

Oil price soars amid new war fears!

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Iranian air-defences are on red alert as Trump mouths off his usual threats and Brent crude tops \$100 on the spot oil market amid fears that a new round of all-out fighting is imminent in the Middle East. The cease-fire in Lebanon has collapsed as Israeli troops battle to extend their control of their northern borderlands and create a new 'buffer zone' on Lebanese territory. And in a renewed call for peace, UN chief António Guterres warns that the consequences of the war in Iran and regional instability are growing "dramatically worse with each passing hour".

Two months into the American-Israeli war on Iran and the Persian Gulf remains closed. The Trump truce has halted the war in the air for the moment but the double-blockade of the Persian Gulf continues. The struggle between Iranian patrol boats and American warships for control of the Strait of Hormuz that is choking-off over 20 per cent of the world's oil and gas supplies has sent global energy prices surging and heightened concerns about the risks of a new worldwide slump.

Iran's President Masoud

TEHRAN TIMES



Turkish academics condemn US-Israeli attacks on Iranian universities

TEHRAN - Hundreds of Turkish scholars have strongly condemned recent US-Israeli strikes on Iranian universities, calling the attacks an act of "unprovoked aggression" against knowledge and humanity's intellectual heritage.

Iran acting in self-defense, will continue until guarantees are secured, envoy

TEHRAN - Iran is not waging war but will continue to defend itself until hostilities fully cease and credible guarantees are secured to prevent their recurrence, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva said.

From Madrid to Tehran: Spain's flag emerges as a symbol of principle in Iran's wartime rallies

By Shahrokh Saei
TEHRAN - Since the start of the war, Iran has seen an upsurge in rallies across the country to denounce the aggression. These demonstrations, marked by chants, speeches, and the waving of flags, have become a vivid expression of defiance.

Qalibaf: Financial war is main frontline against US

TEHRAN - Iran's Parliament Speaker, Mohsen Rezaee Qalibaf, has said that the primary arena for confronting the United States is financial warfare, stressing that economic resistance remains key to weakening Washington's global influence.

Billion-dollar quake: How an invasion is reshaping global order

TEHRAN - What begins as a military confrontation in the Persian Gulf never stays there. Two months into the second great American and Israeli campaign against Iran, the world is waking up to a harsh reality: the shockwaves have reshaped the energy markets and are now tearing through global supply chains, security, and the economic stability of nations.

Amal Khatli wrote the final report with her own blood

By Mehrzad Zamani Fashami
TEHRAN - The martyrdom of Amal Khatli once again draws the attention of regional and global opinion to the scale of the systematic targeting of journalists on the battlefield.

Pezeshkian says the American blockade of Iranian ports amounts to an "extension of military operations" by Washington and is "intolerable". Trump says "we might need" to resume fighting adding that "nobody knows what the talks are except myself and a couple of other people".

Although the second round of peace talks in Pakistan collapsed before they even took place, secret exchanges between the

Americans and the Iranians continue through the good offices of Pakistani mediators. But it's clear from leaks to the Arab media that the stumbling blocks that led to the break-down in negotiations are entirely down to the Americans who are insisting that the Iranians abandon their nuclear research programme before any talk about lifting the crippling sanctions regime on the Islamic Republic can begin.

Meanwhile, Israeli naval forces have seized Gaza aid flo-

INSIDE

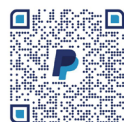
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May Day shut-down

Our volunteers are taking a well-earned rest for the first week of May.

The last issue of the *New Worker* before our break will be published on Friday 1st May. We will be back on Friday 15th May.

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tilla ships in international waters off the coast of Crete. Some 20 small vessels, part of the Sumud Aid Flotilla, were stopped and boarded by Israeli marines last week. The flotilla set sail two weeks ago, with a total of 58 vessels joining from Spain, France and Italy, aiming to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. The remaining 36 boats remain close to Crete's southern coast. The Israeli raid was naturally backed by the USA, which dismissed the aid flotilla as a "meaningless political stunt".

Flotilla organisers said the seizure of the aid ships, and the detention of 175 campaigners on board, reflects an expansion of

the "policy of impunity" enjoyed by Israel. "This is an act of piracy and illegal detention on the high seas," the Global Sumud Flotilla said. "The incident demonstrates that occupation forces can operate with total impunity, far beyond their borders, and without facing any consequences." Most of the activists have now been released but two were taken to Israel for further questioning.

The Global Sumud Flotilla was established with the goal of breaking the blockade on the Gaza Strip, delivering aid to its residents and raising global awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian situation under Israeli occupation.

FUND

This week's tally came to £1,110, boosted by a £500 contribution to the fighting fund from a comrade in the West Country and other donations that included £100 from a Staffordshire supporter and £26 in coins saved by a Brixton pensioner to help keep us going. The grand total for April was £3,018 – sadly well short of our £3,500 target for the month. Hopefully we can make up for it in May – we certainly need to keep our suppliers happy!

War abroad and austerity at home. That's all Labour and the rest of the parliamentary pack have to offer us these days. Millions eke out a miserable existence on benefits or bread-line wages while corrupt politicians and the rich parasites they serve flaunt their wealth without fear of retribution. These high castes think their rule will last forever. We must prove them wrong.

Our paper is the only communist weekly in Britain. Help us counter the lies of the bourgeois media that are rammed down our throats every day. Stand by the people's democracies and the rest of the Global South. Stand by the Cubans, Palestinians and Iranians defending themselves against imperialist aggression. Campaign for national liberation and peace. Get the communist answer to the capitalist crisis heard on the street.

You can help! Your contribution, big or small, counts! All donations help keep our presses rolling. Please send your donation 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/fightingfund.html>

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

The spirit of May Day

May Day is workers' day – but its origins go back to the rituals of hallowed antiquity. Long before the emergence of trade unions, May Day was a spring festival dedicated to the spirits that people thought controlled the destinies of humanity. Houses were decorated with green branches and peasants picked a 'May King and Queen', believing this would magically bring about a good harvest and prosperity.

Nowadays it's a time to remember past struggles and achievements and look forward to the bright red future still to come. From the big parades in the people's democracies to the rallies in Europe and throughout the Global South, May Day is celebrated to honour the generations that have gone before us and to look to the future with confidence and determination.

We recall the fight for the eight-hour day and the strikes in the USA on May Day 1886 that ended in the murder of six strikers by the police in Chicago, and the deaths of seven police the next day when a bomb exploded during a protest in the city's Haymarket Square. Eight union leaders were arrested on trumped-up charges and four were later hanged.

In 1889 the First International, the International Working Men's Association, declared May Day an international working-class holiday to commemorate the Haymarket Martyrs and the Red Flag, representing the blood of working class martyrs – the martyred dead of Labour's anthem – was adopted as the international symbol of working people.

Lenin's May Day was a call to action. He said: "May Day is coming, the day when the workers of all lands celebrate their awakening to a class-conscious life, their solidarity in the struggle against all coercion and oppression of man by man, the struggle to free the toiling millions from hunger, poverty, and humiliation. Two worlds stand facing each other in this great struggle: the world of capital and the world of labour, the world of exploitation and slavery and the world of brotherhood and freedom.

"On one side stand the handful of rich blood-suckers. They have seized the factories and mills, the tools and machinery, have turned millions of acres of land and mountains of money into their private property. They have made the government and the army their servants, faithful watchdogs of the wealth they have amassed.

"On the other side stand the millions of the disinherited. They are forced to beg the moneybags for permission to work for them. By their labour they create all wealth; yet all their lives long they have to struggle for a crust of bread, beg for work as for charity, sap their strength and health by back-breaking toil, and starve in hovels in the villages or in the cellars and garrets of the big cities.

"But now these disinherited toilers have declared war on the moneybags and exploiters. The workers of all lands are fighting to free labour from wage slavery, from poverty and want. They are fighting for a system of society where the wealth created by the common labour will go to benefit, not a handful of rich men, but all those who work. They want to make the land and the factories, mills, and machines the common property of all toilers. They want to do away with the division into rich and poor, want the fruits of labour to go to the labourers themselves, and all the achievements of the human mind, all improvements in ways of working, to improve the lot of the man who works, and not serve as a means of oppressing him." Let us all follow in Lenin's footsteps to build a better tomorrow for the generations to come.

Mistrust shadows the 'special relationship'

by
Li Guanjie

King Charles III and Queen Camilla began their four-day state visit to the USA on Monday. Many analysts believe the King's visit carries a 'special mission' to mend ties and bridge growing rifts. As their strategic trajectories diverge, the friction within the Anglo-American alliance is becoming increasingly visible.

