

Iran–Israeli truce holds but war goes on

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

The skies over Tel Aviv and Tehran are unusually quiet this week as the cease-fire holds and secret talks with the Americans resume in renewed efforts to resolve the nuclear issue with Iran. Airports are re-opening, shares rise and oil prices are slipping on the global market following the end of what Donald Trump called the “12 Day War”. But the guns still blaze throughout occupied Palestine as Zionist settler gunmen go on the rampage in the West Bank and seven Israeli soldiers were killed and many more wounded in a resistance attack in the south of the Gaza Strip.

The 11-strong BRICS bloc, which includes People’s China, Russia, Brazil and India, have expressed “grave concerns” over the US strike against three Iranian nuclear facilities last weekend, which they said were a violation of international law and the UN Charter. And in New York, Russia, China and Pakistan tabled a draft resolution at the UN Security Council condemning last week’s American attack on the Iranian nuclear complexes.

Last week the Israelis wheeled out the son of the hated



last Shah of Iran and called for regime change in Tehran and Trump demanded “unconditional surrender”. Now the Israelis lick their wounds as Trump talks about “stability” and the need for new talks with the Islamic Republic.

All sides are, of course, claiming victory. Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian hails what he calls a “great victory”. The Israeli leader, Benjamin Netanyahu says “we have brought down the Iranian nuclear project”, and Trump poses as the great peace-maker who’s bringing all sides to the bargaining table while bragging that his bunker bombs have destroyed the entire Iranian nuclear energy project. Yes, no, maybe...

The Americans certainly stopped the fighting after a curiously theatrical assault on Iranian nuclear facilities – the Iranians were given several hours warning in advance to evacuate the sites – and a similar Iranian reprisal on a key US air base in the Gulf state of Qatar. Not only were the Americans notified in advance of

the raid but later reports revealed that the Iranians had co-ordinated the missile attack with the Qataris as well. Secret Iranian–American talks, possibly involving Turkey and Russia but not Israel, are continuing whatever anyone says in public.

Israel is, perhaps, the biggest loser. They didn’t knock out the Iranian nuclear plants. Their ‘Iron Dome’ and ‘David’s Sling’ failed to stop the Iranian drones and rockets. Swathes of Tel Aviv and Haifa are now in ruins. There was no ‘regime change’ and they had to call for American help to end

the war they had eagerly started.

But as Professor Avishai Ehrlich, a member of the communist-led Democratic Front for

Peace and Equality (Hadash) in Israel, says: “Israel today is part of the US global military power projection. The US military controls what happens in the world from 11 command centres (and hundreds of bases). US allies are subordinated to one or more of them. As long as Israel was isolated in its region, it was assigned to the European Command (as in football), where it was alien and irrelevant. During Trump’s first presidency, after the Abraham Accords were signed in 2021, Israel was transferred to the US Central Command (CENT-COM)...”

“The Middle East will not quieten down until a just solution is found to the Palestinian question, and due to the centrality of the Middle East in global politics, neither will the rest of the world.”

FUND

Third lap of the June fighting fund with £450 in the post. The running total now stands at £1,852 thanks to supporters all over the country, including readers in Hull and Hereford who both gave us a tenner to keep the *New Worker* going along with two London comrades who chipped in with £25 and £20 donations as well as an old friend in Wallasey who sent in another score. Our target – £3,500 per month to help keep our presses rolling.

Make sure that the communist voice is heard every week in every factory, office and neighbourhood across the country by supporting the fighting fund. We are the only communist weekly in Britain. Help us get the word around by keeping our presses rolling. The labour movement as a whole plays a crucial role in the anti-war movement campaigning for peace and a better tomorrow. Let’s get the message across and build the communist movement in Britain now!

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To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here:
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Summer shut-down

Our volunteers will soon be taking their well-earned summer rest.

The last issue of the *New Worker* before our two week summer break will be published on Friday 4th July.

We will be back on Friday 25th July.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

After the guns fall silent...

...real negotiations must begin – and not just on the thorny issue of Iran's nuclear energy industry. The American-inspired truce that some say was brokered at Israel's request may have put the Israeli–Iranian conflict on hold but it hasn't stopped the fighting in Palestine. In occupied Palestine, Zionist gangs spread terror in the West Bank while the Palestinian resistance fights on against a brutal foe who kills scores of civilians every day in what is clearly an attempt to drive the Palestinian Arabs out of their Mediterranean enclave to make room for more Zionist settlement.

Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian leader who signed the Camp David surrender treaty with Israel, once said that the USA held “99 per cent of the cards” in the Middle East and that he relied on the Americans to advance the peace process in the region by “bringing Israel to reason”. The Arab traitor, who was assassinated by Islamic militants in October 1981, was wrong.

Sure – recent events have shown that America can bring “Israel to reason” any time they like as the Zionist entity is a total dependency of the USA. But the Americans, who certainly hold 99 per cent of the cards in Tel Aviv, have little or no sway in the corridors of power in Tehran let alone the Palestinian resistance.

Despite all the talk of “Zionist lobbies” and the “Jewish vote” only the Americans count in Tel Aviv. The Israelis are American puppets that, until recently, enabled the Americans to pose as friends of the feudal Arab kings who allow the Big Oil corporations to plunder their oil in return for a juicy cut and American protection.

Likewise, the Zionist leaders who strut the world posing as independent politicians are just alibis for American aggression in the Middle East. US imperialism provides the military and economic support that keeps Israel going. The country is an American protectorate and their leaders will ultimately do whatever America wants.

Iran is perfectly entitled to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. While Trump and his Israeli and European followers bleat on about Iran's supposed nuclear bomb project, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that the claim by Israel and the USA that the Islamic Republic is secretly building a nuclear weapon is false. Likewise, the continuous monitoring of Iranian nuclear activities by the agency has not unearthed any evidence of departure from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that Iran has signed.

The war goes on in Gaza because that's what American imperialism wants. They want the fighting to continue until Hamas is crushed – because Hamas stands in their way, because the Palestinian resistance sabotaged the American plan for NATO expansion in the Middle East when it launched its raid into Israel in October 2023.

But what the Americans want and what they get is another matter altogether. They failed in Iraq. They failed in Afghanistan. They will fail in Syria and they will fail in the rest of the Middle East.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 led to the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians from their homes. The war continues to this day. The Palestinians fight on and they will continue the struggle until their legitimate rights are restored.

UN resolutions have provided the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. First of all Israel must totally withdraw from all the occupied territories seized in 1967, including Arab East Jerusalem and Syria's Golan Heights. The Palestinians must be allowed to establish a state of their own on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian refugees whose homes are now in Israel must be allowed to return or, if they so wish, be paid appropriate compensation in exchange. And all states in the region, including Israel, should have internationally agreed and recognised frontiers guaranteed by the Great Powers.

by Andrey Kortunov

The recent G7 Summit, which took place in Canada's Kananaskis in June, marked the semi-centennial anniversary of the group. The first top-level meeting of the six most powerful Western nations (G6) was held in Rambouillet, France, in the autumn of 1975, and a year later after accepting Canada as a member the G6 turned into the G7. Since that time, the composition of the group has remained practically unchanged with the exception of 1997–2014, when Russia's participation temporarily expanded the G7 into a larger G8.

The mid-1970s were not the easiest time for the West. Still, half a century ago, the G7 group was an unquestionable leader of the global economy and, in many ways, even a universal symbol of modernity itself. In the 1980s, it accounted for a significant portion of the global GDP measured on the purchasing power parity (PPP) basis. Today, the “Magnificent Seven” accounts for less than one-third of the global PPP GDP.

Even more importantly, the former irresistible magic of the “Magnificent Seven” has faded. These days, the West is no longer perceived by the rest of the world as an indispensable source of technological or social innovations, best management practices in either the public or private sector, or as a unique exhibition of human capital advancement. The universality of Western development trajectories is called into question, and none of the G7 group members can now credibly position themselves as an envied and respected modernisation model to be followed and imitated by other nations.

