

# All Quiet in the Persian Gulf

by  
our Arab Affairs  
correspondent

Tankers are now passing through the Strait of Hormuz as the guns fall silent in Lebanon and the Persian Gulf. The war, which began in late February with a barrage of Israeli and American drones and missiles on Iran that killed the Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei and many other members of the Iranian government, has ended following months of secret mediation efforts by Pakistani, Turkish and Qatari diplomatic teams.

The double blockade on the key global shipping choke-point has been lifted with the signing of a preliminary agreement between the USA and Iran to end the months-long conflict. The two sides are still working to reach a final peace deal during an extendable 60-day negotiation period that began on Tuesday. The 14-point Memorandum of Understanding calls for free passage through the Persian Gulf during the extended truce period, an Iranian commitment not to develop nuclear weapons, as well as sanctions relief and a \$300 billion reconstruction fund for the Islamic Republic.

President Vladimir Putin wel-



comed the US–Iran agreement as a step towards permanently halting the conflict and which could serve as a model for future peace agreements. Speaking at the Russia–ASEAN summit in the Russian city of Kazan, Putin said stabilisation in the Middle East would be beneficial for global energy markets. People’s China also welcomed the framework agreement and expressed the hope that the deal will be signed as planned and that safe maritime passage will soon resume.

Trump says the deal has achieved all of the objectives the USA hoped to accomplish at the beginning of the war. Some talk of victory in Tehran. Others say wait and see.

A lot depends on what hap-

pens next. The talk of “regime change” and “unconditional surrender” has all gone in the American camp, and the Iranians have agreed to suspend their unilateral tolling of what until now had been an open international waterway. Both sides have compromised to get this far. One

thing’s for sure – while there may not be any outright winners there’s one definite loser – and that’s Israel.

The deal calls for a cease-fire on all fronts – including Lebanon. And that’s where the first problem lies. The Israelis, who get nothing from the deal, want to hold on to the borderlands they recently seized from Lebanon.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli leader, had long dreamt of an Israeli-American onslaught against Iran. It was his mission. His place in history. But Netanyahu’s dream has turned into a nightmare with cities in ruins, hundreds dead and over 10,000 Israelis wounded in a war he helped to start but was powerless to end. He’s humiliated by Trump who foul-mouths him when he doesn’t do as he’s told and is dismissed as a “small partner” by his master in Washington who

now has no further use for him. Neither have the Israeli people.

“The wars have brought nothing but destruction and ruin, slaughtering tens of thousands and devastating the lives of millions – in Israel, Iran, Lebanon and Palestine. All criminal attempts to sabotage agreements through more force and violence have crashed against reality on the ground” says Ofer Cassif, a member of the communist-led Hadash bloc in the Israeli parliament. “The spineless Zionist ‘opposition’ must internalise this: more force, more blood, and more destruction will achieve nothing. The only path forward is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, and a just, true peace. The road there begins with overthrowing this bloody government. We will not back down until justice prevails.”

## FUND

This week’s post brought in £402 and now we’ve begun to worry. With only £842 in the bag for June the *New Worker* is hitting the rocks! We need £3,500 per month to survive and we can only appeal to our readers to help keep us going.

This week we’ve seen the far-right getting trounced at the Makerfield by-election. We’ve seen Trump sign a truce with the Iranians, which if implemented will meet many of the demands of the Islamic Republic. But the struggle for peace and socialism continues – for a better tomorrow, a future that working people deserve, a new life that we are all striving to build. Our communist voice has been out on the street since 1977. So join us in the fight to guarantee the survival of the *New Worker*.

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# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Double whammy in Makerfield

**Makerfield's voters killed two birds with one stone this week, giving the Faragists a drubbing and sending Andy Burnham back to the House of Commons. If Starmer goes before Parliament's summer recess that will be an added bonus.**

Burnham's by-election victory was not all that surprising. He was the odds-on favourite with the bookies on the eve of the poll that ended weeks of ferocious Labour campaigning on the streets of the constituency in what was essentially a two-horse race between the "King of the North" and Nigel Farage's Reform UK. But the stakes weren't quite the same. For Farage victory would just be another feather in his cap. For Burnham victory opens the door to Number Ten.

Farage likes to pose as a country gent with the common touch. But he's just a venal City businessman who's been the political voice of those sections of the ruling class long-opposed to the European Union. For many years he languished on the political fringe of British politics. He made common cause with the Tories with his heady mix of racism and anti-Euro federalism during the Brexit campaign. But being propelled to centre stage and leading a small but high-profile far-right front is no substitute for Burnham's years of political experience as a Blairite minister and then Mayor of Greater Manchester.

Farage is a good communicator. But so is Burnham. Burnham is a hand-shaker and a back-slapper. He's everyone's friend and like Labour's old leader, Harold Wilson, or the late Charles Kennedy of Liberal-Democrat fame, he can get the vote out on the street.

But that wasn't always the case. Reform had high hopes for their man, a local plumber who was just three points behind Burnham when the campaign began a few weeks ago in the constituency in Greater Manchester. The Faragists played the race card, clearly hoping that the Southampton riots and the sectarian violence in northern Ireland would trigger nation-wide unrest that could be exploited in their favour throughout the rest of the country. But the firm response of the anti-racist movements, together with that of the local communities as a whole, made sure that there was no repetition of the mob violence in Southampton despite the best efforts of the racists, the fascist gangs and the followers of Tommy Robinson to stir up anti-immigrant hysteria.

Burnham is back in Parliament and he says he's ready to challenge Starmer for the leadership. Starmer's followers are drifting towards the Burnham camp. Those of his rival, Wes Streeting, want to do a deal to keep their place in the new Burnham administration. Some Corbynistas even hope for reconciliation – although Burnham has ruled out any return for Jeremy Corbyn himself.

Burnham may not be "New Labour". But he's definitely "Old Labour". He says he'll keep the triple-lock and return the water industry to some sort of public ownership. But that's as far as it goes from a man who comes from the right social-democratic camp that has traditionally dominated the Labour Party from Ramsay MacDonald's days...

# Social media ban – will it work?

**Sir Keir Starmer's plan to ban children under 16 from social media has drawn fresh attention to online child safety, with experts warning that its impact will depend on enforcement, platform design and support beyond the ban itself.**

The Government said on Monday that the measure would follow Australia's model, covering platforms built around social interaction, content posting and algorithmic recommendation. It also plans to implement default restrictions for 16 and 17-year-olds, while considering overnight curfews and breaks in infinite scrolling for under 18s. The restrictions will take effect from spring 2027.

