

Liberation Day? Workers pay the price

by Cameron Harrison

Trump called 2nd April ‘Liberation Day’ and says his trade war will “Make America Wealthy Again”. But as has always been the case, workers shouldn’t expect to gain much from a policy crafted for capitalists.

Corporate-controlled politicians and big business CEOs keep pushing two big lies about trade. First, they claim free trade deals will “lower prices and grow the economy”. Then they say tariffs – taxes on imports – will “protect American jobs” but raise prices. But for workers, these policies aren’t really designed to help us or increase our standard of living. They’re tools for big business to control our wages and maximise their profits.

Historically, the pattern for capitalism is clear. When industries are weak, corporations demand protectionism to block foreign competition. Once they dominate the market, those same companies push for free trade to exploit cheap labour elsewhere and rake in the profits. Workers lose either way. Protectionism keeps prices high while wages stay low. Free trade lets companies outsource jobs to countries without unions, or weaker ones, and lower the average pay for workers everywhere in a race to the bottom.

Neo-liberal free trade policies accelerated the offshoring of jobs from the USA. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has destroyed over 850,000 US jobs since 1994. The more recent US–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) closed some loopholes from NAFTA, such as establishing an autowork-



er minimum wage and instituting a rapid-response mechanism for labour disputes, but it didn’t go far enough.

In 2018, Trump launched a trade war against China. He slapped heavy tariffs on steel, aluminium and other goods, claiming it would bring back manufacturing jobs. The results were disastrous for workers, and jobs scarcely returned back to working-class communities.

Steel companies such as US Steel and Nucor saw profits jump. But instead of raising wages or hiring more workers, they bought back shares to enrich shareholders. Meanwhile, farmers and manufacturers faced brutal retaliation. China hit back with tariffs on US soybeans, pork and machinery. Prices rose on everything from washing machines to car parts.

Tariffs are back on the agenda, with new import taxes announced for steel and aluminium, and a 25 per cent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, plus an additional 10 per cent on goods from China. There are also potential levies looming for chips and pharmaceuticals. The Trump administration’s actions have strained North American

economic relations and raised the risk of the biggest trade war since the 1930s.

The MAGA “America First” rhetoric is ultimately a distraction. While workers are told to blame China or Mexico or Europe, the real problem is big business and the capitalist system as a whole. For instance, corporations such as General Motors kept closing US plants and moving work to Mexico – even after getting massive tax cuts paid for by the American working class.

The problem isn’t just “bad trade deals” – it’s what social force ultimately controls the economy – the capitalist class. Under capitalism, trade policy serves corporations, not workers. Tariffs are primarily used to protect the monopolies, not working-class jobs, no matter what Trump says.

As we sawn the steel tariffs imposed in his first term primarily helped the steel monopolies, not the steelworkers.

Now with Trump ramping up the trade wars again and workers still reeling from inflation due to the effects of the COVID pandemic, prices will inevitably continue to spike. Workers will pay more for basic goods and

services while profits stay high. The average value of our labour power will continue to fall. Price gouging is the name of the game

for big business.

Corporations will always chase cheaper labour. No tariff can stop that. No trade deal brokered by the capitalist class will fix it long-term. So, the times call for a different approach, a political one, where a worker-centred trade policy could be implemented. But it must be consciously struggled for.

Real solutions require challenging monopoly power over their dominance of our everyday lives – from what is produced to how it’s produced, what price it’s sold for, and how much of the surplus is appropriated and for what ends.

Trump’s trade wars won’t save our jobs over the long term. At the same time, continuing neo-liberal free trade also won’t help workers. The only real solution is united working-class political action – particularly at the international level. The struggle isn’t between American and foreign workers, it’s between workers and the capitalists exploiting all of us.

People’s World (USA)

FUND

This week’s post brought in £1,300, pushing the needle up to £2,925 but still sadly short of our £3,500 target that we set for ourselves every month. Special thanks to all who helped us on our way this week, including the comrade in East Anglia who gave us £500 and another from north London who gave us £200, a regular contributor from Hereford who sent in a tenner and a Hull friend who gave us £6.50. Can you join them and lend a hand to keep the *New Worker* going?

The April appeal starts now and we need your help. Help us put it back on the workers’ agenda by supporting the only communist weekly in Britain. We support the national liberation movements. We fight for peace and socialism. We say there is an answer to the crisis. It’s the only answer. It’s socialism.

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INSIDE

CANADA	.. P2
CHINA	.. PP5,10
RESIST NATO	.. P7
BEETHOVEN	.. P11
UKRAINE	.. P12

THE NEW WORKER

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Trump's big day

The Trump administration launched a global trade war this week with a tranche of tariffs on most countries – including the United Kingdom. Trump announced a 10 per cent baseline tariff on all imports wherever they come from and higher rates on a number of countries whom he deemed the “worst offenders” in terms of imposing tariffs on American goods. Britain is in the 10 per cent general band. Even the uninhabited Heard and McDonald islands, a remote Australian outpost near Antarctica, is on the basic rate – even though the population consists largely of seals and penguins.

A few, devoid of any meaningful trade with the USA, such as Belarus, Cuba, Democratic Korea, Iran and the Russian Federation, get off scot-free. Others were not so lucky. Cambodia tops the list at 49 per cent and Vietnam is second on 46. People's China gets 34 per cent, pushing their overall tariff to a stomping 54 per cent.

Tariffs are used by the capitalists to boost domestic manufacturers and punish those from other countries whose interests conflict with theirs. A tariff is essentially a tax paid by companies who import goods from the targeted countries. This is then normally passed on to the consumer in higher prices. 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.

By turning trade into an over-simplistic tit-for-tat game, the Trump administration is dismantling a global trade system based on efficiency, specialisation and mutual benefit, and hurting both the US economy and the global economy at large. The idea of “reciprocal tariffs” is particularly misguided. The principle of comparative advantage allows countries to focus on what they do best and trade for the rest. Ignoring this leads to economic inefficiencies.

Despite Trump's claim that higher tariffs will help bring in revenue for the government and revitalise American manufacturing, economists have warned that such measures will push up prices for US consumers and businesses, disrupt global trade and hurt global economy.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen called Trump's tariffs a “major blow to the world economy” while People's China promises counter-measures. China “will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests” a Chinese Foreign Office spokesperson told the media in Beijing this week, saying that there is no winner in a trade or tariff war, and that protectionism offers no solution.

On the White House lawn Trump said this was “Liberation Day” holding up a board showing the rates he was imposing on different countries throughout the world. He said a “golden age” was coming back the USA.

That wasn't the view in the money markets of New York and the City of London as shares of the multinational companies tumbled when they heard the news. Crude oil, Big Tech stocks and even the going rate for the US dollar against other currencies all fell. Even gold, which hit records recently as investors sought something safer to own, has dipped.

As big brands lose their value in early trading and shares crash on Wall Street, many fear that far from heralding a new era Trump's draconian protectionist measures will simply trigger a trade war and another global capitalist slump.