To put it bluntly, the ageing “Magnificent Seven” can no longer convincingly claim the global leadership it once took

for granted. This does not mean that the G7 should be automatically disqualified as one of the important international actors capable of contributing to more inclusive bodies ranging from the G20 to the UN Security Council. Since the collective West is not going to vanish into thin air tomorrow, the G7 could still remain a legitimate lobbyist for Western interests, trying to shape the international agenda in competition or co-operation with a growing number of explicitly non-Western groups such as BRICS, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, the African Union, the Arab League and others. The problem with the G7 however, lies not only in its relative decline in power and authority, but also in the erosion of its cohesion.

Of course, G7 cohesion has faced many challenges before. Today however, deep disagreements are not limited to specific foreign policy issues; they touch upon the very foundations of Western political systems and values, on which the Western world has been built. The disagreements displayed in Canada were not limited to the Russia–Ukraine or the Israel–Iran conflicts. They included the future of the international trading system, trans-border migrations, AI governance, human rights, drug trafficking and multilateralism at large. The summit also exposed the quasi-multilateral nature of the G7 group: although all the members of the group are formally equal, a single dissenting voice coming from Washington can easily outweigh any concerted positions of the rest of the group.

The Canadian hosts worked hard to make the summit as representative as possible by inviting many high-level guests, including leaders from India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Ukraine, Australia and south Korea, as well as NATO's secretary general. It was however, US President Donald Trump

who got the starring role in this event. The Canadian organisers could have recalled the last G7 Summit they hosted in June of 2018. That meeting revealed so many contentions between the US president and his colleagues that it was dubbed by media as a “G6+1” gathering. This is why, this time, the agenda was carefully crafted by Prime Minister Mark Carney and his team to avoid any sensitive or controversial matters and to focus mainly on technical issues such as mineral supply chains, energy security, disinformation on the internet and the global economic outlook. The real problems were relegated to the level of bilateral consultations.

From the very beginning, expectations for the summit's results have remained low. It was evident even before the event began that there would be no comprehensive communiqué representing unified G7 stances on the key international issues that matter most to the participants. The contrast with the October 2024 BRICS Summit, which resulted in a detailed and comprehensive Kazan Declaration, could not have been more striking!

One can argue that the ongoing disintegration of the formerly consolidated West opens potential opportunities for moving toward a truly multilateral world. Perhaps, in some distant future, North America (the USA along with Canada and Mexico), Europe (the EU) and Northeast Asia (Japan and south Korea) will emerge as independent and self-sufficient global centres of power. In the immediate future however, this centrifugal trend adds uncertainty, volatility and unpredictability to global politics and economy.

The author is the academic director of the Russian International Affairs Council

Global Times

Workers' Notes

No war with Iran!

by New Worker correspondent

More than 350,000 people marched through the heart of the capital last weekend to demand an end to the fighting in Gaza and Iran. Demanding no war with Iran and an end to the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians, the protesters marched from Russell Square to a rally in Whitehall on Saturday in a massive show of solidarity with the Arabs and Iranians confronting imperialism and Zionism in the Middle East.

Jeremy Corbyn condemned the normalisation of atrocities carried out by Israeli forces. And Palestine Solidarity Campaign director Ben Jamal said: "For over 20 months now we have all seen the world turned upside down. We have seen our political leaders try to convince us that what we know is right is actually wrong. That what we see with our own eyes is not really what it seems. That a state slaughtering over 55,000 people and forcibly starving children is not a genocidal state, but a 'democratic ally' we should still sell arms to and trade with normally."

"That the people who should be regarded as terrorists and treated accordingly are not the perpetrators of those barbaric crimes, but those who protest against them."



• Jeremy Corbyn rallies the crowd.

Back to the Workhouse

by New Worker correspondent

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) thinks we should be grateful for the new Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill as almost four million households are to benefit from uprating of the Universal Credit standard rate, and that "more than 200,000 people with most severe, lifelong conditions to be protected from future reassessment for Universal Credit entitlement". Others are not convinced.

Among its 'benefits' will be a 13-week period of financial support for those affected by PIP changes as part of upcoming welfare reforms and a £1 billion employment support package to "unlock opportunity and grow the economy". But the DWP openly declares that even people unable to wash half their body or cook a meal for themselves will be denied PIP if they have no other disabilities.

Even the Government's own press releases give the game away. The promised 13-week period of additional protection "will give people who will be affected by the changes time to adapt", which suggests that they can expect tough times "once they are reassessed and their entitlement ends".

The government claims that the social security system is broken. In particular since the pandemic, too many are claiming Personal Independence Payments (PIP). This was introduced in

2012 to assist adults coping with the extra costs of living with a health condition or a disability. From the beginning it was plagued with difficulties. Tough assessments, carried out by commercial companies, made life hard for claimants – particularly those with mental health problems. A high proportion of appeals against rejections were successful, which confirms they were conducted too harshly. The Government claims that it will be funding greater personalised employment support are not accepted by those at the sharp end.

At the annual TUC Disabled Worker's Conference, Social Security Minister Sir Stephen Timms did not dare show his face in person and only addressed the conference by electronic means, and that with a recorded message. He claims that only 10 per cent of those receiving PIP will lose it and on a more positive note 165,000 more disabled people will be in work in five years' time.

Timms had the brass neck to respond to calls for increased taxation on the rich to boast that this had already been done by introducing VAT on private schools and jets, exemptions on inheritance tax and the doubling of stamp duty on second homes, all of which are very modest measures.

There is also strong evidence that, contrary to its public statements in the Green Paper, ministers are planning to means-test PIP, which would restrict it only to the poorest and most disabled.

This became apparent after a Freedom of Information request showed that ministers and civil servants have been thinking along these lines for years (before Labour came to power), which demonstrates the measure is not the radical plan Labour claims. Labour's latest proposals bear more than a passing resemblance to 2021 Tory plans to merge PIP with Universal Credit.

The *Disability News Service* (DNS) reports that participants in focus groups had been asked questions about who are the deserving sick.

Disabled activist groups claim the Government's consultations have been more of a "consult-a-sham" than the real thing. The only one scheduled for Wales was cancelled.

Speaking for the Greater Manchester Coalition of Dis-

abled People, Rick Burgess said that: "The architects of these policies have two disablist beliefs, that the state should spend less on disabled people and that any benefit for people unable to work incentivises people to claim it, so that must be eliminated."

Svetlana Kotova of Inclusion London pointed out that: "Pushing people who are ill into poverty and destitution does not bring them closer to work. If the government were willing to improve disabled people's lives, it would invest in removing the barriers we face in the workplace and society," but "instead, they choose to cut essential benefits and support."

A spokesman for the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance said that "after 14 years of Tory austerity, Labour is now carrying on where they left off and stepping it up to a new level". He also pointed out that: "The only concrete commitment in their manifesto was to consult and co-produce disability policy with disabled people's organisations. It took them less than a year to trash this pledge and do the opposite."

Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall claims "this legislation represents a new social contract and marks the moment we take the road of compassion, opportunity and dignity" but not everybody is convinced. Oppo-

sition is mounting, beyond the ranks of the usual suspects and the increasingly well organised disability groups. Many normally loyal Labour MPs are waking up to the drastic impact this measure will have on their majorities, sorry, disabled constituents. Vicky Foxcroft, former shadow disability minister, resigned as a junior whip in protest about the measure saying she could not support the cuts that could affect more than a million people.

At Monday's meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Kendall attempted to rally support for the drastic cuts by brazenly claiming that: "Our plans are rooted in fairness, for those who need support and for taxpayers. They are about ensuring the welfare state survives, so there is always a safety net for those who need it. They're about putting proper safeguards in place to protect the most vulnerable." Surprisingly there were no reports of her nose growing after she made these claims.

