

Netanyahu snubs Pope's funeral in Rome

by New Worker correspondent

World leaders gather in Rome to attend the funeral of Pope Francis whose final message before his death on Easter Monday was a call to end the fighting in Gaza. But no Israeli ministers will join the mourners when the Pope is laid to rest. The Zionist state will be represented only by its ambassador to the Vatican – the lowest level of representation possible.

While the largely ceremonial president of Israel, Isaac Herzog, paid his last respects saying Pope Francis was “a man of deep faith and boundless compassion” the Netanyahu government was busy deleting its original condolence message from social media claiming it was a “mistake” and ordering its diplomatic missions abroad to delete similar posts and not to sign Vatican embassy condolence books on the grounds that the Pope’s outspoken condemnation of Israel aggression in Gaza was “anti-Semitic”.

This was echoed by Israel’s former ambassador to Italy, Dror Eydar, who told the Israeli *Maariv* [Evening] newspaper that Francis “accused us of genocide” and claimed the Pope had been “largely responsible for the rise in waves of anti-Semitism in the world”.

Not all Israelis agree. “I’m ashamed by the fact that the Israeli government and the Israeli Knesset did not release an



• This is Gaza...

official message of condolences. I’m here in order to express my condolences on behalf of the vast majority of Israeli citizens,” Gilad Kariv said on a visit to the central Catholic Church in Jerusalem. Kariv, a member of the opposition social-democratic Democrats bloc in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, said: “The fact that the Government of Israel and the Knesset have yet to see fit to officially express condolences following the passing of Pope Francis is a display of disrespect toward tens of thousands of Israeli Catholic citizens, the many Catholic clergy living and working in the country, and the hundreds of millions of believers in nations around the world that are true friends of Israel and the Jewish people.”

The Pope rang the Holy Family Church in Gaza city every day to speak to his Palestinian congregation but his efforts to end the conflict were ignored by the Netanyahu government and the Americans who protect

and maintain the Zionist entity. And back in the Gaza Strip the director-general of Gaza’s Health Ministry says hunger has now been added to the cause of death for children in the Palestinian enclave.

“Gaza’s children are now dying not only from bombs, but from starvation and untreated illness,” Munir al-Boursh said on Tuesday. He also noted that Gaza’s Health Ministry is counting those killed due to famine separately from those killed in Israeli attacks.

At least 53 children have lost their lives due to malnutrition caused by Israel’s crime of deliberate starvation of people in the Gaza Strip, he added. Israel unleashed its brutal Gaza onslaught on 7th October 2023. So far, the offensive has killed at least 51,240 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 116,931 others. Israel is also intentionally targeting Gaza ambulances, hospitals and medical workers while blocking the

siege, which has caused severe shortages of medicines and electricity. “We are providing health-care under the hardest, most extreme conditions,” with 18 out of 38 Gaza hospitals still partially operating, he pointed out.

Boursh said that 1,400 medics, including 150 doctors and 221 nurses, have been killed in the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza. Denouncing the Israeli war of extermination and the international community’s inaction, he said the Israelis are deliberately targeting children.

More than 15,615 children have been martyred in the course of the war, including over 600 children who have been killed since 18th March.

Meanwhile, Boursh said Israeli airstrikes on tents sheltering women and children have caused horrific injuries. “Bodies are arriving burned and mutilated,” he added, suggesting that the Israeli military is using new experimental munitions “gifted by America”.

entry of all humanitarian aid into the territory.

Boursh said the health service in the Gaza Strip has all but collapsed under the brutal Israeli

FUND

This week a Stowmarket supporter PayPaled £42. We received £24 that was raised at two Metropolitan NCP Cell & Supporters meetings this month and we got another welcome tenner from a comrade in Hull as well. All in all, the fighting fund went up by £642. The April appeal now stands at £2,019 and we need £1,481 by May Day to hit our target for the month.

We certainly need to do it. There are new bills and services to pay – all vital to keep our electronic press rolling.

The fight for peace and socialism is intensifying with the guns still blazing in Ukraine and the Middle East and imperialism’s greedy eyes casting around for more prey all over the world. None of the bourgeois or social-democratic politicians ever talk about peace because they are all enthralled by end-game capitalism that sees war as the only way out of the economic crisis that is the inevitable outcome of their system. But there is an alternative – and that’s socialism. Let’s put it back on the streets by making our voice heard.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Our May Day...

On the first day of May we remember those dark days of old when workers fought against grasping employers who would have them work all day, every day but Sunday, for a miserable pittance of a wage. And though the origins of May Day go back to hallowed antiquity when it was a festival for the ancient gods, it has also always been a day for working people. We also remember the pioneers of the labour movement that built the unions in Britain and throughout the rest of the world that curbed the worst excesses of the employers and set up the First International that declared May Day an international working-class holiday in 1889.

...and theirs...

May Day will be marked, as usual, by the labour movement in events up and down the country including the traditional march in central London and a rally in Trafalgar Square. It will also be marked by local elections for 23 councils and six mayors in England.

The Tories are facing a strong challenge, in hundreds of seats they won in 2021, from Nigel Farage's Reform party. Some say the Faragists will make the greatest gains next week, with Labour in second place and the Tories amongst the also-rans. The opinion polls currently put Reform slightly ahead of Labour with the Tories third, followed by the Liberal-Democrats and the Greens. Whether this will be reflected in the real May Day polls is another matter.

In the halcyon days of the 1970s when the unions packed a punch on the street, the left focused on union elections and building grass-roots movements to mobilise the labour movement in the fight for the socialist alternative. While these long-gone campaigns were flawed, they did, at least, try to involve the rank-and-file in the struggle – unlike the bogus "broad left" factions that run the bureaucrats' gravy-train in most of our unions today.

We will, doubtless, see the return of the usual left social-democratic platforms in these elections – posing as a serious 'alternative' to Labour while incapable of mobilising more than the protest vote that's effortlessly garnered by the likes of Lord Buckethead or the Monster Raving Loonies.

The mainstream parties have done their best to inject some interest in these polls. But although around a third of the electorate in England will be eligible to vote, few of them – a third at the best – will be bothered to go to the polling booths on the day.

There's a number of reasons behind the lack of interest in local elections on the street. Indifference is bred from the fact that hardly anyone knows the names of their local councillors, and the councils they represent have few real powers these days. Nevertheless, the results will be closely scrutinised by the media pundits who see these polls, which include a parliamentary by-election in the Cheshire seat of Runcorn & Helsby, as a measure of the Starmer government's standing following last year's general election.

The Tariff Armageddon

by Martin Jacques

One of the defining characteristics of US foreign policy since the beginning of China's reform and opening-up has been its consistent underestimation of China. It never entertained the idea that China could become America's equal, let alone surpass it. In fact, we have already arrived at the latter scenario. It is this that persuaded the Trump administration that the only solution was to junk America's post-1945 foreign policy. America was losing and would continue to lose: a radical change of direction was needed. The first attempt was Trump 1.0. When Donald Trump won last November, a very different and far more extreme strategy was in place. It climaxed on 9th April when the Trump administration effectively called a halt on trade with China.

It was policy in extremis, what Italians might call tariffissimo, if such a word existed. When you can't win, build a sky-high wall around your enemy, cut yourself off from them, and try to get the rest of the world to do the same.

Far from all Trump administration's talk about "Making America Great Again" this is nothing less than the "Great American Retreat". It is an admission of defeat. It is a denial of the very wellsprings of human development, the constant interaction between societies and cultures that spreads learning, and the inevitable passing of the baton to rising civilisations that emerge and reshape the future. A remarkable example of this has been the last eight decades, the rise of the developing world, home to the great majority of humanity, the emergence of China and India on the global stage, and the spread of globalisation. This is the world the Trump administration is revolting against. Its counter-revolution is anti-development (the huge tariffs against developing countries), anti-diversity at home and abroad, anti-globalisation, anti-science (COVID and climate change), and pro-white racism. It wants to close the door on the last

eight decades.

Normally a strategy is conceived of as a process. Instead, the Trump administration has started at the end, with a maximalist position, a huge rupture and a headstrong approach that has been ill-thought-out. There are three reasons why it will fail. First, the trade ban will harm the USA far more than it will harm China. Even though Chinese exports to the USA are much larger than American exports to China, the USA is far more dependent on Chinese exports than China is on American imports, for which, for the most part, it can find substitutes relatively easily. The lack of proper preparation on the American side has also been exposed by the temporary suspension of tariffs on chips, routers and other electronic products.