Currently, the 'special relationship' between the two countries is clouded by an intense sense of mutual distrust. This uncertainty has been further exacerbated by signals from Washington regarding the Falkland Islands (known as Las Malvinas in Argentina). Reports suggest the Pentagon is advising the administration to rethink its stance on the islands as a retaliation for Britain's perceived inaction during the US-Israeli military operation against Iran. Meanwhile, the State Department stated that the USA remains "neutral" on the issue of the sovereignty of those islands. What may seem like a simple diplomatic manoeuvre by Washington exerts immense pressure on London.

Externally, this implies that Britain's claims over its overseas territories could face serious challenges. As more former colonies move to distance themselves from London, it finds itself with little moral high ground and dwindling leverage due to its declining 'hard power'. Beyond the Falklands, disputes over the Chagos Islands and Gibraltar remain unresolved. Historically, the USA supported or tacitly accepted the British position on these matters. If Washington shifts toward ambiguity or withdraws its support, the UK will lose its primary diplomatic pillar.

Domestically, US pressure could have unintended consequences for Britain's political and governance structures. Since the Keir Starmer administration took office, fluctuations in US foreign policy and domestic political volatility have repeatedly sent shock-waves through British

politics. London has already been grappling with discordant voices from Scotland and Northern Ireland. But the scars of Brexit, combined with current economic hardships, have deepened the crisis of governance. This explains the fierce, unified reaction from across the British political spectrum, with the ruling Labour Party, the Conservative opposition and Reform UK all standing firm on this issue.

The motivation behind American pressure is clear: the 'instrumentalisation' of alliances. The current US government's foreign policy logic has undergone a seismic shift, re-balancing strategic priorities while demanding that regional allies shoulder more of the burden. From Washington's perspective, a 'special relationship' should imply that the UK is tethered to US global strategy, offering 'unconditional' support.

Britain however, is currently caught in an awkward position between the EU and the USA, hampered by a sluggish economy and limited military capacity. In 2025, the UK's GDP growth was a mere 1.4 per cent, and its defence spending gap reached £28 billion. Such conditions are simply insufficient to support a global strategy that aligns with US ambitions. Consequently, since the onset of the American-Israeli military operation against Iran, Prime Minister Starmer has repeatedly stated that Britain should not be dragged into war, offering no concrete commitments to those calling

for increased defence spending.

The volatility of the UK–USA alliance highlights the fundamental asymmetry of the 'special relationship'. The American stance on the Falklands serves as a case in point: Washington is using a core interest of its ally as a tool for discipline. While Britain is reluctant to follow America blindly out of national interest, it remains tethered to Washington for those very same interests. The current state of the relationship is best described as an 'entangled mess' that is increasingly difficult to untangle.

The current UK–USA tension reflects a clash of two paths: the USA seeks to reshape global hegemony via unilateralism, while the UK pursues national and regional interests and upholds its influence within the existing international order. In the short term, these two paths are unlikely to converge. King Charles's visit may clear up some misunderstandings, yet it cannot bridge their fundamental strategic divergence. Given the two governments' starkly different styles, leadership changes on either side may trigger sharp policy shifts. Whether the alliance can return to its former track remains to be seen – and at present, this prospect looks increasingly remote.

The author is a research fellow at the Shanghai Academy of Global Governance and Area Studies at Shanghai International Studies University.

Global Times



Workers' Notes

New bid to ban Palestine marches

by New Worker correspondent

"I am absolutely horrified by the appalling attack on two Jewish Londoners," said Jeremy Corbyn on hearing the news that two Jews had been stabbed in an apparently anti-Semitic attack in Golders Green. The Metropolitan Police have now detained a man with a "history of serious violence and mental health issues". The suspect in the double stabbing has been identified as a British national who was born in Somalia and came to the UK legally in the 1990s.

Corbyn, the former Labour leader who now heads the Independent Alliance bloc in the House of Commons, said: "My thoughts are with the victims, their loved ones and Jewish communities across the UK. We must stand united against racist attacks – and defend a society that embraces the common humanity of us all." But attempts by others to connect a series of anti-Semitic attacks in north London with the marches in solidarity with Palestine are false.

The Stop the War Coalition has been proud to be part of organising these mass marches in support of the people of Gaza and against the genocide of the Israeli government. In a statement issued this week, the anti-war movement said: "We have campaigned for justice for Palestine since our founding 25 years ago, because we recognise that this question is inextricably linked to the wars throughout the Middle East which continue today in Iran and Lebanon.

"We believe that the statements by Jonathan Hall KC, suggesting that the Palestine marches should be subject to a 'moratorium' because of the series of anti-Semitic attacks in North London, are unacceptable.



"We condemn unequivocally these attacks, as we do all forms of anti-Semitism and racism. No one should be attacked for their race or religion.

"However, the attempts by Hall, sections of the media and some politicians to connect such attacks with the Palestine marches are wrong. Our marches are against the treatment of the Palestinians in Gaza, against the killing of up to 200,000 people in the past two and a half years, the destruction of most of the Gaza Strip, and the targeting of hospitals and other civilian sites. They are in protest at the role of the Israeli government, and the complicity of the British government in these attacks.

"These marches are supported by many Jewish people who attend. They are not the 'hate marches' described by right-wing politicians but expressions of solidarity and support for those under attack. The aims to criminalise the protests, which reflect majority public opinion in this country, or worse to connect them with racist or terrorist attacks being carried out against Jewish people, are scurrilous and

should be rejected. They appear to be part of a wider agenda to clamp down on protest more generally, and to limit our rights. In a democracy, we have the right

to peaceful protest and we will continue to exercise it. We will be marching on 16th May for the Nakba."

Birmingham council cave in over bin strike

by New Worker correspondent

It looks like the long-running strike by Birmingham bin workers is, at last, drawing to a close. This is the strike that began on 11th March of last year, long enough to earn its own Wikipedia page.

On Monday, Unite the union declared victory saying that a statement by the leader of Birmingham City Council (BCC) was a vindication of the bin workers' struggle for a decent deal that demonstrated the power of workers backed by their union to resist effective pay cuts of up to £8,000.

At the same time, the union declared that: "It is an absolute abhorrence that this deal has been blocked not just once but twice by unelected unaccountable commissioners and officers at Birmingham City Council, who enjoy eye watering pay packets

and no consequence for their actions." These "unaccountable commissioners" were imposed in Autumn 2023, when BCC issued a section 114 notice, the local government equivalent of bankruptcy. This stopped all future spending except on statutory services, which BCC said was essential to get to a sound financial footing. The bankruptcy was blamed on equal pay liabilities and a disastrous attempt to unify its IT systems, but as is the norm in such cases nobody mentions the crippling interest payments local authorities must pay, which means councils pay several times over for buildings. Unite and GMB both claimed BCC's estimates of the cost of the equal pay dispute were far too high.

BCC emerged from 'bankruptcy' in February after raising the council tax by 17.5 per cent and selling off £750 million worth of assets. Unite fears the deal will be frustrated by the commissioners but welcomed the good faith of the council leader. Cynics noted this came just before the local elections. Reform, Tory, Liberal Democrat and Green Party councillors all united to deplore the timing of the announcement, with a Green saying: "Labour could have resolved this strike months ago, saving misery and millions of pounds."

The dispute saw claims that the limited service during the dispute focused on the city's posh areas, and saw injunctions taken out against mass pickets that were supported by many trade union general secretaries. Unite reduced its affiliation to Labour by £580,000 because of the dispute. Among the organisations BCC attempted to use to break the strike was neighbouring Coventry council's wholly owned company Tom White Waste, which was briefly being sub-contracted to Birmingham council to collect household rubbish. The council claimed the dispute cost it £34 million.

Others expressed doubts about the deal (which still has to be voted upon by the 300 workers). Unite's press release was unusually short on details and made no mention of the £8,000, which Unite said affected 170 workers when BCC sought to abolish the grade of Waste Recycling and Collection Officer, which it

Nakba 78
Justice for Palestine
United against Tommy Robinson & the far right

SATURDAY 16 MAY, 12PM
CENTRAL LONDON

PFB PSC FOA

continued on page 4...

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claims no other council has.

Onay Kasab, Unite's national lead officer, said the offer would include compensation of £16,000 for workers, which will now include compensation for drivers.

