

Stale-mate in the Gulf

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

IT'S STILL stale-mate in the Gulf. Trump mouths off his usual threats then backs down claiming a number of his feudal Arab allies had implored him to keep on talking to the Iranians. The Hezbollah resistance is beating back the Israeli invaders who are now penned into positions just across the Lebanese frontier.

Benjamin Netanyahu fights for his political future after Israeli MPs vote to dissolve parliament to pave the way for fresh elections. And a mysterious explosion in an Israeli missile factory that rocked Jerusalem is said to be a “controlled experiment” while others say it was either hit by a Hezbollah drone or sabotaged by the Palestinian resistance.

Pakistani and Turkish diplomats are continuing to act as go-betweens in mediation efforts to end the conflict that began when America and Israel launched their “decapitation” offensive against Iran in February. But there’s been little progress since the cease-fire in April because Trump refuses to budge from his demand that the Iranians unconditionally re-open the Strait of Hormuz, hand over their uranium stockpile and abandon their nuclear research programme.

Trump offers the Islamic Republic next to nothing

in return. Iran says it’s ready to accept inspections and controls over its nuclear programme but only in return for a genuine peace agreement with the USA, and end to the war in Lebanon, the lifting of all sanctions and reparation for damages inflicted during the recent conflict.

The US economy is cracking under the pressure from the war it began but now cannot end – and ordinary Americans are left to pay the bill. Washington is divided. It’s said that Trump has fallen out with his deputy, JD Vance – who is reportedly in favour of accepting compromise terms to end the war well before the crucial mid-term elections in the United States.

This week Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Americans are being forced to absorb the rising costs of Washington’s illegal war of aggression against Iran. “Put aside gas price hike and stock market bubble. Real pain begins when US debt and mortgage rates start to jump,” Araghchi said. He pointed to rising US Treasury yields, warning that the consequences of the US-Israeli escalation will not be limited to fuel prices or market turbulence. “Auto loan delinquencies



are already at 30+-year high. This was all avoidable”.

The Strait of Hormuz – a critical choke-point accounting for over 20 per cent of seaborne oil trade prior to the US-Israeli war against Iran – remains effectively blocked despite the tentative ceasefire. And oil prices, over \$100 a barrel on the spot market, remain elevated, hovering roughly 62 per cent higher than their pre-conflict levels.

Some oil tankers do get through – but only on Iranian terms. The Islamic Republic has set up a Bitcoin-based scheme to provide insurance to shipping companies to pay the toll the Iranians demand for passage out of the Persian Gulf. The *Lloyds List* shipping journal reported on Monday that at least 54 vessels – including ten Chinese-linked vessels –

transited through the strait last week – more than double a week prior but still only a fraction of

what it was before the war, when around 3,000 vessels crossed the strait every month.

FUND

Friends and supporters dug deep to help out the fighting fund last week. We got £300 from a comrade in Suffolk, a £100 from a supporter in Wales, £15 from a London reader and £20 from another in Nottingham. All in all we raised £835 for the *New Worker* pushing the running total for the May appeal to £1,601. Our target, as usual, is £3,500 and we need it by the end of month!

Trump struts the world threatening to resume fighting in Iran and “regime change” in Cuba while greedy eyes still look on Canada and Greenland as future prey. But imperialists are paper tigers. Their bark is much worse than their bite – as the Americans and their Israeli pawns found out to their cost when they launched their surprise attack on Iran in February.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Let the good times roll...

THE RACE for the Labour leadership has begun. Not officially. No leadership challenge has been formally made. No election under rules has been set. Sir Keir Starmer is still at the helm. But no one doubts that his days are numbered as Wes Streeting and Andy Burnham set out their stalls in preparation for the contest to come which will give one of them the keys to Number Ten.

Streeting is a Blairite who has nothing to offer working people apart from more of the same rubbish they got from Starmer. He wisely plays down the fact that he was a protégé of the disgraced Peter Mandelson while Andy Burnham plays up demands for social justice to fend off the Greens and woo back the Labour vote on the streets that until recently had traditionally backed Labour. The self-proclaimed “left” on the Labour back-benches – the sort who support the Socialist Campaign Group and other Bennite campaigns – is backing Burnham, largely to keep Streeting out. John McDonnell, a one-time ally of Jeremy Corbyn, says that the former Labour leader should be able to rejoin the party if Burnham becomes leader. But this has been ruled out by the Burnham camp.

But everything hinges on Burnham winning the Makerfield seat. If he fails – and the Faragists are going to put up a strong challenge – then all bets are off for both Andy Burnham and Wes Streeting.

Back in Brussels...

...all eyes are on the battle for Labour’s top job. Whoever gets it it’s a win-win for the Common Market. Streeting is openly calling for a return to the European Union. Burnham says nothing now that could play into Farage’s hands but only last year he told his supporters that “I want to rejoin the EU. I hope it happens in my lifetime...”. Whoever wins, a second referendum looks inevitable. Rejoining the EU is now back on the agenda, and the Remainers are winning the argument given the pathetic leaders of the Brexit camp these days.

The Tories had a golden opportunity after Brexit to build an independent British economy freed from the fetters of the European Union. Johnson, Truss and Sunak squandered it in pursuit of the impossible dream of a free trade agreement with the United States – that was never on the cards in Washington.

Lexit, the left case for leaving the European Union, never got off the ground. The public face of the Brexiteers is now that of Nigel Farage, Kemi Badenoch and the followers of Tommy Robinson that we see draped in Union Jacks at the anti-immigration rallies of the lunatic fringe.

But one only has to look at what’s happening in Europe today to see that rejoining the European Union will not solve the problems of working people. Communists need to make the case for staying out of the EU, trading freely with everyone throughout the world and building an independent economy needed to restore our public services in the 21st century.

Putin kicks off China visit

by Wang Qi and Li Yu

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin touched down in Beijing on Tuesday night, where he was greeted by senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi, placing the Chinese capital back in the international spotlight just days after US President Donald Trump’s visit.

“China welcomes President Putin’s state visit to China,” said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun at a press conference as Chinese and Russian national flags fluttered along the streets of Beijing.

The visit marks Putin’s 25th trip to China – more than any other incumbent leader of a major country. The frequency of such exchanges reflects the depth of China-Russia ties. In a complex and shifting global landscape, the relationship has demonstrated notable resilience, with both sides emphasising non-alliance, non-confrontation and a commitment not to target third parties – an approach they say supports global stability and a more multipolar international order.

Before his departure Putin told the media that Russia-China relations have reached “a truly unprecedented level”. Putin also noted that 25 years ago, Russia and China signed the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Co-operation, which laid a solid foundation for a genuinely strategic relationship and comprehensive partnership for the benefit of the two countries and two peoples.

The close strategic relationship between Russia and China plays a major, stabilising role globally. “Without allying against anyone, we seek peace and universal prosperity. It is in this spirit that Moscow and Beijing act in a coordinated manner to defend international law and the provisions of the UN Charter in their entirety, completeness and interconnectedness”.

Putin said. “We support active cooperation through the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, and other multilateral entities, making a substantial contribution to resolving

pressing global and regional challenges”.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination. The special nature of Russia-China relations is reflected in the atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, a commitment to pursuing win-win and equitable cooperation, conducting respectful dialogue, and supporting each other on matters affecting the core interests of both countries, including protection of sovereignty and state unity, he said.

In a report on Monday, the *Guardian* noted that Putin’s visit to Beijing came just “four days after Donald Trump left China after a high-stakes summit” adding that the two leaders have met on more than 40 occasions, far outstripping Chinese leaders’ encounters with Western leaders. Other Western media outlets have revived the old narrative of an “alliance” between China and Russia. The American business news channel CNBC, for instance, reported that “Washington is likely to closely monitor what emerges” reflecting heightened attention from the US side.

working together

But Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov said that Moscow and Beijing “are not allying against anyone... we are working together in the name of peace and everyone’s prosperity”.

Ushakov told a press briefing that the Russian delegation accompanying the president on his visit to China will be “quite representative”. The delegation includes five deputy prime ministers and eight ministers, ranging from sectors like agriculture, culture, transport, economy, finance, construction and education. Russia’s Central Bank governor Elvira Nabiullina, heads of a number of Russian regions, CEOs of state corporations as well as top executives of Russia’s largest companies also accompanied the Russian leader.