Canada will fight

by Graham Holton

President Donald Trump's threats to invade Canada have been taken very seriously by former senior Canadian intelligence officials, who said that the USA is covertly destabilising Canada. Ward Elcock, the former head of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and national security adviser, said Trump “intends clearly to try and destabilise our economy”. He also regards Musk “as a problem” on a number of fronts. South African-born Elon Musk was a Canadian citizen. He now tweets on X that “Canada is not a real country”.

Dick Fadden, former head of CSIS and a national security adviser to former PM Stephen Harper, says the Central Intelligence Agency will use Musk's X platform to try and change political views. “If so, that's foreign interference”. Fadden says it is possible that the US government would use more intrusive tactics, such as financing pro-annexationist groups within Canada. The CIA has “an extraordinary capacity to do this”.

Neil Bisson, a former CSIS intelligence officer who is now director of the Global Intelligence Knowledge Network, says that there are some Canadians who are vulnerable to anti-Canadian propaganda,

particularly the young who feel economically disenfranchised. He told CBC News “if you have individuals who are concerned about where their next meal is coming from or if they're going to get a roof over their head, that supersedes sovereignty”.

US political analyst, Malcolm Nance, also takes Trump's threats seriously. He was an intelligence and foreign policy analyst, a former CIA agent, and was a visiting lecturer on counter-terrorism at Macquarie University's Centre on Policing, Intelligence and Counter-terrorism. He believes that over the next six to 18 months Trump will politically and economically destabilise Canada leading up to a possible military invasion. Trump's plan is to split political parties with secret destabilisation plans.

President Trump's threats to invade Canada have been taken very seriously by US politicians. So much so that Seth Magaziner, a Democrat, has introduced the No Invading Allies Act legislation into Congress to prohibit Trump from invading Canada and other friendly nations. The bill will ban the use of federal funds for a military invasion.

Since his inauguration Trump has continuously attacked Canada. He referred to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the “Governor of the 51st State” seeing him as

weak. Mark Carney replaced Trudeau as Liberal prime minister on 9th March. Carney is seen as a much tougher negotiator. Trump has repeatedly insulted Canada in virtually every discussion he has had on the subject, saying with his usual mixture of threat, falsehood and exaggeration that if Canada became the 51st state it would have “lower taxes, and far better military protection for the people of Canada – and no tariffs”. In early February Trump stated that “Canada was not viable” as a country, and that “Canada would not exist without the United States”. Forty-eight hours later, he imposed 25 per cent tariffs on Canada. He claims that the “vast majority” of Canadian youth want to join the USA.

A recent poll from Angus Reid however, found that only 10 per cent of Canadians, and 21 per cent of Conservatives would vote to join the USA, depending on the conditions offered. Even French-speaking Quebec, with its history of wanting secession, saw no advantage in becoming a US state. The reality is that the average Canadian has far better conditions than American citizens, with free hospitals, great health care and low crime rates. Canadians will fight against any US invasion.

Guardian

Australian communist weekly



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Workers' Notes

Nine arrested in police crackdown

by New Worker correspondent

Police repression has reached a new level after a meeting of a youth-led environmental and political activist group was broken up and a number of homes of their supporters were raided last week. Over 20 Metropolitan Police (Met) officers crashed into a Youth Demand Welcome Talk at a Quaker meeting room in London and arrested six people for conspiracy to cause a public nuisance. In separate incidents, three other Youth Demand supporters were arrested in other parts the country. Youth Demand, which was established in January 2024, is part of a co-ordinating committee called Umbrella that includes three other direct action protest groups.

Quakers in Britain said police officers, some equipped with tasers, forced their way into the Westminster Quaker Meeting House just before 7:15 pm. Officers reportedly “broke open the front door without warning or ringing the bell first, searching the whole building and arresting six women attending the meeting in a hired room”.

The Met told the media that: “Youth Demand have stated an intention to ‘shut down’ London over the month of April using tactics



including ‘swarming’ and road blocks. While we absolutely recognise the importance of the right to protest, we have a responsibility to intervene to prevent activity that crosses the line from protest into serious disruption and other criminality.”

The Quakers have condemned the raid saying that they “support the right to non-violent public protest, acting themselves from a deep moral imperative to stand up against injustice and for our planet. Many have taken non-violent direct action over the centuries from the abolition of slavery to women’s suffrage and prison reform.”

The Welcome Talk is an opportunity to share information about the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank and about the mass killing that is being imposed on vulnerable people across the globe as a result of the accelerating climate crisis. It is also an opportunity to share plans for non-violent

civil resistance actions to take place in April.

One of those arrested and released was Ella Grace-Taylor, a student, who said: “At this point, it couldn’t be clearer that we are in a police state. Our politicians will stand by as police engage in mass arrests and imprisonment of anyone who speaks out against the government for being responsible for genocide. By arming Israel and refusing to call what is happening a genocide, they are perpetrating mass slaughter. Hundreds of children were killed in Palestine in the last week. We won’t stop saying it. We won’t be intimidated.”

A Youth Demand spokesperson said: “It’s clear that the government sees Youth Demand as a threat. They know that we are right. There are thousands of young people who are horrified by what the government is doing to facilitate genocide and who know that they have been betrayed as their future is fucked. We will not be silenced. Young people all over the country are coming together to shut London down day after day throughout April. Sign up for action at Youth Demand.Org

“We refuse to be ruled by liars, war criminals and arsonists. We will not let them get away with this. We refuse to be ignored. It’s time for young people to take to the streets day after day and shut London

down. Only sustained mass resistance can put an end to genocide. By standing together we can grind the murder machine to a standstill.”

Two Cheers for a Wage Rise

by New Worker correspondent

There were no reported outbreaks of dancing in the streets of Tuesday despite that being the day when the new statutory minimum wage rates increased. The National Living Wage (a term stolen a few years ago from the Living Wage Foundation) rose from £11.44 per hour for those aged over 21 to £12.21. Those below 20 are on the National Minimum Wage. Those between 18 to 20 rose from £8.60 to £10.00, those under 18 and apprentices rise from £6.40 to £7.55 hourly.

The Government say this will benefit about 4.5 million workers. However, as the press has recently been commenting on the coming of the £5.00 pub pint, it is clear that these increases will not see an upsurge in riotous living. Instead the money will have to be spent on boosting the profits of energy companies because the energy cap rose

by 6.4 per cent from £1,738 to £1,849 on the very same day.

These figures are below the Real Living Wage urged by the Living Wage Foundation (LWF), who say the UK Living Wage should be £12.60 and for London £13.85.

The LWF welcomed the latest increases but point out that workers paid the National Living Wage will still earn £760 less per year than those earning the real Living Wage. “This difference could cover almost three months of food or two months of rent and energy bills.” Worse yet, “in London, the gap is even wider. A worker earning the National Living Wage would need £3,198 extra per year to match the London Living Wage – equivalent to nearly a year’s worth of food or four months of rent and energy bills.”

The Foundation claims that its own figures are based on what employees and their families need to live, while the Government figure is based on a target matching 66 per cent of median earnings. Being sponsored by FTSE companies and the likes of IKEA it takes care not to mention anything so vulgar as trade unions.