Reading between the lines, it means that they will get a two-year 'cushion' against the impacts of job evaluation processes, rather than the six months originally promised. In addition, agency workers who joined the strike will be offered a path to permanent employment, disciplinary issues will be quashed, and for pension purposes the dispute will be treated as authorised absence.

Local government staff are not among the best-paid workers. In March, local government bosses offered a 3.3 per cent pay offer to local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, well short of the demands submitted by unions.

Unison rejected this last month, but what action they will take remains to be seen. The claim by the main unions for 2026/27 was for an increase of at least £3,000 or 10 per cent whichever is greater, with a minimum of £15 per hour for all staff, a two-hour reduction in the working week and an increase of one day annual leave. No mention of the non-pay elements was made in the bosses' offer.

Unite has also denounced the offer, deploring the fact that it was presented as "full and final"

by the national employers without any meaningful negotiation with Unite or its sister unions, adding that it was a real-terms pay cut.

Sharon Graham said that: "Council workers must no longer be penalised for a crisis not of their making. Austerity is a political choice and the national employers must change tack and invest in frontline public sector workers."

Further down the Unite food chain, national officer for local authorities Clare Keogh added: "This is a disappointing offer which falls far short of our pay claim and is yet another real terms pay cut. To add insult to injury local authority workers will be angry that the national employers have refused to meaningfully negotiate on all aspects of the workers' claim."

Both unions note that cuts to council services and budgets have resulted in local government workers enduring a real-terms pay cut of 30 per cent since 2010 and complain the low wages make recruitment and retention difficult.

This will be a test for new Unison general secretary Angela Egan, who was elected, albeit on a very low turnout, to reject the right-wing incumbent who was seen as far too close to the Labour Government. With Unite's Sharon Graham facing a similar contest later this year, it is possible we might see some more action than normal from the bureaucrats who run our unions.

China leads the way

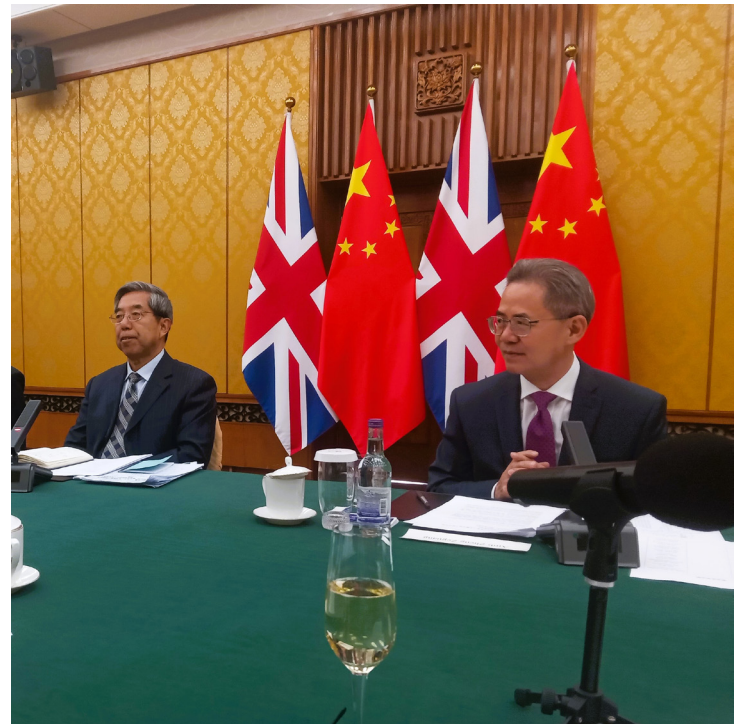
by New Worker correspondent

Andy Brooks joined other British communist leaders and solidarity campaigners in welcoming a senior Chinese delegation to London at a meeting chaired by China's ambassador, Zheng Zeguang, at the Chinese embassy last week.

The five-strong delegation was led by Ma Jiantang, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China who also sits on the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) that plays a central part in the communist-led work of the United Front of China.

At the embassy the NCP leader, together with Alex Gordon of the CPB and Ranjeet Brar from the CPGB-ML along with a number of long-standing friendship activists, were briefed on China's efforts to expand domestic demand and promote high-quality development under the 15th Five-Year Plan, which began this year.

In the discussion Andy Brooks said: "The success of the Chinese revolution, led by the Communist Party of China, is one of the greatest achievements of humanity. The communists were the only force capable of building



• Ma Jiantang and Zheng Zeguang at the meeting,

the broad front in the struggle against Japanese aggression. They were the only ones able to unite China's millions in the struggle against the landlords and exploiters during the civil war that ended with the establishment of the people's government in 1949.

"Since then we've seen an amazing transformation of a country which was the poorest in the world to a prosperous pillar of the Global South that is paving the way forward in the 21st Century.

"There may only be one road to people's power but there are many roads along the way of socialist construction. Chi-

nese-style socialism, based on the experience of generations of struggle, is one of them."

During their stay in London Ma Jiantang and his delegation also held discussions with government, business and academic circles as well as representatives of leading UK media outlets.

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20 years ago this week in the New Worker

28th April 2006

UNIONS REPRESENTING the 2,300 workers employed at the Peugeot-Citroen factory at Ryton in Coventry last week warned the company that they would not "go quietly" – and the French unions representing Peugeot workers in France are supporting the fight to keep Ryton open.

Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Tony Woodley said it was "another nail in the coffin" of Britain's car industry.

"Make no mistake," he said, "we will be looking, as a

matter of urgency, to explore with the company as well as with ministers ways to have this decision reversed.

"We warned the Government three years ago that the labour laws in this country which allowed people to be sacked and plants closed cheaply, quickly and easily needed to be tightened up.

"It is astonishing that this company has given only the bare minimum notice to sack 2,300 people. They may be staying within the basic requirements of British law, but their action is absent of any social responsibility."

Derek Simpson, general secretary of Amicus, which represents the engineers at Ryton, also attacked labour laws in Britain that make it easy and cheap to sack workers here.

Simpson countered claims from Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson that it is not easier to sack British workers than their French counterparts.

He gave ten reasons why it is harder to sack a French

worker than a British one, including: There is a notice period for redundancies of up to five months in France compared with three in Britain. In France, where more than 50 employees are at risk the employer has to propose a social compensation plan and provide that to the unions. The social plan is likely to address internal redeployment, retraining, relocation packages and re-employment of spouses and partners. The employer is obliged to listen and to study suggestions from unions for mitigating the losses. No such obligations exist in Britain.

On average in France, it costs £100,000 to make a worker redundant. In Britain, the maximum allowed for statutory redundancy is £5,000 for 20 years' service. In France, the works committee may appoint an accountant, paid for by the employer, to produce a report to possibly challenge the company's decision in court. Detailed information must be provided to the Government, who will check the employer has complied with all the obligations.

Looking For Djinn: A Russian producer returns to India

by Dimitri Kosyrev

A Russo-Indian movie seems to be the star of the ongoing 48th Moscow International Film festival.

Festivals are not exactly about revenues they are about art of the highest degree. You should not expect any commercial impact from the *Songs of Djinn* by Roman Mikhailov, here we rather have a challenge to the whole film industry – a matter of envy and delight for professionals rather than for the wider public.

That phenomenon is well known in all kinds of arts. There was a man in imperial Austria at the end of the 18th Century who was called a composer's composer, definitely not a darling of the masses. His name was Antonio Salieri, and each time his works were played for a narrow circle of music professionals, they got envious while saying something like "what he does is impossible". Salieri's contemporary, Mozart, was getting applause and money from the widest possible public, but it was Salieri who laid the path to the music of the 19th Century since he was tutoring (often for free) most of the stars of that century, such as Schubert, Beethoven and others.

Roman Mikhailov is always getting audiences packed by film professionals, as well as by the most sophisticated public in Moscow, and that's exactly what happened this time in the capital with his yet another Indian movie, shot mostly in Goa and Varanasi. Simply speaking, it's about Russians lost in their search for the meaning of life and finding some of that meaning in India – where else!

Djinn or genies, call them what you will – it's a complicated subject. Not exactly Indian spirits, these. They are rather the product of the Arabian deserts with its dancing sand devils. But a film, like a



• Roman Mikhailov with the cast and crew at the festival

good book, is able to transfer magical creatures to places they did not originally come from.

The djinns in this film are, simply speaking, making music. Mikhailov says that the music in his new work took a whole year to compose. It's a mix of everything, including Bach's instrumental pieces. You may even say, the actors on the screen are simply illustrating the music, or maybe even acting the music if you know what I mean. You may also say that the whole film is a dialogue of actors with the djinns, the latter speaking in melodies and strange sounds.