Li Yongquan, the director of Eurasian Social Development Research at the Development Research Centre of

the State Council, said the principle of developing China and Russia ties based on non-alliances, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third country represents the historical wisdom of the experience gained in China-Russia relations. Guided by this principle, the two countries have forged a model of a new type of major-country relations, which has also exerted a very positive impact on regional security and the global order, he said.

China-Russia trade has grown rapidly in total volume in recent years. Moreover, the trade structure was changing from the previous heavy reliance on energy. For instance, China’s exports of cars and electronic products to Russia have increased notably, and industrial and supply chains co-operation in science and technology is also expected to deepen further.

According to China’s Ministry of Commerce, bilateral trade reached approximately \$228 billion in 2025, exceeding the 200-billion-dollar threshold for a third consecutive year. China has remained Russia’s largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years.

China and Russia are staunch supporters of the UN-centred international system and firm advocates of multi-polarity. Both have well-established policy frameworks for aligning their respective development strategies, and are steadily elevating the status of emerging markets and developing countries in their foreign policies, says Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University.

Positioned as a partnership free of alignment and targeting no third party, China-Russia relations not only serve as a successful practice in advancing global peace, prosperity and stability, but also represent active efforts to steer the world away from outdated mind-sets and paths. Bilateral coordination between Beijing and Moscow proves that major powers can rise above bloc confrontation and zero-sum games, effectively advance multipolarity and foster greater stability and certainty amid global changes.

Global Times

Workers Notes

Pressure mounts on Starmer to go

by New Worker correspondent

CALLS ON Keir Starmer to go are growing. Five government ministers resign, including Wes Streeting, the health secretary who has been manoeuvring to depose Starmer for some time, amid reports that more than 80 Labour MPs have privately or publicly urged the Prime Minister to step down. Starmer defiantly tells his diminishing band of followers that he has no intention of resigning as Andy Burnham and Wes Streeting prepare to battle it out when Starmer finally bows to the inevitable and hands in his resignation.

Andy Burnham was selected as Labour's candidate for the by-election in the Makerfield constituency in north-west England this week. Burnham held one of Manchester's seats in the House of Commons from 2001 to 2017. When Burnham made a bid for the Labour leadership following the 2015 general election he came a distant second to Jeremy Corbyn. He left the House of Commons to become mayor of Greater Manchester in 2017. Burnham's less than covert come-back campaign began last year when it was clear that the Starmer government was on the rocks. But under Labour rules the leader can only be replaced by a sitting member of parliament.

His first attempt to return to Westminster, through a by-election earlier this year, was thwarted by Labour's National Executive Committee, which is dominated by Starmer's followers and Blairites. Now that Committee has had second thoughts, and if Burnham does regain a seat in the House of Commons, he will certainly run for the Labour leadership.

Some say Burnham has done a "double-banking"

Never forget Palestine!

by New Worker correspondent

"BRITISH complicity in the dispossession and mass murder of Palestinians is not only a story of the past—it is still the reality today" said Ryvka Barnard, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign Deputy Director, on Nakba Day as hundreds of thousands of

protesters marched through central London to highlight the ongoing impact of the 1948 partition of Palestine, the first Arab-Israeli war and the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinian Arabs from their homes in what is now Israel. The Stand Up to Racism movement joined the demonstration, combining it with an anti-fascist protest

against a nearby "Unite the Kingdom" rally organised by a racist and supporter of the State of Israel who calls himself "Tommy Robinson". Some 250,000 people joined the Palestine march that takes place every month in London while the Robinson rally was said to have drawn around 40,000 to its rally in Trafalgar Square.



deal with his Blairite rival, Wes Streeting, that would ensure that whoever wins the leadership race, the other gets the Number Two job in the Cabinet.

In the Starmer camp others say Sir Keir is digging in – pointing out that over 100 backbenchers and junior ministers have signed a statement arguing that it was "no time for a leadership contest".

That's not the view of Dan Hodges, a former Labour insider who now writes for the *Daily Mail*. He says Starmer is indeed considering throwing in the towel.

Writing in the *Mail* last weekend Hodges cited an unnamed Cabinet minister as saying that Starmer "understands the political reality" and is considering arranging his departure on his own terms. "He realises the current chaos is unsustainable. He simply wants to be able to do it in a dignified way and in a manner of his own choosing. He will set out a timetable," the source said. The newspaper said it remained unclear when such an announcement could come, with some of Starmer's allies urging him to wait until after the Makerfield by-election.

He's possibly holding out for a top job in a future Burnham or Streeting government – maybe even Foreign Secretary. But what has he got to offer these days?

Graham Hryce, an Australian journalist, told the Russian media that "Starmer has never been anything other than a third-rate politician completely lacking vision. Unlike Tony Blair, who he somewhat woodenly resembles and tries to ape, Starmer lacks both charisma and political judgement. And unlike Jeremy Corbyn, Starmer is utterly void of principle.

"Starmer started out as a Corbyn acolyte, who then destroyed his master's political career – by levelling false allegations of anti-Semitism at him – in order to advance his own. He then pretended – unconvincingly – that he had never supported Corbyn's political programme in the first place. It must be conceded that this pose was at least superficially plausible, but only because it was difficult to believe that Starmer had ever believed strongly in anything at all...

...after disposing of Corbyn, Starmer ruthlessly imposed his own anodyne agen-

da on the Labour Party and filled his Cabinet with compliant nonentities like David Lammy, who continue to support him this week".

Whatever happens the Remainers believe their time has, at long last, come. They've put the Common Market back on the agenda with Streeting making rejoining the European Union part of his campaign platform. Burnham's more reticent as he knows this is a touchy subject in the constituency he hopes to represent. But he too is a Remainer and both he and Streeting know that on this issue they can count on the support of the Lib-Dems, the nationalists and the Remain-er Tories when push comes to shove over a "second-referendum" in Westminster.

A Dud Act

by New Worker correspondent

THE GREATLY watered down Employment Rights Act is gradually coming into force. Experts are warning that the Act is not going to make that much difference and already calls for a second helping have

been made.

Scandal sheet *Private Eye* recently reported that Labour Minister Kate Dearden held a private dinner in January to further water down the measures. This involved lobby firm Anacta and included such model employers as Qantas, Amazon, Sainsbury's and Capita.

The new law is to be implemented with a brand-new UK wide Fair Work Agency (FWA) which is slowly coming to life. An executive agency of the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), it merges three existing enforcement bodies. These were the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate which, which focused on agency workers; the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, which was supposed to look after agriculture, horticulture and shellfish gathering, (except Scotland where, the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board still exists) and HMRC's National Minimum Wage Unit, which enforced the Blair Government's minimum wage and was even known to impose fines on employers.

At present FWA enforces employment agency standards, pay-related rights including National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage, requirements for a gangmaster licence and conditions for licences. Next year its remit expands to cover enforcement powers over holiday pay, statutory sick pay and the new Fair Pay Agreements for school support staff and social care.

It even has some union leaders on its board: general secretaries Mike Clancy of Prospect and Dave Ward of CWU and a former assistant general secretary of Unite, Diana Ward. This has not prevented it coming under fire for lacking teeth. Passing nice sounding laws without the intention of enforcing them properly is a long-standing ruling class strategy. The top priority for FWA is to be "reducing regulatory burdens" according to the Government.

For many years health and safety laws have almost become a dead letter due to cuts in factory inspections which have fallen by between 70 and 80 per cent since 2013 to the extent that the average

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workplace can now expect an inspection every 50 years. It would be comparatively cheap and quick to remedy these defects, if the Government had the will to do so. Beyond increased funding, there are several immediate steps that could strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of the new Agency.

It will have an annual budget of £60.1 million for 2026-27, which is an improvement from the £47.4 million for the predecessor bodies last year. Staff from the predecessor bodies will join the agency, meaning it will have about 600 inspectors. This amounts to 0.26 inspectors per 10,000 workers, well below the one per 10,000 workers recommended by the International Inspection Convention, which says there must be enough labour inspectors. This point alone means Britain is breaking international agreements. So much for the nonsense peddled by the Times as "surveillance powers... more commonly associated with intelligence services and police".

