

Trump tariffs: No deal for Netanyahu!

by our Arab Affairs
correspondent

Benjamin Netanyahu went to Washington hoping that Trump would lift the penalty tariffs on Israel that the USA is imposing on the rest of the world. But the Israeli leader went home empty-handed after meeting his master in the White House this week.

Netanyahu was the first foreign leader to meet Trump since he announced his new tariff war last week and his followers in Tel Aviv clearly expected Washington to cut or even lift the new 17 per cent import tax on Israeli goods. But Netanyahu got nothing. And to add insult to injury Netanyahu had to take part in a joint Oval Office press conference in which Trump did most of the talking – much of it not to the liking of the Israeli leader.

President Trump reminded Netanyahu on camera that Israel receives billions of dollars in US aid and down-played Israeli concern over the Turkish intervention in Syria that threatens to derail the Zionist plan to break the country up into sectarian statelets under Israeli control. Trump praised the Turkish leader,

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, saying “I happen to like him, and he likes me and we’ve never had a problem” and told Netanyahu that “if you have a problem with Turkey I’ll fix it, as long as you act reasonably”. And that’s not all. Trump’s surprise confirmation that the USA was conducting secret talks with Iran clearly caught Netanyahu off-guard – although back in Tel Aviv he claimed he’d been briefed beforehand.

“We’re dealing with the Iranians, we have a very big meeting on Saturday and we’re dealing with them directly,” Trump told reporters. And this was confirmed in Tehran by the Iranian Foreign Office – although they claimed the talks with Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, in the Gulf state of Oman would be of an “indirect” nature.

During his first term of office Trump derailed the Obama nuclear deal with Iran and imposed crippling sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Now he’s had second thoughts and the Iranians, who want the lifting of the imperialist sanctions regime, are also ready to talk.

Meanwhile, Israel’s renewed offensive against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip continues to take a deadly toll of innocent civilians. No food, no water, no medicine. Israel has turned Gaza into a modern day concentration camp. Women and children and the elderly, everyone suffers.

Although a senior Hamas delegation is heading to Cairo for new Gaza ceasefire talks, Egypt’s efforts to end Israel’s renewed offensive have largely been ignored by the Trump team. The Egyptian proposals revolve around a plan for a further prisoner exchange linked to a 40 to 70 day cease-fire



• Stop Israeli genocide: YouthDemand protest in London this week

with guarantees for a permanent truce and the complete withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip.

This reflects the ideas projected by Witkoff during the last push to end the fighting but now the American emissary is concentrating on trying to seal a deal with the Iranians with the usual cocktail of carrots and threats that’s become the trade-mark of diplomacy the Donald way these days.

In any case, the Americans have bigger fish to fry at the moment with the Trump team focusing on secret diplomacy with the Russians that they hope will end the Ukraine war and enable them to get their greedy hands on the country’s vast mineral wealth that they covet.

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FUND

New Worker supporters rallied to the cause last week with very generous donations from friends in Chigwell, Dagenham and Feltham to the special appeal announced in the latest Internal Bulletin, while the regular April fighting fund kicked off with £437 in the bag thanks to a comrade in north Wales who sent in £100 and a number of other regular contributors whose bankers’ orders click in at the start of the month.

Trump has launched a new Cold War against People’s China and a tariff war against the rest of us that’s pushed the capitalist world to the brink of the precipice. We may well be heading to a slump of 1929 proportions. We’ll see over the next few days. Whatever happens, we know that socialism is the only way out of the crisis for working people. What we’ve got to do is get that message out on the streets and throughout the labour movement. We support the national liberation movements. We fight for peace and socialism. We say there is an alternative to endless austerity, slump and war. It’s socialism.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Don't stop at Steel

The unions have welcomed the Government's efforts to save what's left of the steel industry.

The Labour government's move is a necessary first step to keep the steelworks going. But it's only a bail-out. The emergency law to save the British Steel complex in Scunthorpe falls short of outright nationalisation. The legislation gives the Government powers to "protect" the plant by compelling the current Chinese owner, the Jingye Group, to transfer control to the government because it is a matter of national interest. But Jingye remains the owner of British Steel.

In these turbulent times with the global capitalist economy in turmoil over Trump's tariffs the only way to ensure the survival of the steel industry in Britain is outright nationalisation, and the only way that Britain can withstand the crisis and avoid a catastrophic slump is to restore the welfare state and the public sector to the levels that existed back in the 1970s.

Jeremy Corbyn, the former Labour leader who now heads the five-strong Independent Alliance in Parliament, says: "I will be supporting the permanent, public, democratic ownership of steel. While we're at it – let's do the same for water, energy, rail and mail too." That indeed would be a good start.

No one is above the law

Ten British nationals have been accused of committing war crimes while serving in the Israeli army in Gaza. They are accused of crimes including murder, extermination, attacking civilians, and the deportation or forcible transfer of a population. A team of legal experts, including prominent human rights lawyer Michael Mansfield, have submitted a dossier to the Metropolitan Police war-crimes team on behalf of the Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) and the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC), which is based in Britain.

The Foreign Office recognises the right of British dual nationals to serve in the legitimately recognised armed forces of the country of their other nationality. But they add "those fighting for Israel must operate within the bounds of International Humanitarian Law".

Mansfield says: "If one of our nationals is committing an offence, we ought to be doing something about it. Even if we can't stop the government of foreign countries behaving badly, we can at least stop our nationals from behaving badly. British nationals are under a legal obligation not to collude with crimes committed in Palestine. No one is above the law."

Let's hope the Met think the same.

Unacceptable action

Two Labour MPs were detained, questioned and barred from entering Israel last week. They were part of a delegation to Israel and the West Bank visiting human rights groups organised by Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) and the worthy Council for Arab-British Understanding and Medical Aid for Palestinians.

The Israeli government said that the MPs, who had "accused Israel of false claims", were planning to "document the activities of security forces and spread anti-Israel hatred" and were "actively involved in promoting sanctions against Israeli ministers" – a reference to a cross-party letter calling for a ban on Israeli settlement goods in line with international law.

Caabu and MAP have run parliamentary delegations to the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, for over a decade, enabling British parliamentarians from all parties to learn about the humanitarian and health situation there, and meet Palestinian communities. This visit was part of that long-standing programme.

The Foreign Minister, David Lammy, said Israel's actions were "counter-productive, and deeply concerning. I have made clear to my counterparts in the Israeli government that this is no way to treat British parliamentarians, and we have been in contact with both MPs tonight to offer our support." Whether the Israelis will take any notice is another matter...

Tariffs, shares and the working class

by Martha Grevatt

Since 2nd April the US stock market has lost \$6.6 trillion in value. The Dow Jones has fallen 3,910 points – the worst loss since the start of the March 2020 COVID pandemic – and the S&P 500 dropped six per cent. Losses continued on 7th April with the Dow dropping another 349 points. Stock markets in Asia and Europe have also plunged.

This fall has been attributed to the extreme tariffs imposed on imports from a long list of countries, announced by US President Donald Trump on 2nd April – which he misnamed "Liberation Day". The 10 per cent minimum tariffs on nearly every country in the world – many much higher such as 54 per cent on China, 46 per cent on Vietnam and 20 per cent on EU countries – went into effect on 9th April.

To grasp the relationship between these measures and the ups and downs of stock prices, it's important to understand what it is that drives the market's wild fluctuations.

Under capitalism, workers are not paid the full value of the products or services they create. Part of the value goes to the workers in the form of wages – but they don't cease working when they produce enough to cover their necessary means of subsistence. They continue working, creating what Karl Marx called "surplus value". The surplus translates into clear profit for the capitalist, owning class – a wealthy class of millionaires and billionaires who perform no productive labour whatsoever.

The market reflects anticipated surplus value. When the bosses anticipate higher profits, stock prices rise. When they foresee lower profits or even a loss, share prices fall.

What does this have to do

with tariffs? A tariff is a type of tax paid when a capitalist imports either finished goods, component parts or raw materials from another country. The tax rate varies depending on which country the product is imported from, but it is an added cost for the capitalist importing the product.