It's not only the Russian film-making professionals who avidly follow Roman Mikhailov's career. In fact, his career has seriously shifted to India. And so, there is Manasvi Mangai, the beauty queen, playing in the *Songs of Djinn* as well as Vyom Yadav, Disha Thakur and Rajat Sukhija.

What we have here is quite a phenomenon but not exactly a unique one. There have

always been that thing called the art-house movies, meant for the selected few but powerfully driving the art of cinema to the new heights. The most famous case is probably Federico Fellini in Italy of the 1950s–1970s, being probably the most influential film-makers of all times.

But there also was Russia's Andrei Tarkovsky of *Solaris* fame, making his Fellini-style masterpieces slightly later. And it's small wonder that Roman Mikhailov was showing Tarkovsky's films to his Indian team, simply to show the end product being envisaged.

Hard to explain what kind of film it is, I mean Mikhailov's not Tarkovsky's. The action is slow if not outright absent. It's a bit like a good raga, which first immerses you in a world of its own and then tells you something important that you could not comprehend in haste. What I like best in Mikhailov's work is the light. The maestro has been explaining often enough that seeing things in a special

light makes you understand them. So, it's always a shock to watch his golden or aggressively red light breaking through dust or mist, from where a djinn may emerge any moment.

Here we are talking about a rare case of an absolute genius. A genius is, simply speaking, a lavish excess of nature, a person with amazing gifts of the Divine. Roman Mikhailov got himself internationally famous as a mathematician. I'm not even trying to explain what mathematicians are doing these days and why their work is raising humanity to the new heights. I'm only stating the fact that Mikhailov is a Doctor of Mathematics, a Russian Academy professor and a laureate or a member of the team of several world-famous universities, Princeton included. And then, in 2022, at the age of 44, this world-famous guru of mathematics suddenly announces that he is over with science.

The reason was, he began to like his writing rather than

figures. A list of his published novels and collections of short stories numbers nine items. Again, none of these is a case of easy reading. And that's not exactly something that you would call a novel, as in some imaginary people's life stories clashing with each other. Here we have something else, an author's monologue, with sudden lurches into anything thinkable.

Mikhailov's prose has been noticed and admired by some literature professionals, the man collected several literary prizes. Then theatre directors took interest, and some of Mikhailov's books became plays/ Twenty-nine is the number of these staged in Moscow and other places, so far. At first the directors made these plays themselves, then the author began to take interest in the process. He started writing scripts himself. Then he had to explain things to actors, and, hence, only a tiny step remained to film production. He's now made nine films, with the tenth in the pipeline.

Mikhailov went back to India almost immediately after his djinns hit the screen in Moscow. A new film, tentatively called *While Heaven Watches*, is in the making there.

The film industry is a thing as strange as any other art. It needs money. It loves money and so it makes simple and dumb films to touch the least sophisticated audiences. Then generations change and the next one wants something else, totally new and unexpected. Hence come the times for mavericks with audiences that only number thousands, not millions. Looks like such change is coming now.

What nations can produce a global change in the world of films? Here you have to look at who came to the Moscow festival. Plenty of Koreans and Chinese, some Central

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...continued from page 5
Asians and Americans
(yes, there are good

films in the USA too).
But, in general, it is
the non-Western film

world getting together
and making miracles,
maybe with the help

of the djinns hovering
in Mikhailov's golden
light!

Dmitry Kosyrev is a Russian
writer; the author of spy nov-
els and short stories. He also

wrote columns for the Pioneer
and Firstpost.com

Sputnik India

Hungary: The far-right shuffles the pack

by Vijay Prashad

Hungary's April 2026 parliamentary elections ended Viktor Orbán's 16-year rule and brought Péter Magyar to power with a two-thirds parliamentary majority. Instantly, the Western media began to celebrate the victory as a democratic turning point, indicating that Magyar, unlike Orbán, was cosy with the European Union. Yet, beneath the celebratory rhetoric of democratic renewal lies a more sober reality. What has occurred is not a rupture with the political trajectory of the post-communist period in Hungary, but a reconfiguration within the right-wing bloc itself. The victory of Magyar, a political insider of Orbán's system, represents a shift in personnel and style rather than a transformation of the underlying ideological terrain.

To understand the meaning of Magyar's ascent, it is necessary to revisit the arc of Hungarian politics since the collapse of socialism in 1989. The transition from socialist policies to capitalism did not yield social stability. Instead, the enforced privatisation and the hollowing out of public institutions dramatically increased inequality. Unemployment, previously unknown, surged to around 14 per cent, inflation climbed above 30 per cent, and over a third of the population

was pushed below subsistence levels, while inequality rose sharply from one of the lowest levels in Europe. The former communists reconstituted themselves as the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), which abandoned the policies of the left and became the defenders of the market liberalisation system. Winning the elections in 1994, the MSZP's Finance Minister Lajos Bokros accelerated neo-liberal reforms through the Bokros Package of austerity, mass privatisations and cuts to social spending. This alienated large sections of the MSZP's traditional working-class base and sent them in search of a home in the newly aggressive nationalist and conservative forces.

Orbán, once a liberal anti-Communist youth leader, gradually re-fashioned himself as the architect of a new right-wing political force, Fidesz (Hungarian Civil Alliance), that was rooted in right-wing Catholicism and Hungarian nationalism. Fidesz, under Orbán's leadership from 1993, pushed itself from liberalism to the far-right of a special type gradually and methodically. When Orbán's party won a super majority in 2010 and then governed till the present, he consolidated power through control of the judiciary, media and key state institutions, creating what is frequently called an illiberal democracy.

Orbán's government



fused economic clientelism with nationalist rhetoric, positioning Hungary against migrants, against the EU and against basic social values (which they described as liberal social values, standing against liberalism – itself a word that became corrupted through their messaging). This model – a combination of state capture, oligarchic networks and cultural conservatism – became a reference point for the global far-right, being spoken of often by US President Donald Trump and his intellectual associate Steve Bannon. However, Orbán's system also produced deep and unbridgeable contradictions. Economic stagnation, corruption scandals and the concentration of wealth eroded his social base. These tensions ultimately opened the door for a challenger – not from the devastated camps of liberalism or the left, but from within Orbán's

political universe.

Magyar the insider

Péter Magyar is not a reformist outsider who defeated an entrenched autocrat. Magyar is not a product of Hungary's marginalised opposition. He is a creature of the very system that he now claims to dismantle. Magyar's political life unfolded inside Orbán's Fidesz orbit, including major roles held by Magyar in state institutions and major positions of proximity to the ruling elite. Trained as a lawyer, Magyar moved within the upper layers of the state and business world thanks to the connections to the Fidesz establishment. He was married to Judit Varga, a prominent minister under Orbán, a relationship that placed him near the core of governmental power. Their eventual separa-

tion became politically significant, because it coincided with Magyar's public break from the regime: he accused the Orbán government of illicit surveillance and criticised the government over a presidential pardon case – all of this based on information that he got from his wife before his separation from her and before his resignation from Fidesz. There is something quite repulsive about the way the divorce from his wife and the break from his party took place; it seemed almost orchestrated by Magyar rather than a spontaneous act, which is how he tried to portray it.

This trajectory of the 'break' is crucial because it explains to some extent the utter opportunism of Magyar. In 2024, he joined the Tisza (Respect and Freedom) Party, which had been formed a few years earlier by some rich men to contest the presidential election against Orbán. The party was dormant, so Magyar took it over, brought in his people from Fidesz and got to work building a new organisational platform for the election. He did not fundamentally challenge Hungary's right-wing consensus, but instead mobilised anger at corruption and mismanagement while preserving the key ideological pillars of the Orbán era. Magyar maintained conservative positions on migration and avoided major departures on social policy and geopol-

itics. His thin platform focused more on governance reform (very vague in its framework) rather than on structural transformation or democratisation. Magyar is not an antagonist of the system but its renovator, an opportunist who seized a moment of crisis to rebrand the far-right.

