Harvey Oswald, Ken-

nedy's killer, purchased the rifle.

Two days after JFK's murder, Oswald was suddenly shot dead by nightclub owner Jack Ruby. Hours after Oswald was killed, FBI Director J Edgar Hoover wrote a memo urging the agency to "convince the public that Oswald acted alone".

Newly declassified documents also reveal that, rather than investigating

JFK's murder, the US intelligence community was more focused on classifying and destroying records, Christensen says.

Not covered by Christensen is a 15-page memo entitled *CIA Reorganization*, written by a Kennedy aide in 1961, warning that the agency's growing influence and power had made it "a state within a state".

*Sputnik*