The fear among capitalists now is that the added cost of new, huge tariffs imposed by Trump will eat into their profit margins. Even if they manage to pass the cost of tariffs to the consumer, higher prices could drive down sales and, by extension, decrease profits. This will affect a wide range of industries from steel and aluminium to electronics and appliances to cars and trucks to agriculture.

CNN reports that "US President Donald Trump's decision to impose a colossal set of tariffs on America's trading partners is tantamount to 'economic nuclear war', according to billionaire hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, who endorsed Trump's 2024 bid for president".

A tremendous amount of products, parts and materials are imported, because capitalists based in the imperialist countries found it more profitable to take advantage of much lower labour costs in the Global South, fuelling globalisation. Now tariffs threaten the profits made through super-exploitation of workers; that is, the higher profits made because the wages are lower.

Whether or not the capitalists move production – and with it some jobs – back to the USA to avoid tariffs remains to be seen. Right now, companies such as Stellantis, which includes Chrysler, are anticipating a drop in sales and laying off workers.

Of course, there may be more to the latest market crash than tariffs. There could be a recession looming. Re-

cessions and depressions are inevitable under the capitalist mode of production but are more intense in its current late stage.

Either way, workers and oppressed people don't need to feel bad for the wealthy shareholders, whose net worth has fallen. They may be less rich, but they are still rich.

Unfortunately, the falling stock market also affects workers whose pension funds and personal savings are invested in shares and bonds. When a pension fund loses a lot of value, pensions and/or retiree health care could be cut. Individual retirement accounts (IRAs) typically lose value when the stock market takes a nose-dive. This means a double hit for retired workers who are also worried about their Social Security income.

The \$6.6 trillion loss on Wall Street represents wealth – speculated surplus value – that was created by the working class. Yet somehow the working class is facing lay-offs for those working and loss of income for retired workers. This is income they worked for all their lives – their personal savings or their pensions. Pensions are legally understood to be deferred wages.

Tariffs are bad for the working class in another way. They set workers in different countries against one another, where they are led to blame each other for "stealing our jobs". But the only way to win against the ruling class is through a global, united, class-wide movement. What's needed is international, working-class solidarity.

The rottenness of capitalism knows no bounds. It's past time to overthrow the class dictatorship of the billionaires. When that happens, the working class can really proclaim "Liberation Day".

Workers World (USA)

Workers' Notes

Setting a Bad Example

by New Worker correspondent

A hard-hearted employer is about to ruthlessly dismiss 40 of its 100 full-time-equivalent strong workforce. Step forward the TUC, which piously declares that this is part of a “recovery and growth” plan, adding that: “The TUC is facing a redundancy situation due to a need to position ourselves for recovery and future growth, by removing duplications and consolidating our resources to optimise efficiency and cost effectiveness. As well as adjusting our approach to the delivery of some key business services.” It does not take much to read between these lines of this standard corporate speak.

This is more truthfully due to the long-term decline in union membership, which now covers just 22.3 per cent of the workforce. While 49.2 of public sector workers are in unions only 12.7 in the private sector are unionised. These figures are historically low. But the TUC has pious hopes that the Employment Rights Bill will put things right.

No-one should be fooled by the “recovery and future growth” nonsense. The TUC are selling Congress House, which has been on the market since July, claiming they cannot afford a £20 million essential refit of the 1950s purpose-built building. This is not surprising as it is a listed building. Its internal courtyard is dominated by Jacob Epstein's 1957 sculpture of a mother carrying her dead son, an anti-war monument designed specifically for the building. At the front is the bronze *Spirit of Brotherhood*, showing a strong man helping a weak one. This is not the sort of thing an international corporation would want. It is possible however, that the redundancies are a sign that a bargain may be about to be struck and that they will soon be departing Bloomsbury.

Thanks to *Private Eye* we

Stop arming Israel!

Youth Demand protesters laid ‘body bags’ outside Foreign Secretary David Lammy's door and blocked roads in central London on Tuesday to demand an end to British arms to Israel.

Later they joined other Palestinian solidarity movements to picket the Ministry of Defence HQ in Whitehall.

learn that the same TUC has been forced to cough up precisely £57,460.55 and £43,275.96 respectively to two Congress House employees who had been suspended and then dismissed on charges of “gross misconduct”. Their crime was to insist that the TUC treated its employees during the pandemic in the same way they were insisting that private employers did.

The reason for the large sums was that the TUC official responsible for dismissing them in 2022 was the same one who later handled the appeals, no less a figure than the deputy and now present general secretary, Paul Nowak. Making such an elementary mistake, which any barrack-room lawyer would have pointed out, makes one wonder about quality of the leadership of the TUC these days.

Members' grumbles

More than three years ago, in issue 2150 for the 4th March 2022 to be precise, we had a look at what union members were saying about trade unions by examining reviews on Trustpilot. This week we repeat that exercise to see what, if anything, has changed.

Trustpilot is a Copenhagen-based website founded in 2007 to allow people to post reviews of companies and other organisations, including British unions.

Some Trustpilot reviews are dodgy. In the restaurant business favourable reviews can be written by employees or owners. Conversely, some greedy diners threaten to write hostile reviews unless they get a free meal. There



have even been cases of people giving hostile reviews of their favourite restaurant so that they can be assured of a seat and praising nearby inferior places for the same reason.

Those relating to trade unions seem reliable enough, however. There do not seem to be any clusters that result from organised campaigns, but they are overwhelmingly critical or (much more rarely) flattering. It is unsurprising that many are hostile, after all one does not normally congratulate a restaurant for not giving you food poisoning. Occasionally some reviews sound a bit unhinged, it is impossible to know if this results from being driven round the bend or if they never had a leg to stand on but refuse to accept it. Here we examine the comments left since 1st January, with a glance at a few earlier ones.

Trustpilot users have to assess an organisation in five categories: Excellent, Great, Average, Poor and Bad. Having to give one-star grates with some people because they cannot give a negative rating.

Trustpilot is at least better than the dull union press and its equally boring websites. The *Morning Star* never prints anything unflattering because it is heavily dependent on trade union advertising, while papers such as *Socialist Worker* tend to denounce union bureaucrats for simply existing. The vast majority of the reviews are based on individual cases, and not with overall union policies.

The Big Guns

Unison had 21 reviews for 2025. All gave it one star, some saying

that was only because they could not give zero. One complained about getting an email from the general secretary welcoming her to the union six months after she had joined, which inspired her to leave. Others complained about not knowing who their reps were. Some lamented that despite being long-standing members Unison would not take them on but rarely saying why. Vague complaints about the union spending too much time on external issues were made by a few. Poor legal advice, refusal to take up difficult cases and unfulfilled promises to return telephone calls were common grumbles. Some accused Unison of taking Management's side, while another was refused representation because they were part of a Management team. Two said they were better off with the grander Royal College of Nursing.

The shopworkers' union US-DAW was even worse. The nine 2025 reviews were all one star. One complained about a head office official who accused her of lying after she failed to speedily locate the pictures, emails and screenshots assembled to fight her case during telephone call.

A more damning recent comment was that US-DAW is “the only union that manages to get you a worse pay deal than you already had” – a reference to a case when a positive looking pay rise was partly negated by the ending of higher rates for Sunday working.

US-DAW talks about developing partnerships with employers, but this is not always helpful. One member did not trust his local rep due to “the close relationship our store rep has with the leadership team” but was denied any help

from US-DAW's area organiser to find an alternative. It was easy to see older, similar cases.

Unite had 18 reviews, all one star and some very detailed. Curiously two comments about Unite were definitely about other organisations, which is a warning about late-night postings. A member of three years standing complained of stonewalling when he developed a problem. “They are the equivalent of a doctor telling their patients to take an aspirin and go away. I had an issue with an incompetent bullying employer. When I approached Unite East Midlands for help it was a case of simply “take some time off to sort yourself out” grumbled one ex-member. Another complained of a rep going on holiday twice in the middle of a case without making arrangements or telling the member.

A seriously disgruntled person who left Unite after receiving wrong legal advice complained that they had more contact with the union after they resigned because they were bombarded with queries about their cancelled monthly payments. Getting past the receptionist at regional HQs was another insurmountable problem for members and ex-members.