FWA will not be a single enforcement body. The Acas industrial relations advisory and conciliation body, the EHRC equality watchdog, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and the Employment Tribunal system remain outside the new Act, for good or ill.

One predictable defect of the Act is that it contains

no significant new rights or powers for unions or workers in relation to employment law enforcement. Professors David Whyte of Queen Mary College and Ruth Dukes of the University of Glasgow say that unions could easily be empowered to do more. They cite the example of Australia where elected union representatives are allowed to issue "Provisional Improvement Notices". They point out that "Only through the active involvement of workers and trade unions will the Fair Work Agency be able to make a meaningful difference. Without this, there is a real risk that it becomes the latest in a long line of ineffective regulatory watchdogs". Unfortunately union membership is low, only 22 per cent generally and 10 per cent in the private sector which are the worst offenders with regard to health and safety.

"While even the best-resourced agencies do not have the capacity to make regular inspections of every workplace in the country, trade unions can perform inspectorate-like functions through the presence in workplaces of shop stewards and other lay representatives, and they can act as a trusted body to which workers can report suspected breach of the law", say Whyte and Dukes. That is perhaps why the Government does not like trade unions.

One area which could raise the pay for millions of workers is statutory support

for sectoral collective bargaining. This was deliberately excluded from the Act on the sensible (for bosses) grounds that improving individual employment rights will not lead to higher pay!

Further warnings that the FWA will not be a dynamic organisation come from its new Chair, Matthew Taylor, the FWA's chair, openly said its powers would be used "sparingly and proportionally" and that the agency would focus on supporting compliance rather than relying on enforcement. It would only use its powers in "serious criminal cases". The meek and mild response of the TUC was to simper that "if the Fair Work Agency is to deliver... it will need additional funding, given that current state enforcement bodies are significantly under-resourced and the body will take on new responsibilities for the enforcement of holiday pay, sick pay and unpaid employment tribunal awards."

Another unaddressed problem is anonymity when making complaints. At present regulators generally only pursue complaints when workers allow their names to be used, exposing them to possible victimisation from employers.

Whyte and Dukes point out that the FWA needs to be fully administratively separate from immigration and border enforcement bodies, ensuring migrant workers can seek protection without fear, one step towards this is that

the director of labour market enforcement (DLME), post was created under the Immigration Act 2016.

One particular bleak spot is the question of seasonal agricultural workers who have been ignored in the recent Act. Starmer's government has even rejected advice from its own advisors, the Migration

Advisory Committee (MAC) to pay migrants at least two months' pay in order to help prevent workers falling into debt. Some pay as much as £5,000 to come to the UK on the six-month visa. These costs involve debts they take on to cover travel, visas and other costs which mean they often end up working for

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

**The New Worker
19 May 2006**

THE GUNS blaze throughout Iraq as the partisans continue their bold and relentless onslaught against the US-led imperialist army and its local puppets. Fierce fighting continues in the southern British zone of occupation, firing a re-

newed call on the Blair government to pull the troops out of the conflict.

General Sir Rob Fry, the most senior British general in Iraq, says a phased withdrawal was likely to begin "in the pretty near future". But the downing of a Royal Navy helicopter over Basra earlier in the month and an increase in deadly partisan road-side bombings has fired demands for a complete withdrawal.

Labour MP Paul Flynn said television pictures of British troops being protected from a mob by Iraqi police had provided evidence of the need for a phased exit.

New Iraqi resistance groups with distinctly Shia names have begun to make their appearance in attacks and video announcements, joining their Iraqi Sunni comrades in the battle against the Anglo-American occupation. And not just in the Shia strongholds of the south.

The Imam al-Kazim Brigade claimed to have killed seven US troops last week when they detonated a bomb by a US patrol in the Sab' al-Bur area north-west of Baghdad and the Imam Ali Brigade broadcast a video showing the destruction of an Italian armoured car in Na-

siriyah that killed all the Italian troops aboard the vehicle.

There's been no let up against the Americans either. Partisans shot down a US Black Hawk helicopter gunship over Yusufiyah on Monday killing its two-man crew during an ambush of an American military column some 25 km south-west of Baghdad. This happened in what the Marines now call the "Triangle of Death" following the downing of a US Apache helicopter in April in a region largely controlled by the resistance.

Resistance fighters are battling in the heart of

the provincial capital of Ramadi and the US HQ in the border town of Al Qaim was repeatedly shelled last week. In Baghdad the resistance is launching daily ambushes and bomb attacks on the Americans and their puppets. The quisling Iraqi "foreign minister" narrowly escaped with his life when his motorcade was attacked on the main road to Kirkuk in northern Iraq. Three of his bodyguards were slain during the battle but the puppet regime later claimed that the minister was not with his entourage at the time.

The battle for Berlin's memory

by Nico Popp

ON THE NIGHT of 7th April 2022, the world-famous Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park, the final resting place of some 7,000 Red Army soldiers who lost their lives in the fighting for Berlin in April and May 1945, was desecrated.

Graffiti – swastikas and slogans in English such as “Death to all Russians”; “Russia kills” and “Russians = Rapists” – was found throughout the extensive grounds, from the Motherland Calls sculpture to the hill with the monumental statue of a soldier holding a child. At the time, an employee of a cleaning company tasked with removing the damage told the *Junge Welt* newspaper that the graffiti was so extensive that it seemed as if “an entire school class” had been at work – apparently professionals at leaving no trace, as the perpetrators were never caught.

Although Ukrainian historian Yevheniia Moliar recently called for the “sacred status” of the memorials to be “broken,” an incident of this magnitude has not been repeated since. The impetus behind the desecration of the memorial – the attack on Soviet commemorative symbolism and its connection to the war in Ukraine – has become professionalised.

What seemed hasty in 2022 – such as the demand by Stefanie Bung, then the Christian Democrat (CDU) parliamentary group spokesperson for urban development in the Berlin House of Representatives, to remove the two T-34 tanks in front of the memorial in the Tiergarten as “symbols of aggression” – is now being approached cautiously, step by step.

The three Soviet war



Graffiti at Treptower Park.

memorials in Berlin – in Treptower Park, Schonholzer Heide, and Tiergarten – have become battlegrounds in the debate surrounding the interpretation of the Russian attack on Ukraine.

A coalition of political, historical-political, and “civil society” actors is working to reinterpret, “contextualise,” and alter these sites, ultimately aiming to “de-Sovietise” them. The anti-Soviet iconoclasm that has swept through eastern Europe with renewed vigour since 2022 is thus also reaching Germany, where, after 1990, initially “only” the

various layers of the anti-fascist and communist culture of remembrance left behind by the German Democratic Republic were attacked, erased, and overwritten. Much of that continues today.

Under the cover of the Russophobia unleashed by the war in Ukraine, many in Germany and elsewhere are pushing an anti-communist agenda, as they seek to link the government of Vladimir Putin with the old Soviet Union, even though the two states are diametric opposites.

The statue of Ernst Thälmann, leader of the

historic Communist Party of Germany, in a park in what was East Berlin is regularly vandalised in the same fashion as the Treptower Park Memorial. During the Nazi period, Thälmann was imprisoned in the notorious Buchenwald concentration camp, where he was executed and communists later led the only movement inside a concentration camp that resulted in that camp’s liberation.

After World War II, the GDR constructed the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism in Berlin, which featured a

constant guard and an eternal flame burning at the site. After the GDR was annexed to West Germany, that flame was extinguished. Authorities never touched the huge monument to monarchy, the statue of Frederick the Great on horseback, just opposite that memorial, however.

Nearby, the enormously popular Palace of the Republic, a cultural and recreational venue popular in the GDR, was torn down and replaced with a hollow empty facade of the Kaiser’s Palace. Frequent mass demonstrations against the destruction of the beloved centre by the population were ignored.

