

Trump stumbles in trade war blues!

by New Worker
correspondent

Donald Trump's trade war is faltering following unease on Wall Street and the City of London that led to the massive fall in the bond markets, which forced the American president to "pause" his global tariff hikes last week for 90 days for all but China. Now Trump is turning the screws on his allies to join in the new crusade against People's China that faces an American tariff regime which, if not reversed, will choke off all American trade with the Asian giant. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the Trump administration is seeking trade pledges from its allies aimed at economically isolating China, in return for lower import levies. But in Britain and in the other chancelleries of Europe there is mounting opposition to Trump's attempt to force them to uselessly sacrifice their lucrative trade with China.

In London the Starmer government is digging in, telling the Americans that combining tariff talks with discussions about its relationship with Beijing is off the table. According to *The i Paper* the UK will not sever its economic relationship with China in order to improve trade



ties with the USA. The paper says a source within the British government told them that "it is unacceptable" to link tariff relief with co-operation on China, and that the UK intends to maintain a "pragmatic" approach to its dealings with Beijing. "Our position and approach [towards] China is clear," the source said.

Back in Beijing the people's government has made it equally clear that they will match every Trump measure with one of their own, recalling Mao Zedong's steadfastness back in the 1950s, and calling on the entire world to rally round and stand up to American bullying, extortion and blackmail.

The Trump team seeks to "Make America Great Again" largely at the expense of their allies to corner the global energy and minerals market through economic blackmail and military threats.

During the Cold War US

imperialism dealt with its allies from a position of strength. Whether dealing with allies in what it once called the "free world" or with those it now deems rivals, the Americans measured others by rules that they alone established, to cloak power in the guise of values, and to use sanctions as a cover for the absence of true equality in negotiations. Following the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Europe the Americans thought they could call all the shots. This was going to be the "American century" that would usher in a "new world order" and a new era of global peace under their control. But Russia, China and the Global South have helped build a multipolar world that has put an end to the American dream of world domination.

Last week a Chinese diplomat shared a video of Chairman Mao condemning the US imperialists during the Korean war and told

her compatriots not to back down to Trump. China doesn't want a trade war but it won't shy away from one, said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning. "We are Chinese. We are not afraid of provocations. We don't back down," she said on social media together with a clip of Chairman Mao's defiant war-time speech from 1953. Then the leader of the Chinese revolution said "as for how long the war should last, I think we are not the ones who can decide that. In the past, it was decided by Truman. In the future, it will be decided by Eisenhower – or whoever the president of the United States may be. It's up to them. They can fight for as long as they want – we will never yield. We will fight until complete victory!"

FUND

The fighting fund was boosted by a very generous contribution of £500 from an old comrade who now lives in eastern Europe and other donations that pushed the weekly total to £940. The April appeal now stands at £1,377 and we need £2,123 to hit our target for the month.

May Day will soon be upon us and comrades and friends in Britain will be joining the millions upon millions in this country across the globe celebrating International Workers Day. But demonstrating the solidarity of the international labour movement is not just for one day. It's part of the 24/7 struggle needed to end exploitation and oppression here and throughout the rest of the capitalist world.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Trump's 100 days

In America the symbolic significance of the first 100 days of a presidential term goes back to Franklin D Roosevelt's first term in office in 1933. In those early days Roosevelt pushed through the New Deal economic plan and a tranche of relief programmes to help farmers and ease unemployment in a USA that had been brought to its knees by the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Although America never fully recovered until the war boom of the Second World War, Roosevelt's reforms boosted the fortunes of his Democratic Party and ensured that he remained in the White House until his death in April 1945.

Trump's cronies like to put him in the same league as Roosevelt. Some of his inner circle even say The Donald is the greatest president the USA has ever seen. But that's as far as it goes. Trump's 100 days will end on 30th April. Like FDR's, he has certainly hit the headlines but not for the same reasons.

Roosevelt used Keynesian methods to create work. Trump's draconian cuts will only benefit his fellow billionaires. Trump likes to be surrounded by people like himself – people such as Elon Musk, who is said to be the richest man in the world. That's why Senator Bernie Sanders says "our government is now of, by and for the billionaires". The social-democratic Vermont senator, who supports the Democrats in Congress, compares the billionaire oligarchs to "heroin addicts" whose drug of choice is "greed". But hasn't that always been the case in the USA?

George Washington, the Founding Father and first president of the USA, was the richest man in the new republic with a fortune made from the slave trade. In the 19th Century the rapidly industrialising USA was dominated by oligarchs dubbed "robber barons" in the press, whose powers were barely limited by the Anti-Trust laws of 1890 and 1914 that were meant to curb price-fixing and monopoly power.

These are the people who have always dominated American politics. They did it then and they do it now. But these vested interests are divided and in the corridors of power in Washington a vicious struggle over the management of the capitalist economy continues unabated.

The 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.

Trump likes to pose as a "peace-maker". He covets the Nobel Peace Prize that his rival Barack Obama got in 2009. But he is hardly a second Gandhi, and his famed "deal-making" skills have not, so far, achieved anything on the diplomatic front. Although Trump has started talking to the Russians and he's even opened up a bridge to the Iranians, nothing concrete has been achieved, so far, to end the fighting in Ukraine or the Middle East.

Spurning the United Nations, some of the Trump team talk about a "new Yalta" that would redefine the world into spheres of influence while retaining the lion's share for US imperialism. At the same time, the Trump administration seeks to "Make America Great Again" and boost American manufacturing through tariffs and protectionism while using secret diplomacy and economic blackmail to achieve its goals. But the "America First" rhetoric is only a distraction. While workers are told to blame China or Mexico or Europe and that the answer is control of the Panama Canal and the annexation of Greenland and Canada, the real problem, as always, is big business and the capitalist system as a whole.

China urges caution over British Steel

by Yu Xi

The Starmer government should refrain from turning economic co-operation into a political issue was the message from the Chinese Foreign Ministry following emergency action to bail out the Chinese-owned British Steel corporation.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Monday that the Jingye Group is a private Chinese enterprise that has business co-operation with the UK side on the basis of market principles. As for the current difficulties arising in the operation of British Steel, the two sides should resolve them through consultations in the principle of mutual benefit, said Lin. "We hope that the British government will treat Chinese companies investing and operating in the UK in a fair and just manner, protect their legitimate rights and interests, and refrain from turning economic and trade co-operation into political and security issues lest it should undermine the confidence of Chinese companies in their normal investment and operation in the UK," he said.

Last weekend the British parliament passed an emergency law granting the government

sweeping powers to take control of British Steel, the last plant in Britain capable of producing steel from iron ore.

The Scunthorpe complex supplies the vast majority of the UK's rail tracks. The legislation was introduced in response to British Steel's plan to shut down its blast furnaces at Scunthorpe, citing unsustainable financial losses.

In an extraordinary Saturday sitting, the first in more than four decades, both Houses of Parliament returned from Easter recess to fast-track the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act, which received royal assent the same day.

Based in North China's Hebei Province, the Jingye Group has owned British Steel since 2020. Last month, the Jingye Group warned of losses of about £700,000 a day and said that the blast furnaces and steel-making operations were no longer financially sustainable due to highly challenging market conditions, the imposition of tariffs, and higher environmental costs relating to the production of high-carbon steel.

A spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the UK said on Sunday that "we have urged the British side to act in accordance with the principles of fairness,

impartiality and non-discrimination and to make sure the legitimate rights and interests of the Chinese company will be protected".

It is an objective fact that British steel companies have generally encountered difficulties in recent years, said the Chinese Embassy spokesperson. "It is hoped that the British government will actively seek negotiation with the relevant Chinese company to find a solution acceptable to all parties," he said.

Reuters reported earlier that "a transfer of ownership to the state remains on the table", citing Britain's business secretary Jonathan Reynolds.