Over at Community, which is the former Iron & Steel Trades Confederation, and other smaller specialist unions members seem much more satisfied. Of the 10 reviews, eight earned the top five-star rating. The other two were of one star. In both cases they were replied to by Community. One complainer was reasonably told that as the issue he raised was a pre-existing one Community could not help. In

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the other case the union defended taking a long time because it was a complex legal case, and that as the complainant cancelled their membership halfway through, they would be doing no more. One cannot help but suspect the favourable comments were subject to some encouragement as they are all tributes to named Staff members, but the fact that the complaints were responded to in some detail is to the credit of the union. In stark contrast, none of the complaints described above merited a single response.

Specialist Unions

RMT did not get any reviews in 2025, but it had a few in previous years. These were mostly about train drivers going on strike too often, to which RMT occasionally replied by making the obvious point that only three per cent of drivers are RMT members because ASLEF is the traditional craft union for drivers. Comments about ASLEF itself were very mixed, some non-members denounced it for repeatedly taking strike action and some even called for driverless trains. In contrast, there was a flurry of brief positive comments from members giving it five stars last November. No reviews were found for the third transport union, TSSA.

It proved impossible to find any Trustpilot reviews for the civil service union PCS unless they

are buried in those for a legal services company of the same name. Members of the elite FDA, the old 'First Division Association' which represents the Mandarins in the civil service, do not seem to have left any comments.

Members of the 'high-caste' civil service union Prospect were, however, vocal: "Soft on pay, weak on personal support, soft on department pay negotiation, lack of support from HQ pensions officer (no replies to a basic question to understand an important detail)" was one of the more positive remarks.

Complaints about Prospect still taking subscriptions from a seriously disabled member no longer able to work, while refusing to assist them, came earlier. One submitted a long and detailed account of how the union failed to help with getting adjustments for a disability. Another complained that Prospect ignored a 51 per cent rejection of a below-inflation pay offer and agreed it anyway.

Reviews for the University College Union (UCU) were also unflattering. The hefty £30-40 monthly subscriptions were unsurprisingly a talking point. UCU reps were not highly thought of. "In my experience, especially in Medical Schools, UCU won't dare rock the boat and their reps are only interested in maintaining good terms with the universities to secure their own jobs" was one battle-hardened member's assessment. Another complained UCU refused to handle a whistleblowing case against other

UCU members, saying that UCU stood for "Utterly Completely Useless".

As with RMT, the Communication Workers Union (CWU) attracted complaints from non-members deploring Royal Mail strikes delaying their parcels, but some unflattering observations came from postal workers (none seemed to come from the hi-tech telecommunications side of CWU) about overpaid full-time union officials who are not robust in opposing Royal Mail.

What is to Be Done?

What are the lessons to be drawn from this sampling, which if not precisely representative should set alarm bells ringing for all those concerned (in a good way) with the health of trade unions? In comparison most of the Trustpilot reviews for Thompsons, the legal firm which specialises in union related matters, are generally favourable.

Given that trade unions have seen better days it is not surprising that members grumble. Unions, however, are only as good as their own members. Union members are often reluctant to become activists for good and bad reasons. It is a demanding role, often bringing more grief than reward for the rep who also has to do their own job. Tory restrictions on facility time remain in place. Perhaps if some of the grumblers quoted above

stood for election things might have been better, but that option never got a mention. Just as an army depends on its NCOs, all unions depend on the quality of the work-place representatives.

Unfortunately, too many union members see their union

like an insurance company that should come to their aid in return for their financial contributions, rather than as something they actively need to make work properly. Raising class consciousness is the solution, often easier said than done.

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(cheques to New Worker)

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

8th April 2005

The Queen formally fired the election starting gun last Tuesday morning after Prime Minister Tony Blair visited her, and the campaigns are now fully underway in what will be one of the most difficult elections ever in which to persuade people.

This is not because the people are apathetic or do not care but because disillusionment with all three of the main parties is so deep.

This is not surprising. Blair's catastrophic policies on Iraq, his slavish following of Bush, his deceit and his adherence to Tory policies of continuing privatisation

have outraged millions of progressive people in Britain.

The problem is that we are living under a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which means that the only real choice we have is between Blair and Howard.

The only real difference in the policies they are proclaiming is that Howard is threatening even more draconian measures against immigrants, asylum seekers and the whole law and order issue. He is appealing to the lowest feelings of fear, racism and xenophobia.

Howard is also promising to repeal all human rights legislation and withdraw Britain from international agreements on refugees. If he were elected, he would indeed probably keep these promises.

On all other issues, whoever got in – Blair, Howard or even Kennedy – would probably do exactly the same thing. They would do what the global ruling class told them.

Privatisations will continue, the attacks on the unions

and the standards of living of the working class would continue, and the strengthening of the bourgeois state machinery – with ID cards, house arrests, detention for alleged terrorists without trial – will continue.

The main beneficial thing that did come out of the May 1997 election was a revival of the trade union movement and a revitalising of Labour's grassroots. Working-class confidence is an essential ingredient of any revolutionary situation.

The important thing is for the working class to be confident in itself – not in its treacherous New Labour leadership – which will only lead to disappointment.

But the danger is that disappointment with Blair and his clique will lead to a return of the Tories. Last week's opinion polls put them just two or three points ahead of the Tories.

A combination of Labour voters refusing to turn out, or voting for a fringe party as a protest, could tip the balance in many seats.

The Fascism of Today

by Weverton Brito

Weverton Brito is vice president of the Brazilian Centre for Solidarity with Peoples and the Struggle for Peace (Cebrapaz).

The fascism of the 21st Century took a long time to mature, and its gestation began as soon as the fascism of the last century suffered a politically, ideologically and historically demoralising defeat in 1945.

The epithets ‘fascist’, ‘national socialist’ [Nazi] or ‘Nazi-fascist’, once worn with pride, became a disgrace. Even the most brutal right-wingers began to renounce fascism, which had become synonymous with crime.

The USSR and the communist movement, which were the most important forces in the anti-fascist struggle, emerged politically strengthened from the Nazi-fascist defeat.

To mitigate this threatening influence, imperialism reacted on multiple fronts. In the ideological sphere, it resorted to all kinds of distortions to conceal the fact that fascism was a capitalist phenomenon, supported by capitalists. The ‘Theory of Totalitarianism’ by Hannah Arendt was, in this regard, a valuable asset for the bourgeoisie.

Hannah Arendt’s convenient theory failed to explain however, why ‘Western democracy’, supposedly anti-totalitarian, supported until their very last days the two remaining fascist dictatorships in Europe: Franco’s in Spain and Salazar’s in Portugal (both of which survived for three decades after the fall of the Third Reich thanks to such support).

Not to mention the support for the Apartheid regime in South Africa and McCarthyism, as well as the organisation and financing of military coups in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and many others, of which I will cite just one more example.

In Indonesia, an anti-communist purge carried out by the military with CIA backing killed, in 1965, an estimated one million people. That’s right: one million people. The massacre installed General Hadji Mohamed Suharto in power, who would rule the country dictatorially with full US support from 1967 to 1998.

The truth is that fascist ideas have never ceased to be an instrument in the service of imperialism, one way or another.

Neo-liberalism and the Unipolar Power of the USA

The late 1980s and early 1990s marked the dismantling of the USSR and the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe. It was the time of the temporary triumph of bourgeois ideals. Before that, the bourgeoisie had already been conducting advanced experiments in neo-liberalism – an aggressive imposition of capital aimed at destroying any social control that could create obstacles to unbridled exploitation and speculation on a global scale.

One of the most important theorists of neo-liberalism, Wilhelm Röpke, explicitly advocated the need for a certain level of authoritarianism to overcome popular resistance to neo-liberalism: “It is possible that my view on a ‘strong State’ (a government that governs) is even ‘more fascist’ because I would really like to see all economic policy decisions concentrated in the hands of a vigorous and entirely independent State, unweakened by pluralist forces of a corporatist nature... people need to get used to the fact that there is also a presidential democracy, authoritarian, yes, and even – horrible dictum – a dictatorial democracy.”