Second, the reaction of the bond markets, where power really lies, fired a warning shot that the Trump administration was forced to heed: The abuse of tariffs posed a serious threat to American exceptionalism. The exorbitant privilege of the dollar as the world's reserve currency could not be taken for granted. The same warning was issued in 2008 and 2020; we can be sure that 2025 will not be the last time. The consequences of the next one could be far more drastic.

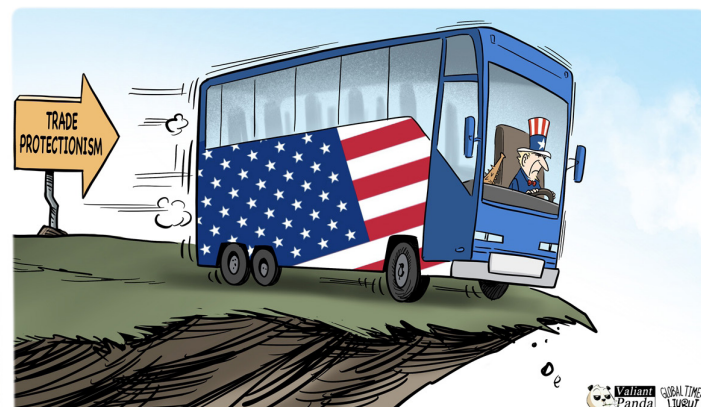
The third reason why the US 'Tariff Armageddon' will fail is that China has been preparing for this scenario ever since the first Trump administration launched its anti-China crusade in 2017. If China was taken somewhat by surprise by Trump 1.0, it was extremely well-prepared for Trump 2.0, regardless of the eventualities. While the USA accounted for 21 per cent of China's exports in 2016, that figure had fallen to 13.4 per cent

by 2024. This was not an accident, it was by design. Similarly, China, aware that sooner or later it might face major obstacles to its exports, had built up ample resources that could be deployed if and when needed to give a huge boost to domestic consumption. The contrast between China's approach and that of the USA could hardly be starker: while China is playing chess, the USA is holding a fireworks display.

By starting at the end and going for broke with its maximalist position – ending virtually all trade with China – the Trump administration has taken a huge risk. It has jumped stages and catapulted the world into what, in economic terms, is more like an end-game. The consequences for the USA are far-reaching. With its imposition of 10 per cent tariffs, it has aroused the wrath of many countries around the world, which deeply resent the arbitrary and dictatorial manner of their imposition. The US intent is clear: the coercive reconfiguration of the world on America's terms and at the expense of other countries. From previously embracing multilateralism, the USA has chosen unilateralism. It can no longer expect the same kind of goodwill from these countries, their loyalty will increasingly be motivated by fear. The USA is much less likely to command their support in the trade war against China. On the contrary, many will increasingly look to China for solidarity and their future. America will face growing isolation.

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Global Times



Workers' Notes

No to Endless War!

by New Worker correspondent

Activists from International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity were out over the Easter weekend, holding a protest picket in the East End of London calling a Britain to stop sending weapons and money to the Zelensky regime in Kiev.

They also held placards opposing Prime Minister Starmer's plans for huge increases in military spending, at a time when millions in Britain are struggling to survive and public services are desperate for money.

The protest organisers said that Britain and its European allies, while calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine, actually want to see an endless war with the aim of weakening the Russian Federation, starting with sending troops masquerading as "peacekeepers" into Ukraine, regardless of the cost to the people of Ukraine or the danger of war with Russia. But most countries in the EU have already refused to send troops to Ukraine – even Poland. And the organisers say that the people of Europe won't support these insane plans, after three years of high inflation and seeing billions spent on Ukraine instead of desperately needed housing.

The protest was held in Whitechapel, a working-class area

in Tower Hamlets with a long history of migration that once had substantial minorities from the Irish and Jewish communities. These days over 30 per cent of the population are Bangladeshi. Bangladesh-born Lutfur Rahman, who grew-up in the borough, is the elected Mayor of Tower Hamlets and the borough is led by his Aspire party, composed largely of former Labour supporters, which won control of the council in 2022.

Room at the Top

by New Worker correspondent

It is all change at the top of shopworkers union USDAW. The union has appointed its first ever female general secretary, Joanne Thomas, presently the union's North East regional secretary. The word "appointed" is used because there was no contest as she was only candidate to secure the necessary number of nominations. Exactly the same happened with the post of deputy general secretary where Rab Donnelly, regional secretary for the Southern Region, takes over from the hitherto unknown Dave McCrossen.

This is all too typical for unions and USDAW in particular. In the last elections for its NEC, not only were there many uncontested seats there were also several vacancies. The turnout ranged from 3.5 to 4.6 per cent across the regions.

The present and future general secretaries poured syrup over

each other. Joanne Thomas said her predecessor Paddy Lillis had "an incredible record of service and led the union through very difficult times, with the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. Paddy's leadership of our union has seen us move into a modern new headquarters, he has secured our finances to ensure we can provide a great service for our members and we are now one of the fastest growing trade unions. Paddy has been a real inspiration and mentor." Given that of the 2.7 million workers in the UK retail trade only 360,000 are USDAW members, there is clearly plenty of room for improvement.

"Paddy", in addition to offering standard congratulations, expressed the pious hope that "the election of a Labour Government is crucial to delivering the change we need on raising pay, improving employment rights to make work more secure, tackling the scourge of attacks on retail workers and delivering equality for all". He obviously hasn't read the fine print of the Employment Rights Bill.

No doubt the retirees will get a gong. Lillis must be in line for a red robe given his loyal services to the right-wing of the Labour Party. Since it took its present shape in 1947, USDAW has had eight general secretaries, three of whom were knighted and two became lords.

The Bill

Turning to Sir Keir Starmer's Employment Rights Bill, which is going through the Upper House, bosses are busy attempting to water down an already weak

measure that continues the Blair Government's policy of leaving intact most of the anti-trade union legislation introduced by Margaret Thatcher.

Those great friends of the working classes, the British Chambers of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry, the Institute of Directors, and the Federation of Small Businesses have put aside their minor differences to claim that giving rights to workers from the first day of their employment will bring the British economy to its knees.

While they do not actually call for the return of child chimney sweeps, they deplore modest improvements to sick pay, protection from unfair dismissal and parental leave, and restrictions on 'fire-and-rehire' processes.

Showing concern for "those at the margins of the labour market", the employers' cabals claim the measure will reduce hiring because bosses will not want to risk costly tribunal cases. The Government responded by saying that they had already "consulted extensively with business on our proposals". It is clear that Starmer's measure is business friendly. Hannah Strawbridge, Founder and CEO of HanLawCo which advises small business on such matters, reassures her clients that "the Bill focuses on flexibility, fairness, and worker protections – particularly in areas where traditional practices have fallen behind post-pandemic workplace realities", so there is really nothing much to worry about so long as businesses make sensible preparations.

She points out that the right

of employees to request flexible working from day one of employment instead of after 26 weeks is merely a right to request in the same way as a beggar has right to ask you for 50 pence. All that needs to be done is "make sure your managers are trained to respond to requests properly. Template responses and a clear decision-making framework will help protect your business from future claims". So, no real change there.

Likewise with Zero-Hours contracts, all Management needs to do is tidy up their contacts after they have been working on a casual contract for 12 weeks. She also suggests that changes to Redundancy Rights for Pregnant and New Parents need just a bit more documentation if bosses want to get rid of someone.

One less than revolutionary measure applies to the hospitality industry. This insists that tips and service charges must be passed on and it will become illegal to withhold or redistribute tips. All that needs to be done is for employers to formulate a clear written policy and keep records for three years. No doubt a way will be found to add tips into minimum wages.

To confirm that the Bill is not going to make much difference, Strawbridge assures her actual and potential clients that: "The Employment Rights Bill is nudging businesses toward better practices that can improve retention, morale, and productivity. Getting it right now means avoiding disputes and disruptions later."