By Wednesday no less than 127 Labour MPs, almost a half of those with no ministerial responsibilities, have put their names to what is effectively a wrecking amendment. These include 13 Labour Chairs of Committee, and some Ministers might just think about joining them in the lobbies. Even the normally faithful Mayor

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of London has warned the cuts would “destroy [the] financial safety net” of “too many disabled Londoners”.

Only 87 Labour rebels are sufficient to sink the measure, but that depends on whether they really will stand up to threats of de-selection.

Echoing Margaret Thatcher, Chancellor, Rachel Reeves refused to make any concessions, declaring: “There will be no U-turn. We’re voting on it next week.”

Starmer could be in the embarrassing position of the measure passing thanks to the kind offer by Opposition leader Kemi Badenoch of Tory support, if he would only make some modest promise about not raising taxes...

Starmer's 10 Year Plan

by New Worker correspondent

Monday saw the launch of a 10-year industrial strategy by the Starmer government. It promises much without giving any hostages to fortune. Beyond the predictable buzzword bingo terms such as “agile, smart and fair approach to navigating a fragmented, geopolitically volatile, and tech-driven world” it contains much to beware of. It wants stronger connections with the EU energy market, which is part of Starmer's

plans to reverse Brexit, and higher military spending. Talk of reducing “regulatory burdens” will be music to the ears of dodgy businesses as will the fact that Corporation Tax will be limited to 25 per cent. Nothing is said about environmental safeguards, and there were very few references to unions in the document, and that only after mentioning businesses.

The main unions with members in manufacturing industry were broadly favourable. United said it was a good first step but more needed to “go further” and focus more on job creation. One of these was improving the energy system and costs, which can only be achieved by nationalisation, starting with the National Grid.

Another cause for complaint was that the plan needed to be implemented before the planned date of 2027 and afterwards. Sharon Graham, the Unite general secretary, said her union “would like to have seen the government go further. Our energy system is broken beyond repair; it will never function in the interests of business and consumers until it is brought back into public ownership.”

She also said the Government needs “to deal with the decisions to be made in the here and now that affect jobs, like the decision to buy British Typhoons [warplanes] and a clear plan for Grangemouth”.

GMB took a less critical view. General Secretary Gary Smith

said: “This is a big step forward. Businesses across the country were left to wither and die as Conservative governments failed to deliver an industrial strategy for the UK. This is a great opportunity to rebuild our industry, save iconic homegrown sectors like our potteries, and bring good jobs home.” He cautiously added that “as ever, the devil will be in the detail, but at long last we have a grown-up strategy that will allow industry to thrive”.

Community union's Assistant General Secretary, Alasdair McDiarmid, was also positive. “We welcome the launch of the industrial strategy today, which represents a big step in the right direction after long years of neglect and inertia under the previous Conservative Government.” Optimistically adding: “It's clear that we now have a government which is serious about revitalising Britain's manufacturing base and delivering growth across the nations and regions of the UK.” As might be expected he welcomed outdoor relief for the steel industry, but that might be a bit too late.

Prospect also joined in the applause. General Secretary Mike Clancy said: “There is much to welcome in the strategy, including the focus on developing high growth sectors like energy, defence, tech and the creative industries, and on creating high wage jobs in every region and nation.”

Curiously the TUC had nothing to say, only the Welsh TUC

expressed approval. Perhaps that is because many public sector unions will not be delighted about the increase in military spending that is an important component of the plan which may or may not be translated into action.

USA out of Korea!

by New Worker correspondent

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined other Korean solidarity activists outside the US embassy in London last week to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War and call for an end to the American occupation of south Korea.

The Friday evening protest was called by the Korean Friendship Association (KFA) whose chair, Dermot Hudson, said: “We are here today in front of the US Embassy, the embassy of the American empire, the empire of evil, because on the 25th June it

will be the 75th anniversary of the provocation of the Korean War by the US imperialists and their puppets. The Korean War never really ended because no peace treaty was ever concluded only an armistice.” He also said that the US imperialists wanted to invade the DPR Korea not only to destroy the socialist system but also to seize the valuable rare earth deposits of the DPRK.

A message of support was received from KFA Germany, which was read out. In part, the message said: “Until this day 30,000 US-soldiers occupy the southern part of the Korean peninsula. Until today the US have nuclear weapons stationed in South Korea and they still continue their aggressive military manoeuvres against the DPRK. That is why it is so important to show solidarity with socialist Korea and openly fight against the US-aggression. Your picket here in front of the US embassy in London today is an important part in the fight against the US imperialist aggression.”



• Outside the American embassy.

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

1st July

The Identity Cards Bill scraped through its second reading in the House of Commons with a majority of just 31, with 314 votes in favour and 283 against.

Twenty Labour MPs voted against it, reflecting the growing opposition to the whole scheme now that its full implication and costs are known.

The Bill will now go to the House of Lords, where it is likely to meet stiff opposition and some serious amendments. Then it will be back to the Commons for the third reading; this is where it is likely to meet increased

opposition from MPs and the real battle is expected. So there is every reason to keep pressure on MPs to vote against it.

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Mark Oaten said on Tuesday evening: “Tonight Britain has taken the first step towards a changed society where people need to have their fingerprints scanned to see their doctor.”

Prime Minister Blair and Home Secretary Charles Clarke are well aware that the scheme is losing popularity – and to bolster the flagging resolve of Labour MPs they promised to cap the costs of the ID card.

Clarke told MPs that the biometric passport, containing fingerprints and an iris scan, would cost £65. An ID card would be issued at the same time for another £25–£30.

Those who change address will be legally bound to notify the authorities – and pay heavily for the changes to be recorded on the database. Anyone accidentally losing or damaging their card will have to pay for a new one. Fines

for refusal to comply with any of these requirements will be thousands of pounds.

The massive computer database will carry around 50 pieces of personal information about every one of us, including a record of who has asked for access to the information. Every time we borrow money, go to hospital, join a library or whatever it will be recorded.

There are now a growing number of campaigns against ID cards, including NO2ID, a cross-party non-partisan campaign, which has currently raised a legal fund of over £61,000 to support those who want to make a stand by refusing to subject themselves to be scanned.

This is the Bill's weakness, the whole system will be so large, unwieldy and difficult to administer that a significant number of people refusing to comply will make it impossible, just like the poll tax.

The illusion of Israeli military invincibility

by JE Rosenberg

For decades, Israel has cultivated a myth of military invincibility – a myth eagerly repeated in Western media, echoed in Congressional speeches and treated as an unshakable truth in American foreign policy circles. But peel back the layers of propaganda and the reality is far different.

Israel's military reputation has been built not on consistent battlefield prowess, but on surprise attacks against weaker foes, American sponsorship, and colonial repression dressed up as 'defence'. Far from a model of strength, Israel's military record reveals a pattern of over-reach and failure.

This same historical sequence is on display once again in the latest war launched against Iran by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. With the Trump administration racing to get its forces in line to back Israel, it's worth reviewing the record of past conflicts.

The 1967 mirage

The illusion of Israeli military superiority began with the 'Six-Day War' in 1967. Israel launched a surprise pre-emptive strike on 5th June that year against the air forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, destroying most of their equipment before a single plane got off the ground.

The war was short, brutal and decisive. Israel seized huge swaths of land, including the Sinai peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Gaza. Western observers swooned over what they described as a "David versus Goliath" victory, ignoring the reality that it was David who struck first and Goliath was already limping.

The Arab armies were poorly co-ordinated, ill-prepared and politically frac-



• 1973 October War: Israeli POWs in Egyptian hands.

tured. Egypt's military – the strongest of the three – was still reeling from a previous disastrous intervention in Yemen. Syria was in the midst of dealing with internal instability. As for Jordan, it was dragged into the war by a series of misleading reports and geopolitical pressure.

Israel's victory, then, was not a testament to unmatched military power; it was a well-planned ambush against disorganised adversaries.

Humbling defeat in 1973

The air of invincibility didn't last long. In 1973, on Yom Kippur – the holiest day in the Jewish calendar – Egypt and Syria launched a co-ordinated attack to retake the territory they lost in 1967. Israeli forces were caught off guard.