It is essential for the UK to provide a reasonable explanation for such actions to avoid creating new complications in gradually improving China-UK relations, says Cui Hongjian, a professor at the Academy of Regional and Global Governance in Beijing Foreign Studies University. Any measures taken by the UK should be reasonable, compliant with regulations and avoid simplistic intervention, Cui noted, adding that if the goal is to address corporate losses then market-oriented approaches should be prioritised.

Global Times



Workers' Notes

Blood red for murder

by New Worker correspondent

Activists poured blood-red dye into the US Embassy moat in London last week to protest against arms sales to Israel. Greenpeace activists, disguised as delivery riders, tipped 300 litres of blood-red dye into the Embassy moat to highlight the death and devastation caused in Gaza as a direct result of America's continued sale of weapons, ammunition and military hardware to Israel.

Twelve activists tipped the non-toxic, biodegradable dye from containers emblazoned with the words "Stop Arming Israel" into the large ornamental moat located in front of the embassy building in south-west London.

Will McCallum, the Co-Executive Director of Greenpeace UK, was among six people arrested in connection with the protest. McCallum has been arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to cause criminal damage, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. Five other activists were also arrested near the embassy on suspicion of criminal damage and conspiracy to cause criminal damage.

Since taking office in January Donald Trump has continued his predecessor's policy of supplying weapons to Israel, approving nearly \$12 billion in military sales. This is despite widespread concerns over the indiscriminate killing of civilians and other war crimes committed by Israeli forces. Greenpeace UK is urging the British and US governments to announce a total arms embargo on Israel in order to stop the horrific unfolding genocide.

The protest comes as Israeli forces step up military activity in the Gaza Strip following the breakdown of the fragile ceasefire last month. The entry points into Gaza have also been closed by Israel since early March, blocking food, medicine and medical equipment at the border,



• © Greenpeace

and denying humanitarian access to people in need. It also comes after a string of recent comments from Trump that suggest a permanent displacement of Palestinian people from Gaza, that "the US will take over the Gaza strip", and that Gaza could be the "Riviera of the Middle East".

Israel's war effort is heavily dependent on arms shipments from the USA. America provides Israel with billions of dollars' worth of military aid every year and is the supplier of two-thirds of all of Israel's arms imports, including warplanes, armoured vehicles, missiles and ships. Additional military aid approved during the last two years includes \$20 billion last August, and \$8 billion this January, in the last weeks of the Biden administration. All currently active combat aircraft in the Israeli air force were supplied by the USA.

Areeba Hamid, co-executive director at Greenpeace UK, said: "We've turned the embassy pond blood-red because US weapons continue to fuel an indiscriminate war that's seen bombs dropped on schools and hospitals, entire neighbourhoods blasted to rubble, and tens of thousands of Palestinian lives obliterated.

"As the biggest supplier of weapons to the Israeli military, the US government bears a heavy responsibility for the horrors unfolding in Gaza. Despite widespread concerns over war crimes and even acts of genocide, both the Biden and Trump administra-

tions have continued to fund billions of dollars' worth of fighter jets, bombs and tanks, making the US complicit in the bloodshed.

"The ceasefire Trump claimed credit for has collapsed and full-scale war is back. If Trump has any real interest in stopping the war, he should listen to the majority of Americans and stop arming Israel now. And the UK government should do the same."

The UK is also an exporter of weapons to Israel, having sold the country almost £500 million worth of military hardware since 2015. The British government did suspend 30 of its 350 arms export licences to Israel in September last year. Crucial F-35 fighter jet parts were excluded from the suspension however, and the move was heavily criticised by campaigners.

Countries such as Spain, Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands have already banned arms sales to Israel since the start of the war in Gaza.

In addition to a global embargo on all arms sales to Israel, Greenpeace has been calling for both the Israeli government and Hamas to unequivocally agree to support and abide by the UN Security Council Ceasefire resolution in full. We call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages. We call for the Israeli Government to immediately end the blockades on the supply of food, water, medicine and fuel to the people of Gaza and release all illegally detained civilians.

Birmingham bin workers reject new offer

by New Worker correspondent

Striking Birmingham bin workers have rejected the council's "totally inadequate" offer.

Hundreds of workers voted overwhelmingly to reject the deal, which still included substantial pay cuts for workers. As bin bags and rubbish pile up on the streets, Birmingham City Council still refuses to respond realistically to union demands. Their offer did not protect workers from proposed reduced staffing levels and pay cuts.

Since the council effectively declared bankruptcy in September 2023, refuse workers have accepted cuts to their pay and terms and conditions and worked with management in good faith to ensure services continued.

The service is also facing greater pressures from ageing vehicles and the lack of staff with no new full-time hires. With an increasing reliance on agency staff, although many have worked for the refuse service for years, service pressures are increasing, recycling rates are below average, and public abuse and anger has been amplified.

The refuse collectors, all members of Unite, walked out

over a month ago after the Labour-run authority moved to abolish the safety critical Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) role – resulting in pay cuts of up £8,000 for 150 workers – as well as a catalogue of cuts across a service that is already on its knees. Unite national officer Onay Kasab said 97 per cent of those who voted rejected the council's deal, on a 60 per cent turnout. "They could see through what this so-called proposal meant, it simply failed to deal with all of the issues and it also nailed the lie," he said.

Birmingham MP Ayoub Khan, a member of Jeremy Corbyn's Independence Alliance in the House of Commons, slammed Sir Keir Starmer over Labour's "disgraceful" Birmingham bin strike failures. Khan said the rubbish piling up in England's second largest city joins a growing list of failures since Starmer entered Number 10. Birmingham was forced to declare a major incident on 31st March after 17,000 tonnes of waste was left on the streets.

The Birmingham Perry Barr MP told Starmer that: "This Labour Government has failed the British public at every turn. They have abandoned the WASPI women, leaving them without the compensation they deserve. They have turned their backs on pensioners by failing to support the winter fuel allowance. They have let down children by keeping the two-child benefit cap in place, and they will inflict further hardship on the most vulnerable by slashing five billion pounds from benefits.

"But perhaps the most immediate and visible failure, one that poses an immediate and direct health risk to the people of Birmingham, is the appalling financial mismanagement of the Labour-run Birmingham City Council.

"After more than a decade of Labour control, their incompetence has led to mountains of uncollected rubbish piling up on every street so far that it can be seen from satellites orbiting space.

"It is nothing short of a disgrace and a damning indictment of Labour's inability to govern. Will the Prime Minister take urgent action to protect the public health and the people of Bir-

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mingham?”

Starmer predictably avoided directly answering the question, saying: “I’ve said the situation in Birmingham Council is completely unacceptable but he might want to tell his constituents that we’ve delivered two million extra appointments for the NHS, so waiting lists are coming down for his constituents; we’ve delivered the national living wage, a £1,400 increase, including for his constituents; we’ve got record investment into this country, growing the economy, including for his constituents.”

Many believe that Starmer wants to break the strike. Police and security guards are stationed permanently on picket lines and Army specialists have been called in to help tackle the mounting piles of rubbish while neighbouring councils have been enlisted to provide additional waste clearance.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “For weeks, these workers have faced attacks from government and their employer pushing the lie that only a handful of workers are affected by the council’s plans to cut pay by up to £8,000.

“Instead of peddling untruths about these low paid workers and focusing on winning a media war, the government should have taken the time to check facts and used its office to bring the council to the table in a meaningful way.

“The rejection of the offer

is no surprise as these workers simply cannot afford to take pay cuts of this magnitude to pay the price for bad decision after bad decision.

“From the start, the council has constantly moved the goalposts for these workers, prolonging the strikes in the process. First it was equal pay, then it was about improving the waste service, then cost cutting. The list goes on.

“Unite has set out simple and reasonable steps to the council to resolve these issues. It is important to remember that this dispute is not about a pay rise it is about preventing serious pay cuts.

“The government must now call a meeting with the stakeholders to ensure these steps are taken to bring the strike to an end.

“The government must now also urgently consider Unite’s proposal for debt restructure at Birmingham City Council and other local authorities. Workers and communities cannot continue to pay the price.”