Last month, labour law expert Lord John Hendy KC described the Bill as "thin gruel" – particularly because it ditched earlier proposals to introduce sectoral collective bargaining arrangements for each sector of the economy. Although some sectors, such as adult social workers and school support staff, already have consultative agreements, these are purely consultative with no teeth. Restrictions on solidarity actions remain untouched. Differences in workers' statuses remain. This means that with different categories of workers remaining their status can easily be changed. Little wonder Hendy arrived at the conclusion: "The Bill appears to have been drafted by a group of employers'

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lawyers.”

Education News

by New Worker
correspondent

The teaching unions traditionally hold their annual conferences during the Easter holidays.

Before their conference. National Education Union (NEU) members in England voted in a preliminary ballot by 93.7 to 6.3 on a 47.2 per cent turnout to reject an unfunded 2.8 per cent pay offer (one which will come out of the existing budget). Only slightly less, 83.4 to 16.6 per cent voted for strike action.

As a result the conference demanded an above-inflation pay rise, the general secretary even threatened to campaign against Labour if teachers are not suitably rewarded. He warned that strike action could take place in the autumn and said that with the Government increasing military expenditure it has plenty of money to meet their demands if they genuinely wanted an end of Tory austerity.

The NEU also called on the reduction of some salaries in the education sector, with particular reference to the massive salaries of CEOs in the Academy trusts where one senior boss takes home £525,000 partly as reward for reducing salaries of teachers.

The NASUWT also said it could ballot members for indus-

trial action within weeks if there was no “fully-funded” pay rise on offer. This could possibly mean both unions going on strike at the same time, a rare occurrence.

While the NEU supported further mergers with other unions, the NASUWT firmly replied by passing a motion at its conference to “reiterate publicly that there is no desire by NASUWT to consider any union amalgamation or merger”. Conference also said that it would instruct the executive to “report all attempts of poaching members and infiltrating of our lay structures” to the TUC and other bodies.

NASUWT’s outgoing general secretary, Dr Patrick Roach, said he did not “detect” an appetite for a merger among members “but it’s nice to be wooed”. Despite the NEU vote some of its delegates thought it would not be wise to merge with NASUWT because it is generally reluctant to take strike action, and the NEU itself struggles to meet the 50 per cent threshold for action. So, it looks as though Daniel Kebede’s ambition for the NEU to become a “union of a million members” is someway off. Former Fire Brigades Union (FBU) general secretary Matt Wrack, who lost his bid for re-election in January, has bounced back however, with the blessing of the bureaucracy, to be the new head of the NASUWT.

NEU delegates approved a motion accusing Israel of “apartheid” but deplorably voted to support fascism in Ukraine, in particular by supporting those

dodgy educational trade unions which are allowed to function in Ukraine. In a move sure to gladden the heart of Sir Keir Starmer, it also voted down an amendment specifically opposing sending British troops to Ukraine.

The NEU seems to have sparked a fight with other unions when conference voted to start recruiting school support staff, despite a 2017 agreement not to do so. It presently has about 60,000 such members. When it was formed by a merger between the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers the NEU agreed with Unison, GMB and Unite not actively to recruit their current or recent members.

At the urging of the support staff (who although members are not represented in the negotiating machinery) it has now recanted and voted to: “begin actively and openly recruiting with immediate effect” and “cease all attempts to appease our sister unions”.

This hasn’t gone down well with the other unions. GMB national officer Mark Wilkinson said: “GMB is one of three recognised unions for school support staff and is disappointed, though not surprised, that a teachers’ union is taking this course of action.” Unison was also angry, saying “it’s both surprising and frankly confusing that the NEU seems to be taking this approach, which appears to undermine a longstanding TUC agreement”.

The last time NEU tried this, in 2023, a TUC panel ruled

the ballot of support staff and campaign breached its principle that member unions cannot “knowingly and actively take into membership existing or recent members of another union”, resulting in NEU being ordered to pay Unison, the GMB and Unite over £150,000.

North of the border, Scotland’s teaching unions have already held formal pay talks and rejected an offer from CoSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. This, said CoSLA, would provide a three per rise “which would see the salary of typical classroom teacher rise to over £52,000”.

Another demand from some irate Scottish teachers is for self-defence classes so that they can protect themselves from their own pupils. The teaching unions have yet to make any formal demands for this.

As a grim sign of the times, the NEU conference revealed that schools are performing a vital welfare function and are having to supply beds and bedding and kitchen appliances to hard-up families as the impact of child poverty worsens. NEU leaders warn that with forthcoming welfare cuts, especially for disabled pupils, things are only going to get worse.

Already an NEU survey reported that 87 per cent of teachers had seen pupils showing signs of tiredness or fatigue as a consequence of poverty, with 39 per cent reporting physical under-development.

Chris Dutton, a deputy head of a secondary school in the south-west, said that schools were even stepping in to provide “basic equipment, things like duvets, pillows, because they just aren’t there in the family home”.

From Birmingham, Kari Anson, the head of a special school, reported that her school uses its own funding to supplement local holiday club schemes its pupils would not normally be able to access, to provide wheelchair-accessible transport.

Thirty-seven per cent of members also reported providing food banks or lunches beyond the free school meals allowance, which is not the sort of thing education budgets are for.

Michael Allen, deputy head of a primary school in Wiltshire, said: “It’s more worries for teachers and leaders, where we want to be focusing on teaching, inspiring people, and we are really sometimes mired in things that we feel that maybe others should have picked up before they get to school.”

Daniel Kebede pointed out that: “Child poverty is a political choice, one that has been sustained by successive governments which have failed to get to grips with the solutions. A government calling for ‘high and rising standards’ cannot at the same time stand idly by in the face of high and rising rates of child poverty. The government must take action.” They already have. That’s why the problem exists...

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

22nd April 2005

BOTH TONY Blair and Michael Howard have been through a tough time from prospective voters and from divisions within their own ranks this week in their hectic election campaigning.

The Tories are beginning to suffer from Michael Howard’s obsession with immigration and asylum issues. A group of Tory front bench MPs, including members of the shadow cabinet, last week called on their leader to tone down his rants on the issue after he claimed that Labour policies on immigration would lead

to race riots like those of 2001. This raised echoes of Enoch Powell’s infamous “rivers of blood” speech. The riots were in fact caused by organised racist provocation and police failure to stop it.

One Tory candidate, Bob Spink, obviously hoping to win Howard’s favour, went even further and called for the repatriation of migrants and talked of “asylum cheats”. This sparked complaints from his rival candidates and now he is facing an inquiry by the Commission for Racial Equality.

But it was a member of the public, taking part in BBC Radio Four’s Election Call, who really explained the effects of Howard’s cynical use of the race card.

Federico Mazandarani reminded Howard of his own Jewish family history as refugees. Then he said: “Every time Mr Howard opens his mouth and talks about foreigners who are invading this country in the words that he does – he is making life impossible for us.”

Public sector trade unions Unison and the GMB last

week launched campaigns to defend their members from Tory slurs about dirty hospitals and to remind the electorate that it was the Tories who cuts millions from the NHS budget and insisted that hospital cleaning services should be privatised.

In newspaper adverts the GMB said: “Our members are sick of Michael Howard turning up in hospitals to have his photograph taken with them, only for him to then turn around and talk about dirty hospitals and too many bureaucrats.

“Our members are sick of Michael Howard preaching cleaner hospitals then pledging to bring back the cowboy contractors the Tories hired on the cheap who gave us MRSA in the first place.”

And Unison has launched a poster campaign saying: “How will spending £35 billion less on public services improve them?” followed by the strap line: “What are the Tories thinking of? Use your vote to stop them.”

Adolescence: TV vérité masterpiece or just adolescent?

by Dennis Broe

Adolescence, Netflix's four-part single-take, real-time series about a schoolboy knifing, is the streamer's most popular series of all time in Britain and in many other parts of the world, has been hailed by critics as a television breakthrough, and has been endorsed by Prime Minister Keir Starmer who not only watched it at home with his kids but wants it viewed in all British schools.

The last British series to have this kind of a social impact was last year's *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*, which at that time Keir Starmer also championed, although it was pointed out that his prosecutorial office was in part responsible for the perpetuation of the scandal.

There are multiple subjects that the series embraces, including a generation reared on the internet that is media savvy and relationship ignorant, the deterioration of the school system, and the class system as evidenced in episode three's confrontation of its working-class adolescent who marks the privileged or "posh" status of a police psychologist.