Nevertheless, union leaders from TUC general secretary Paul Nowak downwards were delighted with the Government’s increase. “This increase will make a real difference to the lowest paid in this country at a time when one in six are skipping meals to get by.” The two main unions representing low-paid workers signalled their approval, with Unison’s Christina McAnea parroting Labour’s claim that “making work pay is vital to recharge the economy and help hard-pressed families walk a financial tightrope”. The GMB echoed this by saying “a much needed wage rise for millions of low-paid workers is welcome”, but wisely added that “in care homes, schools, the NHS and so many other employers, workers are still not getting the levels of pay they deserve”.

The big problem with the statutory minimum wage is that it has become the maximum wage in many occupations.

continued on page 4...

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...continued from page 3

In addition, setting standards for a decent hourly rate does nothing to address the problem of irregular hours. After all, a month's rent does not go down when a worker on a zero-hours contract has only had few hours of work that month.

Given that union density is now strongest among better paid and qualified workers, it is at least arguable that many low-paid workers do not see the need for trade unions if they are guaranteed at least a modest rise by Government decree, or by a voluntary agreement with bosses.

Fire and Water

by New Worker
correspondent

The water industry has been in the news recently. In England this has been due to widespread pollution caused by the privatised industry refusing to invest in treatment plants in favour of flooding investors with dividends.

In Scotland the publicly owned water industry is now making news because of industrial action by about a thousand members of Unite, GMB and Unison over pay. This dispute will see delays to Scottish Water's ability to respond to water leakages,

flooding, pollution and quality concerns, but water shortages are not expected.

The strike started on the last Friday of March with a one-day strike after a breakdown in talks at conciliation service ACAS. Unite accused Scottish Water bosses of a "watered down" offer which was worse than that made earlier in negotiations. The rejected offer is a basic pay rise of 3.4 per cent or £1,050 for those on the lowest grades.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham deplored that "the arrogance shown by Scottish Water executives to the workforce and the wider Scottish public who rely on this essential service is astonishing" adding that "the pay packages of Scottish Water executives is eye-watering, yet they have deliberately wrecked pay talks".

The union helpfully pointed out that the public sector bosses of Scottish Water have private sector style salaries. The CEO has a modest £246,000 salary that is topped up with various extras to a more realistic £483,000.

Sam Ritchie, a Unite full-time officer, warned: "Strike action is set to hit Scottish Water for one simple reason and that is the two-faced behaviour of its highly paid executives. Scottish Water has strung our members along while taking pay offers off

the table and replacing them with a watered-down one. That is unacceptable and our members won't stand for this anymore."

Speaking for her Unison members, regional organiser Emma Phillips added that "their pay has not kept up with inflation over the past 10 years, and most staff get paid less than £31,000 per year". GMB Scotland organiser Claire Greer chipped in to say "it is by now hard to be surprised at how this company takes part in negotiations but, even for them, this is beyond the pale". Unison also suspect that a programme of backdoor privatisation is under way as Scottish Water are outsourcing many of its functions.

Speaking from the Shieldhall sewage works in Glasgow Riki Hall, Unite's Scottish Water convener warned that "this is initial action and if they don't get around the table this could be a sustained strike".

Scottish Water simply responded by saying that they were "very disappointed that we have still not been able to reach an agreement with the trade unions.

"We would encourage them to restart meaningful negotiations as soon as possible and to recognise the need to agree on a sustainable pay award for our people."

Firefighters in Mid and

West Wales are fighting off drastic changes to their shift patterns despite the opposition of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). At present they work nine-hour daytime shifts and 15-hour night shifts, but the management want to alter this to two shifts of 12 hours each.

The FBU opposes this change (which is being imposed without consultation), saying that it will adversely affect firefighters with childcare and other caring responsibilities and take a toll on the mental and physical wellbeing of the workforce.

The present short day and long night shifts reflect the fact that the night-shifts are generally much quieter, so a longer day shift will be much more demanding, rather than offering equal shifts.

Tom Wass, the FBU's Mid & West Wales organiser, said of his members: "We keep the public safe at all hours of the day and night, and the imposition of punishing shift patterns will do nothing to improve public safety. Pushing firefighters to exhaustion and making work in the service incompatible with childcare will only force firefighters out of the service."

The union's Welsh secretary, Duncan Stewart-Ball, added that "forcing firefighters to work twelve-hour shifts will take a huge and avoidable toll on the physical and mental

wellbeing of the workforce". He also demanded that: "The fire authority must start listening to firefighters and holding the service's chief fire officer and senior management to account. Putting an end to these unworkable, incendiary plans to change firefighters' shifts must be the first step in rebuilding trust and morale."

The union's new general secretary, Steve Wright, observed that: "Firefighters already go above and beyond to keep the public safe, working without enough resources after over a decade of cuts. Forcing the frontline to work gruelling new shift patterns, punishing those with childcare and caring responsibilities, will only deepen the crises fire and rescue services face."

A very similar battle is also taking place across the border in Gloucestershire, where altering day shifts from 8am to 7pm instead of the present 9am to 6pm will have the same effect, forcing many firefighters out of the service. Here at least the council's fire and rescue scrutiny committee opposed the council cabinet's endorsement of the changes.

The county's FBU organiser, Kate Yhnell, said: "There is no benefit to increasing the length of firefighters' day shifts, and it will take a huge toll on women and those with caring responsibilities in the service."

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

1st April 2005

Unions in England and Wales last week gave a half-hearted welcome to the publication of the long-awaited draft corporate manslaughter Bill, which should improve safety at work but still lets negligent bosses off the hook.

The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) had been working with the construction union UCATT to campaign for new laws on corporate manslaughter and directors' responsibilities.

TGWU general secretary Tony Woodley said: "These proposals are a significant step towards safer workplaces. Last year 235 workers were killed in this country and

workplace deaths actually rose by four per cent. Reform of the law is therefore long overdue.

"We are particularly pleased to see that the proposals will also apply to the Crown. As the largest employer in the land, it is vital that the Government sets the lead on workplace health and safety."

The TGWU has also expressed concern that the Bill does not require directors to take positive steps on health and safety.

This could mean that the courts will not be able to apply the new offence of corporate manslaughter in instances where individual company directors have neglected to maintain safe workplaces.

The Health and Safety Executive estimates that up to 70 per cent of workplace deaths are the result of serious management failures, yet only five directors have been imprisoned for corporate manslaughter in the history of British law.

Grass roots union activists in the building industry have told the New Worker that they are very unhappy with

the proposals, which they describe as "garbage". They feel that only the prospect of being jailed for criminal negligence will motivate some bosses to put their workers lives before profit.

Meanwhile in Scotland, the oil workers' union OILC is angry that Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson has delayed introducing a similar measure in Scotland.

The Scottish Executive has instead set up an expert group to offer advice, which has angered those campaigning for "corporate homicide" to be made a specific offence.

OILC general secretary Jake Molloy said: "We have been waiting since Labour came to power in 1997. I just can't understand the move at all. There is more than enough expert opinion out there.