Experts said the policy's impact would, however, depend on whether it tackles specific sources of harm, rather than simply keeping young people off major platforms.

Criminology expert Professor Matthew Williams from Cardiff University says that some forms of social media use expose young people to real harms, including algorithmic amplification, compulsive design, bullying, peer comparison and stranger engagement. But he said the evidence does not yet support a simple claim that a total under-16 ban, by itself, will reduce these harms.

"The key test is whether this particular intervention reduces exposure to harm without displacing young people into less visible, less regulated and less researchable spaces," he said.

Williams said Britain's proposals on stranger engagement, gaming and live-streaming are more promising than a blunt social media ban because they target specific features, such as unsolicited contact, live interaction, recommender systems, private messaging and the mixing of adult and child online spaces.

Lizzy Winstone, a senior research associate at the Centre for Public Health at the University of Bristol, said the evidence does not yet show that blanket age bans improve young peo-

ple's mental health or safety. Her research suggests that the key question is what kinds of experiences young people have online, rather than whether they are online at all.

"A ban may reduce some harms for some young people by reducing access to mainstream platforms, but we should be cautious about assuming it will meaningfully reduce harm overall," she said.

She added that policy should also address platform features and business models, including algorithmically driven discovery feeds, infinite scroll, visibility metrics, private messaging, unsolicited contact, image-based broadcasting and expectations of constant availability.

## Enforcement challenges

By Tuesday, the proposal had also drawn pushback from major social media companies. Meta, YouTube and Snapchat warned that a blanket ban could push teenagers toward less-regulated online spaces. YouTube said young people could be moved away from supervised and beneficial services, while Snapchat said cutting teenagers off from private messaging with friends and family would not make them safer.

The responses also highlighted the difficulty of enforcing such a ban. Experts said Australia's experience does not yet provide proof that such restrictions reduce harm.

Williams noted that Australia's under 16 restrictions, which came into effect in December 2025, have led to problems of compliance and circumvention.

Lizzy Winstone said enforcement has been difficult; some young people have found ways around age restrictions, especially if they view the policy as unfair. If they move away from regulated spaces, "harms may become harder for parents, schools, platforms, and regulators to iden-

tify and address".

Young people who circumvent age restrictions may also be less likely to seek support from adults if they encounter problems online.

Williams said age assurance is feasible, using tools including document checks, facial age estimation and digital identity credentials. However, some children will be able to avoid these checks, he warned.

## Politics and the next step

The policy also carries a political dimension. Ian Scott, a professor at the University of Manchester, says that the ban is partly about Starmer being under political pressure from rivals within Labour.

Public concern and media coverage of online harms to young people have also encouraged Starmer to act. Scott said the effects of the ban will only become clear over the next year or two, however, and a future administration may adjust the policy.

Williams said Britain needs measurable outcomes, independent access to platform data, baseline measures before implementation, audits of recommender and age-assurance systems, and monitoring of impacts on vulnerable groups.

On the other hand, Lizzy Winstone says Britain should increase social media and algorithmic literacy for all age groups, regulate platform design more effectively, and evaluate displacement to other platforms, loss of social support and widening inequalities.

"It is also critical to consider what replaces social media in young people's everyday lives," she said, adding that young people need safe opportunities for friendship, belonging, creativity, play, identity exploration, information and support.

*Xinhua*

## Workers' Notes

### Courts endorse Palestine Action ban

by New Worker correspondent

**On Monday, the Court of Appeal ruled that the Government's decision to ban Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation was lawful. In February, the High Court ruled that the proscription of Palestine Action was unlawful but the Starmer government decided to appeal. Now, the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the Government. This means that the banning order remains in place, making it a criminal offence to belong to or express support for the group.**

Liberty, the human rights campaign, intervened in the case because the UK's definition of terrorism is so wide-ranging that it captures behaviours most people would never consider terrorism. This case has already had, and will continue to have, a chilling effect on protest and free speech – leaving many people too afraid to protest or say the wrong thing.

Monday's judgment risks paving the way for current and future governments to use counter-terror powers against groups no one would consider to be terrorists, as we have seen in other countries to silence activists, minorities and opponents.

Last week four Palestine Action activists were jailed after causing £1.2m of damage at a UK site of an Israel-based defence firm. Charlotte Head, 30, Samuel Corner, 23, Leona Kamio, 30, and Fatema Rajwani, 21, were convicted of criminal damage in a retrial after they broke into the Elbit Systems factory near Bristol in August 2024. Corner got seven years and eight months, Charlotte Head and Kamio got five and Rajwani was jailed for four years and eight months.

Left social-democratic Labour MP John McDonnell said the scale of the sentences was "truly shocking" and Green Party



leader Zack Polanski said it was "gut-wrenching to see four young people jailed for direct action against an arms supplier to Israel". He added that the sentence was a "truly dangerous attack on the right to protest".

Angry scenes at the Palestine Action trial led to the arrest of 72 protesters outside Woolwich Crown Court. Some 500 demonstrators had gathered outside the south London court for the trial that ended in the conviction and stiff sentencing of the four activists accused of criminal damage and violence against the security guards at the Elbit plant.

The demonstrators chanted "Free Palestine" and waved Palestinian flags and banners bearing messages such as "Saving lives is not terrorism. Support Palestine Action". One of them was carried by a middle-aged man who was among the first people to be arrested.

### Struggling Starmer to divert budgets to fund military

**The UK will divert money from other government departments to increase the defence budget,**

**Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said.**

He made the remarks at the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on Tuesday – days after Defence Secretary John Healey and Armed Forces Minister Al Carns resigned over the government's military spending plans. In his resignation letter, Healey complained that Starmer had been "unable, and the Treasury unwilling, to commit the resources" needed for sweeping military reforms and to raise defence spending to three per cent of GDP by 2030 in line with Britain's NATO obligations.

"I have taken the decision to reallocate money from other departments," Starmer told reporters this week, adding that discussions were under way with the new defence secretary on how the money would be spent and which capabilities would be prioritised.

Every government department has been tasked with finding cuts to fund the military, with Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy confirming on Sunday that Cabinet ministers have been told to look for further reductions. The move has drawn criticism from some MPs, who question why military funding is treated as a priority while departments covering health, housing and social

care face cuts.

Starmer said military spending had risen from 2.3 to 2.6 per cent of GDP, describing it as "the biggest increase since the 1980s", and would amount to £270 billion during the current parliament. However, the fact-checking Full Fact media charity said the figure referred to the Defence Ministry's projected overall spending rather than additional new funding.

Military officials have warned that operational activity may have to be scaled back without additional funding, while continuing to cite an alleged threat from Russia, which they claim is "probing, challenging, and testing our defences".