Its main focus, however, and the lens through which all of these subjects are refracted, as is made painfully obvious in episode four, is male violence, passed on through generations and perpetrated against women.

There are some excellent scenes and fine points made by the series on that score, including the psychologist's confrontation of the boy Jamie as converting his fear of women and inability to communicate with them into rage, and the explosion of his father Eddie (Stephen Graham, the show's co-creator) who in the series' ultimate moment, after beating a young neighbourhood hooligan, explains



that his father beat him and he was proud to have not carried on that tradition in never touching his son. To which his wife says that, in light of the tragedy and of his own continuing spurious angry eruptions, that effort was "not enough" giving the lie to a confession that has become a cultural and media trope, rationalising and sanctioning psychological violence.

The problem is that all of this is filtered itself through a class lens, with the villain and source of violence in the society being not just 'masculinity' in the abstract but male working-class men and the boys they raise.

Societal institutions are fair-minded in the extreme but unable to cope with this lashing out by the 'other' in their midst. Episode one, after the initial breaking into the house by the police, is seen through the eyes of the detective inspector, detailing the laborious ways the police are scrupulously observant of the laws favouring suspects, but leaving open the question of what the boy's treatment would be like if he were not white.

Episode two, though describing a breakdown in civility in the school system, does not place the blame on the years of austerity by first the Conservative and now

Starmer's Labour government. Rather, the problem is those unruly students, "the kids", who in the words of one teacher "have no feelings".

Episode three, which locates or rather traps the audience in the interrogation room for almost the entire duration, through Jamie's criticism of the psychologist acknowledges the class differences but ultimately comes down on the side of his naked and scary brutality.

Episode four, one of whose 'Aha!' moments, because of the need to stretch out time for a family trip to the hardware store, actually involves the Australian band *Ah-ha*. This episode also is the meanest in its presentation of the 'working-class' problem: its men, of course in the elitist neo-liberal view, are mainly violent creatures, while the assigned role of its mostly passive and victimised women is to socialise this violence. This characterisation leaves out the ability of both working-class men and women to work together to channel this energy against the elites and for their rights, with women historically often in the forefront of struggles for equality.

There is a long history in Western societies of 'othering' adolescents, and of the terrors their untrained or unindoctrinated minds

can conjure, taking in comic books, rock'n'roll and horror films, all forms which equally have rebellious anti-capitalist aspects.

Equally the series, and this is not remarked upon, also participates in racial coding. When JD Vance recently visited Britain he evoked, as part of his far-right, anti-immigration agenda the spectre of Muslim gangs knifing the populace. As everyone in Hollywood and in American politics will tell you, if you want to raise that spectre in the 'liberal' climate, the way to do it and get away with it is to present the problem only through the eyes of a white protagonist. The dog whistle then still pierces the ears of those attuned to it but there is plausible deniability on the part of the creators, with this show also being based on an actual incident involving white teens.

A word about the style, so pronounced in the series. The long take, that is, the refusal to cut a scene up into its component parts, is an old and revered trope in the cinema, however it is usually attributed to those on the left beginning with Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise*, about the French Revolution, *The Crime of Monsieur Lange* about the devastation wrecked by an owner on his workers, and

Rules of the Game, a minute examination of the ultimately deadly 'foibles' of the aristocratic class in the 1930s.

There's also Orson Welles's astute presentation of the interpersonal violence and alienation of the right-wing publisher William Randolph Hearst in *Citizen Kane*, Robert Altman's devastating critique of Hollywood in *The Player*, and Paul Thomas Anderson's validation of an unlikely community of sex workers in *Boogie Nights*. This series, on the other hand, though it purports to be in the tradition of both the long take and the British 'Angry Young Men' social cinema of the late 1950s and early '60s is, in its elitist gaze concealed though the trope of hyper-realism, actually anti-working class and anti-left. That is, the refusal to cut here, instead of opening up a world, closes it off and does not provide a context for its attack on a specific class, thus posing its aggressive behaviour as ultimately beyond explanation.

No doubt Sir Keir Starmer, the anti-working-class head of what he still chooses to call the "Labour" Party, who purged it of its radical Corbyn-led elements, when watching at home with his kids was eager to warn them that working-class anger was something they should condemn. He was probably much more comfortable with a work that only features that anger lashing out at women instead of combining across racial and gender lines to unionise and erupt at figures (like himself!) whose austerity creates the conditions for that anger. The Starmers of the world then sit back, "tsk-tsk", wave their hands Dr Frankenstein-like as they watch what are, in their eyes, these 'deteriorating creatures' running amuck. *Adolescence*: Not a TV vérité masterpiece but simply posh pretentiousness.

People's World (USA)

Europe: the roar of a paper tiger

by Vijay Prashad

EUROPEAN states have gradually been building up an aggressive posture in the context of the war in Ukraine. As the USA, under President Donald Trump, has called for a ceasefire and peace talks, European leaders have been urging more military supplies for Ukraine. On 11th April 2025, the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, once led by the USA and now led by Germany and the UK, pledged an additional €21 billion in military aid to Ukraine. Meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, the defence ministers of the 55 members of the Contact Group discussed the gains made by Russia in the last few weeks and the need for Ukraine to have greater air defence capabilities. They agreed to build up their military industrial capacity so that they support a war that has become increasingly difficult for Ukraine to sustain.

It is important to register, however, that despite the headline of €21 billion, most of this aid will come over four years – which, in the context of an ongoing war, is not very useful at all. Germany's defence minister, Boris Pistorius, who is member of the Social Democratic Party, told the media: "Ukraine needs a strong military and only then can the negotiation process lead to a just and lasting peace." Even amidst Ukraine's strongest supporters, the idea of defeating Russia is no longer on the table and the process for peace – pushed by US Presi-



dent Donald Trump – is now cemented.

Pinch of salt

Europe's credibility regarding its obligations to Ukraine remains untested. These monetary pledges and the promises of military equipment transfers come with a pinch of salt. To illustrate the actuality of the aid, let us look at Germany's commitments. In 2024, Germany made the largest commitment to Ukraine, amounting to €17 billion in military and non-military aid. For that year alone, Germany budgeted €7–8 billion in military aid (the rest was for humanitarian support and economic aid). But it is important to know that this aid does not come in one tranche. In 2025 Germany will provide Ukraine with €4 billion in (largely) in-kind military aid through the provision of crucial equipment. This has been the way Germany has supported Ukraine with military

equipment worth €2 billion (2022), €4.4 billion (2023) and €8.1 billion (2024). For comparison, the USA had provided Ukraine with €18.1 billion in 2024, before Trump began to draw down the assistance to that country.

Europe's main countries understand they simply do not have the military capacity to undertake a war against an adversary like Russia without the active military support of the USA through NATO. For example, studies by the German government show that it could only withstand two to three days of intensive fighting, far below NATO's standard of being prepared for a 30-day intense war. The German military, the Bundeswehr, comprises 180,000 soldiers, below the target of 203,000, while most of its heavy equipment – such as its Leopard II tanks and its air defence systems – are committed already to Ukraine and those

that are not, have maintenance problems. The German air force – the Luftwaffe – has a small fleet of Panavia Tornado and Eurofighter Typhoon fighters, but the former are now 40 years old, while there are simply not enough of the latter in operation. This is precisely why the German government announced the Zeitenwende (historical turning point) with €100 billion allocated to military modernisation. But even the most optimistic German analysts say that German military capability can only be improved by the end of the decade.

French military analysts and politicians are not as despondent as the Germans. While the latter say that they will be able to endure less than a week of intense warfare, the French claim that they can withstand two months of full-scale war. In December 2024, Senators Hugues Saury and Hélène Conway-Mouret indicated in a report that their country should be

able to do so if they have enough ammunition. In March 2022, however, Senator Christian Cambron (at the time chair of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee) said that France had only "fifteen days of ammunition" or even "three or four" days. A study by the French government showed that its defence industry could only produce five hundred 155mm shells per year at a time when the Ukraine forces used 7,000 shells per day. A credible assessment of France's capacity shows that a total upgrade of its military capacity cannot take place before 2030.