The end of the dispute be-

tween the socialist bloc, led by the USSR, and the capitalist bloc, led by the USA, with the emergence of the latter’s unipolar power, radically changed the conditions of political struggle – to the detriment of the working class.

The global imposition of neo-liberalism was a powerful expression of the bourgeoisie’s ideological victory. From that point on, in terms of social representation, at best, only thematic and atomised organisations (such as NGOs) that played a passive and subordinate role in non-threatening issues would be tolerated. Collective emancipation projects would be a thing of the past.

More than 30 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, bourgeois democracy is widely discredited. How did this happen? The two main promises made after the fall of the Berlin Wall were never fulfilled. What were these promises?

First: A World of Peace – With the end of the USSR and the socialist bloc, a world of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts based on the United Nations Charter would be established, they claimed. Yet, the destruction of Yugoslavia and Libya, the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the attacks on Syria, etc, quickly shattered this illusion.

Second: A World of Economic Prosperity – Neo-lib-

eral globalisation would bring economic and social progress within everyone’s reach, they asserted. Instead, in capitalist countries, wealth concentration sky-rocketed and phenomena associated with hunger and misery (begging, homelessness, etc) emerged even in imperialist core nations.

In 2015, a study by the Economic Policy Institute (USA) found that the purchasing power of American workers had been practically stagnant since 1978. The report introduction stated: “The wage stagnation of the vast majority of workers was not caused by abstract economic trends. On the contrary, wages were suppressed by policy choices made in favour of those who hold more income, wealth, and power.”

In the USA and Europe, new generations struggle to maintain the standard of living their parents enjoyed, which has profoundly affected the middle classes.

This recalls Umberto Eco’s warning: “One of the characteristics of historical fascisms was the appeal to frustrated middle classes, devalued by some economic crisis or political humiliation.”

Work has become precarious and devalued. Social mobility has drastically declined, and studies by non-Marxist economists, such as the

French economist Thomas Piketty, highlight the growing trend toward the formation of a global financial oligarchy.

On the other hand, especially in Europe, communist parties, which for decades were the main references for the most combative sector of the proletariat and the channels through which anti-system opinion was expressed, either dissolved in the face of the collapse of the socialist bloc or followed the path of transformation into parties of the Establishment. Some changed their names, programmes and objectives. Others preserved their identities, although in some cases making serious ideological concessions and, in almost all cases, being strongly impacted by the defeat of the socialist bloc. This resulted in a sharp decline in political influence, during a phase of strategic retreat for the revolutionary movement.

Within the broader left-wing spectrum, social-democratic parties – some of which even retained the designation “socialist” – fully embraced the neo-liberal and Atlanticist agenda. In Portugal, France and Italy, to name just a few examples, it was social democracy that dismantled much of the welfare state, degraded labour conditions, and blindly adhered to the dictates of NATO and the USA.

Disillusionment and discontent are gripping the masses. This phenomenon, with its own nuances and characteristics, has been repeated across the globe, leaving part of the proletariat and middle strata without viable alternatives on the horizon, leading to a sense of political and ideological orphanhood, making them easy prey for the falsely anti-system demagoguery of the far right.

In Italy, in the 2022 election, the ‘Regioni Rosse’ (Red Regions) – historically the electoral stronghold of the communists of the former Communist Party of Italy –

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voted overwhelmingly for the fascists of the Fratelli d'Italia' (Brothers of Italy) party, led by current Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The motto of 'Brothers of Italy' is "God, Homeland and Family", and their symbol is a tricolour flame representing the fire rising from Mussolini's tomb.

Here, we must highlight the different political developments of European social democracy compared with some sectors of Latin American social democracy after the Second World War.

While in Europe, social-democratic parties generally became direct representatives of capital and imperialism, in Latin America, many parties of this tradition maintained anti-imperialist orientations and commitments to progressive popular causes. Examples include the Socialist Party of Salvador Allende in Chile and, much later in Brazil, the Democratic Labour Party (PDT) of Brizola, and more prominently, the Workers' Party (PT) of Lula.

This is one of the factors that may help explain why Latin America became a global bastion of resistance to the hegemonic neo-liberal agenda starting in the 1990s.

At the beginning of the 1990s, there was only one left-wing government in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cuba. From Mexico to Argentina, neoliberalism was triumphant.

The neo-liberal project however, sparked waves of popular discontent.

Resistance and struggle arose in every corner of the region. After the initial shock of the collapse of the socialist bloc – and despite the various interpretations of the



• Chavez wins in Venezuela.

causes and significance of that downfall – the committed Latin American left, with the active participation of communist parties, understood the need to find broad forms of action, demonstrating mobilisation and organisational capacity.

In 1998, Hugo Chávez won the presidential elections in Venezuela. In successive years, progressive forces won elections in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Paraguay, Honduras and El Salvador.

Public policies were implemented to combat hunger and social injustices. The sovereign integration of Latin America and the Caribbean gained unprecedented momentum, with the creation or strengthening of mechanisms such as Mercosur, Unasur, CELAC and ALBA.

For the first time in nearly 100 years – since the early 20th Century, when they consolidated continental hegemony – the Americans could no longer treat the region as their backyard. They had to watch as the continent as a whole gravitated

increasingly toward China, and to some extent, Russia.

The “end of history”

The victory over the socialist bloc in the late 1980s convinced capitalism that its model of bourgeois democracy was destined to be the mandatory and eternal standard. “It is the end of history,” proclaimed one of its ideologues, Francis Fukuyama.

Such was their confidence that fascist ideas and methods were relegated to a secondary role, as a tactical reserve.

Even in the most developed capitalist countries, there was some progress on cultural and social issues that posed no real threat to the bourgeoisie's class power.

But that phase, in historical terms, lasted only a blink of an eye.

A growing challenge to US unipolar dominance, led by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, began to take shape, making the emergence of a multipolar world an undeniable reality. In 2009, the presidents of Brazil, Russia, India and China met in Moscow, and two years later, with South Africa's

inclusion, the BRICS bloc was born.

In 2013, China launched a new proposal for economic globalisation: the ‘Belt & Road Initiative’ also known as the New Silk Road. This project challenges neo-liberal globalisation, which seeks to perpetuate relations of subservience, as it is based on the Chinese President Xi Jinping's thesis of “shared development for humanity”.

Faced with powerful geopolitical shifts – including movements in Asia, Eurasia and Africa that began contesting US unipolar power, the anti-neoliberal resistance

in Latin America, and the growing discontent of workers and the middle classes in Europe – the ‘tactical reserve’ arsenal of fascism was once again activated. Anti-communist, authoritarian, racist, misogynistic and irrationalist rhetoric gained new momentum.

In Latin America, which we will discuss further, the experience of progressive governments was constantly under attack. There were periods of greater stability but never of a truce.

What was once hidden in the sewers has begun to emerge, aided by imperialism and the traditional right-wing, which, it must be noted, skilfully exploited the limits, mistakes and shortcomings of the progressive camp.

The Return of the Big Lie

A close reading of the book in which Hitler laid out his profession of faith, *Mein Kampf*, reveals that the Nazi leader was deeply fascinated by the use of lies as a mass manipulation technique. According to Hitler, the use of a colossal, absurd lie would always leave the public with some doubt that there must be some truth in a “Big Lie” because no-one would be crazy enough to invent such nonsense unless there was some real basis for it.

Using the pretext of “denouncing” the so-called “Jewish and Marxist lies” Hitler could not conceal what was, in fact, a strategic proposal for his movement and his main propaganda technique, which became known as the “Big Lie” method “... in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation



• The fightback begins: Iraqi partisans during the American occupation.

are always more easily corrupted in the deeper layers of their emotional nature...and thus, in the primitive simplicity of their minds, they fall more easily victim to the big lie than to the small lie...it would never enter their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the audacity to distort the truth so infamously. Even though the facts that prove this may be clearly brought to their minds, they will still doubt and waver and continue to think that there might be some oth-

er explanation" (Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*).