Co-op vote to boycott Israel

by New Worker
correspondent

The Co-op Annual General Meeting (AGM) is taking place in Manchester on Saturday, 17th May. One of the motions members can vote for is urging the Board to cease all trading

with Israel and remove all Israeli goods from the shelves. Although Motion 13 is flawed – it endorses the Co-op’s existing “ethical” boycott of Russian goods – it nevertheless does call on the Co-op Board to now “take all Israeli products off the shelves”.

To vote in the Co-op AGM and Elections, you need to be eligible. This means you need to be a member of the Co-op who has spent £100 or more in Co-op stores throughout 2024, or have policies or products with our Legal, Funeralcare or Insurance businesses.

If you are eligible you should have already received an email or letter from the Co-op inviting you to vote. You can check on your Co-op App ‘Discover’ tab for your invitation or check your eligibility by logging into the Co-op Membership website at membership.coop.co.uk. Voting opened on Monday and it continues until Monday 12th May.

Co-op members will have the chance to find out more about this year’s Council and Member motions at online motion events. These events will provide the chance to ask questions about this year’s motions and discuss them with other members.

Another diversion

by Ilya Tsukanov

Britain’s “foreign agent” scheme is distraction action to divert people’s attention from economic woes. The new scheme will serve to hinder the restoration of Russian–British relations if and when the time comes and is designed to distract ordinary Britons from “depressing” news, such as cuts to social benefits and rising electricity costs, the Russian Embassy in London said last week.

The Embassy called the scheme “another discriminatory barrier to the long-term restoration of Russian–British relations...erected out of thin air” and accused the Starmer government of squandering the chance to abandon “the Tories’ failed confrontational course” against Russia.

“The motives behind the decision taken by the UK authorities are clear to us. It is primarily due to the awareness of the approaching collapse of the ‘Ukrainian project’, to London’s obvious disappointment, as the desired coalition of European ‘volunteers’ fails to materialise to help it,” the Embassy added.

The UK announced a two-tier Foreign Influence Registration Scheme on 1st April requiring anyone alleged to be working with or for a foreign state to register, on penalty of up to five years in prison.

The scheme can target everything from “the transfer of funds from an individual abroad to an

individual in the UK or vice versa” to a social media post aimed at individuals in the UK, “even if it is posted by an individual overseas”.

Russia and Iran have been placed in the scheme’s “enhanced tier” of threats. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova asked whether the new law would require British vets who got medals from Russia for participation in the Second World War Arctic convoys to register and hand them in, and whether the UK’s National Space Centre would now be listed as a Russian Aerospace Forces base due to past Soviet–British co-operation in space.

She also wondered aloud whether the traditional Muscovy hat worn by the sword-bearer of the Lord Mayor of the City of London would result in them being labelled “agents of the Kremlin”.

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**20 years ago
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15th April 2005

IRAQI resistance forces have liberated al Qaim, a city in al Anbar province on the River Euphrates near the border with Syria. Partisans from other parts of the region are pouring into the city as four American columns advance and fierce fighting is continuing between partisans and American Marines on its outskirts.

The US high command has proclaimed martial law throughout al Anbar province, dividing it into six military zones.

The chief Muslim authority of al Anbar has issued a

general call to arms to able-bodied men and women to defend al Qaim, and a new Iraqi resistance movement drawn from the Sufi Muslim community has been established to fight the Americans.

The Marines and their puppet auxiliaries were driven out of al Qaim last week and the resistance has thrown back several American attempts to retake it, driving them out of positions the US troops had briefly retaken. Large quantities of drugs known locally as “Arteen” and “Makdoon” were found in the abandoned American trenches.

Al Qaim is now under American siege while US helicopter gunships and artillery target the drinking water storage tanks and food storage freezers. The electricity supply has been cut and no food is being allowed into the city.

In Baghdad the resistance is resuming the offensive after a lull to cover the massive anti-American street protests organised by supporters of maverick Shia cleric Muqtada al Sadr. Roadside bombs greeted the unannounced arrival of US defence secretary Donald

Rumsfeld in the Iraqi capital for one-day talks with the new puppet regime on Tuesday.

The mouthpieces of Anglo-American imperialism are claiming that the US-led occupation army has got the partisans on the run. But Bush’s “coalition of the willing” is crumbling by the day. This week Poland broke ranks, announcing that its 1,700-strong contingent will quit Iraq in the first weeks of 2006.

Although Tony Blair may hope that anti-war feeling will not fatally damage the Labour vote in next month’s general election, some of our troops are at least voting with their feet.

The number of deserters and those going absent without leave (AWOL) has more than doubled over the last year. According to the Ministry of Defence, 530 soldiers deserted in 2004 compared with 205 in 2003, 150 in 2002 and just 100 in 2001. Over 3,000 troops went AWOL last year, with only a third returning to base within 21 days.

21st Century Fascism: Reflections for Debate

by Weverton Brito

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

In Latin America, the ‘Big Lie’ technique, amplified by social media, has also caused great damage, and I would like to begin by commenting on some cases that occurred in Brazil.

During the 2010 presidential campaign, then-candidate Dilma Rousseff was targeted by an underground war on social media. At the time, WhatsApp had only arrived in the country a year earlier and had not yet reached the influence it would later achieve. Even so, Dilma’s candidacy was the target of an avalanche of fake news that concretely influenced a significant part of the population to either annul their vote or vote for José Serra, her main opponent, who represented the traditional right.

My former in-laws, a retired school janitor and a maintenance worker at the same Catholic school, had always voted for Lula since 1989. To my surprise, when I visited them after the first round of the 2010 election, both (devout Catholics) had annulled their votes because they were “informed” that Dilma would force churches to perform same-sex marriages. Other bizarre fabrications that gained traction included:

- Dilma had cancer, would die soon, and Michel Temer (her running mate) would take over. His son was supposedly a Satanist.
- Dilma had gonorrhoea.
- She had challenged Jesus Christ himself during a rally in the state of Minas Gerais.
- She would shut down churches and imprison

priests and pastors.

The mainstream media remained silent in the face of this abject underground smear campaign because the beneficiary was their preferred candidate who, despite all of this, was still defeated in the second round.

In 2011, a request was made to revoke the mandate of then-federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro after he made various racist and misogynistic statements against singer and TV host Preta Gil. The most influential political columnist for the major bourgeois newspaper *O Globo*, Ricardo Noblat, defended the fascist. Shamelessly, Noblat concealed the real accusations and claimed that Bolsonaro was at risk of losing his mandate merely for expressing controversial opinions, such as being “against racial quotas, the anti-homophobia bill, civil unions for homosexuals, and adoption by same sex couples”. Noblat accused those who denounced Bolsonaro of being “good fascists”.

On 12th February 2014 José Gullén Araque, a captain in the Venezuelan National Guard, gave President Nicolás Maduro a book on the rise of Nazism, declaring at the time that “fascism must be defeated before it is too late”. Just over a month later, Araque was assassinated with a shot to the head by Venezuelan fascist groups led by a well-known far-right extremist named Leopoldo López, whose actions resulted in the deaths of 43 people.

Aécio Neves (the traditional right-wing candidate against Dilma Rousseff in 2014) however, visited the criminal in prison. The corporate media, both in Venezuela and Brazil, referred to Leopoldo López as a “political prisoner”.

During the massive rallies calling for President Dilma’s “impeachment” heavily pro-

moted by the mainstream media in 2015 and 2016, far-right sound trucks were always present, advocating for a military coup and praising torture. Protesters wore T-shirts calling Dilma a “whore” and carried signs suggesting that she “go to Cuba to cure her cancer” among other vile insults. None of this seemed to bother the traditional right or the corporate media at the time, which instead praised the supposedly democratic and peaceful nature of the coup-supporting marches.

The traditional right and mainstream media’s tacit encouragement of the openly criminal methods used by their far-right allies had severe consequences. First, it normalised fascism, and by normalising it, it lent credibility to its discourse.