Across the English Channel, anxiety about its military capacity has occasioned reports after reports about the lack of its military power, including the House of Commons Defence Committee (2003), the UK Defence Command Paper (2023), the Defence Strategy Review (2023) and the House of Lords Defence Paper

(2024). The latter report candidly notes that "the size of the Army has been reduced to a level which is not sustainable in the event of a prolonged conflict". It is also important to bear in mind that most of these reports are written by hawks who use them to argue for greater military funding. But there is a kernel of truth about the lack of preparedness of the British armed forces. General Sir Richard Barrons, the head of the UK Joint Forces Command, told *The Times* in 2023 that "the British Army would be wiped out in a day in a war with Russia, and the UK would take five to ten years to field a modern, war-fighting division". Even if this is moderately exaggerated, it is a sign of the limited capacity of the UK – without full US and therefore NATO support – to carry out a military operation against a power such as Russia.

Earlier, in January 2024, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland agreed to facilitate a military transport corridor that would allow transit of military equipment without any barriers. Germany's then parliamentary state secretary for defence Simtje Möller said that this would take Europe "on the road to a true military Schengen". The Schengen Area allows free movement of people across Europe. This principle is now being used to assert the right of military equipment and military personnel to cross borders without any need for long drawn-out checks. But again, these announcements are largely symbolic. The rail gauge in dif-

ferent parts of Europe differ, and the bridges are of different sizes for military transport. To make these harmonious would cost more money than Europe has at its disposal. That is why Germany is building a military base in Lithuania so that it could easily airlift troops there if necessary. But this is a small base in a small country that would not like to get involved directly in a large-scale military conflict.

To sum up, Germany, France, and the UK do not have the capacity to fight the Russians in a full-scale war without US and NATO support.

Europe's provocations

In December 2024, a YouGov poll was published about European public opinion regarding the war in Ukraine. The poll followed public opinion in seven countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. These are the main governments that support



• Russia's next move could be decisive.

a continuation of the war. In these countries, support for the prolongation of the war has dropped dramatically. For instance, in January 2024 half of the British population said that they would support Ukraine "until it wins" but by the end of the year only 37 per cent held that opinion. Similar declines can be seen in France and Germany. In every country, there has been

an increase in the view that the war must come to a negotiated end even if this means that Russia will control parts of Ukraine (the Crimea and the eastern districts of the country). In March 2025, however, largely due to the intransigence of the European leadership and the advantages secured by Russia on the battlefield, sections of the European public began to show more

sympathy for Ukraine; but even this was muted, since it was merely demonstrated by a call for Ukraine to be included in the peace negotiations – not for the continuation of the war.

But the European leadership – especially the unelected European High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas (former prime minister of Estonia) –

has continued to insist on greater military and financial support for Ukraine and to slow down talks for peace. In April, Kallas said: "It's time to rearm, re-equip, and stand ready for Europe's defence. We will use every lever we have – from adapting fiscal rules for defence spending, to mobilising our EU budget, to new loans for joint procurement of equipment. We must

also step up our support to Ukraine." The term 'rearm' is borrowed from the EU President Ursula Van Der Leyen's Rearm Europe plan. Neither Kallas nor Van Der Leyen are elected to their posts by the European people.

NATO will hold its annual meeting in June in Brussels. These contradictions – between Europe's aggressive statements about Russia and Europe's own military capacity as well as the growing sentiment amongst the European public to end this war – will perhaps be discussed around the NATO table. What Trump will say is unclear. His team has made it plain that they want the war in Ukraine to be brought to a swift end. The difference of opinion between Europe and the USA will not be helped by the threats of tariffs and the turbulence of world trade. A lot can happen between April and June in a world that has Donald Trump as the president of the USA.

*People's Democracy
(India)*

Socialism: the only alternative

by Jorge Ernesto
Angulo Leiva

The Communist Party of Cuba was founded on 16th April 1961. Fidel's words on that day and the epic days that followed remind us of those who wish to sow death and those who bet on the future.

The most accurate way to remember the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution is to reaffirm it every second beyond the dates

marked.

The articles of the Magna Carta dedicated to the irreversibility of that choice for our destiny are not enough as a guarantee; only people can enlarge this collective work. Nevertheless, celebrating the path chosen to face the future, 64 years later, speaks to us of resistance despite the storms.

Under the threat of invasion, on the morning of 16th April 1961, Commander-in-Chief Fidel

Castro Ruz deepened the boldness of the Revolution when he publicly linked it to socialism.

Thousands of militiamen, ready for new battles, raised their rifles as a sign of approval of his words. From the corner of 23rd and 12th in Havana's Vedado district they could see the ocean just a few metres away and imagine how the mercenaries were advancing across its waters intent on invading the island.

At dawn on the 15th

three formations of American warplanes, perfidiously bearing Cuban air-force colours, bombed key Cuban air defence installations without any declaration of war. They tried to diminish the capacity to respond to the imminent invasion and mask their own role by giving the air raids the appearance of an internal uprising. Their Puma, Linda and Gorilla squadrons attacked Ciudad Libertad, San Antonio de los

Baños and Santiago de Cuba.

In Ciudad Libertad seven people were killed and 53 wounded in the bombing, including the artilleryman Eduardo Delgado, who wrote the name of Fidel on a door in his own blood. Those five letters were his last breath – proof that the will of the people does not bend in the face of aggression.

In the midst of the greatest dangers, those present listened and sup-

ported the determination that "for this Revolution we are ready to give our lives". Just a few hours later, new pages of heroism were written at Playa Giron.

Like any human achievement, Cuban socialism is not a perfect work, but Fidel's words on that 16th April and the days that followed remind us of those who wish to sow death and those who bet on the future.

Granma

LETTERS

From the General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza

To the free trade unions in the United States of America and to every free worker and trade unionist fighting for justice, freedom and human dignity, we salute you on the eve of International Workers' Day, a day that embodies the unity and solidarity of workers in confronting oppression and exploitation.

We raise to you the voice of Gaza's workers, who today stand at the forefront of confronting the most heinous forms of genocide, siege and starvation, imposed on our people for decades and continuing to this day with direct support from the US administration under Donald Trump and previous administrations in blatant violation of all humanitarian and international laws.

For over 16 months Gaza has been subjected to a brutal assault that has resulted in the martyrdom of tens of thousands of innocent civilians, including thousands of workers, along with the systematic destruction of infrastructure, homes, hospitals, schools and factories. The occupation has stripped Gaza of all means of life, sparing no service or productive sector from systematic devastation, leading to the collapse of health care, public services, education and the economy.

Millions of Palestinians now find themselves displaced, without food, water, shelter, electricity or

medicine. The genocide is in a dangerous escalation. The occupation continues its policy of collective starvation by closing crossings and preventing the entry of humanitarian aid, placing our people at risk of mass famine while the international community remains powerless, silent or even complicit in this crime against humanity.

These policies are not merely intended to subjugate our people but are part of a settler-colonial regime aimed at completely erasing Palestinian existence. Dear comrades, workers in Gaza are among the most affected by this catastrophe. Economic life has come to a complete halt, workplaces have been destroyed and tens of thousands have been forcibly pushed into unemployment, with no social safety nets in place. Today, workers and their families live in inhumane conditions, deprived of their most basic rights, struggling to survive – whether from hunger or under bombardment.

This war would not have been possible without the unlimited US support for the occupation, whether through military funding, political and diplomatic backing or arms deals that kill our children, women and elderly every day. The US administration under Trump has continued what the previous administration started, becoming a direct accomplice in genocide, ignoring the voices of millions inside and outside of the United States and an overwhelming majority of the nation who reject this brutal aggression.

Therefore, we call on you, the American unions, to translate your solidarity into effective actions that go beyond statements and speeches and create real pressure to stop this dirty war. What we ask of you today:

1. Escalate pressure within workplaces and American decision-making

institutions to end the military, financial and diplomatic support provided by the US administration to the occupation and hold accountable the companies and institutions involved in financing and supporting Israel's war machine and the genocide.

2. Join and expand the current boycott campaigns targeting Israeli companies and their supporters, especially in the shipping and logistics sectors. This includes boycotting Israeli shipping, like ZIM, and stopping business with companies that transport weapons and military equipment to the occupation, such as Maersk and others.

3. Enforce union sanctions at US ports and airports to block arms shipments to Israel, following the example of past labour movements that boycotted apartheid South Africa and other workers across the globe.