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, the Chief of the Defence Staff, told MPs that exercises and deployments would need to be "dialled back" if resources did not increase.

The Defence Investment Plan has been delayed by the resignations, piling new pressure on Starmer at a time when he is already facing mounting calls to step down after Labour's poor local election performance.

The funding row has coincided with fresh problems for the Royal Navy. Critics say years of underfunding have left Britain's armed forces overstretched despite the UK's ambitions to project military power overseas.

Earlier this month, HMS *Prince of Wales*, the Royal Navy's co-flagship, was unable to join a NATO exercise after a technical fault was discovered. Its sister ship, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, was also forced to withdraw from NATO manoeuvres in 2024.

Media reports also said all of Britain's Astute-class nuclear-powered attack submarines were stuck in port awaiting maintenance or repairs, leaving the Royal Navy without a deployable hunter-killer submarine.

rt.com

### All at Sea

by New Worker correspondent

**About 3,000 Coastguard Rescue Officers (CROs) around the UK are up in arms at being denied their wages after a decision by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). These volunteers will no longer be paid for emergency**

**call-outs. Previously they have always been given hourly payments for attending incidents and training sessions.**

This decision came after the Court of Appeal, in a case brought by GMB, confirmed that they were workers. At the GMB's recent conference the union pledged that this decision would be fought. Lynsay Mackay, from the Scotland section, said: "If we want a strong, resilient Coastguard for the future, we must make sure that those who step forward are supported, not penalised."

The decision by the MCA, which is "changing how the service operates", means volunteers will no longer get £11 per hour in expenses for responding to emergencies.

One 20-year veteran complained that: "Many officers have organised their lives around the current arrangements and have relied upon the remuneration received for training, call-outs, exercises and operational duties. The removal of this income will have a serious financial impact on many dedicated officers and their families."

They stress that as CROs make up the bulk of the Coastguard Rescue Service, this could see an exodus of volunteers.

Torcuil Crichton, the Labour MP for the Western Isles who chairs the relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group, said: "Removing this support risks creating barriers for volunteers who would otherwise be able to answer the call when their communities need them most."

Liz Saville Roberts, the leader of Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons and MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd, made the same point, adding that the loss of CROs would add to pressure on other emergency services such as the police.

"Coastguard volunteers were never doing this work for financial gain, but those modest payments helped make it possible for people to step away from their jobs and respond when required," she said. "In areas like Dwyfor Meirionnydd, we rely on local knowledge and rapid response along a vast and often hazardous coastline. Even a small reduction in volunteer availability could have serious implications for public safety."

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She concluded by saying: "Stripping away financial recognition sends entirely the wrong message. At the very least, the UK government must listen to those on the front line. These volunteers are not asking for rewards, they are asking for fairness."

The *East Anglia Daily Times* reports that in Suffolk some volunteers have already resigned in response to the changes. They point out that the changes could place extra pressure on neighbouring teams and increase response times during lifethreatening incidents.

The Tory MP for Bridgewater in Somerset, Ashley Fox, was also up in arms stating the decision risks undermining safety along the Somerset coastline, and quoted a local volunteer as saying "it could force some responders to step back from duties. They said the small payments helped offset lost earnings and that without them, attending call-outs during working hours would become impossible for many."

The MCA claims that volunteer coastguards will continue to receive training, equipment, operational support, uniforms and personal protective equipment. It adds that volunteers will still receive some form of compensation but details were not forthcoming.

Over at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) staff have been battling for union recognition, particularly at its Inshore Lifeboat Centre in East

Cowes on the Isle of Wight. This is the RNLI's shipyard for supplying and maintaining lifeboats for over half of the 238 stations run by the RNLI across the UK. The RNLI plans to close it in two years' time, arguing its Cowes site will need £5 million to remain compliant for legislation on building and testing conditions. At Poole the new, larger facility can build all its lifeboats.

In January, Unite started the formal legal process to recognise the union, going through the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) to ask for statutory recognition. This has been completed, with the CAC having completed membership checks that show the majority of workers want the union to negotiate on their behalf, but this has not changed the RNLI's refusal to allow recognition.

General secretary Sharon Graham says: "The RNLI has acted disgracefully towards our members. The RNLI must stop ignoring its workers' wishes for recognition and collective bargaining. Our members at the RNLI have Unite's full support in this fight to have their voices heard."

A strike ballot opens on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and closes on 6<sup>th</sup> July, which will be paralleled with a summer of campaigning activity at events and festivals on the Isle of Wight to highlight the situation. Regional officer Jamie Major said: "I am shocked by the RNLI's behaviour during the dispute. This is the first time I have had to drag a charity that is a

household name through the legal process kicking and screaming. It is highly disappointing that it continues to refuse Unite's bid for recognition, especially at a time of such uncertainty for our members. The RNLI must change tack, otherwise it faces a disruptive dispute backed by the general public."

## In the City

by New Worker correspondent

**From one charity to a former charity that is now a private business. The City & Guilds (C&G), the training and qualifications body that has been acquired by the private Greek company PeopleCert is facing legal action over its plans to sack about 400 workers (about a third of its UK workforce) while advertising for new ones, which is illegal. While only 75 are to go in the first round, Unite warns much worse is to come, despite PeopleCert claiming it has "no plans for compulsory redundancies in the UK".**

Unite has written to PeopleCert warning that it will enter into formal dispute unless City & Guilds workers are given guarantees over jobs, consultations are extended and conducted in good faith and that a recruitment freeze is enacted.

Unite regional officer Peter Storey said: "PeopleCert has been dishonest from the moment

it took over City & Guilds. Without significant movement from the company, this dispute will continue to escalate, including through potential legal and industrial action."

The 148-year old C&G, which was established in 1878 by the City of London and 16 livery companies to improve technical education, earns its crust by charging fees for accreditation to private training businesses.

It now aims to save £22 million, including £13 million from "personnel cost synergies" which is a polite way of saying that they will be replacing departing UK staff with cheaper overseas hires, according to a presentation to investors.

But while all this was going on, the *Guardian* says, two senior executives received massive bonuses and salary increases just after the sale that they authorised – allegedly without the Board's say-so.

The CEO and CFO paid themselves £3 million, with another £2 million to other senior executives and more junior staff – presumably to ensure nobody talked about it in City wine bars.

PeopleCert claim they knew nothing about the payments, which "were in direct breach of [the CEO and CFO's] duties and responsibilities as office holders and caused significant harm to the organisation's reputation". It will be seeking to recover money from the Board members. Both the CEO and CFO deny any underhand dealings, saying that the

Board knew all about it. When it was sold last year, C&G said it would use the proceeds to continue its work of providing funding for people seeking vocational training. Nothing was said about biggies' bonuses. All in a normal day's work for Britain's bosses...