The fascist far-right became a relevant actor in Latin American political struggles, infiltrating the state’s police and judicial apparatus, promoting class hatred, defamation, sabotage, coups and coup attempts. It did not always lead these efforts, but it consistently gained visibility and accumulated political and ideological power.

In 2014 federal police officer Danilo Mascarenhas posted an image of a caricature of President Dilma riddled with bullets. He was “punished” with a four-day suspension.

Below is a small and incomplete list of coups and coup attempts in Latin America where fascist elements played a prominent role:

- 2002 in Venezuela – Chávez was kidnapped and a coup government was briefly installed. The masses mobilised, and the coup was defeated.
- 2008 in Bolivia – Opposition groups, led by regional governors in the Media Luna region, blocked roads, occupied state buildings, sabotaged a major

gas pipeline, and organised referendums to declare regional independence. Peasants were murdered.

- 2009 in Honduras – Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, who had joined the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) the previous year, had the presidential palace invaded by the military. Zelaya was kidnapped and flown to Costa Rica.

- 2010 in Ecuador – President Rafael Correa went to a police barracks to negotiate with striking officers. The police attacked his entourage, and Correa, injured, was taken to the Military Hospital, which was then surrounded by officers who even opened fire. The confrontation left two presidential guards, two striking police officers, and a pro-government student dead.

- 2012 in Paraguay – Following ‘spontaneous’ protest demonstrations, the Senate removed elected President Fernando Lugo in a process that lasted only 24 hours.

- 2013/2014 in Venezuela – ‘Guarimbas’ (armed gangs funded and organised by the far right) carried out attacks on public buildings, leftist parties and police forces, causing dozens of deaths.

- 2016 in Brazil – A coup d’état involving the hegemonic media, sectors of the judiciary and parliament removed President Dilma Rousseff through a fraudulent impeachment process.

- 2017 in Ecuador – Rafael Correa was forced to flee the country to escape lawfare. His vice president, Jorge Glas, remains imprisoned at the time this article is written. While in prison, Glas attempted suicide. Correa remains in exile.

- 2018 in Brazil – Lula, a victim of absurd judicial arbitrariness, was unjustly imprisoned and, during that year’s presidential campaign, was even prevented by the courts from speaking about the elections, paving the way for the election of the fascist Jair Bolsonaro.

- 2019 in Venezuela – The far-right coup plotter Juan Guaidó proclaimed himself the Venezuelan president. The USA and the EU recognised him as such. Billions of dollars, gold and state-owned Venezuelan companies were expropriated by imperialist or imperialism-subservient governments.

- 2019 in Venezuela – Under the pretext of “humanitarian aid” a new coup attempt in Venezuela was orchestrated, driven by the USA and countries from the now-defunct ‘Lima Group’. Once again, the coup was defeated.

- 2019 in Bolivia – A coup in Bolivia forced the newly re-elected President Evo Morales to flee the country. Far-right gangs carried out assassinations and beatings.

Since our topic is 21st Century fascism, we cannot fail to mention the coup in Ukraine in 2014, which, with the support of the USA and the EU, brought to power a coalition of openly fascist and neo-Nazi groups.

The new Ukrainian state power granted the title of national hero to Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera who, during the German occupation of Ukraine in the Second World War, served in Hitler’s ranks, sending communist, Jewish and anti-fascist resistance compatriots to concentration camps.

The alliance between most of the centre, traditional right-

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wing and commercial media with the far-right occurs in different ways. In some cases (such as Ukraine, Venezuela and Bolivia), the far-right explicitly takes the lead in actions. In others, such as Brazil until 2018, the centre and the traditional right remain in command but instrumentalise the far-right for all kinds of dirty work. When this happens, the traditional right, while publicly trying to distance itself from the most revealing fascist actions, in practice shields and supports its allies, hoping that, in the end, they will isolate the most dangerous elements and maintain hegemony.

It is necessary to open a parenthesis here to emphasise that mistakes and shortcomings of the progressive camp facilitated the rise of the conservative and far-right wave. Regarding Latin America's progressive experiences, there is already a vast accumulation of discussion on this, but addressing this subject could divert focus from the main theme of this article. Therefore, I will only mention two aspects among many:

- The illusion regarding the class nature of bourgeois society led to the belief that top-down arrangements could mitigate contradictions and conflicts, resulting in the secondary importance or even abandonment of grassroots work.
- We live in an



• International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity picket in Whitehall.

historical era where the failure of collective transformation projects is propagated. Even within the left, space has been opened to weaken this notion, with individual projects often prevailing over collective ones. When this happens, it is no longer about the struggle for transformation but simply the defence of parliamentary careers or positions within the state apparatus. This mis-educates the population about the difference between leftist and rightist practices, contributing to disenchantment, de-politicisation, and the de-mobilisation of activists who wish to dream again of a “dream dreamed together” as Yoko Ono and Brazilian singer Raul Seixas once put it.

The Rise of Fascism

It was, indeed, a long gestation. The use of fascist ideas and practices as a political weapon by the bourgeoisie for over seven decades; the

lack of viable political perspectives that offered profound solutions as an alternative to a politically and economically bankrupt system; the naturalisation and legitimisation of fascist discourse by the bourgeoisie; the worsening of capitalism's economic crisis since 2008; and the increasing aggressiveness of imperialism in response to the emergence of a multipolar world – all these factors created the perfect environment for Brecht's “pregnant bitch”, that I referred in the first part of this series, to finally give birth.

In the USA, the leading imperialist power, speeches filled with the most primitive anti-communism, rooted in chauvinism, religious fundamentalism and science denial, have been growing alongside the political discrediting of the American plutocracy and the rapid deterioration of the living conditions of large masses of US workers, who are similarly disillusioned and without advanced prospects. The inauguration of Donald Trump for his second term marks a high point in the rise of the global far-right.

Here, calling Trump crazy or a buffoon does not help at all. The same was said about Hitler and Mussolini. He must be taken seriously. Trump is advancing decisively and rapidly in destroying what little remains of democracy in the American plutocracy, moving

toward a de facto dictatorship, which, if successful, will be followed by a radicalisation of his counterparts worldwide.

Trump's lebensraum manifests itself with immense brazenness. On what legal basis, under international or humanitarian law, does Trump propose to simply expel the Palestinians and turn Gaza into a macabre American real estate venture built over the corpses of thousands of men, women and children? None. He doesn't even care.

Just as Italian and German fascism discredited the League of Nations – which was dissolved in 1946 because it was ineffective in taking any action against Mussolini and Hitler's invasions – Trump openly scorns the UN, abandons important multilateral organisations that the USA helped to create, breaks consensual agreements and alliances, and treats the UN Charter as a dead letter. The message is clear, the danger is real, and we must confront it without hesitation.

Calling Things by Their Name

Even though some of Trump's most zealous supporters, such as Elon Musk, make the Nazi salute, Trump will not appear with a small moustache and a swastika on his arm. If someone is waiting for this to happen in order to be convinced of what we are facing, they will continue tilting at windmills. One common feature in most 21st Century fascist movements is precisely their denial of being fascists. Milei calls himself a “libertarian”, and in a 2022 interview with *Veja* magazine, Bolsonaro

assured us that he is a “liberal”.

Any reader however, who has patiently followed this series and compared the fundamental characteristics of fascism in the past century with what we experience today has surely drawn their own conclusions. All the essential traits of fascism, according to various authors, are present in the most relevant elements of today's far-right. To recall:

- The contemporary far-right operates in a world where socialist China threatens the hegemony of the leading capitalist country (the Soviet threat has been replaced by the Chinese threat); where parasitic financial capital dominates the economic and political landscape of capitalist nations.
 - Its mobilising myths revolve around “fighting the corrupt system” and “restoring the nation's greatness”.
 - It has a socially mobilised and politically organised base; where it has the strength to do so, it is aggressively imperialist.
 - It is fiercely anti-communist.
 - It depends on charismatic leadership.
 - It is chauvinistic; it is irrationalist.
- ...It is fascism.

