

Delhi summit strengthens Russian-Indian friendship

The world was watching as Russian President Vladimir Putin went to India this week for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Modi received the Russian leader before the ceremonial welcome. Putin thanked Modi for his efforts to resolve the Ukrainian conflict, saying he had informed Modi of what Russia and the USA were doing regarding possible peaceful settlement in Ukraine.

The two leaders held more than 2½ hours of informal discussions on Thursday before the formal Russia-India summit on Friday, where discussions were held on bilateral co-operation, regional issues and strategic partnerships.

Putin called the conversation with Modi on Thursday friendly and useful and Modi said the meeting with Putin was an important event for him. India supports the speedy establishment of peace in Ukraine. It is necessary to work towards this together. India and Russia regularly exchange views on the situation in Ukraine, showing deep trust between the two countries.

At the press conference following the summit Putin emphasised the depth and positive tone of the discussions, thanking Modi for their private conversation and noting the steady momentum of bilateral cooperation.

Modi praised Putin's capable leadership, which had significantly contributed to the development of bilateral relations and played a



• Modi greets Putin at the airport.

special role in strengthening ties between the two countries. India is a neutral country and stands for peace Modi said, adding that Putin's role since 2000 speaks to the foresight of his leadership, as shown by development of relations between India and Russia.

Modi thanked Putin for his tireless commitment to working with India. Relations between Russia and India are rooted in mutual respect and deep trust that have stood the test of time and continue to advance.

Modi added that Russia and India are taking their co-operation to a new level and have agreed on a programme of economic co-operation up to 2030. The Russia-India Business Forum will play a key role in strengthening business ties between the two countries.

He added that co-operation in the field of fertilisers is especially important given its direct impact on food security. Russia and India are actively working toward the conclusion of a free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and India, with Modi calling it a major step

toward expanding economic partnership and creating new opportunities for both sides.

Putin said that the summit was useful and constructive, and that the two leaders maintain regular phone contact. He thanked Modi for their one-on-one conversation during the meeting, adding that Russia and India thoroughly examined the entire spectrum of their multifaceted co-operation, stressing the depth and strategic importance of the partnership.

He described the package of agreements signed after the Russia-India talks as "solid", and that each of them is aimed at expanding bilateral economic co-operation.

Russia and India are important partners in trade, investment

and technology, Putin said, noting the rapid shift to national currencies in mutual settlements, which now account for 96 per cent of transactions. Sustainable interbank co-operation channels between the two countries are already established.

The creation of a free trade area between India and the Eurasian Economic Union will significantly expand commercial ties, and work on an agreement

is already underway. Russia and India continue to successfully develop co-operation in the energy sector, reinforcing the strategic nature of their partnership.

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant will make a significant contribution to India's energy supply and is a major joint project. Russia and India may broaden co-operation into new areas such as small modular reactors, floating nuclear power plants, and the use of nuclear technologies in medicine and other fields.

Russian economic operators are increasing their use of Indian rupees accumulated from exports, reflecting the growing financial integration between the two countries.

Russia and India uphold the fundamental principles of international law and share common approaches to major global and regional issues. They will continue to co-operate closely in the defence industry, strengthening their strategic partnership, and Russia will provide full assistance to India during its upcoming BRICS presidency, supporting New Delhi's priorities.

FUND

The last week of the November appeal brought in £970, which means we raised £2,943 for the fighting fund – sadly £557 below our target for the month! Hopefully we can catch up during the season of goodwill. So while you think about your festive presents please spare a thought for the *New Worker* and send us a gift to guarantee the continued production of the *New Worker*.

Last week there were postal delays beyond our control. This week our phone line was out of action for a couple of days – now resolved with the purchase of a new device. Every week we struggle to keep our suppliers happy and our presses rolling.

We fight for peace and socialism in Britain and all over the world. Our voice must be heard. You can help by supporting the fighting fund. The December appeal start now. All donations, big or small count. Please send yours to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here: <http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/>

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Winter Break

The *New Worker* will soon be taking its traditional winter break.

The last issue of the Old Year will be published on Friday 19th December.

The first issue of the New Year will come out on Friday 9th January.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

And so it begins...

The Corbynistas are on the march following last week's foundation conference that retained the inane 'Your Party' name it adopted earlier in the year but at the same time adopted a left social-democratic programme that could become the rallying point for the anti-war movement and the resistance to austerity.

Sadly, the whisper campaigns from both the Corbyn and the Sultana camps are continuing. The conference did little to paper over the differences between the rival factions which have already led to a split between the Corbyn-led Independent Alliance bloc in the House of Commons and Your Party. That was to be expected and indeed it was difficult to see any other outcome given that factionalism, petty ambition and petty-bourgeois individualism is part and parcel of British social-democracy – whether it's from the left or the right.

Likewise, the obsession with "identity politics" – gleefully pounced on by the bourgeois media who repeatedly tell us that the Corbynistas are just part of the "lunatic fringe". They, of course, would like to channel all discontent towards the Liberal Democrats and the Greens – who despite their support for the Palestinians remain part of the NATO-loving bourgeois consensus.

But Your Party is not an irrelevant pressure group. Its 50,000 paid-up members make it the biggest socialist party in Britain in 80 years and it could easily double that when grass-roots campaigning begins in the New Year. At the same time it's not the revolutionary force that some of the left still believe exists within the Corbyn movement.

In fact their demands are quite modest. In their own words, the Corbynistas say: "We will only fix the crises in our society with a mass redistribution of wealth and power. That means taxing the very richest in our society. That means an NHS free of privatisation and bringing energy, water, rail and mail into public ownership. That means investing in a massive council-house building programme. That means standing up to fossil fuel giants putting their profits before our planet."

This is, in fact, what Labour governments did until 1979 when they ran a public sector that included the coal and steel industries, British Airways, telecom and a major car-manufacturer as well as the utilities that Your Party wants to renationalise.

The Corbynista MPs have mass support. We will naturally work with them. But Your Party isn't the only game in town. There is a broader fight-back driven by the need to stave off the complete collapse of the Labour Party in the Scottish and Welsh parliaments and fend off Reform in the local and regional elections next year. Your Party hopes to provide the platform that can provide an effective electoral challenge to the old guard in next year's polls. But some will stay to battle it out inside the Labour Party, which still retains the support of the union bureaucracy and the TUC.

Communists have to defend the principled line of socialist advance throughout the labour movement. We can and indeed must work with other progressive forces inside and beyond the Labour Party to support the struggling people of Palestine and the millions upon millions of other people struggling against imperialism across the world, and to build the resistance to austerity and war throughout our own labour and peace movement.

Starmer wants it both ways

by Dong Yifan

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a speech on Monday at the Lady Mayor's Banquet at the Guildhall in the City of London that the USA, the EU and China are the three global giants, and that the absence of the UK's engagement with China should not continue. He emphasised the need for the UK to trade with China. He claimed that China poses "national security threats" to the UK and that the UK can "work and trade with a country, while still protecting itself".

Starmer's contradictory rhetoric of relying on China economically, while guarding against it on security, reflects the fickleness and opportunism of the country's diplomacy as well as a 'have-it-both-ways' mentality of the UK's China policy.

Beneath the fickleness and opportunism of British diplomacy lies an unshakeable core logic: its strong ideological orientation and deep geopolitical entanglement with the USA.

As one of the birthplaces of Western institutions and political thought, the UK remains deeply attached to and eager to promote so-called 'democracy', placing heavy emphasis on ideological competition and confrontation. This mind-set continues to shape its diplomatic behaviour. From the perspective of the 'special relationship' with the USA, the UK has treated support for American leadership as a key pillar for safeguarding its own strategic interests ever since the signing of the Atlantic Charter in 1941. As a result, the fundamental strategic tone of British diplomacy is a form of political correctness that neither the Conservative Party nor the Labour Party can alter easily.