In the Sinai, Egyptian troops crossed the Suez Canal under heavy fire, destroying Israeli defences with surprising effectiveness. In the north, Syrian forces pushed into the Golan Heights.

It took weeks, massive US airlifts of weapons and sup-

plies, and a near-nuclear alert to stabilise Israel's position.

Despite eventually pushing back the Arab armies, the war damaged the myth of Israeli military dominance. Israel was forced to acknowledge that it could not endlessly occupy Arab land and remain in a state of perpetual war.

The conflict set the stage for Israel's eventual peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, which required Israel to retreat from the largest territory it conquered in 1967 and return the Sinai peninsula to Egypt. It wasn't Israeli strength that secured peace, but Israel being forced to at least partially accept its own limits.

The Lebanon quagmire

Whatever lessons Israel might have learned were quickly forgotten a couple of years later when the country's leaders attempted another offensive in 1982, this time in Lebanon.

Using the pretext of targeting the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that was using Lebanon as a staging ground to organise its forces

against Israeli occupation, Israel invaded southern Lebanon at a time when that country was consumed by a multi-sided civil war. What followed was a long, bloody entanglement, military quagmires, war crimes and eventual defeat.

Israeli forces laid siege to Beirut, committed atrocities in collaboration with far-right Lebanese militias (such as the Sabra and Shatila massacres), and ended up occupying southern Lebanon for nearly two decades.

Far from securing northern Israel, however, the occupation radicalised a new generation of resistance fighters – most notably Hezbollah, thereby creating a much more powerful adversary.

When Israel finally retreated in 2000, it did so under the cover of night, abandoning outposts, weapons and prestige. Hezbollah, the very force Israel had hoped to crush, filled the vacuum and inherited its military equipment and outposts.

2006: Hezbollah fights back

In 2006, Israel returned to Lebanon under the banner of rescuing kidnapped soldiers. What began as a punitive strike quickly devolved into another humiliating campaign.

Hezbollah, now battle-hardened and better equipped, inflicted significant casualties on Israeli forces, fired rockets deep into Israeli territory, and stood its ground despite Israel's overwhelming firepower – funded and supplied by the USA.

The war lasted just over a month but Israel achieved none of its stated objectives. It failed to retrieve the captured soldiers (they were later returned in a prisoner swap), failed to destroy Hezbollah and failed to re-establish deterrence. A commission of inquiry in Israel itself concluded that the war was a strategic failure. The 'invincible' army had been exposed again.

Genocide in Gaza

Now, more than two years into a full-scale war in Gaza, a small territory Israel has starved for decades, it is once again trapped in a military quagmire of its own making. After launching what it claimed would be a decisive campaign to "destroy Hamas" Israel has found itself bogged down in a bloody war, facing continuous resistance and growing international condemnation.

Gaza lies in ruins, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed, and yet Hamas remains the most powerful Palestinian organisation in the territory. Not only has Israel failed to eliminate it, but Hamas continues to operate militarily and politically even amid constant bombardment, while finding new allies and sympathisers from around the

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globe.

Meanwhile, the cost to Israel is mounting. Economically, the war has strained Israel's economy, reduced foreign investment and dragged down its global credit ratings. Politically, its 'moral standing' in the West is in freefall. Militarily, its vaunted image of supremacy lies increasingly broken.

War with Iran

Now, Israel has em-

barked on its latest military misadventure. Still believing their own propaganda about the strength of its armed forces, the country's leaders have once again launched a surprise attack – this time not on a fragmented militia or smaller neighbouring state, but on a far more formidable opponent: Iran.

While Israel managed to land a few militarily impressive opening strikes – achieved through deception and surprise – it now finds itself under a relentless barrage from powerful

ballistic missiles capable of penetrating even its US-funded air defence systems.

The cost of this reckless campaign is mounting. Each strike on Iranian territory burns through massive quantities of jet fuel, while Israel's stockpiles of missile defence interceptors are rapidly depleting.

Meanwhile, civilian infrastructure is being destroyed, civilian casualties are rising, and the world is beginning to see the truth: Israel lacks both the capacity and the strategy to achieve its stated objectives of dis-

mantling Iran's nuclear programme or toppling its government.

As panic sets in, Israel appears increasingly desperate for the USA to intervene, hoping that American forces can accomplish what the Israeli military cannot. Of course, such a move would ignore a long and bloody history – the U.S. military's own string of failed adventures across the Middle East. Once again, the illusion of military might risks dragging the region into deeper chaos.

At every stage, Israel's supposed mili-

tary strength has relied on surprise attacks, the selection of weaker opponents, and total US backing – not on strategic brilliance or moral legitimacy. When confronted with protracted conflict against capable resistance forces, Israel has repeatedly faltered.

The myth of Israeli invincibility has long been weaponised to justify endless US military aid, occupation, apartheid and colonial expansion. But myths don't win wars. They don't defeat peoples fighting with determination for liberation and nation-

al survival. And they certainly don't hide the truth that Israel's war machine is not a symbol of strength, but a mask for deep political, strategic and ethical weakness.

History is clear. When the tide of war turns, Israel either retreats or gets bogged down and battered. Now, facing a far stronger adversary in Iran, it is waging a war it cannot win. And in the meantime, civilians on both sides are paying the price – because Israel's leaders still believe their own lies.

People's World (USA)

Trump, the migrant struggle and US imperialism's deepening crisis

The following is an interview with Monica Moorehead, a *Workers World* managing editor who has been a member of Workers World Party (WWP) for 50 years, by the blogger Oscar Díaz.

How does WWP view Donald Trump's rise to power?

Trump's rise to power for the second time is tied to a deepening global economic crisis based on our party's premise that capitalism is at a dead end. US imperialist hegemony is weakening as each day passes, as is shown by events in Gaza accompanied by the heroic Palestinian resistance and the rest of the Middle East rising up; by China's rise as an economic power based on its socialist perspective; and by the growing BRICS alliance that challenges the declining US dollar and much more.

Confronted with these global challenges, the Democratic Party offered no real alternatives during the 2024

election for the vast majority of people in the USA, who face threats to their already declining living standards. Another important factor to Trump's rise to power was that the 'Genocide Joe' Biden administration bankrolled the racist ethnic cleansing in Gaza with tens of billions of dollars of deadly weapons, which the USA provided to the Zionist, settler-colonial Israeli regime.

The presidential campaign of Kamala Harris, a former California prosecutor of poor, Black, single mothers, not only failed to condemn this genocide but publicly declared her staunch support for the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu.

In summary, the rise of the ultra-right, white supremacist, neo-fascist

forces Trump represents is in large part because the Democratic Party leadership abandoned even the pretence of defending the working class from the neo-liberal assault on wages and social services. It was telling that at a time when the overwhelming majority of the US working class is one pay cheque away from ruin, the Democratic political leaders said nothing substantially meaningful about wages, health care and housing.

Many white US voters viewed the demagogue Trump as a candidate representing their interests, when in reality Trump represents the interests of the billionaires' ruling class.

Are there really significant differences in the treatment of immigrants

between the Republican and Democratic administrations?

In essence, there are no fundamental differences between the Democrats and Republicans. Consider the fact that under the Barack Obama two-term administration, there were more deportations of migrants – an estimated two million – compared with any other administration, Republican or Democrat.

There are certainly some tactical differences that exist between these two pro-capitalist parties. Trump is indiscriminately targeting migrants from Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, be they documented or undocumented. He has unleashed terrorist ICE [US Immigration and Customs Enforcement]

agents on workplaces, schools, health care facilities and places of worship under the guise of deporting people he slanders, calling them "criminals", "rapists" and "drug dealers".

The Democrats seek a more 'humane' immigration policy of deporting migrants without documentation and setting up quotas for who will be accepted as citizens. The fact is historically that US immigration policy is rooted in the US history of a state built on land stolen from the First People, the Indigenous nations, and also the US enslavement of African peoples.