Magyar's promises of anti-corruption drives, institutional reform and renewed relations with the EU have generated optimism amongst liberals across Europe. But these promises do not necessarily signal a departure from the broader right-wing trajectory of Hungarian politics. The electoral map would not have delivered such an enormous mandate for Magyar had the other political parties – including the MSZP, the Green Party, and an assortment of smaller parties – not decided to withdraw their candidates and go behind the Tisza slate. This is what tilted the balance toward Tisza in many constituencies. Nonetheless, the extreme right-wing Our Homeland (MH) won 5.7 per cent of the vote and entered parliament behind Tisza (53 per cent of the vote) and Fidesz (38.6 per cent). The leftist Workers' Party won 0.07 per cent of the vote. The political field remains overwhelmingly dominated by right-wing forces, albeit in different configurations. The social base of Hungarian politics – shaped by decades of neo-liberal

restructuring – remains intact. Without a substantive programme that addresses inequality, labour precarity and public welfare, the underlying conditions that produced Orbánism are unlikely to disappear. Magyar is his latest incarnation.

The most dramatic illustration of a false break comes over Magyar's policy positions that he sought to repair relations with Brussels. That might be so to ensure the widest support from the Hungarian population that saw Orbán's anti-EU positions as excessive. But, Magyar maintains a cautious stance on key issues such as immigration and the war in Ukraine, reflecting the enduring influence of the far-right of a special type over his

imagination. Magyar will certainly reduce the overt obstructionism that characterised Orbán's approach to sanctions and aid against Russia, but there is little indication of a principled break with the nationalist calculus that has defined Hungarian foreign policy. The Hungarian far right – across its factions – has consistently subordinated internationalism to domestic political considerations. Hungary under Magyar will adopt a more polished diplomatic tone, but it is unlikely to become a force to champion the EU position against Russia. Rather, it will remain – as it has been despite Orbán's occasional theatrics – a cautious, ambivalent actor shaped by the same regional and

class interests that have long limited meaningful connections to either Russia or the EU when they have been pitted against each other.

The Right shifts

The defeat of Viktor Orbán is perhaps a punch in the nose of the global far-right, which has lifted him up as a personal icon. Orbán's model of governance has certainly lost its central figure, yet the Hungarian election does not represent the triumph of anything other than a rearrangement of the personnel in a far-right-wing government. There is, however, a change in the character of the far-

right, which has moved from being an openly authoritarian current to a more technocratic, EU-aligned conservatism. Magyar's victory signals the adaptability of the right-wing in the face of a crisis: when one formation exhausts its legitimacy, another emerges to preserve the system. Orbán is only 62. His return should not be discounted.

The pattern is not unique to Hungary. In Italy, Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy repackaged post-fascist traditions into a more respectable pro-EU party while retaining the hardline positions on migration, xenophobia and chauvinism. In France, Marine Le Pen has sought to 'detoxify' the National Rally, soft-

ening its image without abandoning its anti-migrant core. In Poland, the Law and Justice Party blended welfare measures with deeply conservative social policies and nationalist rhetoric. Across Europe, the right has shown a capacity to reinvent itself, absorbing popular discontent while preserving its fundamental commitments to ugly forms of nationalism, monopoly capitalism and social conservatism.

The Hungarian election of 2026 is undoubtedly historic. It ends one of Europe's longest-serving governments and opens a new political chapter. But history rarely proceeds through clean breaks. Péter Magyar's victory does not dismantle the structures that Orbán

built, but it reorganises them. It does not displace the right, but it only renews it. For those seeking a genuinely democratic and egalitarian Hungary, the lesson is clear: the struggle cannot be reduced to the replacement of one leader by another within the same ideological camp. The deeper challenge lies in constructing a political alternative that addresses the social roots of Hungary's crisis – something that neither Orbán nor Magyar has thus far offered and that no other political force is as yet capable of carrying forward to create a new horizon for Hungary.

People's Democracy
(India)

Iran's Lego meme war

by Graham Holton

Explosive News has released more than 50 AI-generated, Lego-inspired Donald Trump videos, with millions of views across X, TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms. These short, hilarious videos are professional, sophisticated, well-scripted and sung to English-language rap music. The group producing the videos has 2.5 million followers on different Iranian messaging channels. The videos are banned on YouTube and Instagram, but Explosive News still has its own Spotify page. LEGO has made no official comment on the videos.

An Explosive News member told *WIRED*, an American digital culture magazine, that to ensure the videos are up to date and culturally significant "Americans themselves have been

helping us – and that support and guidance continues. They share impactful tips and ideas with us."

The political messages are clear, direct and hard striking. In one video the Trump Lego mini-figure sits sobbing at his failed ceasefire while holding a white flag and eating a taco – a reference to the acronym 'Trump Always Chickens Out'. In another video, Trump orders strikes on Iran after reviewing an 'Epstein File' while standing alongside Satan and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

One video shows Iranian missiles bearing the names of everyone from Malcolm X to the victims of Jeffrey Epstein being fired at the USA. In another, a British voice raps: "America is a 250-year civilisation of war, greed and profit. A nation birthed in war will die by war. Iran is a 7,000-year civilisation."



When Trump posted an image on X portraying himself as Jesus, a video mocked Trump for attacking the Pope and posting himself as

Jesus. It went viral. US Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, responded, calling the Trump/Jesus video "disgusting and detached from reality"

(which is how a lot of US citizens view Hegseth).

In others, Lego Iranians celebrate missiles flying toward Tel Aviv to AI-generated rap soundtracks of "L.O.S.E.R" and "Taste the ash of defeat". A Lego grave reads "R.I.P. Donald John Trump". A missile-struck White House lights up in flames. Lego missiles bear messages in English commemorating everyone from Native Americans to Vietnamese villagers, and "stolen blacks". A Lego figure wearing a king's crown, unmistakably Trump, stands in the middle of a chessboard surrounded by soldiers, to the rap lyrics "Send them to the slaughter, you're the only one to blame".

The *Jerusalem Post* has noted that certain clips were labelled with an "apparent watermark" for Revayat-e Fath, the Iranian state-run media foundation. An Explo-

sive News representative has told US media that the organisation is a "student-led media team with a background in social activism". The individuals behind the videos wished to remain anonymous out of fear that their viral success might make them targets in the war campaign.

Often described as 'Slopaganda', a term for any propaganda produced using AI, the videos show how easily American technology and popular culture can be weaponised against the US government. This youth-led production draws on the USA's deepest fears, such as coffins draped in the Stars and Stripes, and examines its deepest internal divisions, the Epstein Files. The propaganda war of 2026 is about messaging and the USA is losing it.

The Guardian –
The Workers' Weekly
(Australia)

LETTERS

Regions require a sound Security Architecture (SA) for continuous peace and stability; a common understanding that respects sovereignty, ensures good relations and deters aggression. Opposition to such an outcome, by deliberately creating tension, will be promoted by those who like arms manufacturers make enormous profits from arms sales. Imperialism with its agenda for world hegemony through geopolitical intrigues will always oppose alliances that they are unable to dominate and control.

A new SA is urgently required for Europe. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Warsaw Pact, NATO immediately, against promises not to do so, embarked upon the establishment of military bases up to the borders of Russia. With its new-found unipolar status, US imperialism overthrew the remaining socialist countries. The ultimate objective was to weaken and break up Russia and so grab its valuable resources. These manoeuvres were accompanied by an intense propaganda campaign to demonise Russia and anything Russian to stir up irrational hatred.

It is against this threat of aggression and created fear that the proxy war in Ukraine takes place. A conflict provoked and engineered by Imperialism without any care for the long suffering of the Ukrainian people. The urgent need is to scrap the warmongering NATO alli-

ance and replace it with a new SA that includes Russia. And why not? Russia has no reason for conflict with Europe. It seeks good relations, co-operation and trade. A majority of Western leaders appear so brainwashed by their own propaganda that they have become illusional, detached from reality and unable to grasp reality. Lasting peace in Ukraine and economic rejuvenation for Europe could be assured with a new SA.

The Middle East is another region in dire need of an effective SA. Urgent action is required to stop the brutal genocide, unprovoked wars of aggression and regime changes promoted by imperialism. The US allies in the region are being used, broken and abandoned and must surely realise that a change of direction is necessary.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Ahead of the Newcastle City Council elections in May, NoSaudiToon has written to parties fielding candidates to clarify their position on Saudi Arabia's ownership of Newcastle United Football Club. It references calls made to the current council leader in a meeting last year.

The NoSaudiToon campaign is actively protesting against the Saudi ownership of Newcastle United, emphasising the need for Newcastle fans to stand against sports-washing accusations. They support the victims of the Saudi regime and they are pushing back against the accusations faced by the city. NoSaudiToon has been vocal in their opposition, highlighting the human rights abuses associated with the Saudi state and its ownership of Newcastle United.

**Saeed Shehabi
Bahrain Freedom Movement
London**

The great Scottish republican socialist John Maclean once read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* with its graphic account of conditions in the tinned beef factories of Chicago.