To some extent, the interplay between Britain's diplomatic volatility and its ideological tendencies also reflects the country's nostalgic mind-set that has persisted since the Second World War – one which has not adjusted

in tandem with its declining national power. Its 'Global Britain' narrative and continued interference in Asia-Pacific affairs are manifestations of this outdated way of thinking.

Starmer's remarks reflect a 'have-it-both-ways' mentality: seeking to smear and pressure China within the framework of Western narratives, while also attempting to gain economic benefits and secure China's co-operation in global governance. In reality, the UK's politically negative posture toward China means it places itself in opposition to both the Chinese government and people. This not only lays the groundwork for further negative rhetoric and actions in trade, technology and politics, but also undermines the hard-earned mutual trust and engagement between China and the UK.

In today's complex and rapidly evolving international landscape, every country's diplomacy must be able to adapt to changes and proactively seek transformation. Britain's China policy needs to acknowledge the reality of China's growing strength. If it continues to pursue a rigid and outdated strategy, it will

only prompt China to heighten its vigilance and precautions against the UK, thereby eroding the country's already limited strategic credibility.

Starmer mentioned in his speech that the UK does not want an "Ice Age" in China-UK relations. If, however, its binary China policy translates into damage to China's sovereignty and core interests, the trajectory of its China policy will inevitably slip beyond the British government's control and may lead to irreversible consequences. The UK should have a clear understanding of the situation, adjust its mind-set, adopt a rational and friendly approach toward China's development, pursue a positive and pragmatic policy towards China, and work with China in the same direction to steer China-UK relations onto a path of sound and steady development. This is a wise move that aligns with the UK's national interests.

The author is an associate research fellow at the Belt & Road Academy of Beijing Language and Culture University

Global Times



Workers' Notes

So this is Christmas...

Observant readers will be aware that the Christmas season is approaching. To mark the season of excessive consumption of food and drink and unnecessary purchases such as a personalised custom-engraved combination spanner, we look at disputes and other issues involving workers most closely involved in the festival that was wisely banned during Britain's short-lived Cromwellian republic.

by New Worker correspondent

Six of the 32 political prisoners for Palestine in the UK are on hunger strike – now in its fourth week. This is the largest hunger strike since 1981, yet the bourgeois media says nothing.

As their health deteriorates, it is fundamental we escalate with our presence. On Tuesday, campaigners mobilised outside BBC HQ in London to demand coverage of the hunger strike campaign. BBC content gives 33 times more coverage per Israeli fatality than Palestinian. While 85 per cent of Israeli weapons used for genocide comes from Elbit Systems. BBC, where is your so-called non-biased reporting?

We stand with the people of Palestine, the hunger strikers and their demands, including shutting Elbit, Israel's largest arms manufacturer, down in the UK. Spread the word!

Prisoners for Palestine!



Two Pints and a Packet of Crisps

by New Worker correspondent

About 90 workers at the Guinness plant in Belfast, which cans the Dublin brewer's fashionable non-alcoholic version of its famous stout, are taking strike action from this Friday until Saturday 13th. The main issue is pay, in particular they complain that Belfast wages are well below a similar facility at Runcorn in Cheshire, belonging to Guinness's ultimate owner's Diageo.

Unite's regional organiser, Michael Keenan, asserted that: "Diageo's Belfast site is the world's biggest producer of Guinness Zero and this strike action will severely disrupt production lines in the run-up to Christmas. Management needs to stop disrespecting our members and return to the negotiating table with an offer that meets workers' pay expectations."

Last Christmas there was a terrible Guinness shortage. Some pubs resorted to ration cards and the Old Ivy House in Clerkenwell allowed orders only if they had first bought two other drinks.

Diageo claimed that there would be no shortage, however, and said there were "contingency plans in place to manage any potential impact". In contrast, the publicans' trade paper, the *Morning Advertiser*, noted that the brewery could be in trouble as this is an increasingly popular drink. The non-alcoholic version now accounts for 14 per cent of the black stuff.

The union's general secretary, Sharon Graham, had the last word, adding that: "Diageo is one of the largest and most profitable drinks companies in the world. It can fully afford to make workers a decent offer but has chosen to put profits before people." That is true enough. It made £3.2 billion global profits in the financial year to June. While this marked a 28 per cent decline, this was largely due to foreign exchange factors and a programme of restructuring, and that was on sales of £15.2 billion.

Potato crisps have for decades been an essential accompaniment to beer. Because they are salty they encourage more beer consumption. Now alas, crisps might also be in short supply.

At the Billingham, County Durham factory of KP Snacks, 85 per cent of operatives belonging

to GMB have voted for industrial action after the company imposed additional duties and responsibilities without any increase in pay.

The 50 workers who make snacks such as Hula-Hoops, McCoy's, Pom-Bears and Discos voted to strike. In response bosses stopped all holiday requests, something which GMB says could be illegal.

GMB Organiser Paul Clark said: "GMB members at KP are skilled workers essential to the production of crisps and snacks. Their expertise keeps operations running smoothly and supermarket shelves stocked, yet they are being asked to do additional work for the same pay.

"If they've been asked to do extra work, they should get more pay," wittily concluding by warning that "it's crunch time for KP bosses, so unless they want to see the shelves empty this Christmas, it's time to get back round the table and sort this out."

Supplies of a more substantial festive delight, turkeys, are also at risk of being imperilled. Once again GMB are taking the lead. Workers at the recently built Magnavale Easton frozen food storage plant (near Margaret Thatcher's Lincolnshire birthplace) went on a two-week strike

under the auspices of GMB last Tuesday.

Almost 100 people are taking part in the action, which means that major customers such as Bernard Matthews could be running about like headless chickens if supplies dry up.

GMB organiser Andy Groves pointed out: "These workers aren't asking for the world, just a pay packet that covers the bills this Christmas. Instead, they've been offered a less-than-plump zero per cent, a total insult to hard working members of staff. This site is one of the UK's frozen turkey capitals, serving up meaty yuletide treats to families across the Midlands. Company top brass need to get back around the table with a serious offer, and quick."

The season of goodwill does not apply to everyone. At Jeff Bezos's predatory retailer Amazon a group of warehouse managers have complained about heightened pressure over Black Friday and Christmas risks breaching the Health & Safety at Work Act and the Working Time Directive.

A necessarily anonymous letter to both managers and MPs reports that pressure to meet demand means warehouse staff are frequently forced to work

beyond their allotted hours resulting in warehouse managers having breakdowns. There has long been plenty of evidence that it was the job of managers to overwork warehouse staff but now it seems that bosses are not much better off.

"Although our contracts specify a 40-hour, four day work week, the reality is we must work on our scheduled days off simply to keep pace," they say. "During peak and high-volume events (sales and mid-October to the end of December) this expands to five 14-hour days, resulting in weekly totals that can easily exceed 60 hours." As a predictable result "this sustained pressure is having a severe and measurable impact on our mental health. Several members of our group have personally experienced stress-related issues, and we have witnessed colleagues break down under the strain."

They also note that Amazon recently dropped the question "Do you feel stressed at work?" from its employee survey. They also allege that there has been an increased number of managers leaving the business. "We are formally placing this on record

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to ensure that you cannot claim you were unaware of this crisis," the letter adds. "The experiences documented in this letter are not isolated incidents; they are systemic issues that affect us all."

Amanda Gearing, a GMB senior organiser, said: "These revelations lay bare the reality for workers at all levels of Amazon. For managers to take the risk of sending a letter like this goes to show just how desperate staff are to make Amazon a better place to work."