The TV Tower constructed in Berlin during the GDR days was always a sore spot for right-wingers in the Federal Republic of Germany, as it could be seen all over West Berlin as well as East Berlin, the capital of the GDR. It was for a while the fourth-tallest building in the world. Now, in the area where it stands, new construction blocks the view of the tower when you are in the area around it. Elsewhere in the city, of course, it can be seen from almost everywhere. What was a low-cost public facility is now an expensive restaurant and tourist attraction. Similarly, hotels all over the former GDR that were vacation spots for workers are now luxury hotels for businessmen.

For a long time, though, the memorial sites with a direct connection to the Soviet military’s defeat of Nazi Germany remained untouched. The central argument against the memorials in their current form is inherently contradictory: On the one hand, Russia is accused of instrumentalising the memorials; on



The Thälmann statue in old East Berlin.

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the other hand, it is claimed that the memorials, with their Soviet character, are as such an authentic expression of an “imperial” policy that continues in the war in Ukraine.

Since 2022, this contradiction has been translated into political action with the annual ban on displaying Soviet flags and other symbols at the memorials on May 8th and 9th. The fact that it can be normalised to prohibit the display of the liberators’ flag at their graves on the day of liberation from fascism in the former capital of Nazi Germany has whetted the appetite for more.

Displaying the hammer-and-sickle flag of the soldiers who defeated Hitler and fascism is forbidden in Berlin. This sign was posted at the entrance to Treptower Park for Victory Day this year.

Since 2025, there has been an increase in attempts to alter the appearance of war memorials. Eastern European actors play a significant role in this, indirectly introducing a line of inquiry into the mainstream of the German debate on the politics of remembrance, derived from the programmatic declaration of the so-called “Platform of European Memory and Conscience,” which equates Nazism and Communism.

Organisations and individuals of the Ukrainian nationalist diaspora – such as the Vitsche association and the Berlin-based Ukrainian Institute (arguing along the lines of a “decolonisation” of the memorials, based

on the claim that the relationship between Russia and Ukraine in the USSR was a colonial one); the anti-Soviet Memorial association; the Pilecki Institute, which has been operating in Berlin as an outpost of Polish anti-communist historical policy since 2019; institutions of belligerent ideology production such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation-sponsored “Cafe Kyiv”; Ukrainian and German historians (who, since 2022, have largely acted as maximalist amplifiers of the state’s position, much like the discredited “eastern studies” of the past) – and increasingly also parts of Berlin state politics are active in the debate about the memorials.

The main argument here is for a more or less invasive “contextualisation” of individual elements of the memorials. This method has a certain tradition – one need only think of the memorial erected in 1981 in Berlin’s Lustgarten for the resistance group around the communist Herbert Baum.

Demolishing the massive Soviet War Memorial at Treptower Park has proven too sensitive, especially as it is the grave of 7,000 soldiers. Instead, officials are planning ways to ‘contextualise’ and de-Sovietise the site in a manner acceptable to the political fashions of today’s German ruling class. |

Since simply removing the memorial seemed too risky, but it was also inconceivable that a communist monument bearing the inscription “Forever bound in friend-



T34 at the Teirgarten.

ship with the Soviet Union” could remain in the heart of Berlin, the idea arose to cover the memorial stone with glass plates on which the monument would be commented on according to the dictates of German historical policy.

Similar preparations are now under way for the war memorials. Since 2025, two Social Democrat (SPD) members of parliament, Andreas Geisel and Alexander Freier-Winterwerb, have been particularly active. Both have recognised (or been told) that a redesign of the memorials can best be presented as a measure against “Stalinist bombast”. In October 2025, they called, among other things, for commentary on the Stalin quotes engraved on some of the stones and a stronger emphasis on the memorial’s character as cemeteries. The *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper thundered: “Away with the Stalin propa-

ganda at the Treptow War Memorial!”

This opens a path to ultimately deeming the entire memorial “Stalinist” (or, depending on the context, “imperial”) and calling it into question. This was evident from the programme of a conference held on March 26 at the Berlin-Karlshorst Museum—a joint event organised by the museum, the Ukrainian Institute, and the “Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED [Socialist Unity Party] Dictatorship” (in East Germany).

Under the telling title Foreign Remembrance—Our Own Responsibility? discussion focused on Soviet Memorials and German Culture of Remembrance, with the opening panel tellingly addressing Coming to Terms with Communism in Germany.

Only afterwards was the discussion turned to Dealing with Memorials and

Cemeteries. At the site where Nazi Germany’s unconditional surrender was signed on May 8, 1945, the structurally and primarily anti-communist “German culture of remembrance” comes into its own. It could not be demonstrated more clearly that the intended new approach to the war memorials is understood as a kind of conclusion to the political debate surrounding “Communism in Germany”.

The conference caused quite a stir after an *RT* report referred to it as a “secret conference,” especially since Jorg Morre, the museum’s director, subsequently told the *Berliner Zeitung*: “We were not interested in public reporting on March 26. That was the selection criterion for our guests”.

Just before the anniversary of the liberation this past weekend, Berlin’s state politicians took action. A motion from the Green Party, which the Left Party (Die Linke) supported at the committee level, proposes entering into dialogue not with Russia, but with the 14 other successor states of the USSR – several of which, as is well known, pursue a policy of rigorously removing Soviet monuments – about what the future of the memorials could look like. SPD representative Freier-Winterwerb reiterates in his motion the demand to “contextualise” the Stalin quotes. The SPD’s coalition partner, CDU, will now form an opinion on the matter.

Undoubtedly, the (foreign) policy costs associated with intervening in the design

of the war memorials are also being considered. In the agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Russian Federation on the “care of war graves” of December 1992, the Federal Republic committed itself to maintaining and caring for the Soviet war cemeteries in Germany, guaranteeing access and dignified conditions for commemorative events, and informing the Russian side about restoration and maintenance work.

However, the 1992 agreement only guarantees the existence of the war cemeteries, not the architectural design and political symbolism. A greater obstacle appears to be the historic preservation regulations, which make it difficult to simply remove or overwrite individual design elements.

One factor, however, cannot be factored into the equation: political opposition. In the Berlin House of Representatives, only Rep. Alexander King of Sahra Wagenknecht’s party has so far spoken out against the redesign of the war memorials.

He told *Junge Welt* that the plan to reinterpret the Treptow War Memorial is “clearly in line with the logic of anti-Russian propaganda”. In his view, “neither German politicians nor Memorial EV [the German wing of the anti-Soviet Memorial organisation], which is collaborating with Berlin SPD representatives on this matter,” are authorised to “develop or even implement changes to the memorial” without the consent of the Russian embassy.

Junge Welt

by Ramzy Baroud

A DOCUMENTARY *Israel is eradicating Palestinian Christians* is up on YouTube. The video is horrifying, though it is the kind of horror now synonymous with the behaviour of Israel, its military, its armed settlers, and society that has been conditioned to see the ‘other’ as sub-human.

Yet, this was not the typical viral video that emerges almost daily from occupied Palestine. The victim, this time, was not a Palestinian. She was an elderly French nun.

On 1st May footage surfaced from Jerusalem showing a 36-year-old Israeli man running behind a French nun – a researcher at the French School of Biblical and Archaeological Research – and shoving her violently to the ground.

In a chilling display of cruelty, the assailant did not simply hit and run. He walked away a few paces, then returned to the fallen woman to kick her repeatedly and mercilessly as she lay helpless.

What was most astonishing was the sense of normalcy that followed. The assailant remained on the scene, conversing with another man who appeared entirely unperturbed by what should have been a devastating event in any other context.

The video briefly imposed itself on the mainstream media scene, garnering perfunctory condemnations. Many explained the event as part of the larger landscape of Israeli violence, highlighting the ongoing genocide in Gaza as the most obvious example of this unchecked aggression.

The assault on a nun and the forgotten story of Palestinian Christians

But even the context of general violence does not fully explain why a French nun was targeted. She is not dark-skinned. She is European, she is Christian, and she holds no historical or territorial claims that would typically trigger the “security” paranoia of the Zionist state.

Still, the incident was anything but “isolated,” despite the rush by Israeli officials to label it a “shameful” exception. To the contrary, the nun was attacked specifically because she is a Christian. This raises the question: why?