4. Support and co-ordinate efforts with the student movement in the USA, which is facing severe repression for its principled stance in supporting the Palestinian cause. Solidarity between the labour and student movements can create immense pressure against the unjust policies of the US administration and effectively respond to the Trump administration's broad assault on civil liberties and freedom of expression.

5. Call for general strikes and widespread civil disobedience to expose the US government's complicity in the war and hold it accountable for the crimes of the occupation, just as labour movements have done in past struggles against imperialist wars.

6. Pressure Congress and the US administration to halt arms shipments and military aid to Israel and cancel any agreements that reinforce colonialism and oppression at the expense of oppressed peoples.

Transform solidarity into action!

Dear members of the labour movement in America, we sincerely appreciate all the efforts made by US trade unions and the voices that have stood in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Moreover, we emphasise that the current stage demands that these efforts be developed in a cumulative manner, transforming solidarity into practical and sustainable actions that contribute to stopping Palestinian bloodshed, ending the occupation and siege and achieving justice for our people.

We, in the General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza, address this call to you on the eve of International Workers' Day, affirming that your struggle for workers' rights in the United States is inseparable from our struggle against occupation and colonialism. True labour solidarity is demonstrated through actions, not just words, and we count on your awareness and determination to take concrete steps to end this tragedy.

It is our collective responsibility – as trade unions and labour movements worldwide – to stand against injustice and use our collective power to generate change. Together, we can break the chains of occupation, end oppression and build a world that is more just and humane.

Long live workers' unity and solidarity! Long live the struggle of peoples for freedom, dignity and justice!

Basheer Al-Sisi
General Secretariat of the
Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
City of Gaza

Dear Comrades

So called experts, deviant Western commenta-

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

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 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? 14:00–15:00, webinar. 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: Protest at Barclays Bank AGM. 09:45–11:15, QEII Centre, Broad Sanctuary, Westminster, London SW1P 3EE.

WED 7 MAY

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

THUR 8 MAY

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Alec Forshaw on his *An Englishman in Cuba*. 19:00, Charing Cross Centre, 17–19 St John Maddermarket, Norwich NR2 1DN.

SAT 10 MAY

Working Class Movement Library: Taj Ali on The Making of the British South Asian Working Class. Venue TBC.

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.

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

tors and an assortment of Sinophobes who make a living by telling lies about People’s China are unhappy. Some appear to suffer from an illogical hate syndrome that clouds their judgment with the result that whatever aspect the report deals with it has to contain snide remarks and gross distortions in relation to China. They are finding it difficult to defend the indefensible in relation to the arrogance and bullying by the USA against the world and especially China. The USA has launched an economic war against Beijing, as it enters a period of self-imposed isolation and rapid decline.

One regular piece of misinformation is to assume and allege that unlike the USA, China is not a democracy. In the USA, with its embedded system of lobbying to influence government decisions and corporate sponsorship, an election is won by money. Policies are decided by a handful of billionaires. The people believe that have choice but both main political parties are happy to see the rich become even more wealthy while the poor become poorer.

In the People’s Republic it is very different. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) works with wealthy business people to develop economic growth but remains in charge. President Xi Jinping is accountable to the 100 million strong CCP serving as its General Secretary and was elected as president by Parliament following which he took an oath to uphold the country’s constitution.

Another incessantly repeated myth is to allege that China’s economy is sluggish and about to collapse. Wishful thinking. During the first quarter of 2025 China’s GDP grew by an impressive 5.4 per cent. China is now restructuring its economy to boost domestic consumption. It

is the Western nations that are in big trouble as recession and economic collapse loom large. Donald Trump’s bizarre trade war will hit world economic growth, impact badly with everyone and very likely backfire against the USA itself.

Today the world stands at an historic T-junction. One way leads downhill to fascism, exploitation, everlasting wars and despair. The other leads uphill towards building a brave new multipolar world of shared values with socialism at its core. While Social Democrats dither and the fake left stands and sneers, the *New Worker* shows the way towards a beautiful new form of society. Our newspaper plays an essential role in the class struggle, and it relies on the generosity of its readers to survive. Thank you to all those who are supporting us, but we urgently need new supporters to help us continue our work. Please help us to survive. We receive no advertising or sponsorship. We are the only weekly communist newspaper in Britain today.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

New Worker readers may be interested in what was Glasgow’s first ever strike!

At the end of the 18th Century Glasgow’s population was around 60,000. In the city itself and in surrounding areas weaving was the main occupation.

The weavers faced opposition, however. New industrial processes threatened their craft-based work practices. The American War of Independence had reduced the supply of cotton from plantations of the American South. Plus, the employers were frantically trying to reduce costs.

Weavers in and around Glasgow heard in June 1787 that payments for weaving muslin were to be cut. This would be the second such reduction in just eight months. A deci-

sion was therefore made to strike. This was the first recorded strike in Glasgow’s history.

Mass protests by the weavers soon followed. Often they met on Glasgow Green. On Monday 3rd September however, the authorities heard that a large number of Calton Weavers had gathered near the Gallowgate. The Lord Provost and Magistrates went to tell them to disperse, however they were then stoned by the crowd. News then spread that the weavers were going to march to Glasgow Cathedral.

The 39th Regiment of Foot were sent in under the command of Colonel Kelllett. The army and weavers clashed near Drygate Bridge and soldiers were ordered to open fire. Three protestors were killed instantly and three more were mortally wounded.

A strike leader, John Grainger, was also put on trial accused of “forming illegal combinations”. He would be found guilty and flogged.

The strike itself dragged on until October of the same year. Although not ultimately successful, it was a sign of the struggles to come. The weavers would be at the forefront of further revolts and would strike again in 1812.

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Decisions taken at Holyrood rarely count for much outside Scotland. Often they cause amusement, as in the case of the long-running ferries saga. But in the case of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Act (GRA) that was passed by Holyrood amid lively scenes in December 2022, including a flasher in the public gallery, the issue became one of UK-wide importance.

The measure allowed any resident of Scotland over the age of 16 legally to simply change gender by declaration, without any medical reasons, and living in their new gender for three months.

One remarkable point about the Act’s progress was that MSPs actually voted down an amendment that would have prevented convicted male sex offenders claiming to be women being sent to women’s prisons.

Soon after the passing of the GRA both then Prime Minister Rishi Su-

nak and his Scottish Secretary Alister Jack declared it would be refused Royal Assent on the grounds that the measure will adversely affect the law as it applies in the UK, in particular the 2010 Equality Act. Now the UK Supreme Court has finally given a ruling on the matter to assert that contrary to the GRA a woman is to be defined in strictly biological terms, which effectively declares the Act a dead letter, although curiously it is still listed as Bill in progress on the Scottish Parliament website.

Normally the SNP enjoy having a fight with Westminster and an unelected court based in London, but unsurprisingly this was not a matter to rally the troops.

Despite being passed by a large majority (86 to 39) it was a highly unpopular measure on the street and no less than nine normally loyal SNP MSPs vote against it. That majority was possible only with Labour and the Liberal Democrats joining the Greens in supporting it.

Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar has recently been making a fool of himself by declaring that they wouldn’t have backed it if they’d known then what they know now, which is clearly nonsense as plenty of warnings had been given at the time.

It takes a great deal of skill of unite radical feminists and traditionalist clergy. but Nicola Sturgeon managed it, albeit at the cost of splitting her party, and this was certainly the main cause of her announcing her resignation as First Minister two months later.

The unanimous verdict of the Supreme Court was a clear defeat for the Scottish Government at the hands of the For Women Scotland (FWS) group.

The UK Labour Government said: “We have always supported the protection of single-sex spaces based on biological sex. This ruling brings clarity

and confidence for women and service providers such as hospitals, refuges, and sports clubs. Single-sex spaces are protected in law and will always be protected by this government.”

The SNP Government belatedly said that it “accepts today’s Supreme Court judgment”, adding that “the Supreme Court rightly counselled against reading this judgment as a triumph of one or more groups in our society at the expense of another. It is not.” The SNP have a habit of losing court cases, the outcome of which was perfectly obvious.

Meantime...

...MSPs have just returned from their holidays to boos from the public about their recent wage rise that is generally agreed to be undeserved given their performance.