"If we go down that route then I am afraid that nothing much will really change in Scotland."

The Confederation of British Industry has welcomed the draft Bill wholeheartedly.

Spotlight on China

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined other communists, academics and businessmen at a symposium at the Chinese embassy last month that looked to the future following the conclusion of China's recent parliamentary 'two sessions'. This is his contribution to the discussion.

by Andy Brooks

The world spotlight was on China in March. 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) were 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 a significant event in 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.

The government's economic targets and policy priorities for 2025; green issues and artificial intelligence; the digital economy; boosting consumer demand, ramping up investment and enlisting the private sector were all on this year's agenda. But the debate takes place against a backdrop of domestic pressures and global uncertainty due to Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian Arabs and the continuing conflict in Ukraine.

On climate change the people's government pledges to reduce energy intensity – a measure of energy consumption per unit of GDP – by three per cent in 2025 while many in the Global South fear the new Trump administration will seriously undermine international efforts to deal with the ecological crisis.

Donald Trump is a climate change denier who serves the interests of the big American



oil and gas corporations. "We have more liquid gold than any country in the world," Trump said during his victory speech, a statement backed by the CEO of the American Petroleum Institute who said that "energy was on the ballot, and voters sent a clear signal that they want choices, not mandates".

During his first presidential term Trump withdrew from the Paris Agreement, the 2015 international climate accord that guides the actions of more than 195 countries; rolled back 100-plus environmental rules and opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Biden administration reversed some of these measures but Trump has pledged to restore them during his second term. Climate change campaigners believe that this could lead to a rise of an additional four billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere – equalling the combined annual emissions of the EU and Japan.

But while the Trump team turns its back on scientific opinion, People's China leads the way with its carbon peak and carbon neutrality goals, accelerating the comprehensive green transformation of its economy and society.

China is now an indispensable nation for global climate efforts, says former UN Under-Secretary-General

Erik Solheim adding that it is essentially "impossible for the world to go green without China".

China plays an important role in the global green energy transition, accounting for 60 per cent or more of global production in key green sectors, including solar, wind and hydropower, as well as electric cars and batteries. The former UN official stressed the need for more investment to tackle climate challenges, saying multilateral platforms, Such as BRICS, are increasingly significant for addressing climate change.

"BRICS has become very important since that's an avenue for the Global South to come together and lead the world," he said, adding that the initiative will move to countries of the Global South. "The Belt & Road Initiative has recently turned into a major vehicle for green investment in the world, in solar, wind, hydropower and green corridors."

The Chinese communists are striving to achieve lasting world peace, so that all countries can enjoy a peaceful and stable external environment and their people can live a happy life with their rights fully guaranteed to build a world that is free from fear and enjoys universal security.

This is, of course, a quantum jump from the post-war Soviet policies of "peaceful co-

existence" and "detente" that failed to end the Cold War and accelerated the collapse of the USSR. Peaceful co-existence mistakenly believed that the capitalists could be economically beaten at their own game while detente was, in essence, a futile Soviet attempt at achieving nuclear parity with the Americans to divide the world into Soviet and American spheres of influence.

The Biden administration that stoked the flames of war in the Middle East took its last bow by orchestrating regime change in Syria and fermenting unrest in a number of countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

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.

Imperialism fans the flames of war in the Middle East, blocks the return of Taiwan to its Chinese homeland and prolongs the unhappy partition of many countries including Cyprus, Ireland, Kashmir and Korea. China's perspective, on the other hand, is based on the concept of 'one country, two systems' and the principle that 'a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought'.

The Chinese revolution that established the people's government in 1949 has transformed the country that was then the poorest in the world. Since then China has risen from being a weak semi-feudal, semi-colonial country to become a force for peace in the global arena, with the second largest economy in the world.

People's China, the fifth permanent member on the UN Security Council, is the only veto-power actively supporting proposals for multilateral nuclear disarmament. Pledging never to be the first to use nuclear weapons in any conflict, China stands for the complete prohibition and total

continued on page 6...

...continued from page 5

destruction of all atomic weapons.

China, backed by many other countries, has repeatedly

challenged the West to implement the entire non-proliferation treaty, signed in 1968, that not only called a halt to nuclear proliferation but also committed the

signatories to work towards universal nuclear disarmament.

The struggle to abolish nuclear weapons is crucial for the survival of humanity.

But central to averting a Third World War is the need to eliminate the causes of war. And that is why communists have always understood that the struggles for

peace and socialism are indivisible. The Chinese communists are striving to achieve lasting world peace, so that all countries can enjoy a peaceful and stable

external environment and their people can live a happy life with their rights fully guaranteed to build a world that is free from fear and enjoys universal security.

Rise and Shine!

by John Maryon

Originally forming part of a biblical verse from the book of Isaiah that calls for God's light to shine, today it has become an idiom to encourage anyone to get up and achieve something. And in the context of the working class to stand up for their rights through class struggle. An essential time to take the path of building socialism and lay the foundations of a beautiful communist society. The New Communist Party of Britain (NCP) is part of that struggle and recognises that complete emancipation from capitalism and imperialism can only be achieved by a revolutionary change.

Our chosen route and rate of progress will be influenced by both internal social and economic conditions and also the international threat from imperialist aggression. We may face trade sanctions, attempts to cause political instability and 'colour revolutions' or direct military aggression. The British road would have been much quicker when the spirit of revolution was in the air immediately following the Second World War and before Mrs Thatcher sold off the family silver. These events are history so let us examine the prospects for building socialism in Britain today.

We must through our political work

overcome the apathy and servile acceptance by the masses to their deteriorating social and economic conditions.

Within a socialist society people would not be left to shiver in the cold, too afraid to turn on their expensive heating. Bringing back the Electricity and Gas Boards would provide a mechanism to control prices and allow for long-term strategic planning that would provide secure and affordable supplies. Engineers, not marketing men, would decide how to invest and provide the

best possible service to their consumers. Events such as the Heathrow outage would become impossible and energy costs would be a fraction of today's inflated values. State-owned utilities are much more efficient and accountable than rip-off get rich quick outfits.

Water, fresh air, shelter and food are all basic human requirements. Water and sewage systems were once upon a time in England provided by local councils and paid for through the rates. Public ownership of these essential

public services ensured affordable services that were the envy of the world. Millions of pounds wasted on water meters could have been spent fixing leaks. In the good old days we could water our favourite flowers and vegetables with confidence.

Socialist housing would mean a roof over their head for everyone, with rough sleeping just a horrible nightmare from the capitalist past. A National Housing Board should be established to build enough wonderful council houses for all who need them. In the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) housing is now becoming a free vital service paid for from the profits of State enterprises. This is the power of true socialism. How unlike Britain, where rents are becoming unaffordable and homeowners struggle all their lives to pay the mortgage on a home that may then have to be sold, to pay extortionate fees for private care homes, when they become elderly.

Education is an investment for the future. A proper socialist government would make education free up to university level and create trade apprenticeships for all those that need them. Everyone would reach their full potential and society would flourish.