Readers unwilling to boost Jeff Bezos's £180 billion fortune should do their Christmas shopping by taking out a gift subscription to the *New Worker*, which ranges from £7.50 for four weeks to £72.00 for a whole year, at: <https://www.newworker.org/ncpcentral/nwsubs.html>.

On the road to progress

by New Worker correspondent

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined businessmen, diplomats and solidarity activists on Monday for an economic briefing on the latest developments in People's China. The meeting room in the Bank of China in the City of London was packed to hear Xin Changxing, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), give an overview on China's 15th Five-Year Plan and China's endeavours to push high-quality development and advance high-standard opening up in the coming years.



• Xin Changxing briefs the audience.

Xin, who is also the Secretary of the CPC Jiangsu provincial committee, also outlined the developments in Jiangsu, China's second largest provincial economy by GDP. It is also one of the most commercially powerful and export-oriented provinces, supported by advanced manufacturing strengths, efficient logistics, robust innovation capabilities and a deep tech talent pool. Other speakers included: Zheng Zeguang, the Chinese ambassador; Fang Wenjian, who is the Chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce and general manager of the Bank of China London Branch; Lord Sassoon, the President of the China-Britain Business Council; Sir David Quarry, the Group Head of Public Affairs HSBC; and Peter Bennett, the Chief Executive of the China-Britain Business Council.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

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

9th December 2005

WHILE IRAQI resistance guns blaze across the land of the two rivers the trial of captured Iraqi president Saddam Hussein continued with the former Iraqi leader dismissing one witness as in need of "psychiatric treatment" and telling the chief judge to "go to hell" before withdrawing in protest at the conditions of his detention and the status of the court.

Earlier, two senior members of Saddam's defence team, former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark and ex-

Qatari Justice Minister Najib al-Nueimi, questioned of the legitimacy of the tribunal and safety of the lawyers.

Reconciliation is essential," Clark declared. "Unless this trial is seen as absolutely fair, it will divide rather than reconcile Iraq."

Saddam Hussein and senior members of his government could face the death penalty if convicted of charges of torture and murder that allegedly took place after an abortive assassination attempt on the Iraqi president in 1982.

The defiant Baathist leader told the chief judge that he understood the pressures on him. "I am not afraid of execution," Saddam said. "I realise there is pressure on you. But I'm not doing it for myself. I'm doing it for Iraq. I am not defending myself. But I am defending you."

The kangaroo court sits in the comparative safety of the US 'green zone' military compound in the heart of the Iraqi capital. Outside is another matter. Resistance rockets hit buildings inside the 'green zone' on Sunday,

and partisans mortared the puppet Interior Ministry in central Baghdad on Tuesday. Two female suicide bombers destroyed the police academy, killing and wounding scores of puppet cadets.

Outside Baghdad the resistance is keeping up the fight in all the major towns and cities of central and western Iraq. A puppet regime colonel and his driver were shot dead on the road from Baghdad to Baquba. US troops have imposed a curfew in the western town of Hit and rounded up 500 civilians in an effort to drive the partisans out.

Meanwhile General Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, the leader of the Baathist underground, has dismissed reports of his death that appeared in the resistance media two weeks ago.

In a message released this week, al Duri said: "The US administration is trying to deflect public attention from the failure of the American project and its defeat at the hands of the soldiers of justness, the heroes of the Iraqi national resistance."

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

(cheques to New Worker)

The View from the Kremlin

Has London responded to the revelation of its role in the thwarted attempt by Russian intelligence agencies to hijack a MiG-31 aircraft carrying a Kinzhal hypersonic missile?

This is a very serious – and far from the first – case of British intelligence intervention on Ukraine’s behalf. I have heard no official comment on this matter. London studiously avoids such sensitive topics. The media gave rather measured coverage of the incident, in the usual vein, presenting it as a Russian fabrication.

Should we expect any sober initiatives for a settlement in Ukraine from Britain, which is pursuing an openly anti-Russian course?

I can confirm that we are in contact with Washington regarding the Ukrainian settlement.

As for London, we don’t see much point in such contacts right now. The British establishment, of course, is pushing its own approaches to the Ukrainian conflict. They are evolving. A couple of years ago, they talked about the need to inflict a strategic defeat on our country, demanding the destruction of its economy and its complete isolation on the international stage. Now the ‘song’ is different: to put Ukraine in the strongest possible position for negotiations with Russia. The talk is primarily about new financial injections and arms supplies. However, they are completely unwilling to take a sober look at the state of affairs on the front lines or the situation within Ukraine itself.

Recent reports in the British media about a telephone conversation between British Prime Minister [Keir Starmer], National Security Advisor Jonathan Powell, and Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov should not be misleading. Such a conversation did indeed take place, I can confirm. This was a one-off, apparently an attempt by the British not just to establish contact, but to convince Donald Trump that

The Russian Ambassador to the UK, AV Kelin, spoke to the TASS news agency last week.

they, too, were making efforts to establish a channel of communication with Russia.

However, the goal of inflicting a “defeat” on our country remains in place. This has been confirmed, for example, by the outgoing head of MI6, Richard Moore. Prolonging the Ukrainian conflict, which is the main focus here, serves these goals. It’s important to understand that the British military-political class has invested heavily in supporting Ukraine. This isn’t just about financial resources – London isn’t the most important in Europe in this regard – but also about informational, propaganda and political-diplomatic efforts – much is at stake in “supporting Kiev”. The local media machine remains determined to denigrate our country and create the necessary backdrop for a long-term confrontation. We see this every day.

The October meeting of the “coalition of the willing” in London revealed its participants’ desire to complete the theft of frozen Russian assets by the end of the year. Why is Britain so enthusiastically playing the role of ringleader in this thieving scheme, ignoring the obvious, devastating damage to London’s image as a financial centre?

The UK’s political leadership has long and consistently advocated the seizure and use of our assets for the benefit of the corrupt Kiev leadership. The reason is obvious: we don’t have our own money. This has been facilitated by failed fiscal policy, which has worsened the country’s financial and economic situation. Labour faces difficult budget decisions, which already pose significant political costs for the ruling party.

London’s actions are driven by a desire to maintain its leadership position, not among global financial centres, but among inveterate



• AV Kelin

Russophobes. Moreover, in the distorted worldview of British, and indeed most other modern Western politicians, cobbling together a pseudo-legal framework for this criminal adventure supposedly allows them to avoid worrying about the consequences.

It’s clear that if London decides to take such a step, its decline as an international financial centre will significantly accelerate. This process is however, already underway. Significant resources are being siphoned off from London’s financial centre to Frankfurt am Main, New York and Hong Kong.

Three European leaders are competing to take the lead in supporting Ukraine. These are, of course, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Macron has now taken a stunning step toward a leadership position by signing an agreement with Zelenskyy not just for arms transfers, but for the long-term supply of up to 100 or more Rafale fighter jets. In doing so, he is laying the foundation for a long-term policy of militarising Kiev and abandoning all goals related to a peaceful settlement. In this way, Macron is attempting to gain an advantage and become the leader of the Russophobic movement. Against this backdrop, Starmer, who has faced criticism for his excessive focus on foreign policy, is focusing his efforts on resolving the country’s numerous

domestic problems. This will not, however, prevent London from continuing to act as a key political, ideological and military sponsor of the Kiev regime.

According to recent opinion polls, only 20 per cent of Britons approve of Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer. And if the country were to hold elections tomorrow, Nigel Farage, leader of the right-wing populist Reform UK Party, could become the new prime minister. What do you see as the main reason for the ongoing political instability in the UK? And what, in your view, is the main success of Farage’s party?