Ministers have recently had a £19,000 pay rise, which means junior ministers now get £100,575 and Cabinet secretaries £116,125. This is justified as the poor dears have had a 16-year pay freeze. First Minister John Swinney, who survives on a meagre £135,605, piously announced that he would decline the rise.

Since the start of the freeze, they have declined to take their full combined pay entitlement – with about £2.2m of public spending saved as a result since 2009. MSPs’ salaries have just increased from £72,196 to £74,507, which contrasts with the £93,904 received by Westminster MPs, but Holyrood only sits three days a week from Tuesday to Thursday, and that only for a few hours in the afternoon.

Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie said of the rise that: “As the bill for ministerial salaries rises, Scots will be more frustrated than ever to see services continue to decline on the SNP’s watch.”

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Going straight for the jugular!

by Ed Newman

“We bypass politicians and go straight to the aggressors” says Palestine solidarity activist Huda Ammori. In an interview in *Sidecar*, a blog run by the *New Left Review*, one of the founders of Palestine Action outlined the group’s uncompromising strategy to disrupt the Zionist regime’s military supply chain by targeting British arms manufacturers complicit in Tel Aviv’s atrocities.

She emphasised the group’s focus on direct action rather than lobbying towards targeting the Israeli occupation of Palestine and deadly aggression towards Palestinians.

Since its inception in July 2020, Palestine Action has concentrated on dismantling the operations of Elbit Systems, Israel’s largest weapons firm, which maintains several facilities



• Into the fray with Palestine Action!

across the UK.

The group’s tactics include occupying roof-tops, obstructing supply chains and in some cases damaging equipment.

Huda highlighted that these actions aimed to “slow the pace of the violence and make it harder for Israel to carry out its aims”.

Palestine Action con-

tinues to target the Israeli war machine through direct action, with the latest being the Bristol headquarters of Elbit Systems which was dismantled.

Palestine Action’s sustained campaign has led to significant disruptions for Elbit Systems. Notably, the group’s actions have been linked to the permanent closure of Elbit’s factory

in Tamworth, Staffordshire, in March 2024.

Additionally, activists caused substantial damage to Elbit’s subsidiary, Instro Precision, in Kent, reportedly resulting in over a £million-worth of damages and halting production temporarily.

These disruptions have had financial repercussions. In November 2024,

the UK ministry of defence terminated its £2.1 billion Watchkeeper drone contract with Elbit’s subsidiary, UAV Tactical Systems, marking the company’s largest-ever contract loss in Britain.

Huda Ammori expressed scepticism about conventional protest methods, describing them as “state-sanctioned” and ineffective. She argued that mass demonstrations, while drawing large crowds, often fail to translate into meaningful action. “If 100,000 people attended a march, it would only take one per cent of them to shut down most Israeli weapons factories across the country,” she said.

The British government’s response to Palestine Action’s activities has been increasingly stringent. Activists have faced arrests, with some charged under “terrorism” laws.

Despite this, Huda remains resolute, stating that heightened repression

often galvanized more individuals to join the movement.

Palestine Action’s decentralised structure, operating in small, security-conscious groups, has made it challenging for authorities to dismantle the network entirely. This approach is believed to ensure the continuity of their operations even under intense scrutiny.

Looking ahead, Ammori emphasised the importance of international solidarity in challenging the Israeli regime’s military infrastructure.

While acknowledging the significant role of the USA, Israel’s biggest ally that contributes most to its firepower, she highlighted the UK’s strategic importance due to its commercial ties with Tel Aviv. That’s why “driving [Elbit] out is a strategic priority for the anti-colonial movement”.

Radio Havana Cuba

Vietnam: the lost art of the road trip

by Alex Reeves

Poking through the flaming dumpster pile of anonymous posts that masquerade as Hanoi’s webosphere these days, I dodge trolls, suspiciously cheap Honda Wins bikes and absurdly expensive Tay Ho penthouse listings, all in the hope of keeping my finger on the pulse – or at least finding something to talk about.

I finally stumble upon something that resonates, an anonymous post (quelle surprise), reaching out to

find anyone else struggling with the chaos of Vietnam, to the point of packing up and leaving. The first comment, an arrogant troll (of course), insults the author for being “weak” – unaware that on some level, they are proving the very point being made.

Social media here is as toxic as the fumes of our chaotic streets, the hectic nature of this life reflected in the micro-aggressions of our digital connections. The poster is not weak; Vietnam can be chaotic. The traffic, despite recent reform, shows as little sign of decongesting as the

pollution-formed organism that colonised my lungs this winter.

If you have migrated here from the more rural existence of Western suburbia it can be overwhelming. Even the increasingly repetitive celebration of ‘walkable cities’, beneficiaries of the very same urban planning projects we so routinely malign, can leave us contemplating our choice to pitch up in an ever-developing megacity.

Despite approaching 10 years of life in Hanoi, even I question my place in this country. I’ve given the best part of a decade to

Vietnam, but what keeps me here is that as much as it might have taken out of me, it has always returned much more in kind. Life here can be rich – financially, socially, culturally or spiritually. Cliché or not, if you find paid work and friends, it really is what you make of it.

I have always endeavoured to keep this column relatively free of excessive advice or perceived wisdom, fearing it might become a digital soapbox. If, however, any of our readers happen to be considering the exit option, the very least I would suggest

is to wait until the sun comes out. It’s amazing how life seems brighter when the particles we revile are lighting up sunsets, instead of settling down in a gloomy smog.

If I were to give advice, it would be simple: almost everyone I know here who could be characterised as a ‘lifer’ understands the value of a road trip. I cannot overstate how much of an affordable therapy it is to travel this country by motorcycle, into the mountains, through the rice paddies, or out by the coast. Vietnam is so much more than its cities.

Head out and feel the crispness of mountain air, swim in open waters, watch the buffalo roam. Find a homestay, drink ‘happy water’ until you fall over, and recover with a breakfast of banana pancakes. The coming months promise a few long weekends, starting with this one. Don’t sit around in your room pondering your choices when you can own the one you already made. You made it this far; now get out and see what Vietnam has to offer.

VNS

Archimedes’ mirrors and the dawn of a new era in China

by Ding Gang

More than two thousand years ago, atop the walls of Syracuse in Sicily, Archimedes was said to have directed soldiers to raise polished bronze shields. According to legend, these reflective surfaces concentrated sunlight into deadly beams, igniting the sails of Roman warships.

When I stood on a platform to see the vast array of heliostats in the Gobi Desert near Dunhuang, where 12,000 mirrors track the Sun with millimetre-level precision, it suddenly struck me that this ancient Western myth is being constructed on the eastern edge of the world, but on a much grander, more transformative scale.

This reflection was inspired by China’s recently concluded two sessions. Deputies and political advisors discussed the growing role of solar thermal energy, which brought me back to the legend of Archimedes.

I had once been among the millions of visitors awestruck by the murals of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. But it wasn’t until a local friend drove me 20 kilometres westward to a vantage point overlooking a sea of mirrors converging on a 260-metre-tall solar tower that I truly felt the pulse of Dunhuang, an old and new model of Eastern civilisation.

This super mirror power station, built by Shouhang High-Tech

Energy, spans 780 hectares, equivalent to over 1,000 standard soccer fields. Each heliostat, with its 115-square-metre reflective surface, captures the Sun’s image.

The mirrors are laid out in precise mathematical arrays: the outermost circles ripple outward like waves, while the inner circles form dense, honeycomb-like patterns.

While Archimedes’ mirrors only unleashed momentary destruction, China’s mirrors generate enduring vitality.

On the silvered surface of the molten salt storage tanks, I saw the reflection of a global energy revolution. The Dunhuang solar plant produces enough green electricity each year to power local households, freeing them from coal dust. Even more remark-

able is that this entirely home-grown project has spurred innovation across 600 upstream and downstream enterprises, weaving a symphony of energy transformation.

Meanwhile, across the Pacific, Washington’s policymakers seem trapped in a Western war mentality – clinging to outdated notions of competition and dominance.

Canada’s retaliatory tariffs on electrici-

ty exports to the USA have increased costs for American consumers and highlighted the vulnerability of the US grid, especially in the Northeast, which depends on Canadian hydropower due to insufficient domestic capacity.

This is from a nation that once pioneered alternating current and is now dependent on imports to stabilise its grid. It’s a stark contrast GW at the end of 2024, setting a new historical record.