The WWP has Spanish-speaking members. What criticism does the WWP maintain against the USA's use of ICE detention centres against

Mexican, Salvadoran, Colombian and Caribbean immigration?

These detention centres are privately run by Wall Street corporations that make lucrative profits from repressive conditions of overcrowding, lack of hygiene and health care, horrible food and guard brutality. There was a recent rebellion against inhumane conditions that took place at an ICE detention centre in Newark, New Jersey, where four detainees escaped.

Ever since the early 1970s, our party worked with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and declared that the prisons inside the USA are nothing more than concentration camps for the poor, people of colour and the workers.

Today, we should say

that detention centres are also concentration camps on a global scale. Why? Mass incarceration is a global crisis for the working class, especially with the Trump administration deporting migrants to Guantanamo – Cuban soil illegally occupied by the USA – and also the notorious Terrorism Confinement Center in El Salvador.

Donald Trump has already threatened Iceland, Canada and the immigrant population of the USA. Could this further exacerbate the problems faced by countries invaded or destabilised by the USA in the last century? Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the economic blockade of Cuba and Venezuela, etc.

Trump has targeted Canada and Greenland for expansion of the US empire. He has delusions of grandeur with dreams of becoming the emperor of the vast majority of the world by capturing whole countries to exploit their peoples and resources, reminiscent of the days of the Roman Empire. It is no coincidence that Canada and Greenland are home to Indigenous peoples who are still fighting for their right to sovereignty and self-determination.

And yes, if Trump were able to get his wish, it would greatly negatively impact countries such as Haiti, Puerto Rico, Panama and the Philippines with populations who are living under the thumb of neo-colonial status created by US imperialism. And then there are Cuba and Venezuela whose economies and sovereignty are under attack by decades-long US-enforced economic blockades, sanctions and other forms of economic and political sabotage.



• This is America.

Is Trump leading the USA toward fascism, or have similar cases of repression like those currently being experienced in California already been seen?

There is no denying that Trump certainly has fascist tendencies when it comes to attacking the democratic rights – even under a bourgeois democracy – for migrants, other people of colour, trans people, women, people with disabilities, federal workers, etc. These attacks extend to the working class on a global scale, when you include the Palestinians and the Middle Eastern masses.

But we are not living under a fascist state such as Germany starting in 1933 and Italy from the early 1920s, where the rights of the workers were abolished under a military-police dictatorship until the end of the Second World War, or Spain from the defeat of the Republic in 1939 until the late 1970s after the death of Francisco Franco.

Everyone should be put on notice that Trump is attempting to fortify a police state in anticipation of workers and oppressed-led rebellions that will be inevitable in response to a worsen-

ing economic crisis. His deploying the National Guard and the Marines during the Los Angeles protests is a test case for such other rebellions. The strengthening of the repressive state apparatus made up of local, state and federal agencies could bring the country one step closer to martial law.

If the expulsion of immigrants was supposedly only for those considered 'illegal', why did ICE forces also detain Latin American workers who had been in the country for years, paying taxes and working?

ICE was set up in 2003 as an extension of the Department of Homeland Security supposedly to safeguard "the United States from transnational crime and illegal immigration that threaten national security". In reality, ICE is a repressive agency to terrorise migrants on the Mexican border and now in the cities. ICE has not differentiated citizens from non-citizens under Trump.

ICE plays on racism and xenophobia to justify the arrest, detainment, deportation or even their killing anyone they deem as looking 'foreign', especially if they are

from oppressed countries. There is a popular saying that says: "We did not cross the border. The border crossed us."

How is the invasion of California by federal forces being experienced in the rest of the USA?

Activists in cities, large and small, are facing the police and ICE in their own cities and refuse to be intimidated by this growing militarisation. In fact, these activists have become inspired by the anti-ICE resilience on full display in Los Angeles, despite the attacks with batons, tear gas, flash grenades, etc. It is truly heartening to see all of the creative anti-ICE tactics being used to push back ICE, such as the blocking of streets and highways, sit-ins, banner droppings and more.

Why do we see the Mexican flag in these riots?

First to be clear, we don't view the current situation in Los Angeles as being a riot. We either say uprising or rebellion, especially when the oppressed are leading it such as the migrants or Black people who resist daily repression

and oppression ignited by police brutality or deplorable living conditions on a daily basis. And whenever there is an uprising, bourgeois pundits and the mainstream media falsely characterise it as being a "riot" with senseless violence.

The real violence under class society in the USA is rooted in state repression from the police, ICE, the prisons, the courts, the military, etc that the billionaires' ruling class must have at their disposal to hang on to their class rule over the oppressed. As Dr King stated in 1966: "Violence is the language of the unheard." The word "unheard" refers to oppressed people who are voiceless, disenfranchised and marginalised within the larger society.

So the flying of the Mexican flag represents the voice of oppressed workers forced to leave their homeland to find work in the USA or other imperialist countries such as France or Germany due to the super exploitation of developing countries by US imperialism. Los Angeles and the state of California on the whole are historically part of Mexico, stolen in war by the USA in 1848. The origin of most of the migrants being targeted by ICE is Mexico and Central America.

Far-right media and some sects are accusing these riots of being full of anarchy and "woke ideology". What do you think of these accusations?

These accusations are false diversions from the real issue of building class unity and solidarity to effectively fight a common enemy, which is the capitalist class and its repressive apparatus. The far-right media, which is part

of the bourgeois state, wants to keep the working class divided and fighting amongst itself to maintain capitalist rule.

What do you think the labour movement in the USA lacks? From the outside, it seems incohesive.

The impotence of the US labour movement goes beyond being incohesive. The main problem is its political orientation. The severe anti-communist period in the 1950s pushed most communists out of the union movement. It left mostly anti-communists in the leadership of the AFL-CIO [the American union federation], and those remaining have been in the back pocket of the ruling class, especially connected to the Democratic Party since the end of that period, called McCarthyite because of its connection with Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin.

Every four years during the presidential election, millions of dollars of rank-and-file dues monies are diverted to support some Democrat that makes promises for higher wages and better benefits for the workers, which never happen. This leadership also tries to discourage its members from taking on important political issues such as Gaza, but this hasn't stopped millions of workers from expressing their solidarity with the demand to stop the genocide and to free Palestine.

It is important to show support for other workers' formations that are to the left of the AFL-CIO leadership, such as Starbucks Workers United, Amazon Labor Union and the Southern Workers Assembly that encourage independent political organising away from the Democratic Party.

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

After 1945, the USA unleashed a global programme of systematic anti-communism in targeting the Soviet Union and the influence of communists linked to it. In fact, the 'Truman Doctrine' was a policy epitomising the 'containment' of communism.

The end of the Second World War and Franklin D Roosevelt's (FDR) death in 1945 provided the right time and circumstance to destroy the New Deal coalition. The specific target for this project became a massive purging of communist and socialist influence. In this way, the coalition that had produced FDR's New Deal could be broken. Anti-communism quickly became the battering ram with which to do that. Almost overnight, the Soviet Union went from close ally (Well!) to demon enemy, whose agents were everywhere in communist parties operating as arms of an effort to "control the world". This "threat" (long before today's "threat") had to be contained, repelled and eliminated.

In the USA, people in the communist party (and not!) were arrested, imprisoned and deported, in a wave of anti-communism that quickly spread to socialist parties in general. Communism, in thought, had to be driven back and out of the USA and the rest of the world. As far as possible, domestic and foreign policy of the USA became, therefore, centrally focused

on anti-communism.

The USA after 1945 had the world's largest economy and the most powerful military. It also wielded the dominant political power position. Hence it held the central position in crafting the United Nations, World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc, etc. And once the USA committed itself to total anti-communism, its allies and most of the rest of the world followed suit, more or less, as their domestic situations enabled or allowed.