Shortly before the election, Labour published a manifesto outlining its key goals. It contained numerous intentions to improve both foreign and domestic policy. But these aspirations, as it turned out, were completely out of sync with their capabilities, as the country currently lacks resources. Instead, there is a huge budget gap, estimated by analysts to be between £20 billion and £50 billion. This gap prevents them from undertaking more serious projects and initiatives that would improve the socio-economic situation. In other words, there is an objective impossibility of returning the country to a normal level.

There are no ideas on how to change the situation. Nor are there any serious, ambitious, charismatic and purposeful leaders in the traditional political parties who, committed to serious reform, could, like Margaret Thatcher or Winston Churchill, lead the country.

Against this backdrop, Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK, has truly captured the public’s attention. He positions himself as the antithesis of the two traditional political parties. However, he lacks a strong and qualified parliamentary corps of his

own, which would transform Reform into a genuine opposition ready, if circumstances permit, to form a government. This is still a long way off; new parliamentary elections are needed. Next May, Reform supporters will likely win seats in municipal and regional elections, but much work remains to be done for Reform UK to join the ranks of parties truly contending for power. Currently, Farage is basing his campaign largely on promises that lack realism and substantiated solutions on the most sensitive issues, particularly on socio-economic issues and on Reform’s signature issue of migration. Therefore, it is premature to talk about Reform’s imminent and guaranteed access to power.

The British government recently announced “breakthrough” reforms in the immigration sector, primarily regarding refugee status. Are these truly significant changes, and will they be effective?

The announced immigration reforms, which are linked here to the rather harsh Danish model, will be spread out. There’s no single law with a single effective date. But it’s already clear that the changes will be quite drastic. For example, there will be restrictions on issuing UK visas to citizens of countries that refuse to readmit their migrants deported from there. It will be significantly more difficult to obtain asylum – and this is precisely the method of settling in the UK that attracts illegal immigrants.

Previous attempts by successive governments to take a tough stance had been fruitless. The flow of migrants to British shores continued unabated. Stopping it is extremely difficult, even with measures such as the now-promised extension to 20 years of the period after which refugees can apply for permanent residence. Or by making it much more difficult for refugees to bring their relatives here.

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Of course, this is completely unrealistic. This is largely a demonstrative, public-facing display of firmness and determination. Whether these measures will actually produce practical results is difficult to judge.

Following the BBC's

scandal over its distortion of US President Donald Trump's speech, the broadcaster's top executives resigned. However, the British government's response has been rather muted. Why do you think this is happening?

Compared to other media companies I've

dealt with here, the BBC is the most biased. This is unsurprising, as it serves as the government's mouthpiece. The BBC is far from the "people's" corporation it tries to portray itself as. Indeed, the lion's share of its budget comes from the licence fee, which amounts

to over £170 per year per British household. However, everything the BBC puts out into the world conforms to government guidelines. I don't know how things actually work, but the government's guidelines certainly apply to them. Alternative opinions are practically non-existent

at the BBC. This is especially true regarding the Ukrainian conflict. Russia is viewed extremely negatively. All that's published about it is dirt. A typical example is the analysis of cemeteries in an attempt to compile some figures about our army's combat losses. Of course, this is pure

disinformation.

As for the possibility of transforming the BBC, its activities are based on deep and established traditions. Therefore, a change in leadership is unlikely to alter the very essence of this organisation.

TASS

Gaza: the new kill zone

by Ramzy Baroud

The so-called Gaza ceasefire was not a genuine cessation of hostility, but a strategic, cynical shift in the Israeli genocide and ongoing campaign of destruction.

Starting on 10th October, the first day of the announced ceasefire, Israel transitioned tactics: moving from indiscriminate aerial bombardment to the calculated, engineered demolishing of homes and vital infrastructure. Satellite images, corroborated by almost hourly media and ground reports, confirmed this methodical change.

As direct combat forces seemingly withdrew to the adjacent "Gaza envelope" region, a new vanguard of Israeli soldiers advanced into the area east of the so-called Yellow Line to systematically dismantle whatever semblance of life, rootedness and civilisation remained standing following the Israeli genocide. Between 10th October and 2nd November Israel demolished 1,500 buildings, utilizing its specialized military engineering units.

The ceasefire agreement divided Gaza into two halves: one west of the Yellow Line, where the survivors of the Is-



• Gaza today.

raeli genocide were confined, and a larger one, east of the line, where the Israeli army maintained an active military presence and continued to operate with impunity.

If Israel truly harboured the intention of, indeed, evacuating the area following the agreed-upon second phase of the ceasefire, it would not be actively pursuing the systematic, structural destruction of this already devastated region. Clearly, Israel's motives are far more insidious, centred on rendering the region perpetually uninhabitable.

Aside from levelling

infrastructure, Israel is also carrying out a continuous campaign of airstrikes and naval attacks, relentlessly targeting Rafah and Khan Yunis in the south. Later, and with greater intensity, Israel also began carrying out attacks in areas that were, in theory, meant to be under the control of Gazans.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, 339 Palestinians have been killed and 871 wounded since the commencement of the so-called ceasefire.

In practice, this ceasefire amounts to a

one-sided truce, where Israel can carry out a relentless, low-grade war on Gaza, while Palestinians are systematically denied the right to respond or defend themselves. Gaza is thus condemned to relive the same tragic cycle of violent history: a defenceless, impoverished region trapped under the boot of Israel's military calculations, which consistently operate outside the periphery of international law.

Before the existence of Israel atop the ruins of historic Palestine in 1948, the demarcation of Gaza's borders was not

driven by military calculations. The Gaza region, one of the world's most ancient civilisations, was always seamlessly incorporated into a larger geographical socio-economic space.

It came under British rule following the defeat of one of Germany's allies, the Ottoman Empire, during the First World War. The Ottomans considered it a sub-district (Kaza) within the larger Mutasarrifate of Jerusalem – the Jerusalem Independent District. The British named it the Gaza District (1920–1948).

But even the Brit-

ish designation of Gaza did not isolate it from the rest of the Palestinian geography, as the borders of the new district reached Al-Majdal (today's Ashkelon) in the north, Bir al-Saba' (Beersheba) in the east, and the Rafah line at the Egyptian border.

Following the 1949 Armistice Agreements, which codified the post-Nakba lines, the collective torment of Gaza, as illustrated in its shrinking boundaries, began in earnest. The expansive Gaza District was brutally reduced to the Gaza Strip, a mere 1.3 per cent of the overall size of historic Palestine. Its population, due to the Nakba, had explosively grown with over 200,000 desperate refugees who, along with several generations of their descendants, have been trapped and confined in this tiny strip of land for over 77 years.

When Israel permanently occupied Gaza in June 1967, the lines separating it from the rest of the Palestinian and Arab geography became an integral, permanent part of Gaza itself. Soon after its occupation of the Strip, Israel began restricting the movement of Palestinians further, sectionalising Gaza into several regions. The size and location of these internal lines were large-

ly determined by two paramount motives: to fragment Palestinian society to ensure its subjugation, and to create military 'buffer zones' around Israeli military encampments and illegal settlements.

Between 1967 and Israel's so-called 'disengagement' from Gaza, Israel had built 21 illegal settlements and numerous military corridors and checkpoints, effectively bisecting the Strip

and confiscating nearly 40 per cent of its land mass.

Following the redeployment, Israel retained absolute, unilateral control over Gaza's borders, sea access, airspace, and even the population registry. Additionally, Israel created another internal border within Gaza, a heavily fortified "buffer zone" snaking across the northern and eastern borders. This new area has witnessed

the cold-blooded killing of hundreds of unarmed protesters and the wounding of thousands who dared to approach what was often referred to as the "kill zone".