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

**16<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

**The long-running dispute between giant supermarket chain Asda-Walmart and the GMB general union took a new turn when the GMB accused it of offering crates of beer to distribution depot workers as an inducement to step up their work rate to unsafe and unhealthy levels.**

*The union has had to fight every inch of the way to force Asda-Walmart to recognise its members' right to be represented by the union. They are still trying to force*

*the company to recognise that union reps are entitled to talk to union members and to represent and negotiate for them on terms and conditions of work as well as wages.*

*One highly contentious issue is Asda-Walmart's efforts to increase the rate at which depot workers pick up boxes for delivery to 1,500 per shift.*

*Now the company is offering a crate of beer to workers at the Deptford distribution depot who pick 1,500 boxes per shift.*

*The GMB has pointed out that the law of the land requires workers to be paid in money and not in kind with beer and again called on Asda-Walmart to end unsafe and unhealthy work practices at their distribution depot and to stop paying workers in crates of beer.*

*This is leading to some workers breaching health and safety regulations in an attempt to cut corners to meet unsafe and unhealthy work targets.*

*Asda-Walmart has used the introduction of radio*

*frequency voice picking at their distribution warehouse to increase the daily pick rate to 1,400 boxes per shift.*

*The weight and shape of these boxes varies considerably and the weight ranges from two to 20 kilos depending on what they contain. The GMB contends that the safe pick rate is no higher than 1,100 per shift. At the 1,100 pick-rate each worker would have to move between two and 10 tons.*

*Meanwhile, GMB shop stewards are considering legal action under new labour protection laws that outlaw 'union-busting' tactics.*

*This follows a tribunal which resulted in a ruling that Asda Walmart must pay £850,000 compensation to depot workers. The company had illegally tried to persuade them to accept a pay deal that involved them giving up their rights to union bargaining.*

*Last week shop stewards accused Asda-Walmart of new dirty tricks, including putting CDs in drivers' cabs urging them to vote against the strike.*

# Media lies fuel Washington's war on Cuba

by Randy Caravaggio

**Following the victory of the Cuban revolution, it didn't take the corporate media long to start with their lies, accusations and distortions against it.**

They know how to serve and protect ruling-class interests: the only way they can succeed in doing so, to justify the controlling and unequal society they've put in place, is through their lies.

To expose the history of lies that Washington has perpetrated against the Cuban revolution would take more space than this article – but concentrating on this year alone provides a good sense of the picture.

On 29<sup>th</sup> January, the Trump administration unilaterally, criminally and illegally imposed an order of a full oil blockade against the island. All over the country Cubans are having to cook with charcoal or wood, electrical blackouts are as long as 40 hours, schools are mostly shut down and there are shortages of water, food, medicine and all kinds of other necessities.

Hospitals can only assist patients in emergency situations and surgeries are reduced to very few for extreme necessities. Industrial production has come to a standstill because factories can't operate without power. Food production and distribution has become enormously expensive and transportation is very difficult to operate, if at all.

The criminal and immoral actions of the US government are an act of aggression that targets all sectors vital to national survival: fuel, remittances, tourism, medical co-operation and finances have all come to a standstill.

To justify its barbaric behaviour against such a small country, Washington has formulated various accusations, distortions and lies against



Cuba's revolutionary government. These are disseminated through their brainwashing corporate ruling-class media.

## Lie #1: Cuba is a threat

The first lie is contained within the Executive Order imposed on 29<sup>th</sup> January. It declares a "national emergency" based on the fallacy that Cuba constitutes an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to US security.

Historically, Cuba has not threatened, invaded or initiated conflicts with any nation. Instead, it has promoted peace and supported peace initiatives across various international platforms. This raises the question of how Cuba could be considered a national security threat to

the USA. America possesses the most advanced weaponry in the world and maintains a defence budget of \$997 billion, significantly larger than Cuba's budget of \$0.1 billion.

## Lie #2: Cuba is harming the USA

The second lie coming out of Trump's mouth, and written to justify Washington's recent criminal actions, is that Cuba has "taken extraordinary actions that harm and threaten the United States".

According to this falsehood: "The regime aligns itself with – and provides support for – numerous hostile countries, transnational terrorist groups and malign actors adverse to the United States,

including the Government of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Government of Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah.

"For example, Cuba blatantly hosts dangerous adversaries of the United States, inviting them to base sophisticated military and intelligence capabilities in Cuba that directly threaten the national security of the United States. Cuba hosts Russia's largest overseas signals intelligence facility, which tries to steal sensitive national security information of the United States. Cuba continues to build deep intelligence and defence co-operation with China". And it goes on.

Despite the widespread reporting on this matter by various corporate and ruling-class news outlets, no evidence has been provided to substantiate the claims being made. They are all lies and accusations with no weight of whatsoever.

## Lie #3: Raúl Castro murdered American civilians

The third recent lie is the US indictment charging Raul Castro and five others in connection with the Cuban military's fatal downing of two planes 30 years ago. The indictment asserts that Raul and the others were responsible for shooting down civilian planes operated by the Florida-based exile group 'Brothers to the Rescue' in February 1996. It resulted in the deaths of four individuals, with the indictment claiming that the planes were outside of Cuban airspace.

Washington doesn't bother to state that Brothers to the Rescue was founded by José Basulto, a well-known terrorist who was trained by the

CIA. Basulto was using the organisation as a terrorist front to oust the Cuban government, with multiple flights over Cuban airspace which dropped leaflets on Cuba's territory to incite people to rise against the government. On each occurrence, the Cuban government warned the US government that actions would be taken by Cuba if Brothers to the Rescue didn't stop.

## Lie #4: Cuba uses forced labour and human trafficking

Another lie worth mentioning is about Cuba's international medical missions. Cuban doctors have worked in over 160 countries, providing medical care and saving lives. Most of them go to the most remote areas on the globe where people in those areas have never seen a doctor and where no other doctors go.

The USA accuses Cuba of using forced labour and human trafficking in such missions, implying that doctors are being forced to go. Washington fails to state that Cuba has more doctors per capita than any other country in the world. Cuba's education system is free from the cradle to the grave for every citizen, and Cuban doctors who participate in international missions are paid more than if they work at home. All of them are volunteering for those missions.

## The truth

These are the type of lies, distortions, accusations and manipulations that are constantly packaged by US media outlets. They are aimed at undermining Cuba's socialist

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system and are used to rationalise a cruel and inhumane blockade that contravenes international law.