To answer this, we must acknowledge how Palestinian Christians have been systematically written out of the history of their own land.

Palestinian Christians are not merely present in the land; they are among the most historically rooted communities in Palestine. They are anything but “foreigners” or “bystanders” caught in a supposed religious conflict between Jews and Muslims.

In fact, the Christian Arab presence in Palestine predates the Islamic era by centuries. They are the descendants of historic

lethal layer to this erasure. It has often projected itself as a “protector” of Christians to avoid raising the ire of its Western backers.

In reality, Palestinian Christians have been subjected to the same policies of ethnic cleansing, racism, and military occupation as their Muslim brothers and sisters. How else can we explain the catastrophic dwindling of the Christian population?

Before the 1948 Nakba, Palestinian Christians made up

place of Christ into an open-air prison.

Yet, despite this, we rarely hear about the struggle for survival of Palestinian Christians. Instead, the world occasionally glimpses “incidents”—like the common habit of Jewish extremists spitting on foreign pilgrims and clergy in Jerusalem. This behaviour has become so normalised that Israeli ministers, such as Itamar Ben-Gvir, have previously defended the act as an “ancient custom” that should not be

participate in the very discourse that led to their marginalisation in the first place.

The Gaza genocide, however, has proven this logic not only erroneous but unsustainable. Throughout the slaughter, Israel has destroyed over 800 mosques, but it has not spared the Christian sanctuaries.

On 19th October 2023 an Israeli airstrike targeted a building within the compound of the Church of Saint Porphyrius – one of the oldest churches in the world.

In that massacre, 18 Palestinian Christians were killed, their blood mixing with the dust of a sanctuary that had stood for 1,600 years. It was a devastating reminder that the Israeli missile does not distinguish between a mosque and a church, nor between the blood of a Muslim and a Christian.

The story of the French nun is worth every bit of the attention it received, as is the targeting of pilgrims. But as the headlines move on, we must remember that Palestinian Christians endure a suffering that is collective and rooted in the very soil of Palestine. They are now an endangered community, and Israel is the culprit. Without them, Palestine is not the same.

The Palestinian homeland is only whole when it is the cradle of religious co-existence, and Palestinian Christians sit at the very heart of that history, dating back two millennia. Their survival is not a “minority issue” – it is the survival of Palestine itself.



An Israeli soldier smashes a Christian statue.

tribes who shaped the region’s identity long before the advent of modern political labels.

The marginalisation of Palestinian Christians is a relatively new phenomenon, deeply linked to Western colonialism. For centuries, European powers used the pretence of “protecting” Christian communities to justify their own imperial interventions.

Consequently, this framed the native Christian not as a sovereign Arab with agency, but as a ward of the West – a narrative that effectively stripped them of their indigenous status and alienated them from their own national fabric in the eyes of the world.

Zionism added a

roughly 12 per cent of the population. Today, that number has plummeted to a mere one per cent. During the Nakba alone, tens of thousands were expelled from their homes in West Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa, their properties looted and their communities dismantled.

A quick look at the map of Jerusalem and Bethlehem today tells the story of an ongoing erasure. Jerusalem is being systematically emptied of its native population, both Christian and Muslim. Christian properties and houses of worship are restricted, and the “Little Town” of Bethlehem has been swallowed by a ring of illegal settlements and an 8-metre-high Apartheid Wall that has transformed the birth-

criminalised.

The reason the Palestinian Christian story is rarely told is that it fails to factor neatly into the convenient narratives used by Western governments. They are keen on presenting the “conflict” as a Jewish state fighting for its identity against a monolithic “Islamic” threat. Israel is heavily invested in this same “Clash of Civilisations” trope, positioning itself as the vanguard of “Western civilisation” against Arab extremism.

But some Palestinians – Muslim and Christian alike – are, to a lesser degree, also guilty of falling into this trap. The former often frame the Palestinian resistance as an exclusively Muslim struggle; meanwhile, some Christians par-

LETTERS

THE 15TH MAY, the 78th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, the open wound in the body of our people and our nation, is the day Palestine was uprooted by the Zionist settler colonialism supported by world imperialism, foremost of which is American imperialism, which continues to provide political, military and economic cover for the killing and occupation machine.

The Nakba was not a passing event in history, but rather a subversive colonial project aimed at uprooting the Palestinian people from their land, dismantling their national and class identity, and transforming Palestine into an advanced base for imperialist capitalism in the heart of the Arab world. Since that date our people have continued their heroic resistance, providing convoys of martyrs, prisoners and wounded in defence of their historic right to liberation, return and self-determination.

This year's anniversary of the Nakba comes in light of the brutal genocidal war against our people in the steadfast Gaza Strip, where the Zionist occupation is practising the most heinous

crimes against civilians, including children, women and the elderly, targeting people and all the elements of life in a desperate attempt to break the will of the resistance and subjugate our people.

But Gaza, as always, proved that the struggling peoples are invincible, and that the will to liberate is stronger than the machine of oppression and terrorism. In the occupied West Bank, the chapters of the Nakba continue in its various forms, through the escalation of the colonial settlement project, the expansion of settlement outposts, the continued storming of Palestinian cities, camps and villages, the imposition of sieges and military checkpoints, in addition to the daily attacks carried out by the herds of fascist settlers against our people in Palestinian villages and communities, including the burning of houses and agricultural lands, the uprooting of trees and the displacement of Palestinian families under the protection of the Zionist occupation forces.

Policies of repression and detention are also expanding, including collective punishment, abuse and field executions, in an attempt to impose a colonial reality by force and break the will of our struggling people. But the masses of our people in

the West Bank, as in Gaza, Jerusalem, the interior and the diaspora, continue their steadfastness and resistance in defence of their land, their existence and their historical national rights.

The Palestinian Communist Party affirms that the battle against the Zionist project is not a battle of borders or negotiations over crumbs of rights, but rather a battle of national and social liberation against colonialism, occupation and class exploitation. The Palestinian question has been and will continue to be an issue of national liberation that is organically linked to the struggle against imperialism, subordinate capitalism and Arab reaction, which, by its silence or normalisation, has colluded with the Zionist enemy. Recalling the sacrifices of our people over many decades, we reaffirm the following principles:

1. Uphold the full and inalienable right of return of all Palestinian refugees to their homes from which they were displaced, in accordance with inalienable historical and national rights.

2. Continue the national resistance in all its legitimate forms against occupation and colonialism, as it is the natural right of the peoples under occupation.

3. Strengthening Palestinian national unity on the basis of a democratic and libertarian programme of struggle, away from division, dependence and absurd bets on imperialist settlements.

4. Linking national liberation with social emancipation, and the struggle for a socialist democratic society that guarantees social justice and the rights of workers, peasants and toilers.

5. Expanding the international solidarity front with the Palestinian people, and strengthening the alliance with the forces of liberation and progress in the world in the face of imperialism, Zionism and neo-fascism.

History has proven that peoples do not die, and that the occupation will end no matter how long it takes. Our

Palestinian people, who have withstood the massacres, the siege and the uprooting, are capable of continuing the struggle until they achieve their full national goals of liberation, return and the establishment of a free and democratic Palestine on its entire national territory. Glory to the martyrs, freedom to the prisoners, healing to the wounded, Victory for the Palestinian people and their resistance!

**Palestinian
Communist Party
Palestine**

I WAS TRULY appalled and outraged to learn that the Songdownon International Children's Camp of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been subjected to sanctions by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom.

On the 11th May the FCDO published on its website a statement that read "Sanctions Notice: 11 May 2026 Regime: Russia" which duly announced that the Songdownon International Children's Camp was subject to sanctions by the UK government even though it is not actually within the territory of the Russian Federation!

The Songdownon International Children's Camp had the following imposed on it; asset freeze and making available provisions, trade sanctions, travel bans and transport sanctions.

The Songdownon International Children's Camp is a children's camp. It is not an ICBM or nuclear complex!

It is run by the DPRK which promotes the noble ideals of international friendship, peace, solidarity, amity and friendship among the children of the world. Children from many countries of the world including the UK and Ireland have visited the Songdownon International Children's Camp.