Standing on the observation deck in Dunhuang, I suddenly grasped the more profound metaphor of the energy revolution. As sunlight falls equally on all corners of the Earth, any human-constructed technological barrier is little more than a line drawn in the sand. The American ban on Hua-

essence of the race between civilisations: actual progress is never achieved by extinguishing the light of others but by becoming a brighter source of light yourself. While politicians on Capitol Hill debate whether to ban Chinese batteries, the mirrors in Dunhuang quietly execute nearly 10 million precise adjustments to track the Sun. In this “mirror array” of renewable energy, every nation will ultimately see a reflection of its own future.

Global Times



• Solar power in the Gobi desert.

At noon, sunlight converges at the top of the tower, creating a focal point of heat that reaches 565°C. By nightfall, the stored heat in massive molten salt tanks continues to drive turbines, generating 390 million kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually.

And therein lies the essential difference between the ancient myth and modern technolo-

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Canada: How do we confront US imperialism under Trump?

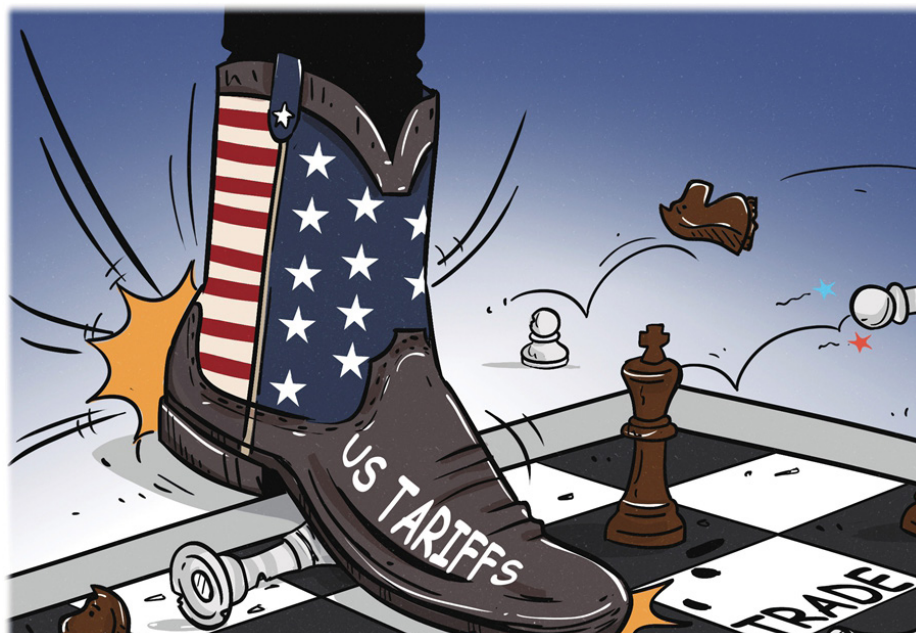
by Jad Kabbanji

Since his re-election in November 2024, Donald Trump has resoundingly reignited debates on American foreign policy. Behind his provocations and aggressive populism lies a central question: are we witnessing a new form of imperialism or a simple tactical transformation of an already well-established system?

The concept of imperialism is too often reduced to geo-political power struggles. This superficial view confuses causes and consequences: rivalries between states are simply the reflection of a deeper logic, that of economic domination by corporate monopolies. Imperialism is not simply a question of military power or political influence, it is above all a global system where large corporations extend their reach to control resources, markets and strategic areas.

Political power in America, controlled by US monopolies, is the archetype. Their hegemony has been built over time on a mixture of soft power (trade agreements, humanitarian aid, mass culture) and hard power (military interventions, sanctions). Under Trump, this balance is shattered. Hard power – blackmailing allies, brutal economic sanctions, targeted interventions – is becoming the dominant tool, while soft power is being partly sacrificed.

This development does not mark a rupture, but an adaptation of an imperialism in crisis, confronted with the rise of China and the exhaustion of a crumbling neo-liberal model.



Militarisation and sabotage

Trump embodies a ruthless logic: to save US hegemony, friends and enemies must be cannibalised. His strategy is based primarily on three interdependent axes.

First, isolate China. Far from the free trade of the 1980s, which allowed Beijing to become a rival, Trump imposed tariffs on Chinese products. The objective is to protect US monopolies while attempting to strangle the Chinese economy.

Second, blackmail NATO. By demanding that member countries increase their military spending to five per cent of GDP, he is imposing massive cuts in social budgets. Public spending – health, education, housing – is being sacrificed to finance the purchase of US weapons, fattening arms giants such as Lockheed Martin and Raytheon.

Finally, sabotage multilateral institutions. The UN, whose budget is being suffocated by the cessation

of payments from the USA, is weakened in its role as conflict regulator. For Washington, this is a god-send: a weakened UN system leaves the field open to military and economic expansionism.

Trump is simply continuing the policies of previous US governments, but in a context that demands a more authoritarian style and methods. Biden razed Gaza while marginalising the UN during the genocidal war, paving the way for Trump, who now speaks of the forced displacement of Palestinians. Similarly, Biden initiated a protectionist policy by taxing Chinese products and renegotiating the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to favour US interests, a policy that Trump is now threatening to implement in practice by imposing a 25 per cent tariff on Canadian and Mexican products.

In reality, Republicans and Democrats are two faces of the same imperialist system, where the methods vary but the objectives remain the same: to serve the monopolies and main-

tain American domination, even if it means plunging the world into chaos.

Servitude to the American Empire

Canada, economically tied to the USA via the USMCA, illustrates the ravages of this imperialist strategy. Quebec's subsoil, rich in strategic minerals such as lithium and rare earths, is already being used by the US military for its high-tech weapons projects. In the West, Alberta's oil sands, exploited by giants such as Exxon and Chevron, symbolise this economic and environmental dependence.

Ottawa, subject to Washington's dictates, plays the 'good boy'. Under threat of trade sanctions, Mark Carney has promised to reach two per cent of military spending by 2030 – a 40 per cent increase in the budget since 2024. This money, diverted from essential public services, is financing massive purchases of US weapons such as F-35s, missile systems and other lucrative contracts for arms

monopolies.

Defence Minister Bill Blair even announced Canada's intention to join Trump's "Iron Dome" missile shield project, a costly programme that strengthens the US military's hold on Canadian territory.

This subservience is not limited to federal circles. Ontario premier Doug Ford, a public critic of Trump, called during a visit to the USA in February 2025 for "working together" to "strengthen economic and security ties". This is a euphemism for validating alignment with Washington's imperialist priorities.

Quebec premier François Legault, for his part, openly argues for Quebec to serve as a bulwark against "China's influence" by supplying the USA with strategic minerals such as lithium, graphite and gallium. "Canada shares the same concerns as the United States regarding China, and we should align ourselves more closely with the US strategy, including adding additional tariffs to the measures already in place," he declared. This discourse transforms Quebec territory into a mere extractive reserve, serving American geo-political ambitions while sacrificing the interests of local communities and the environment.

This widespread submission, at both the federal and provincial levels, reveals a disturbing reality: political leaders in Canada are ready to bow down to the hard cash interests of the monopolies and to sacrifice sovereignty on the altar

of US imperialism.

Only the struggle counts

Far from dividing, Donald Trump's belligerent aggressiveness has the merit of crystallising popular opposition to US interference in Canadian affairs. For peace advocates this momentum represents an historic opportunity. In a context of existential threat and therefore widespread war it is imperative to act now.

Canada, the target of American pressure, must defend itself. But not in the name of a facade of sovereignty, that of leaders who bow to monopolies and NATO. The sovereignty to be defended is popular: it requires the nationalisation of key sectors of the economy, re-industrialisation under public control, and immediate withdrawal from NATO.

These measures are not slogans, but concrete levers to break Washington's imperialist grip. Around them, unions, environmental movements, anti-monopoly parties, anti-war organisations and the people can and must unite. The coming years will be decisive: either we allow humanity to sink into the predatory logic of imperialism, or we build a united front, determined to ensure the triumph of peace and justice. It is up to us to choose, and to act.

Peace is not negotiable; it is won through struggle. And the sovereignty of peoples is not negotiable; it asserts itself!

*People's Voice
(Canada)*