But it's important

to acknowledge that an overwhelming amount of people around the globe do not accept these American lies. With its barbaric activities against everyone

everywhere, the USA is exposed for what it truly is – with its accusations, kidnappings of presidents, invasions, genocides, wars and destruction, more people

are waking up to the negative effects US policies are having on all of us.

Against these lies stands the truth: since the victory of the revolution, Cuba has consistently

advocated for peace, justice and equality. It has stood in solidarity with all progressive movements and revolutions on this planet. All its many accomplishments have

been shared with other countries and people. Its commitment to internationalism remains unparalleled.

*People's Voice*  
(Canada)

# Anti-fascists rally in Moscow!

by Theo Russell

**The Third International Anti-Fascist Forum, held in Moscow from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May was a remarkable event, bringing together 180 delegations from almost 100 countries, and members of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) from across that vast country. One delegate was Egon Krenz, the last leader of the German Democratic Republic, who addressed the forum and was presented with the Lenin Prize while he was there.**

Dozens of members of the CPRF from Moscow and elsewhere worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the conference. By organising this event the CPRF did a great service to the international communist and workers movement.

Opening the forum, CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov said that the West “has achieved great success in combining various methods of domination”, allowing it to become the leading global power. “To maintain its hegemony, it has made extensive use of mass consciousness manipulation. With the development of new technologies, this system has become truly global.”

Zyuganov reaffirmed that “ownership of the means of production is the key to economic

and political dominance. And it doesn't matter whether we're talking about material or information production.” He pointed out that artificial intelligence was “another resource in the hands of those who own capital”, saying “capitalists will use it to enrich themselves and strengthen their dominance”.

“Without recognising itself as a class”, he said, “the proletariat will be a plaything in the hands of capital. It will be forced to accept alien ideas and values.”

“As Antonio Gramsci, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party, wrote, the working people must acquire a new world view. The duty of communists is to help the proletariat acquire class consciousness and develop a new concept of life.”

In an interview with the national TV channel Russia 1 during the conference, Yuri Afonin, the deputy chairman of the CPRF, described the killing of 21 students in a Ukrainian mass drone attack at a college in Starobelsk, Lugansk, most of them girls aged 14–18, as a war crime.

He said that although Italian and Japanese journalists had visited the site, “nothing was shown on their TV channels”. The BBC dutifully recycled the Banderite Kiev puppet regime's lies, claiming the target was a college training elite Russian drone pilots; however later BBC



• Gennady Zyuganov opens the conference.

reports acknowledged that the college may have been for training future teachers.

Afonin also made the extremely important point that the Russian leadership is not opposed to Ukraine joining the European Union, a fact which has definitely not been reported by the British capitalist mass media.

He said “President Putin had repeatedly stated this”, adding that “Russia is simply categorically opposed to Ukraine joining NATO, and becoming a military

base against Russia”. But he also warned that “the EU itself could become a military alliance, they're already talking about their own army”.

Afonin also reminded Russia-1's viewers that the Western plan to destroy Belarus as an independent state, depriving Russia of an ally, “is clearly still on the agenda”. But he reaffirmed that “Belarus is not just an ally of Russia, but part of our Union State, and Russia will defend its territory as if it were its own”.

An unforgettable

concert, *Art against hatred*, was held as part of the Forum with performances by children and teenage arts students, dances from different regions of Russia, and artists and dancers from other countries such as Dominica and Chile. The delegates also watched the documentary *Imperialism and Terror* made by the CPRF's Red Line TV Channel, which has also been circulated to comrades here in Britain.

At the end of the Forum Gennady Zyuganov thanked the international delegates for their “very friendly, effective and interesting collaboration”, saying “we saw many familiar faces among the participants, and we are very pleased that all our friends share a common vision for the fight against Nazism and fascism, for peace and justice”.

Closing the conference, Zyuganov recalled the two “systemic crises” of the last century, the two world wars “which culminated in the Great October Socialist Revolution and the great Victory of 1945”. He said that “the nuclear missile parity established by the Soviet Union saved the world from a major nuclear war”.

Zyuganov outlined the CPRF's Victory Programme “for the Russian Federation's recovery from the crisis”, which includes nationalisation of mineral resources, a return to a normal

eight-hour working day, high-quality care for women, children and the elderly, and the restoration of the universal right to free education and medical care “even if a private, parallel system exists”.

In addition, the Party called for “specific proposals for developing the latest technologies and harnessing the full potential of modern science, to ensure that society is educated, literate and able to live in peace and dignity”.

The appeal issued at the end of the forum *For justice and global development and without fascism, terrorism and wars!* recalled that “in the harsh winter days of 1941, the Soviet people proved to the world that fascism is not omnipotent”.

It said: “Imperialist reaction is once again seeking to unleash its broadest possible attack on the rights of working people. Its constant companions remain militarism and colonialism, fascism and anti-communism.”

“Before our very eyes, capitalism has essentially cast aside the veneer of liberal demagoguery. It speaks less and less about freedom and human rights. Reaction increasingly turns to dictatorship, terror, chauvinism, and war.”

The appeal warns that “various forms of fascism are being revived. The heirs of Hitler and Mussolini, Franco

and Salazar, Horthy and Antonescu, are raising their heads. Aggressive military blocs are increasing their activity.

“The imperialists are increasingly trying to pressure entire peoples, cynically using political terror, religious extremism, ethnic hatred, the noose of sanctions, and the cudgel of war.

“We declare: the fight against fascism is inseparable from the fight against anti-communism and Russophobia.

“We resolutely condemn attempts to equate the Soviet Union with Hitler’s Reich, to declare its liberators ‘occupiers’, to tear down monuments to Red Army soldiers, to ban communist symbols and to justify Nazi collaborators.

“All these steps are nothing less than political preparation for a fascist revanche. These reactionaries seek to deprive the peoples of their memories of history, to cut the bonds between generations, and to slander the heroism of the USSR and the entire resistance movement against fascism.

“The fight against terrorism occupies a special place in our common struggle. We resolutely condemn terror in all its manifestations – whether carried out by individuals, groups, with state backing, voluntary or mercenary, military, economic, or psychological.

“Terrorism brings death and destruction, cripples lives, breeds fear and hatred, and sows pain and suffering.

“Terrorism cannot be explained solely by the fanaticism of rabid groups or the criminal intent of individuals. The breeding ground for terrorism is a world of social inequality, lawlessness and poverty, humiliation and unemployment, interventions and genocide, dictatorship

and neocolonial practices, arbitrary sanctions and cynical blockades.