Even the Gaza sea was effectively outlawed. Fishermen were inhumanely confined to tiny spaces, at times less than three nautical miles, while simultaneously surrounded by the Israeli navy, which routinely shot fishermen,

sank boats, and detained crews at will.

Gaza's new Yellow Line is but the latest, most egregious military demarcation in a long, cruel history of lines intended to make the lives of the Palestinians impossible. The current line, however, is worse than any before it, as it completely suffocates the displaced population in a fully destroyed area, without functioning hospitals and with

only trickles of life-saving aid.

For Palestinians, who have been battling confinements and fragmentation for generations, this new arrangement is the intolerable and inevitable culmination of their protracted, multi-generational dispossession.

If Israel believes it can impose the new demarcation of Gaza as a new status quo, the next few months will prove this conviction devas-

tatingly wrong. Tel Aviv has simply recreated a much worse, inherently unstable version of the violent reality that existed before 7th October and the genocide. Even those not fully familiar with the deep, painful history of Gaza must realize that sustaining the Yellow Line of Gaza is nothing more than a dangerous, bloody illusion.

People's World
(USA)

Solidarity with the Palestinian People

by Maritza Gutiérrez
González

On this land, is what makes life worth living: on this land is the lady of the land, the mother of beginnings and endings. She was named Palestine. Still named Palestine. My lady, I am worthy, because you are my lady, I am worthy of life.

Mahmud Darwish, National Poet of Palestine

On 29th November 2025 the world once again commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, a date which invites reflection on the situation of a people marked by decades of conflict, displacement and struggle for self-determination. This day, established by the United Nations in 1977, has become an annual event that seeks to raise awareness of the difficult living conditions faced by Palestinians and to promote concrete actions toward peace and justice.

The date was chosen for its significance to



the Palestinian people. On this day in 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, later known as the "Partition Resolution", which stipulated the creation of a "Jewish State" and an "Arab State" in Palestine, with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum, subject to a special international regime. Of the two states envisioned in that resolution, only one has been created to-

date: Israel.

This Day provides an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention on the fact that the question of Palestine remains unresolved.

In 1975, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established with the mandate to advise the General Assembly on programmes aimed

at the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes and properties from which they were displaced.

The Committee's mandate also includes "offering its co-operation and support to Pal-

eststinian organisations and other civil society organisations". In accordance with this mandate, over the years a network of more than 1,000 civil society organisations from all regions of the world has been established, carrying out activities related to the Palestinian question.

Despite sustained efforts over more than 70 years, a lasting peace in the Middle East remains

elusive, highlighting the urgent need for a sustainable solution.

This year's commemoration took place amidst a fragile ceasefire in Gaza, the continuation of intense violence, also in the West Bank, the genocide against the Palestinian people, and the humanitarian crisis that has claimed the lives of tens of thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

This International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2025 serves not only as a reminder of the suffering they face; it is also another day for the struggle of those who believe that a Palestinian state is necessary, just and possible.

On this day, in Cuba, as throughout the world, the voice of the people will once again demonstrate the determination of a world that refuses to forget and continues to dream of a tomorrow where peace and justice are a reality for the Palestinian people and for all peoples. They deserve to live!

Radio Havana Cuba

LETTERS

The saga of Prince Andrew is taking a Bahraini dimension. The *Daily Mail* has reported a secret meeting between King Charles and Bahrain's dictator [King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa] on 11th November in the Cotswolds. The meeting was held at an Oxfordshire mansion owned by the Bahraini king. Despite the denial, it is believed that the future of Andrew was discussed and that Bahrain may be his future abode. He is said to enjoy the reverence officials in Bahrain reserve for royalty and is also close with King Hamad and his son, Crown Prince Salman.

Meanwhile on 28th November the UN Committee against Torture adopted *Concluding Observations on Bahrain*. It expressed its concern about consistent reports indicating that torture was routinely used to extract confessions. The Committee called on the State party to ensure that confessions and other statements obtained through torture or ill-treatment were not admitted as evidence in practice. The Committee also expressed its concern about reports according to which human rights defenders, members of civil society, journalists, political opponents and other Government critics had been subjected to retaliation, such as intimidation, harassment, travel bans, revocation of citizenship, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial execution.

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

John Hughes Bahrain Freedom Movement London

Enver Hoxha was born in 1908 in the southern Albanian town of Gjirokaster. Conflicting accounts have been given about his background, but a number of sources have insisted that he was the son of an impoverished cloth merchant.

It is known that he won a scholarship in 1930 to study at the University of Montpellier. There he joined the French Communist Party and wrote articles for *L'Humanite*.

It is reported that those political activities led to support for his studies being withdrawn and that he returned to Albania in 1936. He then taught at his old school.

When he lost that job during the wartime fascist occupation, he opened a tobacco shop that became the headquarters of a fledgling communist organisation. Indeed, the Albanian Communist Party was founded in 1941 and in 1944 Hoxha, the partisan, led the forces for national liberation to victory over German and Italian occupying forces.

Hoxha would then rule Albania for 41 years until his death in 1985.

When he came to power Albania was a "primeval relic of the Ottoman empire". It was bedevilled with clan disputes and blood feuds. But under Hoxha's leadership Albania was transformed. Women had previously been mere chattel to be "bargained away by their fathers to prospective husbands". But in October 1944 a *Declaration on the Rights of Citizens* gave women full equality into the right to divorce. In time women got maternity leave with pay. There were also crèches and day surgeries.

Peasants had lived a miserable existence. Yet in October 1945 the Land

Reform Decree heralded the expropriation of feudal estates. And by 1946 state farms and co-operations were now dominating the agricultural landscape.

Hitherto 80 per cent of the population could not read or write. Yet under Hoxha illiteracy was virtually eliminated. In 1957 the first university was established and by the time of his death 73 per cent of pupils were going on to secondary education.

Plus, there was health. Life expectancy just prior to World War Two only 38. Diseases such as malaria were rife. But under Hoxha a free health service was set up. Malaria-ridden swamps were turned into agricultural land and by 1960 life expectancy had risen to nearly 65.

Hoxha himself was a much more rounded, cultured figure than many of his critics made out. He was fluent in French. He also spoke Russian, English, Italian and Serbo-Croatian. And in time he wrote some 68 books.

Even today in Albania some 45 per cent of the population in polls give Hoxha some credit for his achievements. There is even nostalgia for Albania under his rule.

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

I was interested to read that new Irish President, Catherine Connolly, is involved with the Catholic charity the Legion of Mary. The Legion of Mary do some awesome work amongst the poor and homeless. This includes free delicious soup, goody bags, a shower, a shave and a game of bingo 365 days a year. Just like the far-left, the Legion of Mary possess a genuine concern for the downtrodden and oppressed.

**James Haggerty
Glasgow**

The budget proposals that centre on extending the

freezing of income tax thresholds until 2031 are cruel, unfair and rather than stabilising Britain's economic position will likely make it worse. The burdens of the crisis are placed firmly onto the shoulders of working people.

There was as usual a great deal of spin with talk of unleashing talent and opportunity, mending the roads and improving the NHS. However, apart from a few crumbs such as the removal of the two-child benefit cap and the introduction of a Mansion Tax in 2028 it was a budget that would continue with a policy of hard austerity with higher taxes and increased government borrowing.

To ask a genuine left-winger what they think of the Budget is like asking some rustic character the way to somewhere to be told that they would not start from here. It is a bourgeois budget designed to sustain and protect the failing and unfair capitalist system. It is not in any way a budget that would actually solve the nations real crisis or pave the way for socialism. We require fundamental changes that that would change society and production relations in favour of the people who create the wealth of the nation.

A number of trade union leaders, such as Steve Wright of the FBU, have bitterly criticised the proposals. Sharon Graham of Unite expressed concern that the Budget would hit working-class people and said that wealth taxes should be introduced to make those who have the broadest shoulders pay a fairer share.