In Britain today the children of deprived or broken families are not encouraged by the system to make an effort. They remain destined to live a dull, hard life in some dead-end job on minimum wage. To build a successful socialist society we have to enable these children to rise and shine.

A full socialist society would overcome the social barriers between so-called manual workers and those who occupy white collar professions. It is important to note that the so-called middle class are just better off members of the working class itself. They also serve the super-rich

capitalists who run their world.

Those who are fortunate enough to live in a low stress, caring socialist society are starting to become healthier and live longer than we are. Rebuilding the NHS to the body it was intended to be would provide free full dental treatment, free podiatry care, free prescriptions, and full medical and social care for long-term sick and elderly. And importantly, proper loving care for those mentally ill. Rapid referral would avoid waiting for years in pain for treatment.

We seek a return to a fully funded aftercare service to allow patients to stay in convalescent homes before being returned home to an often cold, bleak house without proper food. And of course under socialism, doctors, nurses, ambulance staff and all ancillary workers would be paid properly with secure defined-benefit pensions. New hospitals would be planned well in advance of need and steps taken for proper, full funding. No PFI [private finance initiative] would be allowed. When the NHS was founded in the 1940s it should have been allowed to manufacture its own drugs and equipment, which would have saved a fortune.

People's China has demonstrated how its peoples have been able to rise and shine under socialism. What, under the leadership



of the Communist Party of China, it has managed to achieve is amazing, improving the quality of life for over a billion people with infrastructure development and a dynamic, expanding economy.

A socialist Britain would recreate a national public-owned integrated bus and train network for a safe, green and stress-free environment.

Socialism would make available large amounts of cheap renewable energy to power a new transport system.

Socialism is far more than just improving people's standards of living and welfare. Under its benevolent wing the arts, music, books and films are able to flourish, stimulate, enrich and nurture an ethos of comradeship, harmony and co-operation in

opposition to the selfish individualism of western society that leads to conflict and aggression. The working class may create and enjoy its own culture, one without elitism.

One may well ask where all the money is coming from to construct and develop our brave new world. I have a little list. Major fiscal changes to tax the wealthy and use the money to help

the less fortunate in our society. Modest profits from the nationalised utilities and industries would be ploughed back to improve and expand services. An end to outsourcing by the NHS and other public services would lead to impressive savings. Slashing the obscene levels of military expenditure, and the funding of neo-fascists, would enable billions of pounds to be directed

to peaceful construction and building a better life for everyone.

As the economy expands under socialism greater public income would be generated to make tax cuts a reality. We would quit NATO, forget the EU and join BRICS for expanded trade. And finally, we could join China's Belt & Road Initiative to benefit from infrastructure investment projects.

Socialism offers a bright future in which we all can excel. With it would come a new spirit of fraternity and comradeship.

Capitalism has little left to offer apart from continued recession, economic decline and endless warmongering. I know who I am battling for.

Support the NCP and hasten the day we can all rejoice!

Resist NATO!

On 18th March 2025 the Bundestag [the German parliament] voted to change the German constitution to allow unlimited debt for military spending. A majority of the 'old' parliamentarians, who were voted out on 23rd February, revealed their plans to expand German imperialism by preparing the country for war at the expense of its residents.

The Bundestag has set aside a 500 billion euro special fund for "infrastructure", meaning the military. Instead of investing in basic needs and public social services such as schools, hospitals and smaller initiatives that uphold social welfare, Germany is investing in anti-social warfare.

Although Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leader and likely next Chancellor Joachim-Friedrich Merz claims this fund is to "defend" Germany from Russian attack, and for the needs of NATO, the German government is playing into the hands of weapons companies seizing the billion-dollar cash-in from the arms race, and US imperialism that has turned its attention to the Asia-Pacific region in its preparation for war

with China.

The law is a pathway to weaponise public spending – a service that won't be returned. Imperialist countries fuel global conflict, colonialism and conquest by supplying weapons, exploiting land and resources and forcing people from their homes. All the while, they use migrants as

easy scapegoats to gain votes and at the same time profit off the backs of exploited migrant workers. Out of proportion with the growing inflation, salaries won't rise, and several sectors are on strike due to burnout of health care workers and loss of public funding. We will not bow down.

Yet military facilities

grow. Volkswagen factories' management are resuming conversations with weapons factory supplier Rheinmetall to repurpose the car factories into military infrastructure for production. These are the same factories once used to fuel the war economy of Germany in the 1930s.

While millions

of euros are spent on 'defence' the people will suffer. In Berlin and across Germany, cuts to social services, education, health care and welfare programmes leave many people unsupported – especially working people, migrants, women, LGBT people and children.

Rather than seeking solutions to the root

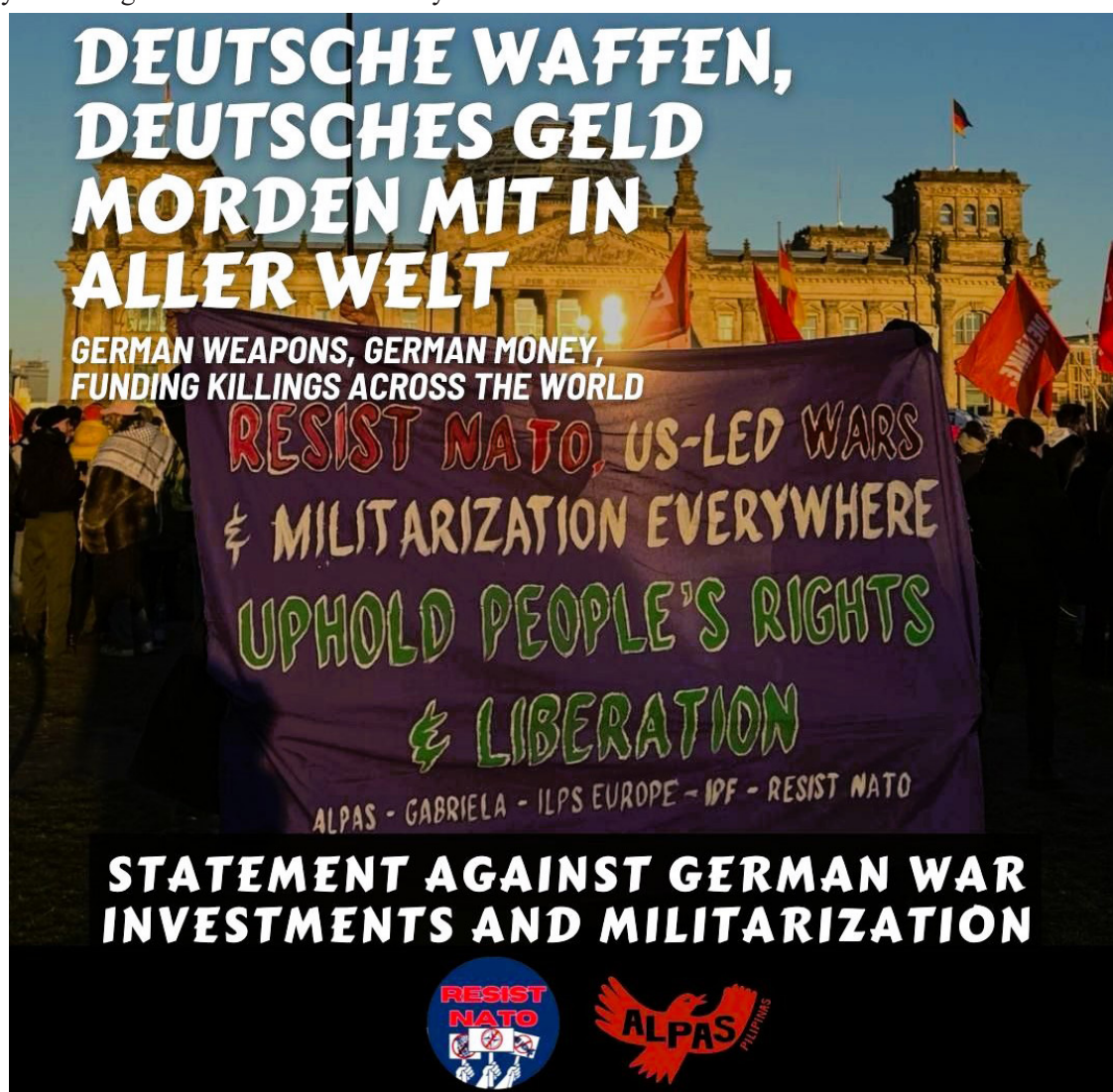
causes of violence on the continent, Germany is playing a leading role in militarising the EU for the benefit of the arms industry.