Apparently these actions had been taken by the British government because the DPRK provided free of charge holidays to children from the Donbas. What is so wrong with this? Surely it was a positive and sincere measure of the DPRK to give free holidays to kids from a war zone? In the past the DPRK also gave holidays to children of the former USSR who were affected by the Chernobyl incident. This action by the British government is as hostile as it is stupid and crass!

The British government should immediately with-

Diary

UNTIL 10 JUNE

National Theatre of Scotland: Stand & Deliver: The Lee Jeans Sit-in. Touring play of Scotland celebrating the 1981 Greenock women workers' sit-in. Book on NTS website.

UNTIL 18 OCT

'Comrades in Art: Artists Against Fascism' exhibition, on the anti-fascist Artists International Association. The Towner Eastbourne, Devonshire Park, College Road, Eastbourne BN21 4JJ.

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 JUN

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

WED 10 JUN

RMT: Garden Party for Cuba. 18:30. Maritime House, Clapham Old Town, London SW4 0JW. Tickets £20.00. Book on Cuba Solidarity Campaign website.

SAT 13 JUN

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 13-SUN 21 JUN

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: End the Siege of Cuba. Cuban Friendship Institute speaking tour: London (at CSC AGM), Derby, Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Oxford and Bristol. See CSC website for full details.

SAT 20 JUN

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 JUN

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

SAT 27 JUN

TUC Midlands: Women Chainmakers Festival. 11:00-16:00. Mary Macarthur Gardens, Lower High Street, Cradley Heath, Sandwell B64 5BG.

WED 1-SAT 11 JUL

Townsend Theatre Productions: Neil Gore's Farewell Leicester Square. Touring play about Bedford's first Black bus driver. Bedford, Watford and London venues. Book on TTP website.

SAT 4 JUL

International Brigade Association: Annual Commemoration. 13:00. Jubilee Gardens, Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PG.

SAT 11 JUL

Durham Miners Association: Durham Miners' Gala, Durham city centre DH1.

THUR 16 JUL

Marx Memorial Library: Discover the lives of Radical Women in Clerkenwell. 18:00. In person, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU

FRI 17-SUN 19 JUL

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle, Dorset DT2 7EH.

THUR 30 JUL

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

THUR 6 AUG - SUN 9 AUG

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings nationwide commemorations.

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draw the sanctions against the DPRK's Songdownon International Children's Camp!

**Dermot Hudson
London**

JOHN MARYON (*New Worker* 24th April 2026), says, at the concluding part of his letter, that "goodwill, cooperation and harmonious development between nations are the primary objective for socialist and other progressive nations". I agree wholeheartedly with him.

Human society is founded on co-operation and reinforced by communities determining their own affairs and building their own social structures.

We are social beings and our natural human urge is to help others. Social dysfunction comes after social co-operation and the most toxic of all such dysfunctions is imperialism. Outside interventions are always disastrous, destructive and tainted with the ambitions of the interveners. That is why uninvited interventions are rightly illegal these days under

international law. However, we all know that international law is not being applied to the so-called "great" imperial powers support for self-determination, and the defence of peoples is under attack, mainly from the USA. Of course, the defence of peoples is an essentially human urge. This comes before the pathological drive to dominate. The natural sense of support for other human communities must, especially, include support for formerly colonised peoples and those under attack. That is consistent with human values and respect for others.

Independent peoples under threat or attacked must be supported in Cuba, Venezuela, Palestine, Iran, etc. Imperial pathology is a reality. Its demands: pronouncing what others "must do", the refusal to listen and domineering interventions represent a fundamentally anti-social mentality.

The USA and Israel like to tell us that Iran is a bad and evil country. Why? It is certainly not because of any threats to peaceful nations. Iran has not invaded another country in centuries.

It is presently in a war with the USA and Israel because it remains the largest independent nation in the Middle East, with both the capacity and the will to resist and frustrate the aforementioned rogue states. It is the anti-imperial character of Iran which conditions its strategic role in the region, and in the world. Also, we should not ignore what might be called the "secular" development of the Iranian Republic. Most of Iran's strategic partners, Russia, China and Venezuela, are secular-pluralist or non-Islamic states. The strategic relationship with Russia is strong. Moreover, Iran has helped Palestine resist ethnic Israeli occupation and it has backed Iraq in its victory over a sectarian terrorism generated by the Gulf monarchies, NATO and Israel.

Iran's enemies have done all they can, including war, to fragment the peoples of the region. Imperialism plainly does not want their integration and independent prosperity. It is the capacity, consistency, and the political will of Iran that makes Iran a force to be reckoned with, and that is why it will continue to lead the independent peoples of the Middle East in a larger struggle over the future of the region, in which Palestine remains central.

**A McKerl
Fife**

WITH REGARDS to Prime Minister Starmer's wish to regulate or ban pro-Palestine support marches it will be interesting to see if this also applies to pro-Israel marches. They are, after all marches in support of a brutal regime whom has killed thousands of Arabs across the Middle East and beyond, with the death toll rising daily.

They are marching in support of a country where soldiers knock the head off statues of Christ and where nuns are abducted on the street. Surely they are the marches to ban – not peaceful Pro-Palestine ones?

But, of course, this will not happen, since this government and Mr Starmer are solidly in support of anything Israel does and to say or do anything against them would be "Anti Semitic". Evidently they have forgotten that Arabs are a Semitic people and, I assume, any attack on them is Anti-Semitic too.

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

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

SCOTTISH National Party leader John Swinney was re-elected as Scotland's First Minister on Tuesday after three rounds of voting in Holyrood, the Scottish parliament. Swinney secured 56 votes, defeating candidates from five opposition parties. Speaking at the Scottish Parliament after his electoral success, Swinney vowed to be "a first minister for all of Scotland". A member of Holyrood since 1999, Swinney has led Scotland's government since 2024, after taking over as SNP leader.

The SNP won 58 of 129 seats in the Holyrood elections held on 7th May, remaining the largest party in the Scottish parliament but falling short of the 65 seats required for a majority.

The 129 MSPs, half of whom are new, earlier elected a new Presiding Officer, Kenneth Gibson, who although belonging to the SNP, was not the first choice of the party leadership. Gibson was first elected in 1999, lost his seat in 2003, but made a return to Holyrood in 2007 where he was so highly regarded he never became even a junior minister, but was allowed to become Convenor of the Finance Committee. In line with SNP tradition his wife is an ex-MP and now an MSP. Some have expressed the hope that having rebelled in three votes in the course of his career he might not be totally subservient of the SNP leadership.

The MSPs have been sworn in – an occasion to reflect on the success of the SNP's policy on promoting Gaelic: not one of them speaks the language.

Of the 129, 58 are from the SNP (down from 64 in 2021), 17 each from Labour and Reform (down from 22 and up 17 respectively). The Greens on 15 are up from eight, the Tories 12 – a drastic slump from second place to the present fourth. The Liberal-Democrats were up

from four to 10. No other party or independent came close to a seat, not even former SNP grandee Fergus Ewing.

The SNP won most of the constituency seats. Its running of the ferry services saw Labour make it's sole gain in the Western Isles and the Liberal-Democrats win Skye, Lochaber & Badenoch. It lost two former ministerial seats, formerly held by Nicola Sturgeon and Angus Robertson, to the Greens with whom they will likely have to do business with.

In terms of the popular vote the election was a great triumph of the TSTV party: those "Too Scunnered to Vote" whose numbers rose to 47 per cent (an increase of 10.2 from 2021) of the other 4,266,700 registered voters (Another quarter of a million didn't even bother to register). Years ago the SNP adopted the Monster Raving Loonies' policy of giving 16–17 year-olds the vote, thinking it would give them the edge. But they are among the most disinterested. Only 60 per cent of them bothered to register compared with 92 per cent of the electorate as a whole. The day before polling the top ten most read stories on the *Herald* website included news about a restaurant and a small bakery chain going into liquidation, Rangers players behaving badly and a music festival being cancelled. Not one was about the election.

The votes of the remaining 53 per cent were shared out among the SNP who secured a Starmer like landslide of 38.2 per cent in the constituencies and 27.2 in the Regional vote.