He had also heard of a scandal closer to home in Greenock on Clydeside. For there was a slaughterhouse there on Crown Street. It was owned by the Town Council and managed by a Committee.

Prior to April 1907, the Committee employed a Mr Ballantine to inspect all the carcasses taken out of the premises. However he often let out diseased cows. Indeed, diseased entrails were sent on to Glasgow in bags labelled "tripe".

The Council did nothing. Bailie Andrew, Conventor of the Slaughterhouse Committee, only visited the premises six or seven times during his long period in office. And, as Maclean pointed out, so lax were the inspection methods that in time Greenock became a dumping ground for "old dead and dying cows within a radius of 20 miles".

Maclean was so appalled by what he had heard that he wrote a pamphlet, *The Greenock Jungle*, exposing the slaughterhouse practices and the trade in diseased meats.

In the pamphlet, first published in 1907, Maclean also condemned the treatment meted out to a whistleblower, a Mr Houston, who had been forced out of work and blacklisted after talking about what he had seen in the slaughterhouse.

Maclean appealed to the people of Greenock to help find Mr Houston alternative employment. And the pamphlet did result in the appointment of a new Government inspector.

So Maclean was in fact an early, successful, campaigner for better food safety.

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

I am sending this email from media outlet *Declassified UK* to a number of media outlets with an appeal that they publicise this report from a former British Army commando who was involved in the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation food aid programme.

It says: "I recently heard a harrowing firsthand account of Israeli 'Squid Games' in Gaza.

The massacres of Palestinians at aid sites stands as one of the more grotesque and brutal episodes in the Gaza genocide.

Dave McIntosh, a private security contractor who managed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) sites, shared his recent experience with me in our latest video.

The former Royal Marines Commando went to Gaza to help deliver food. What he witnessed was a sadistic 'field day' for IDF soldiers, who shot at starving Palestinians desperate for food.

Dave showed me previously unseen videos he filmed while working for the controversial GHF. The videos show a 'sick' Red Light, Green Light system, which he says was devised by the Israelis to create a frenzy among the aid seekers.

The videos show shocking scenes of thousands of men stampeding towards the piles of aid while the private security stand behind barbed wire. Sometimes they had as little as 10 minutes to run to the aid, grab it and get out before the Israelis shut the site. You must watch this video for yourself, it is made possible because of your support."

Dave McIntosh was a Royal Marines Commando who served in Afghanistan. He describes unnecessary and humiliating practi-

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

UNTIL 10 JUNE
National Theatre of Scotland: Stand & Deliver: *The Lee Jeans Sit-in*. Touring play celebrating the 1981 Greenock women workers' sit-in.

WED 6 MAY
Marx Memorial Library: *Capital* Reading Group, Free Taster Session. 19:00-20:30. Introduction to an online fortnightly course lasting until March 2027. Book on MML website.

THURS 7 MAY
Electoral Commission: Elections at a polling station near you. 07:00-22:00.

THURS 7 MAY
Billy Bragg and others: 'Songs for the Workers'. One-off concert. 19:30-21:30. Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Rd, London NW1 7AY. Book on website www.efds.org/whats-on

SAT 9 MAY
Levellers Day. Includes commemoration in churchyard and march round village. 10:30-16:00. Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford OX18 4RY.

SAT 9 MAY
Ipswich New Worker Group Meeting: The Socialist Alternative for a Stable and Peaceful World. 14:00-16:00. Ipswich Institute, 15 Tavern Street, Ipswich IP1 3AA.

SAT 9 MAY
Marx Memorial Library: The 1926 General Strike & Its Significance in 2026. Symposium. 11:00-16:00. Hybrid meeting. Book on MML website.

SAT 9 MAY
People's History Museum: 1926 General Strike Centenary Open Day. 10:15-16:15. People's History Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER. Book on Museum website.

SUN 10 MAY
East End Walks: Bakers and Bankers early Jewish life in London 1650s-1870s. 10:30-12:30. Book at: <https://www.eastendwalks.com>

THUR 14 MAY
Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Workplace Day of Action. Nationwide events.

THUR 14 MAY
Trades Union Congress: The General Strike 100 years on: in conversation with John Monks and Jonathan Schmeer. 18:30-20:00. Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.

THUR 14 MAY
Socialist History Society: Book launch Geoff Andrews *Radicals: The Working Classes and the Making of Modern Britain*. 19:00. Online. Register on SHS website.

THUR 14 MAY
Marx Memorial Library: Ursula

Stone: Walter Crane & the Twentieth Century Press. 18:00. In person. MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU Book on MML website.

SAT 16 MAY
Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Nakba Day demonstration. 12:00. London. Details TBA.

THUR 21 MAY
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: No Nuclear War: Protest the expiry of New START. 12:00-14:00. US Embassy, 33 Nine Elms Lane, Nine Elms, London SW11 7US.

SAT 23 MAY
Red Book Fairs Collective: Merseyside Marxist Book Fair. 10:00-16:00. The Casa, 29 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BQ.

SUN 24 MAY
Morning Star Scotland: Summer Conference. Looking Beyond Holyrood. 12:00-16:00. STUC, 8 Landressy Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 1BP.

THURS 28 MAY
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Part-Time Work in the Post-War Years Day Nurseries. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 30 MAY
International Brigade Memorial Trust: Unveiling of plaque for Clive Branson. 12:00. 310 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 3HU.

SAT 6 JUNE
Socialist History Society: AGM (13:00) and Book launch of Donald Sassoon's *Revolutions: A New History* (14:00). MML, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

MON 8 JUNE
Solaris (1972 Soviet sci-fi film). 14:30. Prince Charles Cinema, 7 Leicester Place, London WC2H 7BY.

SAT 13 JUNE
Society for the Study of Labour History: John Goodridge on "Reading by glow worm: the struggles of labouring-class poets". 14:00-15:30. In person. John Rylands Library, 150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH.

SAT 20 JUNE
Derby Silk Mill Lockout Festival. Assemble 10:00, Market Place, Derby DE1 3QE for rally at Cathedral Green.

SAT 20 JUN
Stop the War Coalition: International Meeting Against War. 12:00. Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, London SW1H 9NH.

THURS 25 JUNE
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The Ford Dagenham Strike. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday.


You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@NCP.clara.net

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Scottish Political News
by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

The Scottish TUC have had their annual Congress at their now normal venue of Dundee on the banks of the beautiful silvery Tay. Sadly, we cannot give such a full report as in previous years. This is because the Congress documents were not available online. As these included lists of delegates, membership statistics etc, it was a useful occasion to take stock of the state of Scottish trade unionism. In recent years, the entire proceedings were broadcast live on YouTube, and there preserved for all eternity. This year the only things on YouTube were the speeches of the STUC General Secretary, the Labour and SNP leaders, and a few presentations to

deserving worthies. Five days after Congress these had 57,104 and 129 views respectively (two each of which were due to this correspondent), so it is easy to see why they have cut down on the YouTube bill.

One decision of the Congress demonstrates that all is not well. This was to abandon annual conferences and have one every two years instead. Apart the devastating effect this will have on Dundee's licensed trade next year, it is confirmation that at the STUC pennies are tight. Trade union membership in Scotland is down to 27 per cent. This is above that of the UK average of 22 per cent, below that in northern Ireland on 34, Wales on 29.5 but above that of every English region, which average out at 20.6 per cent overall.

As with the British TUC, the STUC is a master of uncontroversial motions, many of which were composited to win universal approval. Of the more than 100 motions, none were lost, three were remitted and three withdrawn. Of the successful motions, the vast majority were uncontroversial in trade union terms. Therefore delegates opposed the "Destruction of Scottish Manufacturing Jobs at Alexander Dennis", supported lecturers in the City of Glasgow College Dispute, "Democratising Ownership & Control of Energy" and "Reducing Workload & Improving Staff Well-being in Education". They also deplored "Rising Violence in Schools" and the "Influence of the Far Right in Scotland's Educational Establishments". It is unlikely there was anyone arguing for the destruction of Scottish manufacturing jobs at Alexander Douglas or an increase in school hooliganism.

One of the few signs of controversy was on the question of military expenditure. A bland composite opposing the increase

to three per cent of GDP as demanded by Sir Keir Starmer was passed by 625 votes to 512. We can be sure that as the minority was so large, due to Unite and GMB being behind it, no action will be taken by the STUC on it in line with long-standing tradition of not wanting to upset a component union. As the STUC depends on the SNP Government for much of its income through contracts for its training courses, it has an additional reason for not rocking the boat.