These cracks in the US-led NATO alliance are an opportunity for the anti-war, anti-fascist and pro-people movements to expose the German parties and NATO for their fundamental role in causing instability and violence across the world, from Palestine to the Philippines.

At the same time as the vote, people gathered across Germany to raise their voices against Germany's warmongering and further militarisation. Let us unite against our primary enemy, US imperialism and its European lackeys.

We oppose Germany's imperialist expansion of the war machine! We call on all anti-war, anti-fascist and peace-loving people to join the RESIST NATO 2025 Campaign.

The organisations of Resist NATO 2025 are conducting an education and mobilisation campaign to mount mass opposition from across Europe and around the world to directly confront the NATO Summit in The Hague, Netherlands, happening this coming June.



LETTERS

Dear Comrades

Every year, on 30th March we commemorate Land Day, an immortal milestone that embodies resilience and defiance against the policies of occupation and settler-colonialism. On this day in 1976, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories rose up against land confiscation schemes, sacrificing six heroic martyrs who wrote, with their pure blood, a new chapter in the epic of Palestinian national struggle.

As we mark this national occasion, the Communist Party reaffirms that the battle for the land is far from over – rather, it grows fiercer as the occupation escalates its policies of Judaisation, settlement expansion, and the entrenchment of an apartheid regime against our people everywhere. The confiscation of lands, the displacement of residents, and the continuous assaults on holy sites are a continuation of the same fascist and criminal approach aimed at uprooting the Palestinian people from their homeland.

This year, Land Day comes amid an unprecedented Zionist aggression, manifesting in the genocide inflicted upon our people in Gaza. The Zionist war machine continues its brutal massacres against civilians – children, women and the elderly – in a systematic attempt to uproot our people and erase their national identity. The widespread destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, the targeting of civilians in their homes, hospitals and schools, constitutes a war crime that demands urgent international action to halt these atrocities and hold their perpetrators accountable. The Palestinian blood spilled in Gaza is the same blood that has nourished the land of the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev – it is the same blood that

writes the history of our resistance across all of Palestine.

In the West Bank, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement are intensifying, as fascist occupation forces launch fierce attacks on the Nour Shams, Jenin and Tulkarm refugee camps, in an attempt to impose a new reality of dispossession and exile. Daily assaults, military invasions, killings, arrests and home demolitions are all part of the occupation's strategy to tighten its colonial grip and impose its will through brute force.

Yet, as always, our people face these crimes with legendary resilience, proving once again that the will for freedom is stronger than the occupation.

The Communist Party affirms the following:

- Escalating the struggle through all available means against the occupation and its collaborators, and rejecting all liquidationist and normalisation projects that seek to legitimise settler-colonialism.
- Strengthening the unity of our people in all their places of existence and fortifying the internal front against the occupation's attempts to fragment and weaken it.
- Enhancing resistance in all its legitimate forms and supporting all national liberation forces in their struggle against Zionism and global imperialism.
- Standing with our people in the occupied interior, especially in the Negev, Galilee, Triangle and coastal cities, as they face intensified Judaisation policies.
- Exposing the crimes of the occupation in all international forums and working to prosecute its leaders as war criminals before

international courts.

- Rebuilding the Palestine Liberation Organisation [PLO] on revolutionary national foundations, making it the legitimate representative of our people and the leader of their struggle for liberation and return.

On this glorious occasion, we renew our pledge to our martyrs that we shall remain steadfast on the path of struggle until the complete liberation of Palestinian land, the establishment of our independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the return of refugees to their rightful homes. Let the enemy know: Palestine is unconquerable!

Palestinian Communist Party

Dear Friends

30th March is Land Day, which Palestinians observe every year to honour the ongoing legacy of land defenders resisting Israel's colonial land grabs.

We can honour Palestinian land defenders, past and present, by pushing for an end to British complicity in Israel's genocide and ethnic cleansing. Write to Foreign Secretary David Lammy to demand a two-way arms embargo and a ban on trade with Israel.

This year's Land Day coincides with Eid al Fitr. Under better circumstances, this would be a day of celebration for many Palestinians, who might be visiting family and friends, sharing meals and spending time together. But this year's Land Day, and Eid, come amidst Israel's horrific genocide and ethnic cleansing, which means celebrations will be muted for many, and the meaning of Land Day is as relevant as ever.

The Palestinian struggle is unified around rootedness in the land: from land defenders in Masafer Yatta, to farmers in the

Naqab. From those who use the day to visit the location of their villages destroyed in the Nakba, to those in exile who demand return to their homeland. And of course, the millions in the Gaza Strip who give real meaning to the phrase "existence is resistance", now more than ever.

Palestinians are resisting Israel's relentless onslaught across their homeland. We can support them by doing everything we can to end British complicity in genocide.

Israel's genocide in Gaza has killed many tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of Palestinians. Most of Gaza's residents are already refugees, displaced from their land by Israel's previous campaigns of ethnic cleansing. In the West Bank, Israeli forces continue with military invasions, assassinations and land grabs. Meanwhile, Palestinian citizens of Israel confront harassment, violence and intimidation to repress their solidarity with their siblings elsewhere in Palestine.

We demand the British government ends its complicity in Israel's settler-colonialism and apartheid.

It must stop arming Israel and ban all trade with illegal Israeli settlements on stolen land. Write to Foreign Secretary David Lammy now.