On the other hand, the boss of the TUC, Paul Nowak, highlighted the importance of tax increases to fund essential public services. Paul Clancy of Prospect took a stance of emphasising the importance of protecting public

Diary

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

UNTIL 26 MARCH

Imperial War Museum: Emergency Exits: The Fight for Independence in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus. IWM, Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, London SE1 6HZ.

THURS 11 DEC

Liberation: UN Human Rights Day meeting. 18:00–20:00. Committee Room 10, House of Commons, London SW1. Must book via Liberation website.

SUN 14 DEC

Visible Women UK: Unveiling of communist writer Sylvia Townsend Warner's statue. 13:00. Goulds, South Street, Dorchester DT1 1BS.

THURS 29 JAN 2026

General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Mary McArthur and the National Federation of Working Women. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 31 JAN

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: monthly vigil opposing US nuclear weapons in Britain. 12:00–14:00. RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 9PS.

SAT 7 FEB

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Conference. 10:00–17:00. Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD.

FRI 13 FEB

Ipswich New Worker Group:

Eyewitness account of life in the DPRK by Dermot Hudson. 19:30. Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich IP1 3JH.

TUES 24 FEB

Socialist History Society: Lyndal Roper on The German Peasants' War of 1524–6 and why you should care about it. 19:00. Online on Zoom. Register on SHS website.

THURS 26 FEB

General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The 1918 Equal Pay Strike. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 28 FEB

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop British Nuke Jets – national demonstration. Assemble at RAF Marham, Upper Marham, King's Lynn PE33 9NP.

THURS 26 MARCH

General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The General Strike in its Aftermath. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

1–6 APRIL

Lakenheath Action for Peace: Peace camp. Details TBA.

THURS 30 APRIL

General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Day Nurseries & 'British Restaurants': Women Workers in WW2. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

services with taxation and also called for the government to redouble efforts for investment in defence.

We are talking big money with the total value of the British Budget exceeding £1.353 billion. The UK government, with its addiction to war, intends to

squander in excess of £62.2 billion on defence in the coming year in addition to promotion of the Ukraine conflict. The constant propaganda of a fake security threat to Britain is used to mask this obscene waste of money that should have

continued on page 9...

...continued from page 8

been invested in technology and infrastructure to secure our future.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

The Palestinian Communist Party categorically rejects the recent decision issued by the UN Security Council regarding the Gaza Strip, which stems from a fully biased American initiative in favour of the Israeli occupation and its ongoing aggression against our people. This decision disregards the Palestinian national will and represents a blatant attempt to impose new realities that align with the Israeli project aimed at undermining the rights of our people and eliminating their just cause.

The proposed decision does not represent a step toward any genuine peace. Rather, it seeks to impose a rejected international guardianship over the Gaza Strip and reproduce attempts to isolate the sector from the West Bank and Jerusalem, serving a plan aimed at fragmenting the geographical and political unity of Palestine. This approach reflects once again the nature of the US role in supporting occupation policies and its continuous attempts to reshape the conflict according to the occupier's conditions.

The Palestinian Communist Party affirms that any international presence or military force imposed on Gaza without the explicit consent of our people and resistance forces constitutes a new form of occupation and will be met in the same way that the Israeli occupation is resisted. Our people will not accept any attempt to undermine their national decision or internationalise the management of their land and destiny.

The party also reiterates its firm stance that Palestinian resistance, in all its forms, is a legitimate right of a people living under occupation. This right

is grounded in historical principles and international charters that guarantee peoples the right to resist colonialism in all its forms. The future of weapons and decisions regarding their use is an exclusively Palestinian matter, determined by the path of liberation and the will of the popular resistance forces, and not a subject for international or regional negotiation.

At a time when there is a regrettable decline in official Arab positions and a hesitant stance among some international actors who refrained from taking a clear position against this unjust decision, the party warns against any attempts to bypass the commitments of the resistance forces or exploit the humanitarian situation to impose solutions that undermine the national rights of our people.

The Palestinian Communist Party emphasises that the rising global popular movement in solidarity with the Palestinian cause should be utilised to strengthen the Palestinian narrative and consolidate the international isolation of the Israeli entity. The guarantor states of the ceasefire agreements must fulfil their responsibilities in compelling the occupation to immediately halt its aggression, fully withdraw from the Gaza Strip, and open crossings without restrictions to allow the entry of humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, the party calls upon communist and workers' parties, the free people of the world, and active popular movements to escalate solidarity and struggle against imperialism and Zionism, in support of the Palestinian people, whose struggle has proven that the will for liberation cannot be defeated, and that resistance will endure as long as the occupation exists.

**Palestinian Communist Party
Occupied Palestine**

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

“There is no place for profiting in how Scotland cares for its children” declared *The Promise*, the 2020 final report of the Scotland’s Independent Care Review, which is the official policy of the SNP Government. In reality things are somewhat different at present. The private sector is still befitting from lucrative contracts from local authorities, although the SNP claim this will change in 2030.

The independent Common Weal thinktank has discovered that bosses of private childcare homes are raking in huge salaries and profits for their companies despite government promises to stop profiteering. Ministers are belatedly planning what Common Weal calls watered-down plans to curb profiteering, rather than tackle the root of the trouble, outsourcing.

In theory foster care services must legally be non-profit in Scotland but there are plenty of loopholes, paying huge salaries

to bosses in one way.

Care Visions of Edinburgh, the largest in Scotland with 28 homes, gave its highest paid director £752,048 over two years to October 2024. Amalfi Cleanco Limited, which owns and invests in numerous homes and companies across the UK and abroad, awarded its main directors £1.226 million last year. Scottish councils spent around £200 million on such outsourced services last year.

The March 2025 figures are that of the 359 registered children’s homes in Scotland, 171 or 46 per cent are privately operated. In all they account for 2,000 places. In 2012 there were only 47 private residential homes, at the same time the number of voluntary sector-run houses rose from 47 to 71. In contrast, the number of local authority-run establishments remains almost the same, rising from 114 to 116.

In 2022 the Competition and Market Authority said the prices and profits were “materially higher profits and charging materially higher prices” than they would expect. Their review of the 2016–2020 period showed that these children’s homes companies made an estimated average of £28,000 in profit per child.

Present SNP plans to introduce regulations to limit the profits of the providers of those services are based on the assumption that organisations are re-investing profits by better training of workers and making improvements to homes and buildings. They expect that a Bill presently before the Scottish parliament will provide more financial information to the Government, which is hardly a revolutionary step. Even Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, politely said that initial planning about how *The Promise* would be delivered had not provided “a strong platform for success”.

No wonder the Common Weal Care Reform Group thinks this is inadequate. “We think the Scottish Government should fulfil its promises over profit making. They have been dragging their heels, but they are proposing to let it continue. They should live up to their promise.”

Instead of tinkering about with money being “extracted” from children’s residential care there is a need to “phase out private provision completely” as this would end the farce of unenforceable regulations. This would require all children’s services providers to be not-for-profit within three years.

Privatisation was the basis of the SNP’s National Care Service, which has been put on ice if not totally abandoned after unions and normally loyal SNP councillors revolted at the possibility of losing a traditional local authority power.

Whisky Galore

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer made a mercifully little noticed attempt to endear himself to the Scots by appearing on a St Andrews Day podcast of a Downing Street food event made by

the *Scotsman*.