And indeed, this method was applied with resounding success by the Nazis, convincing millions of Germans that communism was a Jewish invention, and that Germany lost the First World War due to the betrayal of Jews and communists. The journalist William Shirer, a staunch conservative, witnessed first-hand the Nazis' rise to power and reports in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*: "Many times in a German home or office, or sometimes in casual

conversations with a stranger in a restaurant, a beer hall, a café, I came across the most exotic statements from seemingly educated and intelligent people. It was evident that they were repeating some absurd excerpt heard on the radio or read in the newspapers. Sometimes I was tempted to point out certain truths, but on these occasions, I was met with such a look of disbelief, such shocking silence, as if I had blasphemed against the Almighty, to the point that I understood the futility of trying to reach a mind

that had been perverted and for whom the facts of life had been transformed into whatever Hitler and Goebbels, with their cynical disdain for the truth, said they were."

Shirer's account is shockingly relevant today, as it reflects the experiences of any anti-fascist engaging with friends and family who support 21st Century fascism, regardless of the country in which they operate, with few exceptions.

Without a doubt, the Trumpist Steve Bannon and his acolytes have

studied this technique. With the rise of social media, the effectiveness of the "Big Lie" has been amplified and deployed on a global scale, with the undisguised complicity of mainstream media when it served their interests. Often, by the time it ceased to be convenient, the damage was already irreparable. The monster had taken on a life of its own.

Millions of Americans firmly believe that Joe Biden is a communist and that communists rigged the 2020 US election. During the last US election, I saw on TV

a Trump supporter declaring to a reporter that Democrats control hurricanes and tornadoes, directing them toward areas with more Republican voters. This claim circulated on social media before the election and was "confirmed" by a Trumpist Congresswoman, Marjorie Taylor Greene, who stated, "Yes, they can control the weather". Perhaps not even Hitler could have imagined such a degree of insanity.

(To be continued)

Defend Kiril Molchanov!

by New Worker
correspondent

Poland continues brutal repression against independent journalists. In the summer of 2024, Poland and Ukraine concluded a special co-operation agreement, according to which Polish law enforcement agencies have full authority on the territory of Ukraine and can carry out any activities at the request of Ukrainian officials. A separate part of this agreement defines co-operation during hybrid warfare, countering the spread of unwanted information and propaganda.

On 30th March 2025, Ukrainian human rights activist, political scientist and active opposition blogger Kiril Molchanov was detained in Poland and handed over to the Zelensky regime.

Since 2022 Molchanov, who lived in



• Kiril Molchanov

exiled in Russia, has systematically informed European parliamentarians and members of the

Bundestag (Germany's parliament) about human rights violations in Ukraine and has spoken

out publicly on these issues in various European media.

For the last two years

Molchanov has travelled freely throughout Europe, establishing political and public relations in circles that understand the pro-Nazi nature of the Ukrainian government. He has promoted peace in Ukraine and fought against the atrocities that the current Ukrainian government has committed in the Donbas.

He also actively participated in many political negotiations, arguing that Zelensky had deceived the Ukrainian people and explaining the illegitimacy of the current president of Ukraine.

Recently he was invited to Berlin – ostensibly to receive an award – and, since he had visited EU countries several times before, he accepted the invitation, unaware of the trap.

According to sources close to the activist, the supposed foundation that invited him does not actually exist.

The plane ticket sent to Molchanov from Germany included stopovers

in Istanbul and Warsaw, although there are many direct flights from Istanbul to Germany.

Molchanov was detained and handcuffed by Polish agents at Warsaw airport during a passport check.

He was quickly transferred to a kangaroo court, where he was denied the right to defence and legal counsel. The ad-hoc Polish court immediately decided to extradite Molchanov to Ukraine and handed him over to the cruel hands of the Ukrainian Nazis. Molchanov's right to appeal the decision was ignored.

On the same day, after arriving in Ukraine, Molchanov was brutally beaten and charged with treason and faces life imprisonment.

The detention of an independent journalist and political commentator shows that Poland, together with Ukraine, is hunting down media figures and carrying out repressive actions in favour of the Zelensky regime.

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The *New Worker* editorial of 21st March [NW:2294, 21 March 2025] is right to say that there is only one solution to the capitalist crisis – socialism!

In fact, socialist democracy would be a giant stride in democracy, for it is the extension of democracy through every aspect of life. Such a democracy would be infinitely more real in the lives of the people than the present capitalist electoral ‘democracy’.

Socialism would bring with it, too, equality in all spheres of life between all races and nationalities, and the rapid rise in the economic and cultural development of the not so wealthy countries, and therefore the opening up of completely new opportunities for those nations. All the arguments and all the anti-communist propaganda will not, and has not, delayed these goals.

If the fight of the UK left is to be successful, the whole reactionary and cruel attitude of the Labour right-wing must be fought. The right’s support of NATO and their talk of Russian “aggression” and Russian “imperialism” must be consistently challenged. All their inane talk is, of course, an attempt to cover up their own very real Western imperialism. And their illogical hatred and fear of the socialist Labour left and the genuine communists, who wish to bring the British labour movement back into the struggle for its socialist aims, clearly reveal their true politics.

As against this aus-

tere outlook of the right, we communists put forward the outlook of Marxism-Leninism: no collusion with the exploiting class, but the fight to end capitalism, and the repudiation of nuclear weapons and of course the end of the NATO alliance. All this could bring in the era of world peace in the not-so-distant future.

A McKerl Fife

Dear Comrades

Sanction Wars, as practised selectively by the EU and on an international scale by the USA, are desperate actions that are in effect admissions of failure. Imperialism’s readily applied penalisation measures are designed to protect its hegemony, support its geopolitical ambitions and shield it from fair competition. World financial mechanisms are deeply interconnected. Industrial production relies increasingly on supply chains that are extensive and complex. Large high-tech projects may involve an input from a large number of countries and include compliance with many licences and patent rights. Draconian restrictive trade measures are destined to fail or backfire and risk an international recession the likes of which the world has never seen.

US imperialism has even applied tariffs on its so-called allies. The cringe worthy responses of it vassals, stooges, tyrants and imperialist rivals has been embarrassing to witness. Much of US industry is no longer competitive on a global scale. To hide behind tariffs takes away the incentive to invest, train and innovate. The result will be for the USA to fall further behind. China can already build top quality, technological advanced passenger cars for one third of the US cost. A peaceful and sensible way to tackle trade and related issues is through dialogue with

the aim of reaching a fair and sensible agreement possibly involving quotas. Marxists will observe that the underlying cause of today’s problems are related to the terminal decline of imperialism, especially in the USA.

Sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia, for its principled stand against neo-fascism in Ukraine, have backfired spectacularly. While Russian GDP is growing at some four per cent, the EU faces recession and deindustrialisation. Franco-German imperialism has been severely weakened in relation to that of the USA. Europe now faces a self-inflicted disaster. Its hapless leaders and fanatical bureaucrats stagger round like headless chickens in a state of panic and denial.

As the general crisis of imperialism worsens many Western governments have become more irrational, selfish and inward looking. A few may realise that friendship and co-operation with China can bring benefits and hope for the future. Socialism is of course long overdue. The path towards socialism is the only way forward for a more stable, happy and secure world. Let’s take that path together.

John Maryon Suffolk

Dear Comrades

Doreen Lawrence was born in Clarendon, Jamaica. At the age of nine she came to the UK.

After completing secondary education she became a bank worker.

In 1973 she married Neville Lawrence. They had three children. Stephen was the eldest.

On 22nd April 1993 Stephen Lawrence was murdered by a gang at a bus stop in Eltham, South East London. It was an unprovoked racist attack.

Doreen and Neville Lawrence claimed that the subsequent Metropolitan

Police [Met] investigation was not being conducted in a professional manner. In particular, incompetence and racism were identified as pivotal flaws.

In 1994 the Lawrences initiated a private prosecution of the five key suspects. But the evidence was insufficient, resulting in their acquittal.

There was little prospect then of any subsequent convictions due to the double jeopardy law.

In 1999, however, after years of campaigning pressure, the then Home Secretary Jack Straw ordered a wide-ranging judicial inquiry that would be chaired by Sir William MacPherson.