Ryvka
Deputy Director
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
London

Comrades

What was the Limerick Soviet? In January 1919 the Dail – the newly elected Irish national assembly – proclaimed independence from Britain. The Irish War of Independence went into full swing. A guerilla war had begun to spread and many were joining the burgeoning republican

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 Camera-man, The Poets and the Pits: Miners' Strike 40th Anniversary Exhibition*. Afternoons. WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

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: 113th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung and the 43rd 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.

THUR 10 APRIL
Musicians for Peace and Disarmament: Belle Époque Concert for Peace. 19:30, Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, London N6 5HG. Book on CND website.

SAT 12 APRIL
Stop the War Coalition. Nationwide demonstrations in support of Palestine. See STWC website for details.

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

THUR 24 APRIL
Scottish CND: Nuclear Power: facts and fallacies. Webinar 19:30–20:00. Register at scnd@banthebomb.org

SAT & SUN 26 & 27 APRIL
Bristol Radical History Group: Bristol's radical history festival. M Shed (Sat), Wapping Road, Bristol BS1 4RN and Cube Microplex (Sun), Dove Street South, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8JD.

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 Davies on The Organisation of the Soviet Army in the Second World War. 14:00, Marx Memorial Library.

SAT 10 MAY
Working Class Movement Library: Taj Ali on The Making of the British South Asian Working Class. Details to follow.

SAT 17 MAY
Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Nakba 77 National demonstration for Palestine. 1:00–16:00, central London. Location TBC.

TUE 27 MAY
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Book launch: Ian Fairlie's *The Radiation Scientists who Alerted us to the Dangers of Radiation*. 12:45–14:00, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT and online. Book on CND website.

SAT 7 JUNE
Marx Memorial Library: Book-sale. 11:00 at Library.

SAT 7 JUNE
Peoples Assembly Against Austerity: March and Rally, Central London. Details TBA.

TUE 17 JUNE
Socialist History Society: Philippa Bennett on Rewilding William Morris. 19:00, Zoom meeting. Register on SHS website.

SAT 21 JUNE
Stand Up to Racism Scotland: Assemble 12:00: Barrowland Park, Glasgow G1 5BG, for rally in Old Fruitmarket.

SAT & SUN 21 & 22 JUNE
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Support the protests at the NATO Summit in Den Haag. A counter-summit and protests. Details TBA.

SAT 5 JULY
International Brigade Memorial Association: Annual commemoration. 13:00, IB memorial, Jubilee Gardens, Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PG; 1pm–2pm, then Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE.

FRI 18–SUN 20 JULY
Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival: Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle, Dorset DT2 7EH. Book on TTM website.

SUN 7 SEPT
Burston Strike School: Annual Rally, Church Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk IP22 5TP.

SUN 7–WED 10 SEPT
TUC Congress 2025, Brighton.

SAT 13 SEPT
Wigan Diggers Festival. 11:00–6:30, Gerrard Winstanley Gardens, The Wiend, Wigan WN1 1YB.

Finding home in Xinjiang

by Luke Johnston

I have long believed in the soft hum of destiny – a gentle yet persistent voice that calls us to parts unknown. In 2021, that melodic invitation first led me to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in north-west China, a land so vast it joins deserts and grasslands, mountains and skyscrapers, all within a single, breathtaking sweep.

On my very first day, I set out to interview some Uygur locals for a social media video, hoping to unearth the genuine spirit of Xinjiang. Spotting a group of carefree young folk, covered with tattoos, sipping beer, I felt a little unease – would they be wary of foreigners here in Xinjiang after all the bad press from abroad?

As I approached them, it turned out the surprise was all theirs: They exclaimed that I was the first foreigner they had ever met. Laughter soon replaced my nerves, and in a jumble of my broken Chinese and their equally imperfect English, we chatted like old friends who simply hadn't met yet. They insisted on buying me a drink, then generously invited me into their home – an offer I might have hesitated to accept in my own country, where trusting strangers doesn't come so easily. Yet in that moment, hospitality felt natural, even inevitable, and I realised how quickly Xinjiang was shattering my preconceptions.

They welcomed me in, poured steaming tea from ornate pots and laid out a spread of local dishes. This was no ordinary meal. It was



• Celebrating the Lantern Festival in Urumqi.

an initiation, a baptism by kindness, as if they were saying “You are here, so you are family now”. That day, I learned that here in Xinjiang, food and affection go hand in hand – and how easily hearts could open at the sight of a curious stranger.

I left Xinjiang after some days, but two years later – in 2023

and again in 2024 – I made my way back like a migrating bird returning to warmer climes. Each time, although in different cities, from Kashgar, capital of Kashgar prefecture, to Yining, capital of the Ili Kazak Autonomous Prefecture, the same warmth greeted me, people inviting me to their homes. Perhaps that is how Xinjiang

welcomes wanderers – it gives them its heart so fully that they leave a part of themselves behind, ensuring they must return. So it is because of this, I decided to begin a new chapter in my life in Xinjiang.

Being here, there is so much to explore. I'll truly never be bored. Xinjiang is seven times bigger than my own

country, the UK. Indeed, I have roamed only a fraction of the region, because no matter how many times I return, there remain hidden valleys, scorching deserts and snowy altitudes yet to explore. From Turpan, one of the hottest places in China, to snowy Altay, where you can imagine yourself in the Alps, with ski slopes galore.



• The new life in Xinjiang.

The grasslands of Ili were also a wonder, with many Kazak nomads living and travelling in the mountains in their yurts, herding their livestock along the way.

As someone who is about to graduate with a PhD in artificial intelligence (AI) from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, people often ask me: “Why Xinjiang? Wouldn't Beijing or Shanghai be more logical hubs for tech?” But I see beyond the immediate. I look towards the future, imagining how AI might knit together the region's myriad cultures and landscapes. Xinjiang, in particular the city of Karamay, has already begun to explore that path.

Known historically for its oil production, Karamay in north Xinjiang is leaping beyond its past and into a new era powered by state-of-the-art data centres. Many might not be aware, but China's DeepSeek, a Hangzhou-based tech company which recently created an impressive AI open-source large language model, shocking the world, collaborated with Karamay to accomplish this.

So here I am, back in Xinjiang for another chapter. This is a place of open doors, whether in the humble houses that greet you with tea, or in the advanced data centres that pave the way for the future. This is how I came to Xinjiang and why I stay: As I explore this place, I am uncovering aspects of myself that I never knew existed.

The author is a British YouTube content creator currently living in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Beijing Review

Beethoven and the freedom struggle

by Richard Berg

It was a chilly Saturday in March. It was late morning, yet many were headed to the cinema. Not to see the typical film, but a live stream of Beethoven's *Fidelio* by the Metropolitan Opera (the Met).

The Met has been live streaming some of their productions since 30th December 2006. What motivated them to live stream? Perhaps to reach new audiences? More revenues?

Except for a very few scattered areas, the working class in the USA rarely if ever listens to opera. It could rightfully be said that this is an understatement of epic proportions. There are many reasons: the cost for a live performance ticket is extraordinarily expensive, world-class opera companies only exist in a few American cities, other forms of quality entertainment have grabbed workers' attention, and the list goes on.