China's successful communist revolution of 1949, however, under Mao's leadership, 'provoked' even more heightened anti-communism. Indeed, it reached hysterical dimensions, culminating in the public campaigns of US Senator Joseph McCarthy. 'McCarthyism' became a general label attached to such political hysteria. Suddenly, many professors with strong or weak sympathies for socialist critiques of capitalism found that their work could no longer get published. Thus, the teaching profession received the same message that had swept across the trade unions, Hollywood and the American public in general. The number one enemy of the USA was, now, most definitely communism, socialism, and of course the Soviet "evil empire".

Around the world, American foreign policy likewise targeted communism and socialism. Examples include Guatemala and Iran (1954), Cuba (1959-61), Vietnam (1954-75), South Africa (1945-94), amongst many, many others.

Anti-communism was also the central theme and focus of US military policies in the post-1945 nuclear age. The USA established a ring of military bases surrounding the Soviet Union, then the

Soviets' allies in Eastern Europe, then China, north Korea (DPRK) and so on.

Sometimes 'regime change' was the form taken by the global anti-communist project, when and where local conditions made that possible. Earlier, in their post-Second World War period (after the defeat of the USA by communist north Korea in the Korean War 1950-53) Iran's Mosaddegh fell victim, as did Guatemala's Arbenz. In 1965-66 the mass killings of Indonesian communists cost the lives of up to three million people. Anti-communism was also the major theme and preoccupation of US policies in and for Latin America for subsequent decades.

Both communists and socialists have rediscovered that it is never repression itself, however, but how a repressed movement copes with repression that determines its ultimate effect. Marxist communism and socialism have, despite the endless provocations of capitalism, made really major achievements and changes and emerged in the 21st Century stronger than ever with renewed power and influence.

**A McKerl
Fife**

Dear Comrades

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you as a volunteer who has dedicated my own time to raise urgent concerns regarding the current trajectory of the Labour Party under Prime Minister Keir Starmer. I am reaching out to multiple socialist organisations across the UK and internationally to share these reflections and to urge unity and collaboration in confronting the dangerous direction our movement faces.

Recently, Prime Minister Starmer issued a statement endorsing the US strike on Iran.

This endorsement of

aggressive military action signals a disturbing alignment of the UK government with US imperialism, escalating tensions in the Middle East and directly threatening the safety of people in the UK, Europe, and beyond. The UK's siding with America drags us closer to a war that is not ours to fight, endangering working-class communities and undermining international peace.

While much public attention has focused on Labour's domestic policy shifts, the party's geopolitical stance demands equal scrutiny. International socialist organisations such as the Party of European Socialists, the Progressive Alliance and the Socialist International have issued clear statements advocating for peace and justice in Palestine and the wider Middle East, including:

- The Party of European Socialists' call for a permanent end to the war in Gaza
- The Progressive Alliance's principles and framework for peace
- The Socialist International's condemnation of Israeli attacks in Gaza

Yet under Starmer's leadership, the Labour government maintains close ties with Israel; including intelligence sharing and military cooperation with Israel – contradicting these international commitments. Palestine Action's powerful statement, posted as a quote tweet directly to Keir Starmer on Twitter – "It is YOUR responsibility to not be a war criminal. It is YOUR responsibility to not play an active military role in genocide. Now, it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to stop what YOU have allowed" – captures the urgent need for accountability.

Their courageous direct

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

UNTIL 15 JULY

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

UNTIL 25 JUL

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

MON 30 JUNE

Campaign Against the Arms Trade: Barclays Stop Serving Genocide. 10:00, protest at Church Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 5AE, outside Centre Court.

WED 2 JULY

Stop the War Coalition: Workplace Day of Action. 12:00 Nationwide events.

THURS 3 JULY

Venezuela Solidarity Campaign: Sanctions Kill – US out of Venezuela & Latin America! 18:30, Online Rally. Register on Eventbrite.

THURS 3 JULY

Marx Memorial Library: Andrew Whitefield on Dan Chatterton and his *Atheistic Communist Scorchers*. 18:30, In person, MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU.

FRI 4 JULY

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Independence from America demonstration. 15:00-19:00, Kettlesing Millennium Village Hall, Crag Lane, Kettlesing, Crag Lane, Harrogate HG3 2LB.

SAT 5 JULY

International Brigade Memorial Association: Annual commemoration. 13:00-14:00, IB memorial, Jubilee

Gardens, Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PG; then Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE.

SAT 6 JULY

Korea Friendship Association Scotland: Meeting. 16:00-18:00, Argyll Hotel, 793 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G3 7TQ.

MON 7 JULY

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Defend Chris Nineham & Ben Jamal: Defend the right to protest. 09:30-11:30, City of London Magistrates Court, 1 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4N 4XY.

SAT 12 JULY

Durham Miners Gala from 8:30 in Durham City Market Place.

SAT 12 JULY

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Conference on 20 years of Boycott, Divestments Sanctions campaigning. 10:15-16:30, Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, London SW1H 9NH.

THUR 17 JULY

Marx Memorial Library: Class Struggle, the State & the General Strike, Panel Discussion on Red Friday 1925. 17:30, Hybrid event. Book on MML website.

FRI 18-SUN 20 JULY

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival. Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle, Dorset DT2 7EH. Book on TM website.

SAT 26 JULY

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Oppose US nuclear weapons in Britain. Vigil 12:00-14:00, RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 9PS.

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

actions targeting companies complicit in Israeli military production and disrupting military operations linked to Gaza demonstrate the seriousness of resisting Labour's complicity in imperialist wars.

In light of these issues, I believe we must put sustained pressure on international socialist organisations such as the Party of European Socialists, the Progressive Alliance, and the Socialist International to take a firmer stance by cutting ties, defunding any entities complicit in these injustices, and ultimately banning the UK Labour Party from affiliation and observer status within these bodies due to its current direction. This also extends to Labour Party-affiliated trade unions, which must sever connections and withdraw financial support. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to encourage Labour MPs, councillors, and mayors to resign en masse from their Labour whip and party membership in protest against the party's betrayal of socialist principles and its complicity in military co-operation with Israel.

I am also appalled by other issues, including the ongoing disability benefit reforms, which further highlight the party's departure from its foundational values of justice and equality. Many disabled people are deeply worried about these changes, as the proposed cuts to Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit health elements threaten to push vulnerable individuals into greater hardship. Despite some Labour MPs opposing these cuts, the govern-

ment's plans continue to cause significant anxiety within the disabled community.

Additionally, we must promote a boycott of US products, goods, and companies operating here in the UK. By refusing to purchase from these corporations, we can reduce the flow of funds that indirectly reach the US Treasury and finance ongoing wars in the Middle East, including those supporting Israel's military actions.

Since the Iraq war in the 2000s, we have witnessed a profound shift in the Labour Party's politics. With the return of a Labour government under Prime Minister Starmer – who represents a 'red Tory' approach rather than the socialist vision championed by Jeremy Corbyn – we face the urgent need for socialist organisations to unite and collaborate in opposing this betrayal. Only through collective pressure and solidarity can we challenge Labour's international affiliations and domestic policies that betray working-class interests.

This is a critical moment for socialist organisations to reaffirm our commitment to peace, justice, and international solidarity. The Labour Party's current trajectory betrays these principles and risks enabling imperialist wars that devastate working-class people globally.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter. I look forward to your thoughts and to working together in solidarity to oppose war and imperialism.

AN Other

Correspondent wishes to remain anonymous but name and address supplied

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

This week we take a look at issues facing the Highlands and Islands, where the results of two recent council by-elections saw the SNP do badly. One was for the Cromarty Firth ward, where an Independent resigned citing the level of abuse she was receiving. Just under a quarter of the electorate turned out.

On the first count the SNP topped the poll on 23.8 per cent, however one of the two Independents standing finally came out top after no less than nine counts to secure an absolute majority. Reform UK came fourth on 15.4 per cent, just above the Liberal Democrat. The Green narrowly beat Alba, with Labour coming second last above the Tory.