The Right Honourable declared “I love all cuisines”, doubtless designed to avoid offending any ethnicity, but could annoy vegetarians. He also said that “whisky is always good and lovely to drink” and “every barrel has to be perfectly crafted from wood”. Despite being pressed however, he failed to name a single brand of his beloved beverage, adding that “I enjoy pretty well all of them”. The only people who really do that are those who breakfast on the amber fluid, an admission rivals for his job might like to broadcast when preparing to knife him. At the same Downing Street event Starmer announced his “food highlight” was salmon tandoori from Mister Singh’s India restaurant in Glasgow. This exotic choice was doubtless made because Mister Singh himself was present and serving that very dish...

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Voices for Palestine

At Parliament Square
Saturday 13th December 2025
5pm - 6pm

Hear speeches and prayers from multi faith leaders & songs for Palestine

Stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people at a time when families come together.

Bring flags and candles

Palestine will be free!

by New Worker
correspondent

Over a 100,000 people marched through the heart of London on Saturday to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, calling for an end to Israel's occupation and for the UK to halt arms sales to Israel. The protest was called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and its allies to demand the enforcement of the ceasefire agreement and to condemn the ongoing blockade on Gaza. The protest also called for an end to UK arms exports to Israel and highlighted the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where thousands have been affected by military operations.

In 1977 the UN designated 29th November as an international occasion to express support for the inalienable rights of the



Palestinian people, foremost among them the right to self-determination, national independence, sovereignty, and the return of

refugees to the homes from which they were displaced in 1948.

Ben Jamal, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign's

director, said that the day was established by the UN to highlight that Palestinians "did not have their right of self-determination

realised" and were living under "a system of brutal occupation". He said the day had come to symbolise "the complete failure of the

international community" to act. In 1977 there were "12,000 illegal settlers in East Jerusalem (and) the West Bank", the figure is now "close to 750,000".

Jamal said that granting "impunity" to Israel for "occupation and apartheid" had led "inevitably to the genocide we have all been witnessing". He also criticised the recently passed UN Security Council resolution on Gaza, saying it "doesn't support the implementation of international law ... gives governance of Gaza to the United States and gives the Palestinian people no say in how they are to be governed". And the Palestinian Mission to the UK in London posted a message of thanks on social media, saying: "We would like to thank all the freedom-loving people in Britain for standing with us ... Palestine will be free with your unwavering support and dedication."

Teaching in Vietnam

by AF Reeves

I'm fully aware that a fair chunk of our readers are neither expats nor teachers. But those who do not teach almost surely know, and are perhaps even friends with, some of us. Although I would not always recommend it. Bunch of know-it-alls with too many holidays, or so I was told back home anyway.

Vietnam has many days, from Women's Day to Liberation Day, all the way through to Teachers' Day. Despite not personally feeling the need for a day that celebrates what I do with most of my professional time, I do appreciate the sentiment. It shows the profession is still respected here and, in a world where

natural intelligence seems increasingly under threat, living in a country that values it is, well, appreciated.

Personally, I never imagined I would become a teacher, let alone stick with it. The perpetual monotony of office life and living for the weekend was sucking

my soul out and dampening my dreams. I was curious and keen to chance my arm abroad, long fascinated by Vietnam and its inescapable cultural impact on the zeitgeist, despite its seemingly small stature as a nation, it excited me.

I could never have

known, when I moved here with the intention to teach English for a year or two, that I could fall so deeply and spectacularly in love with a place that it would change the course of my life. Yet here I am, as a qualified professional, owing much of that to this

country and to the young minds that make the job not only worth doing, but worth taking pride in.

I also think that it's important to note that not all of us are here to teach the language itself. Plenty of students in Vietnam are chasing international qualifications and eyeing universities abroad. They need confident English speakers who can teach history, physics and the rest with clarity. Speaking a language is one thing; teaching it is another.

As for English as a Second Language (ESL), it isn't some backpacker free-for-all. The weekend TEFL and tourist-visa era has gone. Checks are tighter, penalties are real and the standard has risen with the calibre of candidates.

Vietnam is firmly on the map for educators who want meaningful work and a new challenge. Let's show the profession some respect.

To my students, thank you. Your graft and goodwill make this job a pleasure. To parents and guardians, if you want to show appreciation this Teachers' Day, there's no greater gift than easing the pressure on the kids a touch. Not every quiz score needs to be perfect. Children need time to be children. Well-rested, well-fed and happy beats stress-produced perfection every day of the week. So, consider this a Happy Teachers' Day to all from me, Mr Alex.



REVIEW

The History of an Idea

The West – The History of an Idea by Georgios Varouxakis. Princeton University Press 2025, 512 pp, Hbk: £35:00.

by Ben Soton

The West is more of an idea than a place and in this book Georgios Varouxakis traces its history. The concept of 'The West' can be traced through a series of historical events: the Greco-Persian Wars of the 5th Century BC; the division of the Roman Empire into East and West in the 4th Century AD and with the Empire of Charlemagne in the 9th Century becoming Western Christendom. The idea crystallised in the 18th and 19th Centuries with the Enlightenment and the development of liberty and democracy. There has to be some reference to geography as it is a point on a map; its core is Western Europe and later came to include North America and Australasia.

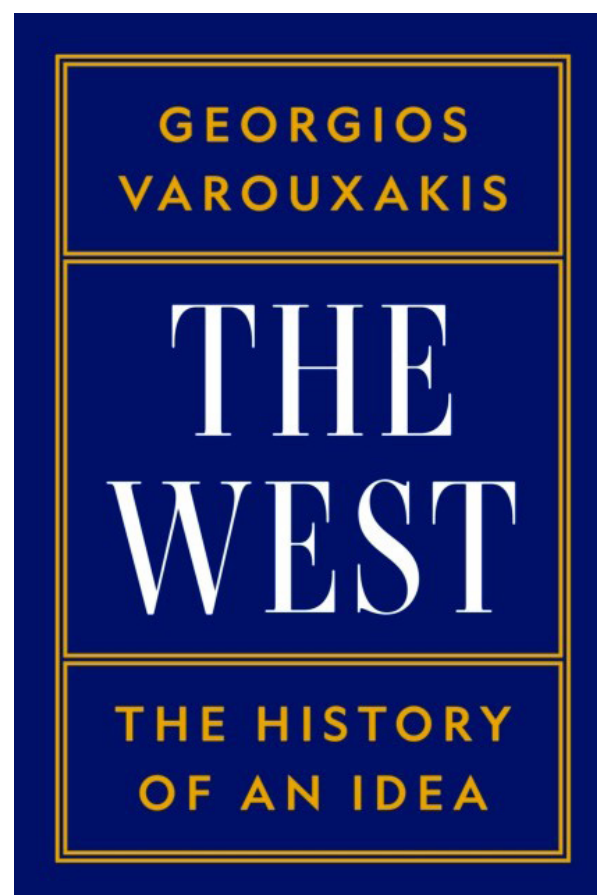
According to Varouxakis, the idea of the 'West' was developed

by the French philosopher Auguste Comte. Comte developed the idea of Occidentalism in which he saw The West as in the vanguard of humanity that, due to its superiority, had been given a leadership role over the rest of the world. Although Comte was a critic of imperialism his ideas have been used to justify actions of imperialist powers from the 19th Century onwards whilst the 'West', as distinct from Europe, stood in opposition to Russia – which then and still today was seen as Eastern and despotic.

Varouxakis traces how the idea of the West evolved from the 19th and 20th Centuries to today's modern world. He explains how Russia became excluded from the West and how the whole concept came unstuck during the First World War when Turkey and Russia joined the fray. Germany claimed to be defending the West

against 'Asiatic' Russia while the Entente Powers pointed to the German alliance with Ottoman Turkey. These problems continued through the inter-war years with talk of the decline of the West while toward the end of Second World War the entry of the USA led to increasing talk of the 'Atlantic Community' as distinct from the West. The chapter on the Cold War covers the twists and turns of European and American foreign policy, both in relation to the socialist camp and towards each other.