“Imperialism has destroyed entire countries and created zones of chaos, all the while pretending to be ‘liberating’ them. And this same imperialism organises and arms mercenaries and orchestrates coups d’état.

“We emphasise: not only is capitalism incapable of eradicating terrorism, it constantly reproduces its social, economic, and political preconditions. The fight against terrorism cannot simply be reduced to police operations or military campaigns.

“Life demands the elimination of its causes: the exploitation of man by man, neocolonial plunder, and social inequality. The dissolution of imperialist blocs and the end of the dominance of transnational capital are the imperative of our times.”

The appeal confirmed that the participants in the Third International Anti-Fascist Forum “express their support for Russia’s anti-fascist and anti-terrorist activities within the framework of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine.

“We view this struggle as part of the overall resistance to Western global diktat, state terror, militarism, and neo-Nazism. We strongly condemn attempts to use Ukrainian territory as a springboard for the expansion of imperialist influence.

“We emphasise: our fight against neo-Nazism and terrorism is fundamental. There is no room for compromise.

“It is directed against forces seeking to revise the results of World War II, rehabilitate Nazi collaborators, and destroy the memory of the heroism of anti-fascists.

“We will never reconcile ourselves to those



• Delegates lay flowers at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

who sow terror and fear, seeking to subjugate the world to the dictates of capitalism. We wage our struggle for the right of peoples to security and historical truth, sovereignty and comprehensive development, social justice, and the choice of a socialist path.

“We resolutely demand that the United States cease its attempts to dictate its will to the Republic of Cuba. For decades, Cuba has remained a symbol of dignity and fidelity to its chosen path.

“We demand that the monstrous sanctions against the Island of Freedom, and Washington’s arbitrary charges against the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Raúl Castro Ruz, must end immediately. The embargo against Cuba is an act of state terrorism against an entire people.

“The pathological desire to punish entire countries for their chosen path of development is an example of irresponsible and criminal policy.

“We express solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We demand an end to all political and military pressure on the Venezuelan people, and an end to economic sanctions.

“We insist on the immediate release of President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores. The repeated US attempts to crush the Venezuelan people and appropriate their natural resources

reflect exactly the same neo-colonialist policies that fuel fascism, terrorism, and military intervention.

“We demand an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people. The Israeli military must cease its crimes in the Gaza Strip, and its aggression against the people of Lebanon. We insist on the realisation of the right of the Palestinian people to their own state.

“Washington must end its support for Israel’s aggressive actions, and immediately end its military operations against Iran. We call on the international community to condemn the United States’ interventionist ambitions, and demand compensation for the damage and suffering it has inflicted on the people of Iran.

“We call upon all people of goodwill to join the united front of progressive, leftist, communist, patriotic, anti-colonialist, and anti-fascist forces. We must join forces in our just struggle.

“Acting as a united front, we must expose anti-communism, anti-Sovietism, and Russophobia, defend workers’ rights and fight for a just world which can bring peace and security for all.

“We appeal to all the peoples of the world: do not be deceived! Do not trust those who spout false slogans about freedom, but who ac-

tually practice enslavement. Those who talk about democracy but cultivate the dictatorship of capitalism. Those who preach security but instead sow discord and violence.

“Only a world of equal peoples, social justice and the brotherhood of workers will protect humanity from fascism, terrorism and war.

No to imperialism, neo-Nazism, anti-communism and terrorism! We won’t let them blow up the world! No pasarán! They won’t pass! Let the world of labour, socialism and friendship of peoples triumph!

Long live international workers’ solidarity!”

Among the many prominent representatives of the international communist movement from every continent, the contributions by two speakers, Petro Symonenko and Boris Litvinov – leaders of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the Donetsk branch of the CPRF respectively – are of particular interest to our readers.

In his speech, Symonenko said: “As events in Ukraine, and other states targeted by ‘colour revolutions’, show – which were in reality coups – we saw organised penetration into public, government political, economic and security structures, the creation of extensive networks of centres and bases for training militants, and a network of companies, banks and funds, all of which were used to hide the true goals of the project.

“To provide propaganda cover for these aggressive policies and the horrific crimes which led to an untold loss of human lives since 2014,” Symonenko said, “the imperialists adopted the slogans of a national lib-

eration struggle with an ethnic and pseudo-democratic basis.”

Boris Litvinov recalled that “a vital part of the anti-fascist struggle in WW2 began in Donbas, the land of anti-fascist workers”, and said that today “our army includes representatives from around the world, even from Israel, Poland and Cuba”.

He also called for the creation of a new communist and workers international organisation. “We invite them to come to Donbas – this is the home of the anti-fascist struggle! If we can break Ukrainian fascism, we will break one of the main points of international imperialism!”

Addressing the forum, the delegate from the United Socialist Party of Venezuela said that Russia was “playing a decisive role in guaranteeing peace in Europe and Latin America. The people of Venezuela are still fighting for the release of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, and working to strengthen people’s power. Our people want to create socialism. We are fighting against imperialism, just as Bolívar and Chavez fought against imperialism, and ours is a revolution which will survive any attempt to crush it.”

The delegate from the Communist Party of China reaffirmed that “our foreign policy is based on global dialogue, mutual wellbeing and the observation of international law. We are working to develop Russian–Chinese co-operation and partnership, and we emphasise that the current world order must continue to be based on the outcome of World War Two.”

The video *Imperialism and Terror*, with English subtitles, is available to watch on the YouTube channel IUAFS2026.

## LETTERS

Alan Stewart [NW:2353; 12 Jun 2026] says that Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya was an “enigma” with a “mixed track-record”. I think we must also recognise that Colonel Gaddafi was a martyr who was murdered by the agents of imperialism in 2011. Shamefully in 2011 some countries who should have known better voted on the UN Security Council for a “no fly zone” over Libya.

As to Colonel Gaddafi’s track-record, I do not think Muammar Gaddafi should be criticised for trying to build an independent Arab socialism that was independent of the USSR. Gaddafi’s *Green Book* was an inspiration to many in the Global South.

With hindsight, however, I think it is a fair criticism that it was wrong to dissolve the Libyan Arab Socialist Union, the ruling party in Libya, as part of an effort to abolish political parties. This meant that the Libyan masses did not have a vanguard party to lead them in building socialism.

Colonel Gaddafi’s biggest ever mistake, and one that ultimately cost him his life, was to surrender the nuclear programme of Libya that was in its infancy and dismantle it. Not only did Libya dismantle the nuclear programme but they actually shipped the parts to the USA! Worse still, Gaddafi even offered to fly to the DPR Korea in 2005 to persuade them to give up their nuclear programme. Needless to say

no visit by Gaddafi to the DPRK went ahead.