In the same region, but on the other side of the country in the Eilean a' Cheò (basically the Isle of Skye plus some rocks), the contest was again caused by another Independent standing down. The turnout was a healthier 40.1 per cent but the outcome broadly similar, with the victorious Independent only needing eight counts to win.

The first preference votes gave the victorious Independent 23.5 per cent, with two other Independents on 18.7 and 7.9. The Liberal Democrat secured 21.1 (this was the late Charles Kennedy's Parliamentary seat), the Green on 6.8 with Reform on an unusually low 4.5 and the Tories on 2.5. Labour and Alba who both stood in 2022 did not bother turning up this time round.

While the Independent tradition makes it unwise to read much into these figures, they clearly do not make happy reading for the

main parties, but particularly so for the SNP who have traditionally been strong up north.

Break-Up

A new addition to that Independent tradition is Fergus Ewing, the hereditary MSP for Inverness & Nairn since 1999, who got himself automatically expelled from the SNP after he announced he was standing as an Independent at the next Holyrood elections. Although he was an approved candidate, he did not fight to secure the party's nomination for his seat, which is already filled.

This is just another headache for John Swinney as the seat will now have two rival nationalist scrabbling for the same pool of votes. Swinney publicly expressed regret, but he will be glad to see the back of the man whose announcement included views such as "I believe the SNP has lost its way and that devolution itself, presently, is letting Scotland's people down". To rub salt into the wound he added: "Too much power rests unchecked in the hands of party leaders, free to choose candidates who will slavishly support them, rather than stand up for the people who sent them to Holyrood. Choosing the pliant over the talented."

Of the party machinery he said: "The idea that the SNP machine is a finely tuned Rolls-Royce is, sadly, not true. Headquarters was barely functioning at the last election. The machine is now out of oil and probably spends more time in the garage than on the road."

Ewing has many axes to grind. One particular bugbear of his is the failure to improve the main north-south road, which he says is vital from both economic and safety viewpoints.

Ewing expects the SNP to do everything to defeat him. On Sunday he said: "I'm sure the party will

fling everything into it. Every effort. The kitchen sink and perhaps even the camper van."

The former minister is on the right-wing of the party and had previously been suspended for voting the wrong way in the confidence vote on the former Green minister Lorna Slater. But his hatred for the Greens is more widely shared within the SNP membership than the leadership admit.

All at Sea, Or Not

Another major issue to the Highlands & Islands are the essential shipping services, which have not been very efficient for some time. The latest piece of bad news for islanders is that one of the ships drafted in to replace an ageing vessel is itself out of action. This is on top of another ancient three ferries on different routes that are out of action, and one is having its capacity cut on safety grounds. The 32-year-old MV *Caledonian Isles* has been under repair since the start of last year but hopes that it would return to action have been dashed. The cost of repairs is only slightly less than the purchase cost of a replacement ship (hired from the owners of the Orkney service) to replace it and the bill for chartering another is £22 million for a ship the owner bought for £8 million.

On the mainland to Arran route, islanders are furious that the harbour at Ardrossan has not been modified to take the newest ships. Its owner, Peel Ports, seem to be holding out for a bigger grant to make modifications.

Three years ago a Freedom of Information request from the Free Church of Scotland's North Uist & Grimsay presbytery revealed that ferry breakdowns increased drastically following the introduction of Sabbath sailings in July

2009. Mechanical breakdowns rose from three in six months before July 2009 compared with six in the next three months, followed by an increasing number of breakdowns which continues to this day. Some see these figures as evidence of divine wrath, but we need look no further than the lesser authority of the SNP government who were incredibly slow to replace ships as they came to the end of their natural lives. Managing the construction of those ships that have actually been ordered is an even bigger scandal. One of these is finally in service, at five times the original cost, but the second has been further delayed, with its funnels having to be removed.

Among the many spitting blood at the disruption caused are the organisers of the Ceòlas Summer School, the annual Gaelic music and dance festival in South Uist in the Outer Hebrides, assuming anyone can get to it as the regular ferry is in for repairs at the height of the tourist season.

By a remarkable coincidence, at the same time Holyrood unanimously passed a Scottish Languages Act, which is supposed to promote Gaelic which is still spoken amongst communities in the Highlands & Islands. But Labour MSP Michael Marra says: "This Bill does nowhere near enough to protect the Gaelic language. Without economic development in the heartlands, we know that the prospects for Scotland's ancient language are bleak."

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Say No to Palestine Action Ban!

by New Worker
correspondent

A peaceful protest in central London this week ended with clashes with the police in Trafalgar Square following the arrest of demonstrators protesting against the Government's decision to ban Palestine Action as a "terrorist organisation".

The draconian move to outlaw the direct action solidarity campaign followed the damage to two military planes at RAF Brize Norton, where flights leave daily for RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, a base used for military operations in Gaza and across the Middle East. Two Palestine Action activists broke into base using electric scooters to swiftly manoeuvre towards the planes. They used repurposed fire extinguishers to spray red paint into the turbine engines of two Airbus Voyagers and caused further damage using crow-bars. Red paint, symbolising Palestinian bloodshed, was also sprayed across the runway and a Palestine flag was left on the scene. Both activists managed to evade security and arrest.

By putting the planes out of service, these activists have interrupted Britain's direct participation in the commission of genocide and war crimes across the Middle East. The RAF have flown hundreds of surveillance missions from Akrotiri in support of Israel's genocide in Gaza, and the base is also used for UK and US military cargo transports to the Israeli military.

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who now heads the Independent Alliance in parliament, called the proscription of Palestine Action "an absurd and authoritarian crackdown on the right to oppose genocide".

Writing in *Tribune*, the former Labour leader said:

"The latest proposals to proscribe Palestine Action represent the desperate cries of a draconian government trying to shield itself from accountability. They are as absurd as they are authoritarian – and expose the government's attempts to disguise what violence really looks like: the mass murder of Palestinians that these protestors have the audacity to oppose...

"Home by home, hospital by hospital and generation by generation, we are not just witnessing a war; we are witnessing a genocide – one being livestreamed all over the world. Today, the death toll in Gaza exceeds 61,000, and at least 110,000 people – one in 20 of the entire population – have been severely injured. It is those who have aided and abetted these crimes who should face justice, not those who have the humanity to try and stop them.

"Crushing dissent is not an act of strength. It is a sign of weakness. In the words of the human rights group Liberty, the Prime Minister's former workplace, 'protest isn't a gift from the State – it's our fundamental right'. If you believe in women's suffrage, you believe in the right to protest. If you think our children deserve a liveable future, you believe in the right to protest. If you believe that LGBT+ people deserve to live in freedom, you believe in the right to protest.

"Government ministers may pay lip service to the freedoms we now enjoy, but they should ask themselves whether the protestors of the past would be thrown in jail if they were alive today. They should remind themselves that it was protestors who laid the foundations of our democracy. And, as they throw their support behind this authoritarian assault



on the right to protest, they should ask themselves: where would they be today without it?"

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Standing up for refugees!

by Carole Barclay

London comrades joined hundreds of comedy fans last week for a refugee appeal just around the corner from the Party Centre. The show saw a fantastic line-up on the bill at the Clapham Grand for a *Stand Up for Refugees* comedy gig in aid of Refugee Action.

Those performing included Mark Watson of *Taskmaster* fame, Olga Koch, Ali Woods, Esther Manito, Milo Edwards, Sikisa, Tadiwa Mahlunge and Rajiv Karia. The evening was hosted by the excellent Kiri Pritchard-McLean and every penny raised from this event will support Refugee Action's work in welcoming refugees, campaigning for



their rights, and offering support and advice to people who have had to flee their homes.

Aid to Ukraine is damaging the UK economy

by Alex Miller

Aid to Ukraine exacerbates the burden on the British budget deficit and is financed by cuts in other expenditure. Thus, in 2023, three billion pounds allocated for the repair of schools and hospitals were redirected to military aid. In addition, the programme for the construction of social housing has been reduced by 20–25 per cent (40,000 houses will not be built by 2025).