21st Century Fascism

A fascism shaped by globalisation, the scientific-technological revolution, and social media, which manifests one of the defining characteristics of the fascist movement: massive propaganda. In other words, it is a fascism that has been influenced by and has absorbed the marks of its time. One of the fundamental tasks of

anti-fascists is to unmask, with even greater emphasis, in front of the masses, the true nature of the phenomenon unfolding.

Like its 20th Century predecessor, 21st Century fascism is not uniform. It retains regional and cultural peculiarities, among others. As I have pointed out, there are differences in emphasis and even characteristics that are absent in some variants and present in others. For instance, the mobilising myth of “restoring the nation's greatness” in the USA and Europe is closely linked to “defending the purity” of the nation and, therefore, to fighting against immigrants. The fight against immigrants is a largely absent element in Latin American fascism, though the racist undertones inherent in the hatred toward immigrants are a common feature of all fascisms, including Brazilian, Argentine, Chilean and Uruguayan fascism, among others.

The epicentre of 21st Century fascism is US imperialism, which is becoming increasingly violent and corrupt. As we have seen, it was imperialism that carefully nurtured the current monster and will never cease to rely on fascists to sustain its global domination project.

Imperialism and imperialists of all shades fully understand that, in the current stage of capitalism, the total defeat of fascism would also mean the defeat of imperialism, and the downfall of imperialism would inevitably trigger a new wave of anti-capitalist demands.

Thus, it will be impossible to wage an effective battle against 21st Century fascism without a broad, united struggle guided by a clear anti-imperialist vision.

While it is necessary



• International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity picket in London.



• Anti-fascist protest in Washington.

to take advantage of rifts within imperialist countries and among imperialist factions to weaken them, any idea of an alliance with 'moderate' sectors of the imperialist centre is a mistake that will only create vulnerabilities for future attacks.

The primary struggle will be against the imperialist policies emanating from the USA – a country governed by 21st Century fascism and still the most powerful in the world, holding hegemony in economic, cultural, diplomatic and military spheres.

On the international scene, the Trump administration follows an inverted version of Nixon and Kissinger's logic. While in the 1970s Nixon and Kissinger sought to separate China from Russia (the USSR) to focus on attacking the USSR, Trump intends to weaken or undermine the strategic alliance between China and Russia in order to concentrate fire on China.

It is important however, to highlight that much of Trump's programme is directly tied to the evident decline of

the USA. The desperate attempt to find ways to "restore lost greatness" may, on the other hand, further accelerate this decline by intensifying:

- Internal contradictions – Even within the USA, Trump will face strong resistance. This resistance may take shape because the American bourgeoisie itself is divided on how to confront its decline. Added to this division among the ruling class is the almost inevitable sense of disillusionment that will spread among workers who

placed their hopes in Trump's promises. The US proletariat is equally distrustful of the Democratic Party, however, and all indications suggest that this distrust runs deep. This could present an opportunity for left wing and revolutionary alternatives to gain political relevance in the USA and challenge American plutocracy from within.

- External contradictions – External contradictions may intensify conflicts between the imperialist

centre and its European partners, as well as with the peoples fighting for sovereignty and development. The ongoing clash with China stands out, given that China wields significant political influence and strong global representation.

A Necessary Struggle

There will be no effective fight against fascism without popular mobilisation and without the active participation of workers and the progressive camp. This however, will not happen automatically or inevitably. It requires

courage and clarity.

And it is precisely this turbulent and uncertain global scenario, marked by crises on multiple fronts, that has the potential to spark large-scale mobilisations that once again bring to the forefront the very ideals that 21st Century fascism most denies and attacks: national sovereignty, equal rights for all human beings, environmental protection, socialism and world peace, with solidarity and fraternity among peoples.

These ideals are like sunlight to the fascist vampire. And with unity, we must work to ensure that, better late than never, we witness the break of dawn.

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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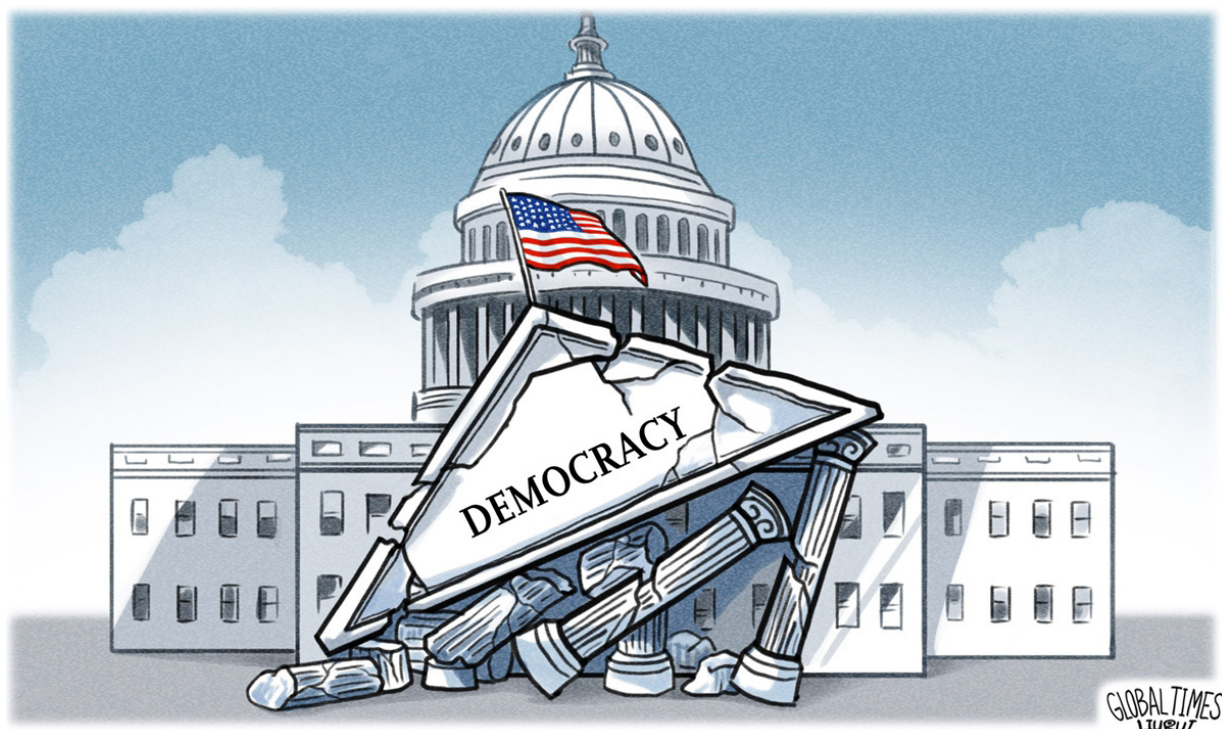
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LETTERS

Dear Comrades

Regarding the imposition of widespread tariffs by the Trump administration, as detailed in the article *Liberation Day? Workers pay the price* [NW:2296, 4 April 2025] tariffs are undoubtedly a clumsy weapon to safeguard industries from foreign competition. It is probable that all Trump will succeed in doing is to push up prices in the USA and stoke up inflation. Apart from risking retaliatory tariffs by other countries, there is no guarantee that the tariffs will achieve their aim, namely to protect domestic industries and rebuild them.

In fact, actually imposing import quotas would be a far better way of protecting industries but this would go against the free market mantra of Trump and the Right. Indeed, imports and exports can only be controlled as part of a socialist planned economy.

Whilst there are very negative implications of Trump's tariff policy it does raise the issue of self-sufficiency versus globalisation. It is lunacy to import things that can easily be produced at home but countries such as the UK and the USA have been doing just that. In the UK we have seen over the last 40 to 50 years the coal and steel industries decimated. In fact more than decimated whilst imports of these products have soared. Much of what is left of the British steel industry is owned by foreign companies.