The Election

First Minister John Swinney, the SNP leader, vows to bring forward a vote on holding a second independence referendum if the nationalists win the forthcoming Scottish parliamentary election. Labour's Anas Sarwar says he'll show Scots "what change looks like" within the first 100 days of a Labour government if he wins the election (a most unlikely outcome). And millionaire Malcolm Offord, the Scottish Faragist leader, denies claims he is out of touch with the people while bragging about his six houses, five cars and six boats.

As the Holyrood election heads towards the home straight, it seems clear that who is the least unpopular will secure, at least, a partial victory,

rather than romp home on a wave of popular enthusiasm.

The SNP have been rather shy about talking about their less than glorious record while the opposition parties speak of little else.

Tactical voting either to kick out the SNP or stop Reform in its tracks is, however, a major talking point on the Scottish political scene. There has also been much talk, some harsh, about coalitions. Reform's leader, Malcolm Offord, says Labour's leader, Anas Sarwar, privately sought co-operation with them before an election hustings broadcast – something Sarwar strongly denies. Who to believe? Interestingly, Offord's claims about what was said by Sarwar are far more detailed than the denial.

The Scottish Greens say they're open to a new power-sharing agreement with the nationalists.


Alex Cole-Hamilton, the Liberal Democrat leader, has suggested his party would welcome a coalition with Labour and specifically ruled out a deal with the SNP.

At the end of the day, however, the most likely outcome is the SNP and the Greens once again burying their mutual hatred for each other for the sake of another five juicy years of ministerial office...

...continued from page 8

es by the Israeli Army who ultimately controlled the food distribution programme. He also alleges, credibly and with video evidence, that they shot dead a 12 year old child who posed no threat. There is a link to the video. Anthony Aguilar, a former US Army Special Forces Green Beret, has said the same things.
Brendan O'Brien
London

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Russian communists' front-line report

by
New Worker
correspondent

NCP members held an online meeting with five comrades from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) on Saturday. The main Russian communists' speaker for the CPRF was Donbas communist leader Boris Litvinov, who gave the following assessment of the current situation in Donetsk and the Ukraine.

"There is martial law in the Ukrainian-controlled parts of Donetsk, so all activities are currently banned. Ukraine's forces are suffering 1,000–1,500 casualties daily. There are fewer and fewer actual Ukrainians on the front line, and more and more foreign mercenaries from around the world, many from Latin America, in addition to the people seized on the streets in Ukraine. As a result, a growing number of soldiers on the Ukrainian side prefer to surrender at the first opportunity, rather than die," Litvinov said.

"In most areas near the



front line less than five per cent of the normal population remains when the Russian and Donbas forces arrive. The Ukrainian military is forcibly removing civilians, including women and children, from towns and villages near the front line they still control. For example in Avdeyivka, only 800 remained from the original population of 32,000."

When the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

was established in 1922 – the first time Ukraine ever existed as a separate territory – the heavily industrialised Donbas, a completely Russian-speaking area, was included in the new Ukrainian republic, so Russian has historically been the main language in the region for the last 104 years. But it was outlawed by the Ukrainian fascists.

Litvinov pointed out that: "When the Russian forces arrived in Kurakovo

there were still 30 children in the town, and their first action was to set up a school for them. Under Ukrainian rule they were brought up to speak only Ukrainian and couldn't speak any Russian.

"Now NATO is using the territory of the Baltic States to launch attacks on industrial and energy plants in Northern Russia. These attacks are aimed at provoking Russia to strike back at those states leading

to an extremely dangerous escalation of the war.

According to the Russian Federation, Ukraine is using drones made in France, Britain and Germany, or built from parts sent to Ukraine, which are being used to target industrial plants all over Russia, just as the USA and Israel are attacking plants all over Iran, and Iran has hit facilities in the Gulf countries.

Refuting Western claims that Russia deliber-

ately targets civilians, Litvinov said: "The Russian military only ever strikes targets related to military production. Residential buildings or areas are never targeted, and the Russian forces issue warnings to civilians to leave areas they are planning to strike."

It's the Ukrainian fascists who target innocent civilians, Litvinov said. "On Lenin's birthday, 22nd April, from the early morning, Ukrainian forces struck the areas around monuments with missiles and drones, as they knew that local people would be laying flowers there, and several people were injured. But in spite of these attacks, members of the CPRF and trade unionists still managed to lay flowers at the monuments.

"This war would have ended long ago without the massive support Ukraine has received from Western states. We believe that if the USSR had still existed, all these problems, and the war, could have been avoided in other ways. Members of the CPRF are united in the eventual goals of ending all wars, and to defeat imperialism."

A Devon stand for Palestine!

by
New Worker
correspondent

The Ottery Palestine Support group held a silent vigil in Ottery St Mary on Saturday in the small Devon town centre, where political demonstrations are very rare.

Local campaigner Trevor Leahong thanked "everyone at our 3rd Si-

lent Vigil today. Fourteen people attended and there was lots of really positive feedback. Our next vigils will be on 9th and 23rd May, 10.30–11.30 on Hind St, Ottery. We hope you will join us to support Palestinians and Peace in the Middle East."

Over the years the Ottery group has raised the Palestinian banner in this part of Devon.



Back in 2024 two locals even walked 25 miles around East Devon to raise funds and awareness for Palestine. Helen Collinson and Julian Elston walked the miles – from Ottery St Mary to Honiton and Sidmouth, and back – to match the length of the Gaza strip, with the support of members from the East Devon for a Fairer World campaign.

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Trump, Iran and Oil

In an interview with *Pravda.Ru*, military expert, political scientist, professor and director of the Centre for Military-Political Studies Alexei Podberezkin explains US objectives, the situation around the Strait of Hormuz, and provides a forecast for the development of the confrontation.

The Americans recently seized an Iranian vessel. How do you assess this step – is it a warning or a threat?

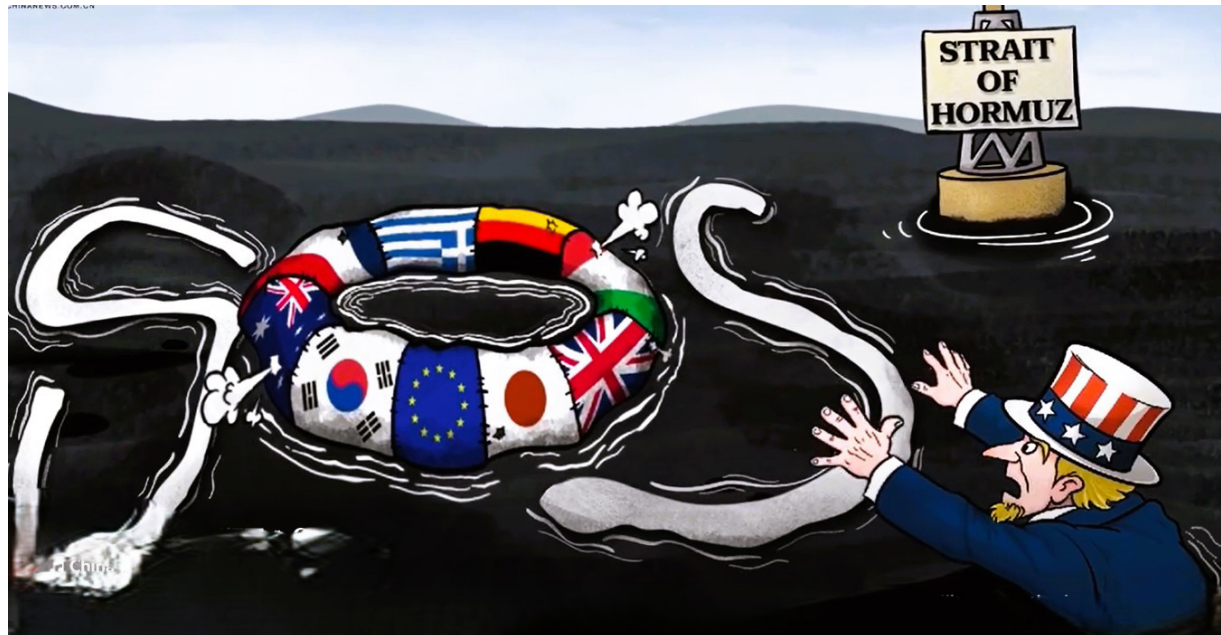
In fact, this is an illustration that this entire story is not over for either the USA or Iran, or any other countries. The situation is in an intermediate phase and developments may unfold unexpectedly quickly in very different directions.