The US imperialists tried to impose the ‘Libyan model’ on the DPRK in 2018 but the people’s government rejected it. Today the DPRK has made it clear that its nuclear status is irreversible.

**Dermot Hudson  
London**

Our world faces a very big threat that everyone disregards. Artificial Intelligence (AI), a potent but very dangerous technology, currently has no safety checks in its development. There aren’t any AI regulations and AI companies are free to do anything they like. Some of their acts are illegal but somehow they avoid the law enforcement. You know that most AI tools are trained using stolen data even violating copyright laws.

While Artificial Superintelligence is a potential existential threat, it is not an immediate danger. There is so much time before it can be realised. The current main danger of AI is job losses.

The most powerful countries such as the USA and China push AI to limits without any rules. It is very bad news because this marks the beginning of the end for all workers. Most AI experts already know that AI can do all jobs when combined with robots. But since it has the potential to make one person or company very powerful, they actually like it. The richest people invest in AI like nothing seen before. No one cares about whatever happens to other people.

The most profitable thing for AI companies is taking people’s jobs with AI. No one takes the risk of using it in innovative ways. This means people will lose their jobs and income. How are people going to make a living?

Most of the world’s countries are still capitalist.

Capitalism is based on labour – no other way to earn money. They never agree to switch to communism, which is more compatible with automation. Ideas such as UBI [Universal Basic Income] will be too low to sustain all life.

AI tools claim to help but you tell it what to do as a prompt and it does all the job. This is not help. This is not innovation. This is not productivity. These are all lies. Entering a prompt is not a real job. This can only create a brain-dead society in a dystopian world. And they aim for full automation, not even prompt engineering is going to stay. See the Agentic AI, which is fully autonomous.

It already became too hard to find jobs in some industries and some countries, even without proper AI adoption. And it will be much worse in the next few years. Most people will lose their jobs. Any society in which humans don’t work can never succeed because it is against human nature. And I didn’t even mention the environmental effects of the data-centre boom – it results in unimaginable pollution.

I believe it is not even possible to have a sustainable economy under capitalism and free-market rules with the existence of AI.

AI shouldn’t replace humans in any way with the pretext of help/augmentation. We think the only way humans can survive in a world with AI is strict regulations. We need federal laws and regulations around AI development and use. We should also have international agreements as I don’t think the world is ready to switch to pure communism yet.

**Noah Williams  
via email**

The major imperialist powers with their immense resources are able to dominate and control the me-

dia of western countries. Press, television and online platforms have become so powerful that they are able to control the political narrative and effectively condition the population into acceptance, without question, of a dangerous, exploitative and broken social system. The aims are to confuse people, prevent critical thinking and to destroy working class solidarity.

Children are included in this malignant process. Of serious concern must be the violence of most American computer games. With thinly disguised identities of other races or cultures as baddies, the game is won by destroying as many lives as possible. The psychological effects upon young minds cannot be under-estimated. Research has shown that exposure to violent video games can promote aggressive tendencies that may serve as a rehearsal for real life aggression. Evidence points to a direct correlation between the effects upon young people and the impact on real world violence. This may explain the apparent indifference of many Americans to the aggression, threats and bullying associated with US hegemony.

Socialism, including its ultimate development into a full communist society, is associated with values and qualities that are opposed to the violence, greed and aggression that underpin imperialism. Love must replace hate. Respect, integrity and co-operative effort should replace arrogance, deceit and selfish behaviour. These are the essential ingredients for a harmonious society in a peaceful world. A brave new world that is already being built in the socialist countries today.

**John Maryon  
Suffolk**

*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 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.

**TUE 23 JUN**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: ‘85 Seconds to Midnight: A Physicist’s Argument Against Rearmament’ Carlo Rovelli. 15:00–16:30. Green House, 244–254 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9DA.

**WED 24 JUN**  
Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Palestine, Health Work and Solidarity. 18:00–19:00. Online seminar. Book on PSC website.

**THURS 25 JUN**  
Venezuela Solidarity Campaign: The 25 Year US War on Venezuela – end all sanctions, give back the gold! 18:30. Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. Book on Eventbrite.

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

**THURS 25 JUN**  
Korean Friendship Association: Online meeting to mark start of the Korean War in 1950. 19:00. Contact uk@korea-dpr.com for link.

**FRI 26 JUN**  
Trades Union Congress: Climate, backlash, and winning with working class communities conference. 09:30–17:00. Congress Centre, 28 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.

**SAT 27 JUN**  
TUC Midlands: Women Chainmakers Festival. 11:00–16:00. Mary Macarthur Gardens, Lower High Street, Cradley Heath, Sandwell B64 5BG.

**SAT 27 JUN**  
Korean Friendship Association: Picket to mark start of the Korean War. 15:00. US Embassy, 33 Nine Elms Lane, Nine Elms, London SW11 7US.

**WED 1–SAT 11 JUL**  
Townsend Theatre Produc-

tions: Neil Gore’s *Farewell Leicester Square*. Touring play about Bedford’s first Black bus driver. Bedford, Watford and London venues. Book on TTP website.

**THUR 2 JUL**  
Marx Memorial Library: Meirian Jump on Women and the Spanish Civil War. 19:00. People’s Letters Bookshop, 395 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9RA.

**SAT 4 JUL**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Independence From America demonstration. Menwith Hill, Harrogate HG3 2RL.

**SAT 4 JUL**  
International Brigade Association: Annual Commemoration. 13:00. Jubilee Gardens, Belvedere Road, London SE1 7PG followed by social at the Camel & Artichoke, 121 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7AE.

**SUN 7 JUL**  
Caribbean Labour Solidarity: Sunday Zoom seminar. Subject TBA. 14:00. Register on SLS website.

**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 JUL**  
Ipswich New Worker Group: Impressions of People’s China by Samuel Swale following his recent study tour. 19:30–21:30. Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich IP1 3HJ.

**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.

**SUN 2 AUG**  
Caribbean Labour Solidarity: Sunday Zoom seminar. Subject TBA. 14:00. Register on SLS 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

...continued from page 8

“We are at war”: so says the *Guardian’s* Gaby Hinsliff, at the beginning of her article in April of this year. According to Gaby, cyber-attacks, trade blockages and disinformation, with the perpetrator, being mostly Russia (It’s ‘obvious’ is it not?), is what her version of war would look like. I wonder if she were in Gaza, southern Lebanon or Tehran, she might see war somewhat differently. For example forced evacuation, buried under rubble or killed by sniper fire.