Unkind nationalist critics point that this was Swinney's second election as SNP leader, (the other was in 2003) and on both occasions he oversaw a decline in the SNP vote, this time by 9.5 and 13.1 per cent. Labour's 19.2 per cent in the constituencies and 16 on the lists represented a smaller but significant decline. The big winner was Reform UK who secured 15.8 per cent but got all their MSPs from their 16.6 on the lists.

So long as they do not have their customary splits the all-new 17 Reform UK MSPs will have five years to make hay, constantly taking potshots at the SNP Government, and anyone else they don't like, without themselves having to defend any previous record in Scotland. It was, however, ungrateful of Swinney to announce that he will enter into talks with all parties but Reform. He does, after all, owe them for splitting the right-wing vote.

The few Green constituency candidates only got 2.3 per cent, but 14 on the lists. The Tories fell almost by half to 11.8, but the constituencies bordering England are still a solid blue. The Liberal Democrats secured a constituency vote of 11.4 and slightly less, 9.4 more than doubling their 2021 low.

Given that the Scottish Socialist Party (which once had six MSPs) secured just 8,326 votes, the Workers Party of Britain 1,321 and their deadly rivals, the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition 2,740, we can safely conclude that Scotland is in a very, very pre-revolutionary situation...

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Young communists in China

by New Worker correspondent

AN NCP comrade joined a delegation of young cadres from communist parties in Europe and North America on a study tour of People's China in May. Samuel Swale from NCP East Anglia took part in the forums and discussions during the two-week tour that included a meeting with Jin Xin, the vice-minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China.

Jin Xin looked at the possibilities and responsibilities of young communists who are organising under the conditions of Western capitalism and imperialism. He said that the world is in the process of change and the global winds are blowing in the direction away from capitalism.

"Socialism has already transcended the low ebb of the collapse

of the Soviet Union. The world is in the process of change and the global winds are blowing in the direction away from capitalism. This is the moment that communist parties in the West should consider carefully, to find out how they can seize the opportunity. You, the generation of younger communists, with your admirable courage and fervour, are at the forefront of this change. The future of the world rests on your shoulders" Jin said.

The vice-minister spoke about the problem of imperialism and war-mongering carried out by the United States and Israel. He also noted the growing concern for Latin American countries, with the Venezuelan and Cuban people in particular experiencing direct military aggression and threats coming from the United States. Jin Xin noted that Cuba finds itself in a danger-



ous geographical position, being so close to the United States, and so far away from China. Regardless, China is committed to helping the Cuban comrades with all available means. He also celebrated the close solidarity, cooperation and growing ideological dialogue and ties between the "five golden flowers of socialism" – that is China, Vietnam, Laos,

Cuba and the DPR Korea.

Jin also discussed the state of Marxism in the West, noting that there are some disagreements and splits, in terms of how Marxism is understood and applied. He criticised the dogmatic approach of some parties, which disregard national conditions, and automatically assume that certain aspects, such as the exist-

ence and development of the private sector, are a "betrayal" of Marxism.

China has made great strides not only in modernisation and development, but also in terms of creating a prosperous and safe society. China is one of the safest places in the world, where people can walk alone at night without any fear, or where they can leave their belong-

ings unattended. This is not the case in most other countries.

Jin Xin said the rise in the acceptance and support of communist parties and ideas around the world, with the youth in particular showed a high affinity for socialism, more so than in the decades earlier. This, he said, is the single spark that can start a prairie fire.

The youth movements and parties participating in the delegation along with the NCP were the CPB's YCL of Britain, the League of Communist Youth of Belarus and AKEL's United Democratic Youth movement of Cyprus together with the youth movements of the communist parties of Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland as well as the CPUSA and the Communist Party of Canada.

"Ping-Pong Diplomacy" wins through!

by New Worker correspondent

THE CHINESE ambassador, Zheng Zegang, joined sports lovers at Loughborough University London greeting the Chinese team, fresh from winning both the men's and women's titles at the 2026 World Team Table Tennis Championships last week.

More than 200 guests attended the event marking the 55th anniversary of China-UK "ping-pong diplomacy" including Alan Hydes, a participant in the 1971 "ping-pong diplomacy" games, players and coaches from Team England, and students from Loughborough

University and the local community.

In his remarks Ambassador Zheng noted that in 1926 the International Table Tennis Federation was founded in London and held the first World Table Tennis Championships. Now 100 years later, the Championships have returned to the capital. He congratulated the UK on successfully hosting the 2026 world championships. He also warmly congratulated the Chinese men's and women's teams on successfully defending their titles after defeating Japan in the finals. He commended the Chinese players for their outstanding skill and remarkable determination, noting



The Chinese ambassador tries his hand...

that they embodied the Olympic spirit and made the Chinese people proud.

Zheng pointed out

that this year marks the 55th anniversary of China-UK "ping-pong diplomacy". In 1971 the England table tennis

team was invited to visit China. This was followed by a return visit to the UK by the Chinese table tennis team

later that year. These exchanges played a unique role in the establishment of China-UK ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations. Sport has long served as a bridge connecting the peoples of China and the UK. The Chinese government supports closer exchanges between the sporting communities of the two sides and encourages broader cooperation between their universities. He expressed his hope that athletes and young people from both countries will continue to use sport as a bridge and contribute to the friendship between the peoples of China and the UK in the new era.

The cruel Atlantic trade

REVIEW

by Ben Soton

The Great Resistance – The 400-Year to end Slavery in The Americas
by Carrie Gibson,
Basic Books, New York 2026,
640 pp, Hbk £30
Pbk £20

THE 16TH CENTURY saw the opening up of the Americas and the establishment of transatlantic trade routes. The trade in sugar, cotton and tobacco was central to the development of capitalism and with it the industrial revolution; central to this process was the trade in human capital across the Atlantic ocean.

In this book Carrie

Gibson gives a detailed account of resistance to this evil institution.

She pieces together a myriad of small texts and in so constructs the four-hundred-year history of slavery in the Americas. It begins in the late 1400s and ends in 1888 with the abolition of slavery in Brazil.

The transatlantic slave trade was initiated by Spain and Portugal and later involved Britain, France and to a lesser extent the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. Resistance took many forms, including suicide, while rebellions took place almost as soon as the slave-trade began. Resistance also took the form of guerilla warfare. Slave revolts took place wherever slavery existed and were more widespread than many of us may have previously been aware.

The book goes into considerable detail as to

how the major events of late 18th century contributed to the ending of slavery. The American War of Independence saw both sides offering to free slaves prepared to join their fight. The French Revolution, with its emphasis of 'The Rights of Man', influenced the successful revolt in Haiti – the first state to abolish slavery in the Caribbean. It was not the actions of well-meaning white folk but the result of the actions of slaves themselves that ended slavery; a theme that the author stresses throughout the book.

Gibson downplays the role of Royal Navy's West African Squadron in ending the slave trade in 1807. Gibson points out that most of the captives liberated were not returned to Africa but ended up in the Americas as indentured labourers. She also points out that the African Squadron was more of a means of extending Britain's imperial interests in Africa than actually helping Africans. On a more surprising note the author is highly critical of Simon Bolivar, a hero of the Latin American left, whose attitude to people of colour was at best ambiguous.

The 19th century saw the gradual abolition of slavery across the Americas. It did not result in an age of prosperity for the former enslaved people; after all it was their former owners who received compensation. The freed slaves still suffered from the ravages of colonialism, segregation and racism. Problems that are for the most part unresolved. The book stands as a testimony to those who fought against the evil institution of slavery.

1926 – a year to remember

by Andy Brooks

MAY 1926 – when the unions tried, but sadly failed, to halt the employers' offensive against the miners. The fledgling British communist party, founded a few years earlier in 1920, did its best to rally the workers during the general strike that was called off by the defeatists and gravy-trainers in the big unions on surrender terms that set back the labour movement in Britain for many years to come.

On the 100th anniversary of the General Strike the NCP is republishing Stalin's comments on this momentous event in the history of British trade unionism. The new pamphlet includes a brief historical review of the strike written in 2006 by Ken Ruddock, a leading member of the New Communist Party who sadly passed away in 2020, together with Stalin's report delivered at a meeting of railway workers in Tiflis on 8th June 1926.