The Second World War has often been viewed as a conflict between pro- and anti-Enlightenment ideologies with liberalism, represented by Anglo-American and French imperialism, and socialism, led by the Soviet Union, having their roots in the 18th Century 'Enlightenment'. Fascism, on the other hand, is opposed to the Enlightenment and



the ideas of the French Revolution.

This is touched upon in the chapter on the post-Cold-War era, which states there is a traditional West based on classical civilisation and Christianity and a modern West based on the Enlightenment. It has even been said that the

Cold War was a conflict between the two pro-Enlightenment ideologies of socialism and liberalism – a conflict between liberty and democracy.

The chapter on the post-Cold War era focuses on Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* and the *End of History* by Francis

Fukuyama. Huntington believed that with the end of the Cold War the West faced new challenges from rival civilisations, which he lists as Islamic, Orthodox, Hindu, Japanese and possibly African and South American. Fukuyama simply claimed that fall of the Soviet Union was the final triumph of the West.

This book is a history of the idea and not a critique of it. The twists and turns around what constitutes the West indicate serious flaws with the concept however. Some of worst conflicts in history have been between Western powers; not just the First and Second World Wars but also the Napoleonic wars, the Thirty Years War and the Hundred Years War to name but a few. In living memory the 'West' has been used as a euphemism for US-led imperialism and the self-styled Western 'democracies' who have been more than willing to support feudal tyrants opposed to secularism or socialism to maintain their hegemony over much of the Global South.

Netanyahu asks for pardon

by Ed Newman

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has formally requested a pardon from President Isaac Herzog over his ongoing corruption charges.

In the request, Netanyahu argues that it would be in the "public interest" for him to be pardoned, as he says it would reduce tension in

Israeli society.

"Out of a public responsibility as prime minister to try to bring about reconciliation between the parts of the people, I have no doubt that the end of the trial will help to reduce the intensity of the flames in the debate that has arisen around it," he wrote.

"Faced with the security challenges and political opportunities

currently facing the State of Israel, I am committed to doing everything in my power to heal the rifts, achieve unity among the people, and restore trust in the state's systems, and I expect all heads of state agencies to do the same."

Netanyahu faces charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust, to which he has entered a plea of "not guilty".

The Israeli prime minister is accused in one case of accepting more than \$260,000 worth of luxury goods from billionaires in exchange for political favours, as well as attempting to negotiate more favourable coverage from two Israeli media outlets in two other cases.

Netanyahu's court appearances have been repeatedly delayed for

a variety of reasons, including Israel's military attacks on Gaza, Syria and Iran. Netanyahu also proposed judicial reforms that critics say sought to weaken the courts and prompted massive protests that died out after the start of the genocidal Gaza war in October 2023.

US President Donald Trump is among those who have called for Ne-

tanyahu to be pardoned. Earlier this month, Trump sent a letter to Herzog calling for the prime minister's pardon. In it, Trump praised Netanyahu's efforts at securing "peace" with Arab countries, something he claimed had "been sought for at least 3,000 years".

Donbas and Novorossiia will be free

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the Donbas and Novorossiia territories controlled by Kiev will be liberated one way or the other – either by military means or by the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces and an end to the fighting.

“Either we liberate these territories by military action, or Ukrainian troops ... will leave these territories and stop killing people” Putin told the media during his visit to India this week.

The Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Lugansk People’s Republic (LPR) did not want to exist within Ukraine and expressed this in a

referendum, Putin said. “We immediately told the Ukrainian troops: the people do not want to live with you. They went out to the referendum and voted.”

Russia tried to build relations between the Donbas republics and Ukraine, but Kiev did not recognise them. Kiev refused to withdraw its troops from the DPR and the LPR after the referendum, preferring to fight.

Achieving a consensus now between the parties is a difficult task. The USA has taken on the difficult mission of resolving the situation in Ukraine, Putin said. “This is a difficult task and a difficult mission that the Trump administration has taken on. It is difficult. I



say this without any irony.”

He added that during his meeting with US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner, there were questions regarding the American proposals

with which Moscow did not agree. But the meeting was “very useful”. It is too early to talk about the meeting, but it was necessary, the Russian president said, adding that proposals the US side brought to

Moscow were based, one way or another, on his agreements with Donald Trump in Alaska. “What the Americans brought us now, we had not seen yet, so we had to go through almost every point, that is

why it took so much time.”

“They [the points of the American-proposed plan for a settlement in Ukraine] are being discussed. They [the USA] divided the 27 points into four packages and proposed discussing them separately,” Putin said.

US representatives are currently engaged in shuttle diplomacy, maintaining contacts with Russia, Europe and Ukraine. “What are they doing? Shuttle diplomacy. They spoke with the Ukrainian representative, then they spoke with the Europeans, then they came to us, and then they have another meeting with the Ukrainians and Europeans,” Putin said.

Sputnik

Trump’s Misdeeds: Who Will Judge Them?

by **Hedelberto López Blanch**

The arbitrary and criminal actions of convicted felon President Donald Trump are long and seemingly endless, as reflected in several articles by researchers and media outlets.

One of the latest actions demonstrating Trump’s innate arrogance was his pardon of former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, imprisoned in the USA for drug trafficking and serving a 45-year sentence, while at the same time threatening to bomb Venezuela with false accusations of being a narco-state.

Last year, Hernández was convicted by New York courts for exporting more than 400 tons of cocaine to the USA. Now Trump considers him an “angel” who only accepted millions of dollars to protect drug shipments and that the whole thing “was a setup by former President Joe Biden”.

The *New York Times* described in a lengthy article how Juan Orlando “boasted that they were going to shove drugs right under the Americans’ noses, and accepted millions of dollars in bribes from El Chapo Guzmán to allow cocaine shipments to pass through Honduras”.

During the federal trial,

the newspaper adds, testimony and evidence demonstrated how the former president maintained Honduras as a stronghold of the global drug trade. He orchestrated a vast trafficking conspiracy that, according to prosecutors, earned millions for the cartels, while keeping Honduras one of the poorest, most violent and most corrupt countries in Central America. And now the convicted president Trump claims that the “young man” is not guilty.

Trump’s decision comes amid unjustified aggression against Venezuela and its constitutional president, Nicolás Maduro. Numerous warships have been stationed off the coast

of Venezuela for almost two months, launching attacks against boats accused without evidence of drug trafficking, resulting in the deaths of 83 people.

But let’s look at a brief summary compiled by experts from various media outlets regarding the countless misdeeds and abuses committed by a president who leads a powerful empire, albeit one in a state of decline.

It turns out that, although Trump has denied it, he flew seven times on Jeffrey Epstein’s plane. Epstein was a wealthy financier and sex offender who associated with many famous and wealthy people and who mysteriously hanged himself in an

American prison.

Trump has invoked the Fifth Amendment 97 times to avoid testifying in response to various accusations. He has been convicted 34 times for serious crimes and has been charged with 91 criminal offences.

His record includes 26 accusations of sexual assault; he has declared bankruptcy six times to avoid paying debts and has had five exemptions from military service.

He also faced two impeachment trials during his previous presidential term; two companies were convicted; a fake university was shut down; and a fake charity was closed.

The tycoon president had to pay \$25 million in a fraud settlement; \$5 million for a sexual assault verdict; \$12 million for misuse of a fake charity; \$93 million in a sexual assault sentence; and \$400 million in another fraud sentence.

What do you think? A long and substantial list of misdeeds committed by President Donald Trump, who wants to rule the world in the style of an American Western. And if he were to reach the end of his term, we might well ask ourselves: who will judge him?

You, the reader, have the floor...

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