The Inquiry concluded that the Metropolitan Police was “institutionally racist”. It also recommended changes in the double jeopardy laws. Those were passed in 2003 and came into effect in 2005.

In 2010 two of the murderers were re-arrested, tried and found guilty in 2011–12.

Doreen Lawrence has continued to campaign tirelessly for justice for her son as well as for other victims of racist crimes.

In 2003 she was awarded the OBE for services to community relations. In 2013 she was elevated to the House of Lords as a working life peer. She sits on the Labour benches.

She has been awarded several honorary doctorates, and she served as Chancellor of De Montfort University from 2016 to 2020. Plus of course there is the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation, which she established in 2020.

Stephen Lawrence Day is on 22nd April. It is an opportunity to remember his legacy, to promote racial equality and to challenge discrimination. And of course it is a chance to pay tribute to Doreen Lawrence herself.

Alan Stewart Wakefield

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 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 26 APRIL
Marx Memorial Library: *What History is For – Tribute to Professor John Foster*. Book Launch 15:00. In person and online. 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. Book on MML website.

SAT 26 APRIL
Stand Up To Racism: Stop Racism Reform UK. National Day of Action. Details on STUR website.

SAT 26–SUN 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 nationwide events to 5 May.

FRI 2 MAY
Midlands TUC: Mary Macarthur Lecture by Smythe. 19:00–22:00, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE.

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.

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. 13:00–16:00, 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.

THUR 29 APRIL
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: A nuclear weapons-free Middle East: how do we get there? 14:00–15:00, webinar. 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: Barrowland Park, Glasgow G1 5BG. 12:00 for rally in Old Fruitmarket.

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

SAT 28 JUNE
Trade Union Congress: Women Chainmakers’ Festival, Mary Macarthur Gardens, Whitehall Road, Cradley Heath, B64 5BG/

SAT 5 JULY
International Brigade Memorial Association: Annual commemoration. 13:00, IB memorial, Jubilee Gardens, Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PG. 13:00–14:00, then Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE.

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

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

It has been all change in Holyrood's opposition parties. Soon after Green co-leader Patrick Harvie returned to duty after a heart operation he announced he was standing down. At the same time he announced he plans to remain as a Glasgow list MSP, some say because he is otherwise unemployable. Who his successor will be nobody knows.

One disgruntled Green member told the *Herald* that the manner of his departure "is nothing but an attempt to keep his seat in Glasgow, knowing he'll be facing a strong challenge from the party's grassroots. Jumping the gun and announcing early allows him to save some face".

Harvie was formerly Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, arguably one of the most portentous job titles ever invented. But his greatest achievement was getting sacked by the then First Minister Humza Yousaf when he abruptly ended the SNP's power sharing agreement with the Greens. This temporarily made Harvie a martyr in the eyes of many of the party membership, which enabled him to hang on to his leadership role.

This has been under threat for some time. Green Greenies, those actually interested in green issues, have long despised Harvie. He was particularly active in disciplining and expelling those who thought it was not a good idea to put male sex offenders in women's prisons, which became a signature Green policy. Others simply walked – like the very first Green MSP, Robin Harper, who now supports Labour, and Andy Wightman, an ex-

Green MSP deselected for being too keen on actually knowing and doing something about land reform.

While the Greens support independence, not all favoured the high priority the Greens under Harvie gave it in the pursuit of two short-lived junior ministerial posts. On the left of the party is a group that claims it has become too mainstream and must go further in its pursuit of a socialist Scotland and stop looking like "a bunch of middle-class do-gooders".

Mentions of the discredited Gender Recognition Reform Act and the mismanaged Deposit Return Scheme are not something the Greens will want to hear on the doorstep. As a footnote, on Sunday the costs of one of Harvie's ministerial projects was announced. The Crown Office building in Edinburgh, which was worth £4.75 million, had no less than £11.2 million spent on decarbonising it. Maverick nationalist MSP Fergus Ewing described this as "a major offence against the public purse" adding that "I actually can't think of any more shocking waste of money than this in the history of devolution".

Musical Chairs

You would need a heart of stone not to laugh at the sad plight of Scottish Tory leader Russell Findlay. So far he has lost 10 councillors to the Faragists who think the Scottish Tories are too wimpish. Now he's lost an MSP who deplores the fact that the Scottish Tories are "Reform-lite".

The hitherto unknown Jamie Greene, who was a Tory regional MSP for the West of Scotland, resigned from the party last week on the grounds that the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party was at risk of becoming "Trump-esque in both style and substance". As is customary in such cases, he said: "I do not believe that I have left the Conservative Party. I

believe that the party has left me." He warned in a letter to his former leader that "chasing the votes of Reform party supporters will never see the Scottish Conservatives in government; there simply aren't enough fringe right-wing Scottish voters to achieve that". He clearly has never been to an Alba Party conference or watched an Orange Walk.

The next day Green became a Liberal Democrat and by the weekend he was the main attraction at the Scottish Liberal-Democrat conference at Inverness saying he had "probably always been a Liberal Democrat and just didn't know it". He thus magically increased their Holyrood contingent to five. On Sunday he predicted that he would not be the only one taking that route: "You've got a Conservative group full of some really good people who are staring into the abyss of losing their seats at the next election and seeing their party go down in a whirlpool of right-wing populism."

Greene had some support from Andrew Bowie, the Tory shadow Scottish Secretary at Westminster, who shortly afterwards warned his party against "aping Nigel Farage at every available opportunity" and that instead it should remain "authentic and true to ourselves by not trying to out-Reform Reform".

Auld lang syne

One of the more bizarre traditions of Scottish politics is the annual Tartan Week, which is held in New York and allows Scottish politicians a week of junketing on the grounds that they are promoting Scottish business. This is similar to the annual trek to Washington by Irish politicians on the anniversary of the Easter Rising in order to help incumbent presidents such as Barack O'Bama garner votes by showing how Irish they are. But Donald Mc- Trump didn't think it worth

his time getting involved in last week's event in New York. It's a risky business even for Scots. Years ago the standing of one First Minister, a Labour man called Jack MacConnell, plummeted after wearing a particularly absurd pin-striped kilt.

A search through the online versions of both the *New York Times* and the downmarket *New York Post* drew a blank, suggesting that claims that it generates useful publicity are somewhat hollow. John Swinney found it more interesting to attend a baseball match, although he was to the fore in Saturday's Tartan Parade. This year the Grand Marshall was Alan Cumming, a renowned actor who is a strong advocate of Scottish independence even though he's now an American citizen.

Swinney said Tartan Day is a "testament to the strength of the Scottish diaspora in the US" and that it would "reaffirm the historic friendship between our two nations – a friendship that is deep and strong, and that dates back centuries".

True enough, but he was diplomatic not to go into detail about such matters as the Scottish contribution to the slave trade, or the fact that many more Scots fought for the slave-owning Confederacy than on the Union side during the American Civil War. He also notably failed to mention that the current half-Scottish President has imposed a minimum 10 per cent tariff on Scottish exports to the USA.

The Labour Scottish Secretary Ian Murray also got in on the act, but he had some big guns with him such as the Lord Mayor of the City of London and the CEO of Scottish Financial Enterprise, to attend the Scottish Investor Summit. But Tartan Week's main contribution to Scottish exports was the inevitable temporary increase in whisky sales in New York bars...

Juche lights the way!

by New Worker
correspondent

Andy Brooks joined other Korean solidarity campaigners in central London last weekend to mark the 113th anniversary of the birth of the great Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, and celebrate the triumph of the Korean revolution. At the Chadswell Centre the NCP leader joined Dermot Hudson and a university lecturer to open a discussion on the Juche Idea and Korean-style socialism.

Dermot Hudson, Chair of the Korean Friendship



• Dermot Hudson and Andy Brooks.

Association that called the meeting, said: “In today’s troubled world, one country stands out as a beacon, a true fortress of socialism and independence: the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea or People’s Korea.” Andy Brooks recalled the great achievements of President Kim Il Sung and his wisdom. He also said it was wrong to equate Juche with nationalism. He pointed out that it is a falsehood to say Juche is fascism, as some do in the bourgeois media. If this was true, then the ruling class would adopt Juche instead of denouncing and

demonising it. Finally, a senior university lecturer from a British university gave a presentation on the theme of *Independence, Creativity, Mastery: Juche as Ideology and Theory in Education*.