Another tribute, this time from the Socialist History Society includes a reprint of Ernie Trory's long out-of-print *Brighton and the General Strike* and other articles on great strike.

It's called *Remembering the Battle of*

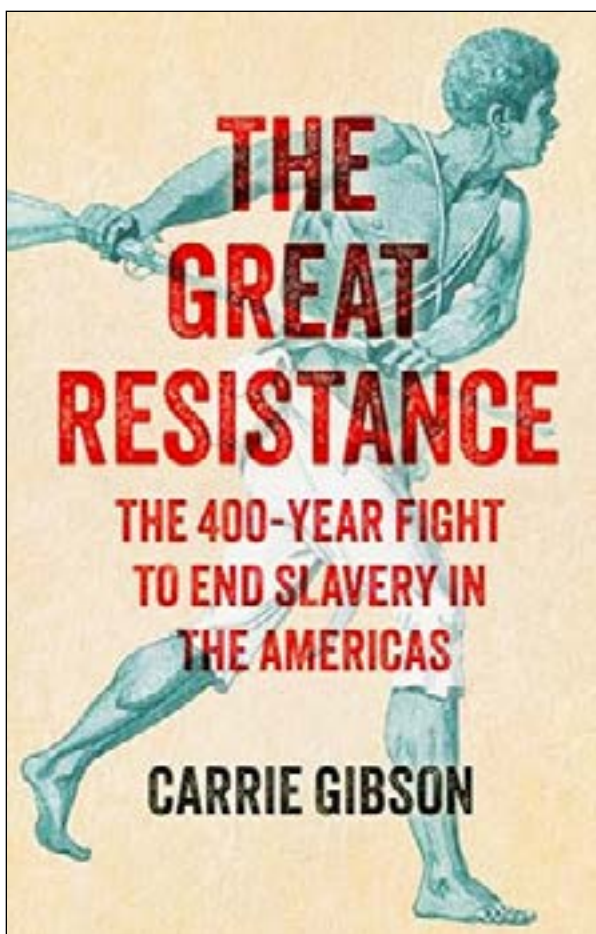


Lewes Road and it's edited and introduced by Christian Høgsberg for the Brighton & Hove trades council.

The booklet contains two pamphlets. One by Ernie Trory, the famous NCP Brighton communist and unemployed workers' leader, and another by Andy Durr of the Brighton Trades Council that were first published in the 1970s. Above all, it is an affirmation of the support which the working class of Brighton gave to the miners in their dispute with the coal owners and the Conservative government, and an homage to the 22 men who were imprisoned from two to six months for their attempt to prevent the tram sheds at Lewes

Road being opened for strike-breaking purposes on 11th May 1926. Both pamphlets draw from the personal experiences of those involved, and the pamphlet finishes with Ernie Trory's rewriting of the song *Sussex by the Sea*, written in the idiom of the strikers. This is a must for anyone interested in the history of the labour movement on the South Coast.

The General Strike of 1926 pamphlet can be ordered from the Lit Dept at the NCP for £4:00 including postage. *Remembering the Battle of Lewes Road* is an illustrated booklet which can be obtained for just £6:00 from the Strike Map online store at: <https://organiseand-strike.sumupstore>.



An Israeli orgy of looting

by Ed Newman

ISRAELI SOLDIERS occupying southern Lebanon have engaged in widespread looting of civilian homes and businesses alongside the systematic destruction of villages, with commanding officers turning a blind eye to the practice, according to testimonies published by *Haaretz* (The Land).

The testimonies emerged as Israeli atrocities continue in Lebanon despite a US-announced ceasefire last month. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that approximately 100,000 Lebanese have fled their homes in recent days, with at least 3,020 people killed and more than 9,200 injured since the escalation began on 2nd March.

Five soldiers from different units described a battlefield culture resembling that of a “Viking army” where discipline has given way to moral disintegration and a lawless environment prevails, the Israeli daily newspaper reported.

“For most of the senior commanders, it did not matter. Soldiers looted even when the brigade commander came to visit, and he turned a blind eye,” one soldier testified.

According to the soldiers’ accounts, the war on Lebanon has acquired a hidden objective beyond confronting Hezbollah: the collection of spoils and exacting revenge on Lebanese civilians.

One reservist described an “unofficial mission” as “taking out all the loot” – unloading stolen goods at outposts so they would be waiting for soldiers when they returned home.



Israeli strike in Lebanon.

The testimonies portray a systematic practice in which soldiers, after clearing homes of any possible resistance presence, would begin “locating valuable items”

Shops were described as particularly lucrative targets, with soldiers emptying stores of food, cigarettes, cleaning supplies, stationery, and other goods for personal use. Even everyday supplies consumed at military outposts were sourced from Lebanon, soldiers said.

“At any given moment, you could see soldiers walking around the village carrying with them civilians’ belongings,” one soldier told the newspaper. “It felt like the primary mission”.

One soldier described his battalion commander as “the most extreme” noting that he “refused to go home, the smile never left his face. He was in a state of exaltation, like a die-hard fan whose team wins a championship after 20 years. I felt that beyond the border, it is okay to be crazy”.

Another reservist

told *Haaretz* that the military’s main mission in southern Lebanon was the destruction of homes. He described a commander’s pre-invasion speech as “a pagan ritual” and noted that when his unit entered one village, “there were no militants. The houses were empty. There was no fighting there at all – only operations to flatten homes”.

revenge

“There was no reason other than revenge,” the reservist said, adding that homes, schools, and clinics were destroyed without stated military justification.

Much of the demolition work was carried out by private contractors, including “extreme settlers” as well as Bedouin and Druze workers.

According to *Haaretz*, the military believes the reported cases represent only the tip of the iceberg, given footage circulating on social media showing soldiers vandalising and looting property.

Hezbollah fighters have pledged that they will neither rest nor set-

tle until every Israeli occupier is driven from the Lebanese soil.

Israeli historian Adam Raz, who has written about the looting of Palestinian property during the 1948 Nakba, said last month that while “looting was part of every Israeli war” what is new is “the total indifference”.

“The senior command turns a blind eye, the criminality continues, and the crime achieves its goals,” he said.

The phenomenon extends beyond Lebanon. Human rights monitors have documented similar practices in Gaza and the West Bank, describing a “clear pattern of theft during Israeli military operations” that has become “an effective policy of the state and the army”.

Such behaviour constitutes a violation of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which absolutely prohibits looting in armed conflicts. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court classifies looting as a war crime, particularly when it acquires systematic or widespread characteristics.

Radio Havana Cuba

Italy: More money for wages, not for war!

by John Catalinotto

A COUNTRYWIDE general strike took place in Italy on 18th May with demonstrations in many cities, including the capital Rome, demanding higher wages and a lower military budget. It was the Union Sindacale di Base (USB – Rank-and-File Union) and other popular movements that organised the actions under the slogan “We block everything!”

Those taking part in the strike and demonstrations showed their active opposition to rising living costs, increased military spending and the Italian government’s decision to increase spending for militarisation while decreasing spending for education and healthcare.

Gaza

They also opposed Israel’s attacks on the Palestinian people in Gaza and supported the Global Sumud Flotilla that has been attempting to reach Gaza by sea to bring humanitarian aid. Flotilla ships have been illegally boarded at sea and seized by the Israeli

navy, with some of the Flotilla volunteers arrested and tortured.

This action is especially significant for working people in the Global North in that it sets an example for how workers’ unions can build alliances with other popular movements to strike and demonstrate.

also political

Such an action can make economic demands and also political demands, like to stop Italy’s military support for Israel against the Palestinian people. The USB held similar strikes and protests in October 2025 and last February.

In Italy on 18th May many demonstrators displayed Palestinian flags and demanded that the Italian government reduce or end complicity with Israel. Slogans calling for a free Palestine were repeatedly heard during the protests.

Transport disruptions were reported across Italy. In Rome, one metro line was suspended, while in Naples, service on a metro line was halted. In Milan, some suburban rail services were also affected, and port workers in Livorno carried out an industrial action”.

Workers’ World (USA)