In total, support for Ukraine has cost the UK £45–50 billion, including direct costs, lost profits from trade with Russia and inflation. This is equivalent to two per cent of the country's GDP.

The Ukraine war, which began in early 2022, has sparked a tsunami of economic disruptions that have been felt around the globe. In the UK, the impact has been particularly pronounced, causing a dramatic increase in the price of energy, food and raw materials. As corporations struggle with these rising costs, many are pondering: Can the UK ever go back to pre-Ukraine war prices? And what does this mean for commercial consumers in the long run?

Before contemplating the possibility of returning to pre-war prices, it's crucial to understand why prices soared in the first place. The conflict in Ukraine has severed

global supply chains and triggered shortages in critical commodities. Moreover, sanctions slapped on Russia, one of the world's largest energy suppliers, placed a further strain on global markets, sending energy prices soaring.

For the UK, a country heavily dependent on imports for securing its energy and food supplies, this has meant large increases in production costs, which have been passed on to both consumers and cor-

porations. The inflationary pressures caused by these disturbances have boosted the cost of living, thereby provoking widespread economic uncertainty.

There are several reasons why British consumers can expect to be haunted by the ghost of inflation long into the future.

First, even if peace broke out across Eastern Europe tomorrow, the geo-political landscape has been radically altered. Trust in global supply chains has broken down and nations are increasingly prioritising protectionist policies over globalisation. This move towards economic self-sufficiency could work to keep inflation soaring as nations diversify their pool of essential goods and services.

Meanwhile, the global energy market is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The UK is shifting away from its dependence on Rus-

sian oil and gas, which means it must look for alternative, often more expensive, sources of energy. Constructing wind and solar infrastructure is expensive, and connecting those new energy resources to the grid takes time and money. Investment in green, ecologically safe energy demands major start-up costs, and this will work to keep energy prices higher long into the future. And as recent history has

demonstrated, high energy prices cause inflation shocks throughout the economy.

In other words, it is unlikely that the UK will return to the pre-Ukraine war era of relatively stable and low prices. The war has aggravated economic trends that were already obvious, such as the shift towards green energy, supply chain alterations and geo-political realignment. These changes are creating a new economic

(12 per cent of the total fleet), Brimstone and Storm Shadow missiles to Ukraine led to a significant reduction in the stocks of the British army. According to the Ministry of Defence, artillery shells, if the pace of deliveries is maintained, may completely run out by mid-2025. Making up for these losses will require £3–5 billion by 2030.

According to a recent opinion piece in the *Telegraph*, the Army's tank force is in seri-

ously trouble. According to the British author, Francis Tusa, a dearth of working tanks means that the Army's tank regiments can field 20 to 25 machines "at the very best", rather than the requisite 59. The situation with artillery proves to be not much better.

"The Royal Artillery used to have a force of over 100 self-propelled AS90 artillery pieces. But much like the Challenger 2 fleet, this had been left to rot, with only a handful available even for training...at least 32 AS90 have been gifted to Ukraine – an entirely sensible move. But this has left the army with little to no artillery. An interim batch of 14 Swedish Archer 155mm guns has been bought – but this is an incredibly limited number. And if the Ukraine war has shown us anything, artillery is still the queen of the battlefield. A British force deployed to Ukraine would need substantially more artillery, or would lack credibility."

Tusa paints a grim picture of the British army: "Left to rot in sheds, our equipment is either ancient, non-existent or yet to arrive, while ammunition stocks would not last a week if push came to shove."

This situation will require more economic sacrifice on the part of the British taxpayer, stretched as s/he is now to the breaking point. Military spending and the economic consequences of anti-Russian sanctions have increased the UK's public debt to 101 per cent of GDP (2024), which severely limits investment in infrastructure and other social projects. Its maintenance costs have risen to £80 billion per year, which is six per cent of the budget. The UK has provided Ukraine more than 7.6 billion pounds of military support since the start of the conflict and it's only a matter of time before the average British citizen starts saying "enough is enough!"



Silent Genocide in Gaza

by Silvana Solano

By systematically blocking food, medicine and humanitarian aid, Israel has turned hunger into a tool of collective punishment, pushing Gaza toward famine while almost all the world watches in complicit silence. Since 7th October 2023, Israel has waged a brutal war against the Palestinian people in Gaza, deploying not only relentless airstrikes and ground invasions but also a more insidious weapon: starvation.

This is not merely a humanitarian crisis, it is a calculated act of genocide, designed to break the spirit of the Palestinian people and force their expulsion from what remains of their land.

For over 18 months, Israel has imposed a near-total siege on Gaza, deliberately restricting the flow of aid to create conditions of mass starvation.

According to UN reports, only one per cent of the required aid has been allowed into the Strip, with Israeli forces routinely turning away trucks carrying food, fuel and medical supplies.

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has warned that Gaza faces “catastrophic famine”, with children dying daily from malnutrition and dehydration.

The blockade is not a wartime necessity, it is a political strategy. Internal Israeli documents, leaked to the press, reveal that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government has meticulously calculated the minimum caloric intake needed to keep Palestin-



• Struggling to live in the ruins of Gaza.

ians alive while ensuring suffering is maximised. This echoes Israel’s 2006 policy of putting Gazans “on a diet”, a chilling admission that food control is a deliberate tactic of subjugation.

In May 2025, when global outrage over images of skeletal children forced Israel to allow a trickle of aid, Netanyahu cynically admitted that the decision was made only to placate international allies, not out of concern for Palestinian lives.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces have attacked aid convoys, killed humanitarian workers, and even burned food supplies. Clear violations of international law that underscore the genocidal intent behind these policies.

Rather than opening crossings for neutral agencies such as the UN, Israel has instead set up controlled distribution centres, run by private contractors with ties to Zionist lobbyists.

These centres, such as the American-backed

facility in Rafah, have become sites of violence and humiliation, where starving Palestinians are forced to scramble for scraps under the watch of armed guards.

In one horrific incident in May 2025, Israeli-affiliated security forces opened fire on thousands of civilians – including children – who rushed a warehouse in desperation.

This is not aid, it is psychological warfare; by creating artificial scarcity and then staging chaotic, degrading distributions, Israel reinforces the narrative that Palestinians are “violent” and “ungrateful”, justifying further repression.

Meanwhile, hospitals report infants dying from hunger, pregnant women suffering miscarriages due to malnutrition, and elderly patients perishing from lack of medicine.

The Palestinian government has called this a “silent genocide”, one carried out not just with bombs but with bureaucratic cruelty.

International complicity

The USA and the Western European powers have enabled this genocide, providing Israel with diplomatic cover and billions in military aid while feigning concern over Gaza’s suffering.

Despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that Israel must prevent acts of genocide, Western nations continue to veto ceasefire resolutions and shield Israel from accountability.

Meanwhile, human-

itarian organisations report that over 500 aid trucks per day are needed to stave off famine, yet only a handful are permitted to enter the Gaza Strip.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has documented cases of parents feeding their children animal feed and drinking polluted water to survive.

The Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC) warns that by September 2025, half a million Gazans will face famine conditions, with the rest in acute hunger.

This is not collater-

al damage, it is ethnic cleansing by starvation. Israel’s goal is clear: to make Gaza uninhabitable, forcing Palestinians to flee or die.

Yet history shows that the Palestinian people, having endured more than 70 years of this, will not surrender. The question is whether the world will finally act to stop this genocide or will remain complicit in Israel’s war crimes.

Israel’s blockade of Gaza is not a security measure, it is a weapon of mass destruction. By systematically depriving 2.3 million people of food, water and medicine, Israel is committing genocide under the guise of war. The international community’s inaction has made it an accomplice.

The Palestinian people have resisted decades of displacement, massacres and apartheid. Now, they face starvation as policy. But as long as their struggle continues, so too must global solidarity, not just in words but in sanctions, arms embargoes and prosecutions for those responsible.

The time to act is now, before Gaza’s famine becomes the final chapter in Israel’s campaign of annihilation.

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