The Americans have already expended a significant portion of their munitions, carrying out massive strikes which, as it turned out, did not produce the desired result. Some strikes hit false targets, others failed to achieve their effect. They need time to replenish resources – this explains the desire to drag out negotiations.

At the same time, Iran has a similar situation: it has suffered serious losses but retained significant potential – according to various estimates, up to 40 to 60 per cent of its missiles and air defence systems. Moreover, Iran demonstratively shows the existence of reserves, including missile silos.

As a result, neither side has achieved its objectives. The Americans did not fulfil their strategic task – control over the hydrocarbon region and transport flows. The Hormuz Strait is now effectively controlled by both the USA and Iran simultaneously, which creates uncertainty.

Oil prices remain relatively stable since many countries have strategic reserves. This reduces the severity of the crisis in the short term. But



the situation may change sharply if the conflict drags on.

The USA still has significant stockpiles of weapons, including cruise missiles, so both sides retain the potential to continue the conflict. Negotiations are ongoing, but their terms remain vague and abstract. If an agreement is signed in its current form, it can be interpreted as a defeat for the USA.

Who initiated the conflict – Trump or external pressure? In the West, there is debate over whether Trump made the decision himself or acted under pressure from allies. What do you think?

This point of view exists but I do not agree with it. External forces cannot determine US policy. They have their own geopolitical interests. The main one is control over energy resources. Already now, energy is becoming a key factor in technological development, including artificial

intelligence. The USA seeks to control the largest sources of oil.

They are already actively working in Venezuela. If they manage to establish control over the Middle East, then China and India, as the largest consumers of energy resources, will become dependent. This will give the USA a powerful instrument of influence on the global economy.

In this sense, Trump's actions are logical and consistent. Any American president would act in approximately the same way, perhaps with varying degrees of decisiveness.

What about the threat to the petrodollar? Gulf countries have started talking about switching to settlements in yuan. How serious is this lever of pressure on the USA?

Petrodollars do have enormous importance. But the process of changing the global balance of power is already underway. BRICS countries already surpass the G7

in economic power, and this trend will intensify.

The share of the dollar in the global economy will gradually decline. The USA understands this and actively opposes any alliances capable of weakening the dollar – whether BRICS or other unions. However, this process is not fast. It is inevitable but stretched over time.

There have been reports that US military forces may use tactical nuclear weapons without a direct decision by the president. How realistic is this?

In the USA, decisions are made according to a certain algorithm. The president, as commander-in-chief, gives a fundamental authorisation for the use of force, and the military then determines specific means and targets. If we are talking about nuclear weapons, their use without a presidential decision is impossible. I am convinced that Trump has not made such a

decision.

Even tactical nuclear weapons are unlikely to be used in the near future. Not for humanitarian reasons but because it is impractical. Their use requires clear targets and in the case of Iran, such targets are not obvious.

Moreover, even a nuclear strike does not guarantee the destruction of facilities if they are located deep underground.

What is your forecast for the development of

the situation?

In the coming month, the parties will continue bargaining over the terms of the agreement. They have resources to continue the conflict but also an interest in concluding a deal that can be presented as a political victory. In its current form, the agreement looks like a defeat for the USA: the Hormuz Strait is effectively not controlled, Iran's nuclear programme has not been destroyed, and its technologies have been preserved.

At the same time, Trump is facing internal problems. His sanctions policy results in legal costs. To make matters worse, dozens of high-ranking military officials have been dismissed, indicating serious disagreements within the system. American forces in the region are mainly represented by light units, not intended for large-scale ground operations. Any attempt at escalation may lead to significant losses, which restrains further actions.

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Imperialism versus resistance

by Sue Harris

There are two ways of conducting a war that have become fairly obvious in this current phase of the battle between imperialism and the resistance against it.

The style of the resistance is to limit the destructive power of imperialism, to destroy their military bases and to destroy their weapons and the factories that produce them – to make it unprofitable to attack, as by blocking the Strait of Hormuz as Iran has done.

This approach is an attack against objects and not people. The message is “go away and leave us alone, or you’ll be sorry”. That is pretty much how Iran and the rest of the resistance in the Middle East are fighting imperialism.

Violence that is directed largely at military targets is permissible in certain conditions under international law; violence that is indiscriminate, such

as when massive bombs are used against civilians, violates the laws of war.

Iran’s missiles have exclusively targeted Israeli military and intelligence facilities and not civilian areas. Hezbollah, meanwhile, targeted Israel’s Ramat David Airbase, east of Haifa. Neither Iran nor Hezbollah have fired their munitions into congested neighbourhoods of Israeli cities.

The imperialist fighting style, practised by the USA and Israel, is characterised by massive destruction of civilian targets, designed to kill as many people as possible, to even erase them and their culture entirely and to make room for the invading imperialists and their settler-colonial culture.

The Israelis call this “mowing the lawn”. They want to make it appear that the civilisation they invade never existed.

It’s akin to the real estate developers’ drive to ‘ethnically cleanse’ the



population of neighbourhoods the developer wants in order to get bigger profits from richer tenants. To do this requires the developer to think of the population they’re invading as less than human, more like ants. It’s not important what happens to them.

Same for the imperialist. The native population they want to cleanse must

be destroyed. They’re labelled “terrorists, savages” and beneath their notice. In the Middle East Israel calls this way of thinking “normalisation”.

The definition of normalisation is described by author and human rights activist Dr Randa Abdel Fattahas trying to exist “as if, a million times a day, we’re not confronted with the fact

that we live in a world that has normalised the live-streamed annihilation of Arab and Muslim lives”.

Normalisation must exist for the imperialists for killing and brutality towards people to be considered acceptable. If it’s not normalised, it will be harder for the soldier to kill, for the prison guard to rape.

In America there is strong opposition to the genocide in Palestine and Lebanon, as well as against the war against Iran. People are beginning to wake up to this pattern of imperialism. They see that it happened with Indigenous peoples in the Western hemisphere, that it happened in Mexico, Vietnam and in lots of other places.

They see that it happens every day in the USA between the rich and the poor: murder and theft for profit, with normalisation of racism, homophobia and demonisation of oppressed groupings in

the population. So that it doesn’t matter if the cops or ICE get off for killing an unarmed person. And it doesn’t matter if patients die for lack of medication or medical care. Under capitalism, poor people are not important. Only profit is.

But people are waking up more and more to the truth. They’re beginning to get the message that what goes on in places like China or Cuba is everybody getting their needs met and nobody having to die or go hungry because they’re poor.

There is a lot of falsification and demonising going on that prevents people in imperialist countries from seeing that more hopeful message, but with the advances in technology and communication, the truth keeps getting out. And the more people wake up, the less imperialist oppression will feel normal.

Workers World
(USA)

White House gunman reflects deepening political divides

A shooting at the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents’ Association last week has cast a harsh light on American society, where deepening polarisation, widespread gun violence and rising distrust are converging into a volatile mix.

The 2026 dinner marked the first time Donald Trump attended the event during his presidency, after skipping it

throughout his first term and breaking with a long-standing tradition of engagement between the White House and the press.

The gathering, typically a showcase of politics-media interactions, instead unfolded under the shadow of violence.

The 31-year-old suspect, Cole Allen, expressed anger towards the federal government and sought to target senior officials.

Minutes before the at-

tack, he allegedly sent a manifesto to family members outlining grievances with the Trump administration and broader societal injustices.

The suspect’s writings referenced high-profile controversies, including the Jeffrey Epstein case and US military actions abroad, suggesting a blend of personal outrage and political motivation.

He described federal officials as his primary

targets while indicating that bystanders were not targets.

The shooting is the latest in a string of politically motivated attacks that have targeted officials from both major parties, reinforcing concerns that political violence is becoming normalised in the USA.

Academic research points to a troubling trend. James Piazza, a professor at Pennsylvania State University, has found that rising partisan hostility is reshaping

how Americans view one another. Supporters of opposing parties increasingly see each other not simply as political rivals but as fundamentally immoral or threatening groups.

That shift, analysts say, lowers the threshold for violence.

Grievances tied to economic strain, foreign policy disputes and domestic political battles can accumulate, creating

conditions for individuals to feel justified in taking extreme action. At the same time, the widespread availability of guns is a catalyst.

The USA continues to have more civilian-owned guns than population, with millions sold each year.

The suspect in Saturday’s attack carried multiple weapons, highlighting persistent gaps in gun regulation.

Xinhua