Globalisation has been

a disaster. It is time to abandon it and enter a new era of self-sufficiency. In today's world People's Korea stands out as an example of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. In fact Trump did not impose tariffs on the DPRK because it is self-reliant.

**Dermot Hudson
London**

Dear Comrades

A personal vendetta can be the only explanation for the *Morning Star* running with the pack of mad dogs when it comes to Russia. I quote: "With the war now in its fourth year, Russian forces hold the advantage. Kiev has endorsed a US ceasefire proposal, but Russia has effectively blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions. The Russian delay has fuelled doubts whether Mr Putin really wants to stop the fighting while his bigger army has momentum on the battlefield." Given that Britain in a joint effort with Norway will be spending £442 million to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, and in a wider deal with other Western thieftoms has pledged a colossal £18.2 billion that will see a surge in front-line fighting against Russian troops and civilians, is there any reason except in the heads of idiots to expect that Russia would accept a peace deal that is non-existent in practical terms and is in fact nothing more than a Western media fairytale.

Russia wants peace but Britain, France, Germany and the USA and other Western gangs want a war that is hidden from public view at this stage, which is a full-scale invasion of Russia. The incredible amounts of money that have been spent and the incredible sums that the EU, USA and UK are shouting out loud that they intend to spend in the future cannot

be accounted for by this conflict alone that began in 2014 with the Western overthrow of the elected government of Ukraine. Ukraine is just a subterfuge to cover up a long wished for, all out Western war against Russia with China very much in the same firing line.

The editor of the *Morning Star* is responsible for the hate-filled lies that fill its foreign pages six days a week. Its coverage of foreign affairs is generally fair, which makes its coverage of NATO's war against Russia difficult to understand. The international editor of the paper is far too busy with an internalised colour war to offer much resistance to the crap being churned out under his watch. It was a strange appointment from the beginning as he had no foreign affairs experience. He's a trade union man and any interest he has in foreign affairs is to do with the anti-racist struggle in the Caribbean and USA. Ben Chacko certainly didn't want another Steve Sweeney in post.

Ben Chacko, unlike any other editor of the *Morning Star*, has taken full control of the foreign pages and Roger McKenzie, with little real interest in foreign affairs, is perfect for the role given to him. We now come to the question of the CPB EC because Chacko could not use the *Morning Star* to smear Russia and give constant space to comments by the Ukrainian authorities without its approval. Something nasty in the CPB woodshed I presume. With its faded general secretary Robert Griffiths looking at retirement, the party could well do with a profound change and elect a leader who can inspire the ranks – not send them into a coma, someone especially in tune with the party youth.

Ben Chacko is responsible with other British

newspaper editors for a mood music that is leading or lulling our country and beyond into a third world war. It's time to speak out, break the circle of fear. To war we will not go. Those who are banging the drums of war can come in red shirts – they are the worst of all. We must expose them mercilessly. The *Morning Star* needs to learn from the pages of the weekly *New Worker* how to conduct itself in foreign affairs. It certainly must stop parroting the lies of the official British media. It is shaming the paper and the truly good rank-and-file party membership.

**Elijah Traven
Hull**

Dear Comrades

Monopoly capitalism has contradictions that inevitably lead to chaos, crisis and disorder. With the risk of total economic collapse just around the corner we all know that it is the ordinary people who will be made to carry the burden. Imperialist rivalry takes place at the same time as the capitalist powers wage a geopolitical struggle against the socialist countries and the developing world. And the actions of warmongers, especially in Britain, makes the risk of World War Three all too real.

When the imperialist powers were more dominant and technically superior, the USA pursued a policy of globalisation. In practice, it gave maximum freedom for monopoly capitalists to exploit the world. Times have now changed as the imperialist states, especially the USA, face major challenges through increased competition and resistance to diktat and exploitation. The USA has an increasing debt burden that it will never be able to repay. The privileged position of the dollar as the world's reserve currency

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.

THUR 24 APRIL

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Analysing and Resisting US Nuclear Expansion Conference. 09:30-17:30. West Row Village Hall, Chapel Road West Row IP28 8NY Register on CND website.

THUR 24 APRIL

Scottish CND: Nuclear Power: facts and fallacies. 19:30-20:00. Webinar. 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 APRIL

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Boycott Barclays Bank. National Day of Action. Details on PSC 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.

THUR 29 APRIL

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: A nuclear weapons-free Middle East: how do we get there? Webinar. 14:00-15:00. Book on CND website.

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 Steet, Oldbury, B69 3DE.

SAT 3 MAY

International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity: Justice for the Families of the May 2014 Odesa Massacre. Protest 14:00. Ukrainian Embassy, 60 Holland Park, London W11 3SJ (behind Holland Park Avenue).

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.

WED 7 MAY

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Trade Unionists against the ongoing Nakba. Webinar. 18:00-19:00. Register on PSC website.

SAT 10 MAY

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

WED 14 MAY

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Parliament Lobby Day. London SW1. Briefing pack from PSC website.

SAT 17 MAY

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Nakba 77 National demonstration for Palestine. 13:00-16:00, central London. Location TBC.

MON 19 MAY

Socialist History Society: Kevin Morgan on Aimé Césaire and Martinique. Online public meeting. 19:00. Register on SHS website.

WED 21 MAY

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Cuba Viva Fundraiser. Tickets £5.00. 19:00, The Casa, 29 Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BP.

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.

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

...continued from page 8

is being challenged and the petrodollar may soon become a thing of the past as countries prefer the freedom to trade in whatever currency they may choose.

American industry has become uncompetitive and can no longer compete on a level playing field with more technically advanced states. Donald Trump's response has been to launch an international trade war, with China being its chief target. US protectionism has created a lose-lose situation in which companies could go bankrupt, workers lose their jobs, shops close, taxes rise and social services are cut. Readers of the *New Worker* will recognise the symptoms of capitalism's decline.

In Britain the Labour Party, led by an apparent warmonger and vacuous devotee of capitalism, has no answers and is totally unfit to play its historic role of defending the working class. The New Communist Party, along with a number of other small progressive organisations, calls for radical changes to put socialism back on to the agenda. In the modern world social democracy is irrelevant with nothing to offer but more of the same, tinkering with a wreck that is sinking fast.

The New Communist Party of Britain struggles for true socialism as the only sure safeguard to Peace and Prosperity. We fully support those few socialists still within the Labour Party, and also those who continue to be expelled. And we seek to work with other political allies with similar views to our own. Ways must be found to unite the working class, while opposing the fake left at the *Morning Star* who sow such confusion by their biased coverage of events in Ukraine. This has led to a meek acceptance by many on the left of savage welfare cuts in order to support NATU aggression in Ukraine.

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**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

Quotation from a *Letter of a Quaker*, William Jenkin (1795): "I fear some of these great folks look more to their salaries, pensions and sinecures than to the real good of the state. If they wish to convince the public that the latter is their chief concern, let them in these perilous times make a voluntary sacrifice of a part of their enormous income to the public good; or at least by acts of benevolence lighten the burden of the lower orders of the people, many of whom now groan under the high price of the necessities of life."

Evidently things have not improved since then, at any rate, I cannot improve or make it clearer than Quaker Jenkin did all those years ago.

**Robert J Smith
Sutton-in-Ashfield**

**Scottish
Political
News**

**by our Scottish political
affairs correspondent**

Although the old refrain that Scotland leads the way for creativity in music, television, fashion, movies, theatre and the arts is best taken with a pinch of salt, it's certainly true as far as the unions are concerned.

The First Minister of Scotland wisely doesn't ignore the labour movement and only last week John Swinney met trade union leaders to discuss Donald Trump's tariffs.

Swinney met business chiefs and the leaders of the Scottish TUC at Bute House to discuss how to deal with the damage the Trump administration is causing to the global economy.

Swinney said: "This is a time of real uncertainty for industry and workers, as we face potentially damaging economic headwinds from the US Government's implementation of tariffs.