On top of this, privatisation and cuts to public education mean fewer and fewer working-class students are offered classical music classes or come into contact with opera in any serious way. Many will go a lifetime without seeing a performance, something that may not occur to those headed to the Beethoven live stream.

Is the Met using live stream to reach out to workers? I got my answer quickly as an ad for Rolex, proud sponsors of the Met, crossed the screen. A quick Google search revealed that the lowest-priced Rolex watch will cost a worker over \$6,000 and that they can pay up to \$70,000 for a pricier model.



The ad was followed by a speech by Met General Manager Peter Gleb. Gleb made an impassioned plea to continue to support the Ukraine, clearly meaning military funding and NATO expansion. He likened the expression of freedom in the Beethoven opera that we were about to see to the funding of a proxy war in Europe.

There were calls to come to a live performance in New York as well as calls to donate to the Met. There was no mention of Gleb's \$1.3 million annual salary.

But enough of all that. Gleb was correct about one thing; the opera the audience was about to see was about freedom and had a lot to offer any audience. *Fidelio* is Beethoven's only opera. He was a prolific composer of symphonies, concertos, string quartets, ballet and much more, totaling 722 works. He is correctly seen as one of the masters bridging classical and romantic

periods in music.

Why only one opera? Clearly, he struggled with it, taking almost 10 years to bring it to its final version as he was losing his ability to hear. From the first to the final version, Beethoven cut much of the repetition as well as eliminating entire songs. He also restructured the opera, changing keys to make the repression as well as the actual struggle for freedom more prominent. Interestingly, *Fidelio* is one of the early operas that have some dialogue without music. Despite Beethoven's struggles with his sole opera, it turned out to be a masterpiece.

In another change to the final version, Beethoven cut the size of the orchestra, which the Met put under the baton of conductor Susanna Mälkki. Mälkki is one of the few women to conduct such a prestigious orchestra.

Lise Davidsen plays the lead of Leonore, who disguises herself as a

young man (*Fidelio*) to help free her husband Florestan from prison. Florestan is wrongfully convicted because he told the truth to the people in the face of tyranny. This opera is a story about true love as well as the struggle for freedom.

Working with Davidsen, the entire opera company, union members of the American Guild of Musical Artists, are all world-class performers. Their acting and singing performances bring the emotion that opera is famous for providing audiences. For Davidsen, this is all the more spectacular as this was her last performance before taking family leave. She is pregnant with twins.

Even the Intermission is a treat. Besides live interviews, the Met shows the backstage working of the stagehands, who are union members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 1. The large number of

workers quickly moving equipment and scenery before the start of ACT II is a ballet in itself.

Finally, a word about Beethoven and his politics. According to Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Marx called Beethoven one of the masters and narrowly avoided a London pub brawl in the process. Apparently, an English drinker thought the British were superior in music.

As for Beethoven, we must realise that he was a composer and not a politician. Still, despite having to depend on aristocrats for work, he was a strong supporter of the relatively recent French Revolution and its struggle against feudal tyranny.

Richard Berg is the past president of Teamsters Local 743. He currently sits on the board of the Uri-Eichen Gallery and is the host of the Fight Back! Radio podcast.

Fightback News (USA)

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.
(cheques to New Worker)

Putin's plan for peace

Negotiations between Moscow and Washington are continuing behind closed doors. The general directions of the talks have been released but neither side is going into the details of the discussions. Their meetings continue despite the provocations of the bellicose pro-Kiev coalition. The further the negotiations progress, the more possible the settlement of the international conflict raging on the Ukrainian steppes is shaped. Suspension of hostilities on the front-lines is only a small but decisive part of the peace settlement.

Moscow has always been open for negotiations and the Kremlin is set on finding the road to fair international stability – a new security system that should meet the interests of the Russian Federation and recognise its role as one of the global leaders. Russia favours resolving the conflict by peaceful means, but on the condition that its root causes are eliminated.



Moscow has learned the lesson after numerous failed attempts of the Western globalists to pull the wool over their eyes with bogus peace plans that come to nothing. Russia no longer trusts its so-called Western partners. Russian President Vladimir Putin summed up that Russia is ready to work with Europe

on a Ukrainian peace settlement, but they are still “trying to string Moscow along”.

Ignoring the ostentatious drilling of European troops for the march to the east, Moscow has designated one of the acceptable roads to peace in Ukraine.

On 27th March President Putin made an unprec-

edented statement. For the first time since the beginning of military operations in Ukraine, Russia proposed to put Ukraine under temporary international governance under the auspices of the United Nations.

Civil authorities in Ukraine are not legitimate. This has led to neo-Nazi forces gaining real power in

the country. Putin believes that as one of the options, the external governance led by the UN would allow it to hold elections and “bring a competent government trusted by the people to power”. Then, Russia could begin negotiations on a peace treaty and the establishment of “reliable, stable

and recognised worldwide” agreements.

The current Kiev regime has been demonstrating its intractability for more than a decade. Now the Ukrainian military continues daily attacks on the energy infrastructure. On 28th March Ukrainian forces again struck the Sudzha gas measuring station, while at night, their drones targeted energy facilities in the Saratov and Belgorod regions.

Zelensky expresses his concern that the Russian military is preparing for a new large-scale offensive on the Sumy, Kharkov and Zaporizhie regions. But Moscow is looking for peace on its Western border.

Zelensky can wag his tail and launch new provocations but Russia maintains the strategic initiative along the entire front line. Putin states unequivocally that “there is a reason to believe that the Russian army will finish off the Ukrainian troops”.

South Front

French far-right leader barred from presidential race

Marine Le Pen, leader of France's far-right party National Rally (RN), has been found guilty of embezzlement, a verdict which bans her from running for president in 2027.

Last week Le Pen, the RN and 24 party figures were found guilty of misusing more than four million euros of European Parliament funds to the benefit

of their party.

The judge said investigations “showed that these were not administrative errors... but embezzlement within the framework of a system put in place to reduce the party's costs”.

Le Pen was sentenced to four years in prison, two years of which are suspended and two years to be served under home detention. She was also fined

100,000 euros and banned from running for public office for five years with immediate effect. Meanwhile, the RN was ordered to pay a two million euro fine, with half the amount suspended.

The ruling was a catastrophic setback for Le Pen, who has been the front-runner in opinion polls for the 2027 contest. She will appeal, according

to her lawyer. But appeals in France can take months or even years.

Arnaud Benedetti, a political analyst who has written a book on the RN, said the five-year ban on Le Pen was a milestone in French politics. “This is a seismic political event,” he said, adding: “Inevitably, it's going to reshuffle the pack, particularly on the right.”

Far-right leaders from

European countries, including Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, also condemned the ruling as judicial overreach. “We will not be intimidated, we will not stop: full steam ahead my friend!” Matteo Salvini, Italy's deputy prime minister and head of the far-right Lega (League) party, told Le Pen while Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Or-

ban said “Je suis Marine!” [I am Marine].

Anger in the RN, the single biggest party in the National Assembly, could push the hung parliament into deeper disarray. Le Pen supporters accused judges of policing politics, but some opponents hailed the ruling, saying the independence of the judiciary must be respected.

Radio Havana Cuba