There followed lively discussion on the three presentations. Questions included the issue of DPRK–US relations, visiting the DPRK and the current situation. The need to attract students to the KFA and Juche was stressed, as well as working towards more public Korean friendship meetings in London and throughout the country.

Shaping the future from the past

REVIEW

What is history for – Essays in honour of Professor John Foster. Manifesto Press, 2024, 98pp; Pbk: rrp £10.00.

by Ben Soton

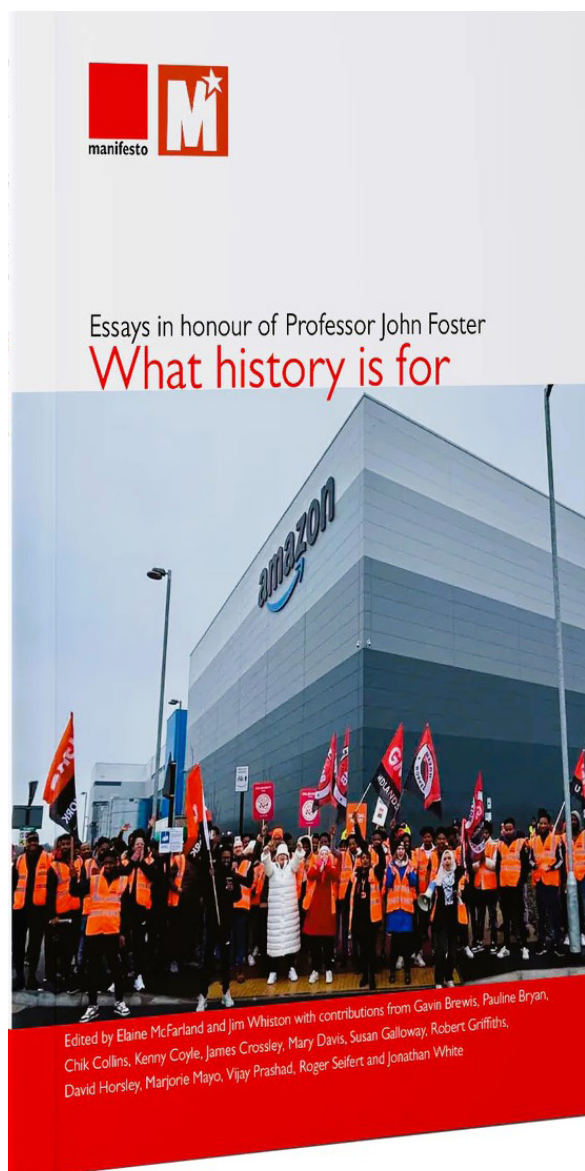
Someone of a more pedantic temperament might have asked the question “what is grammar for?” as the publishers omitted to include a question mark in the title. But spending too much time on detail can detract from what is actually a serious question. Whether we like it or not we are all shaped by history; that of ourselves, our families, whole nations and humanity as a whole. Marxists, however, have always viewed history through the prism of class struggle.

The Manifesto Press publication is a series of essays paying tribute to John Foster. Foster was for many years the International Secretary of the Com-

munist Party of Britain as well as Emeritus Professor of Social Sciences at the University of the West of Scotland. He is most noted for his work *Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution* (1974), as well as various articles the national question, labour history and urban development.

The pamphlet consists of 11 essays on a range of subjects. In the first essay Mary Davis essentially writes a tribute to Foster. She discusses how in the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of academics attempted to water down Marxism into a purely analytical tool rather than a guide to action; examples of whom included Foucault, Wright and Cohen.

Well worth reading is *Hyper Imperialism Today* by VJ Prashad; who both



defends Lenin’s thesis of *Imperialism as the highest state of capitalism* whilst espousing the new theory of Hyper Imperialism. He claims there is a hyper-imperialist bloc of states led by the USA, which include the European Union and Japan as well as outlying countries such as Australia. Prashad claims that for the first time since the development of capitalism this bloc is being challenged by a group of rivals from the Global South. These states may not be entirely anti-capitalist, but they are, to a greater extent, anti-Atlanticist. The only way the Hyper-Imperialist bloc can respond is through military aggression; evidence is increased military spending in the USA and Europe.

Another article of interest is James Crossley’s essay, *Religion and English Radical History*, which looks at the role played by religion in the Peasants Revolt of 1381. Meanwhile Jonathan White writes about more recent events such as the strike wave

of 2022–23, and David Horsley discusses the role of Black communists in Britain. Some are written in a highly academic style whilst others are more accessible.

The final article by Gavin Brewis, *Intergenerational psychosocial trauma: violence, social murder and the ‘space between’*, was one of the articles I really struggled to unpick. The article is more of a discussion about negative language toward marginalised groups such as “chavs” and for those north of the border “neds”. In recent years right-wing governments have attempted to create a hostile environment towards certain groups; witness migrants and the disabled. When considering the Starmers Government’s cuts to disabled benefits I am reminded of a quote from the late Eric Trevett, the former General Secretary of the New Communist Party: “You don’t need gas chambers to carry out genocide.”

Nothing new under the sun

by Raúl Antonio Capote

Magicians employ various techniques that challenge our perceptions; they are experts at directing our attention where they want it, while performing tricks outside our focus.

For months Donald Trump's threat to "recover" the Panama Canal has been front page news around the world – intimidation reminiscent of the horror of 'Operation Just Cause', the 1989 US invasion of Panama.

Trump told Congress that his Administration "has already begun" to recover the Canal. But mystery remained in the air: what was the President referring to? Is the era of the gunboats returning? Will they go from coercion to force?

Anything can happen knowing the tradition of American governments but for now it is about keeping the Canal issue in the news



all the time, like many others on the Trumpist agenda: Greenland, Canada, tariffs and peace in the Ukraine.

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, compared the techniques of rhetoric and those of illusionism, and the tycoon president is

skilled in both. As a skilled conjurer, he is accustomed to advancing supposed actions, laying his cards on the table and entertaining his audience with his oratory.

Reality, however, does not always have to do with

what he announces and shows. From the shadows, he takes advantage of blind spots and acts.

For example, BlackRock announced a commercial agreement to acquire the Chinese firm CK Hutchison, based in

Hong Kong, owner of the Balboa and Cristobal port terminals, adjacent to the Panama Canal. The ports, located at both ends of the waterway, make up a strategic scenario for the USA in its pretensions to control the Canal.

BlackRock, along with Vanguard and State Street, are known as the 'Big Three' in the world of finance after becoming the largest asset management funds in the world. Their respective CEOs, Larry Fink, Salim Ramji and Ronald O'Hanley, are considered to be among the biggest shadow powers.

This mega-corporation accumulates enormous power in the political arena with a very aggressive lobby that acts in the global economy and politics, creates relationships with government officials and provides services to government agencies.

From the shadows, interests are moved and money flows. Nothing new under the sun. Let us remember the actions of the United Fruit Company in Guatemala or the International Telephone & Telegraph in Chile. Perhaps we will soon find the answers.

Granma

No more dollars for the White Helmets

by Ekaterina Blinova

The Trump administration has halted the flow of millions of dollars to the White Helmets, a so-called Syrian "civil defence" group. But what did they do and who benefitted?

The group staged false flag chemical attacks to provoke the West's retaliation against the then Syrian government. At least 40 White Helmets members admitted to staging attacks in the country, according to Russia's Foundation for the Study of Democracy.

In 2016, the White

Helmets used Omran, a five-year-old boy, as a propaganda tool during the Syrian Army's siege of Aleppo. A viral photo of him covered in dust and blood aimed to smear Damascus and its Russian allies. In 2017, his father revealed it was staged.

The White Helmets filmed a false flag attack in rebel-controlled Douma in April 2018. Russian media verified testimony from multiple eyewitnesses saying the attack was staged. The Western coalition however, used it as a pretext for strikes on Syria.