"I am determined that we have a co-ordinated response with business and trade unions and that we work together to map out the actions that need to be taken in response, both here in Scotland and across the UK.

"I have been clear today that the Programme for Government I will publish on 6th May will include measures to ensure we drive economic growth, draw in new investment and create rewarding, well-paid jobs in Scotland.

"But I have also been clear that we need to see bold and decisive action from the UK Government that reflects the uncertainty being felt by business and families.

"I have heard directly from Scottish industry and workers representatives today – and I will now ensure the UK Government understands Scotland's distinctive challenges and opportunities as I seek formal intergovernmental discussions on the UK's economic response.

"The UK Government's response must include closer alignment with the EU, removing the self-imposed strait-jacket of the Chancellor's fiscal rules and reversing the tax on jobs through the national insurance hike.

"And it must include serious investment in Scotland's green economic future – treating our industry on a par with sites elsewhere in the UK.

"The breadth of industry represented during our discussions today shows the fundamental strength of Scotland's economy – but the UK Government needs to act and not treat Scotland like an afterthought."

Meanwhile Unite, one of the major health sector unions, is calling on the government in Westminster to match the pay offer received by health workers in Scotland.

Unite's Scottish members are now being balloted over their latest pay offer – 4.25 per cent for 2025/26 and 3.75 per cent for 2026/27 with a guarantee that the increase will be at least one per cent above the consumer price index – and Unite is recommending acceptance.

Unite national officer for health Richard Munn said: "The initial feedback from Unite members across Scotland is positive in respect of the offer but there is also a lack of trust in the Scottish Government following the recent renegeing on the reduction

in the working week agreement. Unite reps are clear – the Scottish Government need to honour the offer if it is agreed or we will move straight to an industrial action ballot."

Unite is advising the UK, Welsh and Northern Irish governments to pay close attention to the recent Scottish developments on pay. As a starting point, Scottish NHS pay is higher than the rest of the UK and the pay offer is far greater than the 2.8 per cent that the UK government is stating is affordable.

Munn said: "Unite members across the UK will expect that the example set by the Scottish Government is at the very least matched. They will also want to see real progress in respect of closing the pay

gap with Scotland and restoring NHS pay to the real terms value as seen in 2010. It also demonstrates why our members have lost all faith in the PRB [pay review body] process. The timing of the pay increase in Scotland is ahead of the rest of the UK by at least a couple of months and because the unions have been involved in the discussions, we are in a position to ballot with recommendations. Unless the UK, Welsh and Northern Irish governments change their approach then we are seriously concerned that while Scottish members get on with their vital work, union members in other nations will end up in a dispute which the governments can easily avoid by ditching the PRB."

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Chelsea deal with Vietnamese company

Chelsea, one of the Premier League's top clubs, has announced a partnership deal with FPT Corporation, one of Vietnam's leading technology solutions providers.

FPT will bring its future-ready technology and industry-leading workforce to advance Chelsea's digital capabilities with aligned values of teamwork, ambition and hard work, enabling the club to transform and accelerate performance and deliver richer experiences for the club's fans at home and abroad.

Phạm Minh Tuấn, the Executive Vice President of FPT Corporation, said: "Becoming an Official Partner of Chelsea FC marks an exciting chapter in FPT's global expansion. This partnership not only reflects our shared commitment to excellence but also showcases the transforma-



• Chelsea and FPT executives celebrate at Stamford Bridge.

tive power of technology in enhancing performance and creating unforgettable

experiences."

Todd Kline, Chelsea's chief commercial officer,

says: "Vietnam has experienced significant growth in recent years and emerged

as a global digital hub, thanks to the energy and spirit of its people. FPT's

expertise in core business systems, data intelligence and AI makes them the perfect partner to propel Chelsea FC into this new era."

Founded in 1988, FPT has driven Vietnam's technology surge over the last three decades.

The FPT Software United Kingdom CEO, Mark Scrivens, said: "Our unwavering commitment to the UK market drives us to implement cutting-edge innovations, including data analytics and artificial intelligence, that will benefit Chelsea FC, its fans, and the broader community.

"By leveraging these technologies, we aim to enhance on-field performance, deliver a personalised and immersive Chelsea FC experience and foster a stronger, more connected community off the pitch."

VNS

From Wales to fame

by Ben Soton

Many remember Richard Burton as Alexander in his epic portrayal of the Macedonian conqueror in *Alexander the Great*. Others recall Burton as Mark Anthony in *Cleopatra*, which was the catalyst for his tumultuous marriage to Elizabeth Taylor. His later roles as Victor Deakin in *Villain*, Henry VIII in *Anne of a Thousand Days* and as the psychopath reeking destruction from an intensive care ward in *The Medusa Touch* were critically acclaimed. He even played Josip Broz Tito in a partisan war film called *The Fifth Offensive* that

was much admired by the Yugoslav communist leader.

His origins were much more humble however. He was born and grew up in the Welsh industrial town of Port Talbot. Effectively brought up by his sister, his father was a drunkard. Born Richard Jenkins, the surname Burton was that of his adoptive guardian, mentor and English teacher, Philip Henry Burton.

Out now *Mr. Burton* is a coming-of-age biopic centred around the relationship between the young Richard, played by Harry Lawtey, and his mentor, played by Toby Jones. The story could be referred to as 'How Richard Burton lost his Welsh accent'. It is



however, much more than that; the young Burton struggles with the loss of his working-class identity and how he has to transform himself. In one scene his teacher, with the help of his landlady (played by Lesley Manville), shows the young Richard how to eat.

The transformation is mirrored through the younger Burton's portrayal of Henry V. In the Shakespearean play the young monarch casts aside youthful and frivolous ways as he takes up the throne after the death of his father. We see the younger Burton transformed from a humble Welsh teenager into a major star of stage and screen, and this is

reflected in the closing scene. Henry abandons his frivolous and older drinking companion, Falstaff, who is seen as holding him back. But young Burton's older companion actually welcomes and encourages his transformation.

The truth about Richard Burton is much more complicated. He never abandoned his working-class origins and his politics were very much of the left. In an interview he publicly stated that he was a communist and when asked if there was a contradiction between earning huge amounts of money as a Hollywood star and holding left-wing views, he stated that unlike capitalists he did not exploit people.

Israel's war on Gaza's hospitals

by Ghada Abu Muai-
leq

The fragile Gaza ceasefire, which served as a lifeline for Gaza's health care sector, lasted less than two months before it collapsed under a barrage of Israeli airstrikes. In March, Israel resumed its war on hospitals, with its first strikes targeting the intensive care unit (ICU) at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, followed by the bombing of the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital, the only facility in Gaza dedicated to treating cancer patients.

Soon after, following Israeli "evacuation" orders, Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, was once again turned into a shelter for displaced Palestinians. Doctors returned to an even harsher reality: hospitals without resources and patients without treatment.

My father, a paediatrician working at Al-Aqsa Hospital, tells us how the situation worsened after the ceasefire collapsed. The hospital, which had barely recovered from a horrific Israeli bombing in October, is now in its worst condition yet. The paediatric department now lacks the necessary intensive care units to



• Ghada Eyad's father at work at Al-Aqsa Hospital in Gaza.

treat critically ill children and is in urgent need of essential medical equipment, including incubators for premature babies, oxygen stations and CT scanners. Under the ceasefire agreement, Israel was supposed to allow these supplies to enter, yet it failed to comply – only a limited quantity of basic medications was permitted through. Due to these severe shortages, doctors are left with no choice but to issue medical referrals, hoping that critically ill children can travel abroad in time to receive the life-saving treatment they desperately need.

One of the most heartbreaking cases my father told me about was that of two-year-old Lana, her parents' only

child. Lana's suffering began months ago when she started experiencing frequent seizures. My father and the paediatric medical team tried treating her with the available anticonvulsant medications, but she did not respond. He conducted numerous tests, yet the results showed no clear diagnosis. This led him to suspect an underlying condition and inform the medical team that she urgently needed advanced genetic MRI scans for an accurate diagnosis. However, this type of MRI technology is unavailable in Gaza due to Israel's blockade, which has restricted medical equipment even before the war.

Given Lana's worsening condition, my father issued a medical

referral for her to travel abroad for treatment. However, due to Israel's delays in patient travel approvals and its strict limitations on medical evacuations, Lana endured an additional two months of suffering before finally being granted permission to travel to Egypt – on the condition that only one guardian could accompany her. Her mother travelled with her. Tragically, due to the prolonged delays and deliberate obstruction, Lana's fragile heart could not endure any longer. She passed away just one day after arriving in Egypt. She could have been saved if she had been allowed to travel earlier.

Now, with the ceasefire broken, the border crossing has been

completely shut down, preventing all medical evacuations. Thousands of children suffering from heart disease, kidney failure and cancer are in urgent need of life-saving treatment abroad. But they cannot receive it because of their "crime" of being born into a city under siege.

These scenes are not new; they are a repetition of 18 months of genocide. Doctors have found themselves in the most difficult situations, testing their mental endurance and human compassion.

My father feels the pain of the children, hears their cries and sees them clinging to his white coat, hoping he can relieve their suffering. However, doctors are placed in an agonising position. My father says "we have hundreds of injured children, but we only have a few antibiotics and painkillers, and they are not enough to save everyone". As a result, many critical cases are condemned to slow death.

On 26th August the Israeli military issued orders to "evacuate" the residential area where Al-Aqsa Hospital is located, following a series of Israeli attacks on tents housing displaced persons in the hospital's yard. The military continued to threaten the hospital with closure, and the tension gripped everyone present. My father and the medical staff worked to calm the patients and the displaced people after the chaos that had spread through the hospital. They struggled to evacuate patients under extreme difficulty, with some being taken out of ICUs and emergency rooms. The

electricity was cut off, leading to the death of several premature newborns who were relying on ventilators. It was a harrowing day for all of us, especially as a family, because my father was at the hospital for long hours due to the heavy workload on doctors during the war. The wartime collapse of communication networks made it impossible to reach him or know if he was safe.

My father says "we have hundreds of injured children, but we have only a few antibiotics and painkillers, and they are not enough to save everyone".

The Israeli military did not stop at what it had already done to Gaza's hospitals – destroying, raiding and brutalising medical staff at al-Ahli Arab Hospital, al-Shifa Hospital, and 23 other medical centres. Now, the Israeli military is intent on repeating its crimes against Al-Aqsa Hospital – the last remaining functional hospital in central Gaza Strip, which provides vital health care to nearly a million Palestinians.

Although targeting hospitals is an unequivocal war crime, the international community complicity looks away as Israel systematically destroys them. The question remains: How long will patients and doctors remain targets for Israel's war machine?

Truthout

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Fair trade farce: How ‘reciprocity’ became a global joke

by Xin Ping

In a convenience store in New York, a bottle of San Pellegrino mineral water from Italy, originally priced at five dollars, saw its price jump to six overnight due to the 20 per cent “reciprocal tariff” imposed by the USA on the EU.

This epitomises the fallout of America’s so-called “fair trade” policy: a mathematical game played by Washington, with consumers footing the bill, and an economic shake-down disguised as equity, dragging the global trading system into chaos.

The White House’s so-called “reciprocal tariffs” are, at their core, a maths trick even school kids could debunk: take the trade deficit, divide it by import value, then halve the result to set the tariff rate.

For example, with a \$17.9 billion deficit against Indonesia and \$28 billion in imports, the USA cooks up a 64 per cent “rate” out of thin air – then slaps on a 32 per cent tariff. “This formula isn’t just flawed, it’s pure fiction” scoffs a researcher from an American think-tank, the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

The policy also spits on basic economics. Comparative advantage – the idea that nations prosper by specialising in what they do best and trading – is tossed aside.

Take coffee as an example. The US guzzles coffee beans but grows little, happily importing them tariff-free from Brazil, which imposes a nine per cent duty on foreign coffee (to shield its own farmers).



If the Trump administration forces “reciprocity” and starts taxing Brazilian coffee, American roasters would bleed billions, Starbucks prices would skyrocket, and consumers? They would toast their \$8 lattes to Washington’s arrogance.

Let’s not forget that when America started growing its industries in the 19th Century, it hid behind 40 per cent tariffs. But now that it has scaled the economic ladder, it is forcing developing countries to lower their tariffs – ignoring their need to protect their own fledgling industries and taking away their right to develop.

The message is clear: America can have it their way and the others must make do with what little they have.

American consumers’ nightmare

JP Morgan just slammed the brakes on its US growth forecast – flipping from a 1.3 per cent expansion to a 0.3 per cent contraction. Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs warns the odds of a recession within 12 months have surged to 35 per cent (up from 20), as tariffs destabilise global markets.

Wall Street’s panic is now strangling Main Street. The auto sector is taking the first hit: JP Morgan estimates General Motors will face a \$13 billion annual tariff bill, while Ford get slapped with \$4.5 billion in new costs. The Bank of America warns tariffs could crush US auto sales by three million vehicles – nearly a fifth of last year’s total. These costs will backfire on consumers with Goldman Sachs predicting a \$5,000 to \$15,000 price hike per vehicle.

The contagion keeps reaching consumers’ wallets. On the eve of the policy taking effect, billionaire Mark Cuban said on social media that “from

toothpaste to soap, anything you can find storage space for, buy before they have to replenish inventory”. The warning sparked a shopping frenzy across America, where overloaded carts jammed parking lots. Shoppers said “All I know is my bank account is bleeding dry”.

Yale’s Budget Lab forecasts tariffs spiking US inflation by 2.3 per cent overall, with food prices up 2.8 per cent and essentials such as clothing, crops and metals soaring over 10 per cent – a \$3,800 annual gut punch to households. This self-inflicted ‘inflation carnival’ has a clear victim: American consumers.

The ghost of the 1930s Great Depression rises from its grave. Trump’s tariff bludgeon is swinging wildly – and the first casualties are America’s trade partners.

Developing countries are taking the hardest hits: India, Brazil and Vietnam – once buoyed by exporting low-cost goods to America – now face tariff hikes

that could cripple their export engines overnight. Advanced economies aren’t escaping unscathed. German automakers, Japanese machine tools and south Korean chip giants all find themselves in the crosshairs of this ‘reciprocal’ trade war.

The Chilean President blasted the tariffs, saying they amount to endorsing “might makes right”. Germany’s motor industry chief harshly criticised the USA for “deviating from the foundation of global trade”. The Australian Prime Minister stated that this is not the behaviour of a friend.

The dominoes are just beginning to fall. History’s ghosts are back to haunt us. The 1930 Smoot-Hawley tariffs shrank global trade by 66 per cent and spiked American unemployment to 25 per cent. Now, banks predict \$1.14 trillion vaporised from global GDP within three to five years and \$1.07 trillion of that

loss hitting America itself.

It is a grotesque re-run where America plays both villain and victim. The world now watches with equal horror and déjà vu, as America loads the very gun it once swore never to fire again. But when the last domino falls, who will be left standing?

America’s lone wolf gamble backfires

America’s unilateral actions have surprisingly sparked a wave of support for multi-lateralism. China announced just a day later a package of policies, firmly responding to the US “reciprocal tariffs”. The EU has put together an initial set of countermeasures worth over €20 billion. Canada went straight for US energy and car products. Japan plans to rally its entire government to take whatever steps necessary to handle the situation caused by these tariffs. The list goes on.

And the world is moving on. When Kenyan farmers live-stream coffee sales to China and Indian spice artisans tap into the European market through YouTube, when BRICS launches dollar-alternative payment systems and members of the Asia-Pacific RCEP free trade agreement exempt each other from tariffs, global trade is not dying – it keeps moving forward, while America’s tariff wars backfire spectacularly.

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