Witness testimonies

claim White Helmet members were not humanitarian volunteers but armed militiamen who recruited others and threatened them with death if they disobeyed.

As the Syrian Army advanced in July 2018, around 429 White Helmets were hastily evacuated through Israel to Western countries, according to Syria's then-Permanent Representative to the UN Bashar al-Jaafari. So who founded the White Helmets and how was it linked to Al-Qaeda?

The White Helmets were founded in 2013 amid

the Syrian civil war. James Le Mesurier, a former British Army officer and intelligence operative with ties to terrorist organisations, established the group and funded it through Mayday Rescue.

Posing as a rescue organisation in jihadist-controlled areas, the White Helmets were soon exposed as a front for al-Qaeda by independent researchers Vanessa Beeley (a British citizen) and Eva Bartlett (a Canadian), as well as eyewitnesses and verified photo and video evidence.

Speaking to the Russian press in 2019, then-Pres-

ident Bashar al-Assad stressed there was enough evidence to identify former and current al-Qaeda members in the White Helmets ranks. How much funding did they receive and from whom?

In 2019 Le Mesurier died under suspicious circumstances in Istanbul after being exposed for fraud. By then, around \$129 million in taxpayer money from Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and other nations had been funnelled to the White Helmets via Mayday Rescue alone.

As of 2018, the USA had contributed about one-

third of the group's total funding, according to the Atlantic Council, providing around \$33 million between 2013 and 2018.

The UK reportedly funnelled \$50 million to the White Helmets during the same period and the Netherlands contributed \$13.4 million. Funding dropped to \$12 million in 2018 amid Mayday fraud allegations.

Despite this, CNN calls USAID the White Helmets' largest donor for nearly a decade. The Trump administration recently terminated a \$30 million USAID contract for the group.

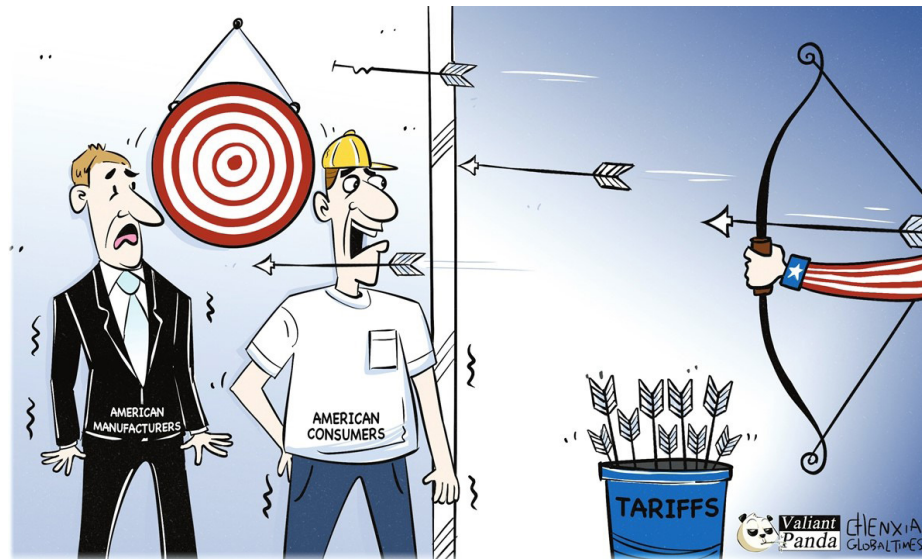
Sputnik

USA against the world

by Lyuba Lulko

Industry accounts for only 18 per cent of US GDP. Manufacturing moved overseas in search of lower costs – wages, labour protection, raw materials and taxes. For example, Apple relocated its factories to China and now iPhones return to the USA labelled “Made in China”. They’re cheaper than if they were made domestically, but this has created serious risks for the USA.

America’s chronic trade deficit has led to rising national debt, threatening the stability of the dollar and the US financial system. What if the much-discussed war with China actually happens? Apple’s assets could be



confiscated, and the USA would lack a domestic production base for manufacturing electronics needed for weapons. This is just one example – entire industries such as metallurgy, chemical production and shipbuilding have also

moved abroad.

Western analysts predict a sharp rise in inflation in the USA. But let’s look at Russia, where sanctions and the shift to parallel imports have caused Apple smartphones to become 20 per cent more expensive.

Russians did not stop buying them. Meanwhile, import substitution has gained momentum, employment has increased, and people’s financial situation has improved.

Alexander Dudchak, a Russian economist, believes

that imposing tariffs “on the entire world” is a brilliant move. The results of this reform however, will only become apparent in a few years time. “To bring industrial enterprises back, you need investment and skilled specialists. Where will all this come from? How long will it take? Are Americans willing to wait five years for promises of economic prosperity?” he says.

Dudchak doubts that rising prices will lead to mass protests in the USA, although “the Soros network is still active”. But the mid-term Congressional elections in November and the next presidential election in four years time will reveal how the public truly feels.

Dudchak says that Trump expects that “lobbyists will now flock to him, seeking special conditions to avoid being hit too hard”. This suggests that most inflation-sensitive tariffs, such as those on fuel, might be lifted or reduced.

Trump declared a state of emergency to justify the tariffs, claiming that the trade deficit posed a threat to national security. But unlike the USA, the global economy truly risks sliding into recession as it will lose privileged access to the massive and solvent American market. Meanwhile, businesses forced to shut down will lay off workers, leading to a decline in living standards and growing social unrest.

Pravda.ru

Reciprocal tariffs only lead to reciprocal losses

by Peng Yukai
and
Wu Chaolan

The world is approaching painful times as the US administration’s so-called “reciprocal tariffs” arrive. It is an undeniable reality that the USA is unabashedly wielding hegemony in an attempt to secure its interests, but these measures may well end up backfiring.

For its major trading partners, American enthusiasm for tariffs is nothing new. The Trump administration is imposing a 10 per cent “minimum baseline tariff” and even higher rates on certain trading

partners.

To some extent, Washington’s flagrant bullying practice indicates the US administration’s growing jitters and anxiety concerning the retention of its position of superiority in an increasingly globalised world. It’s ridiculous however, that the USA opts for protectionism instead of embracing the trend of the times. Playing the ‘tariff card’ is a lose-lose game that also hurts the USA itself.

If the Trump administration does follow through with its tariff plans, it would further elevate what are already the nation’s highest tariff levels over the past decades. Leading

American economists have warned of high implementation costs and collectively voiced concerns about grave consequences – such as higher consumer prices, increased inflation, a rise in unemployment and even an economic recession.

According to a Yale University study, reciprocal tariffs will incur the USA a price level rise of 2.1 per cent should other countries choose to retaliate. This is equivalent to a loss of 2,700 to 3,400 dollars per household on average. Meanwhile, overall US economic growth will drop by one percentage point in 2025.

Notably, classical Western economics underlines

the benefits of free trade and the division of labour. America should know it can never return to the primary ends of the global supply chain in all sectors. What the Trump administration is doing goes against basic economic laws.

It is not possible for the USA to deny that it has benefited a lot from free trade and a multilateral trading system. After all, this system substantially lowered living costs and raised living standards for people in the USA over the past decades.

Tariffs will cause damage across the board. Retaliation is almost certain and likely to be considerable. By announcing the so-called “reciprocal tariffs” scheme,

the Trump administration is dealing a heavy blow to the world trading system and the global economy at large.

For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in its latest Economic Outlook, forecast that global GDP growth is projected to moderate to 3.1 per cent in 2025 and 3.0 per cent in 2026. The OECD is also warning that higher and broader trade barriers will negatively impact growth around the world and add to inflation.

Any attempt to curb trade flows in the global village will backfire. Unchecked protectionism

has the very real potential to trigger trade wars, with catastrophic consequences for all parties concerned, while also destabilising the global economy. A stable and predictable trading environment should not be a luxury. It is a necessity for healthy global economic growth. Equal dialogue is the only viable approach to resolving trade disputes while bullying tariffs make things worse.

Building a better world requires shelving the obsession with tariffs and pursuing shared development based on openness and cooperation.

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