However, since Russia justly invaded fascistic Ukraine, the narrative of it as an “aggressive” militaristic state “threatening” the whole of Western Europe has become the lying narrative of, especially, the Western European politicians. They would love us to believe that Russia is currently seeking to undermine Western states via hybrid warfare (witness the recent furore over internet cables), and that Russia is hoping to destabilise NATO probably via an attack on its eastern flank in the Baltics.

This has been, oddly, reinforced by recent announcements from the USA. Alison Hart, a NATO spokesperson, responding to President Trump’s threat to withdraw 5,000 American troops from Germany, noted that “Western European states were making real progress to meet the growing threat from Russia, by spending five per cent on defence”.

In the UK, Labour peer and former head of NATO, George Robertson, claimed that Britain had acted with a “corrosive complacency” over defence, even suggesting the welfare budget should be trimmed to bolster so-called “defence”. In a report he helped author the following week, he argued that Britain must become a “more autonomous military actor”, increase spending to 3.5 per cent of GDP by 2035

and work with European allies against Russia. Elsewhere, in an interview with the *Financial Times*, the Polish prime minister even warned of a possible war with Russia within months.

The Russo-Ukrainian war in short, is dishonestly presented as an existential threat to all of Western Europe, when it is, in actual fact, an existential threat to Russia. Yet, a parallel and contradictory narrative is doing the rounds. It is that Russia is “losing” the war. It’s just that it does not know it yet!

Surely, both narratives cannot be true. Either Ukraine is about to be crushed with the Russian military machine rolling on into the Baltics, or Russia, having encountered an opponent much tougher than anticipated which is bolstered in this proxy war by so much weaponry and funding from the USA and Western Europe, is being ground down in terms of military personnel and equipment. It says much about the contemporary capitalist Russophobic ‘news’ media that both narratives can be widely disseminated without acknowledging that they are mutually exclusionary.

Of course, all this spiteful monsterring of Russia is a pathetic pretext for a new round of massive military spending by Western European states. The idea that Russia wants the war in Ukraine to spill over into a war in Western Europe is the stuff of fantasy.

**A McKerl Fife**

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## Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

**Scotland’s First Minister was targeted by an Israeli firm spreading online disinformation before the Holyrood election, a French government agency has claimed. Hundreds of fake accounts targeted John Swinney and the SNP on social media, with the operation ending on 8<sup>th</sup> May, the day after Scots went to the polls.**

Ross Colquhoun, the SNP’s head of digital, told Reuters that during the May elections, the party’s “social media platforms were subject to an unprecedented level of negative reactions and comments from accounts which appeared to be AI-generated bots”.

Swinney and the SNP were allegedly targeted in accounts linked to BlackCore – a shadowy Israeli tech company claiming to “shape narratives” whom French authorities accused of trying to smear pro-Palestine election candidates. It has been suggested that the SNP’s statements opposing the Zionist genocide in Gaza has been the reason for the accounts attracting such automated messages.

Viginum, the French government agency, says that Swinney was targeted by BlackCore, which posted 1,000 hostile comments about messages from his and SNP social media accounts around the time of the Holyrood elections.

To be precise, Viginum states that “the account of the Scottish First Minister, John Swinney, as well as that of his party, the Scottish National Party (SNP), appear to have been targeted on four occasions between 6 January and 8 May 2026, through the co-ordinated posting of comments in English from these inauthentic accounts. As part

of this operation, Viginum identified the mobilisation of at least 256 accounts that enabled the dissemination of 1,400 comments, mainly on posts by @JohnSwinney, @theSNP and @ScotGovFM (respectively 652, 338 and 112 comments).”

The agency has also detected similar trends relating to smear campaigns in the New York mayoral election, three mayoral candidates from La France Insoumise (LFI) party and elsewhere. After the firm was approached for comment on the report by Reuters, BlackCore appears to have gone to ground, with its website and social media presence being wiped. The identity of those behind the Israeli organisation has not yet been established.

John Swinney said “these reports of bad actors attempting to interfere in the Scottish Parliament elections are deeply concerning”. The First Minister called on the British government, “which has responsibility for national security”, to make “dealing with hostile state online interference a far higher priority”.

## Meanwhile...

...let’s spare a moment to look at the nationalist fringe. Alex Salmond’s Alba Party has vanished. Founded by anti-Sturgeon SNP members in 2021 just before that year’s Holyrood elections it never won a single seat, and those sitting councillors and MPs were all heavily defeated in Holyrood, municipal and Westminster elections. It was dissolved under the cloud of fraud allegations in March.

Despite quickly securing a membership of 6,000, they were united only on their admiration of Alex Salmond and hatred of Nicola Sturgeon and fought over everything else. When both departed the earthly

and political scene things went downhill. Even the ‘Alba Continuation Group’ has gone, with some of its very few members joining the ‘Alliance to Liberate Scotland’, of which more below.

Sadly we no longer have the Scottish Jacobite Party (SJP) around. It was launched at Glenfinnan in 2005 at the time of the 260<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Edward Stuart raising his standard in 1745 to march on London and take the throne. The following year the Young Pretender’s dreams of glory ended on the battlefield of Culloden. The new Jacobites secured merely a handful of votes in the Holyrood elections in 2007 and 2010 before dissolving the following year.

Other colourful elements are still around however. One is the Independence for Scotland Party (ISP), founded in May 2020. An Argyllshire Independent councillor defected to it in 2021 but did not stand 2022. When Alba was founded it abandoned plans to contest the Holyrood elections but contested the 2022 Scottish local elections. In the famous Rutherglen & Hamilton West by-election it came ninth with 0.68 per cent. It had two similar results in the 2024 General Election. In this year’s Holyrood election it split from the Alliance to Liberate Scotland (ALS), to which it was briefly affiliated, and contested two seats to no avail.

The ALS was founded in 2025 to unite dissident nationalists. But with the decline of Alba it morphed into a political party just before the last Holyrood elections. It attracted high-profile faces from Alba and Your Party such as Tommy Sheridan and the former diplomat Craig Murray, but only won 4,768 constituency and 18,396 regional votes, amounting to 0.84 per cent. Its only claim to fame was splitting the nationalist vote in the Western Isles,

which helped Labour beat the SNP by 154 votes.

Meanwhile, Liberation Scotland and its thinktank Salvo argue that the 2014 Referendum was invalid because the ballot papers were marked by pencils and that English residents were allowed to vote. They are obsessed with the notion that it is a colony of England to the extent that they attempted to take their case to the United Nations.

Even their advocates at the UN, the small Geneva-based Justice pour Tous Internationale (JPTi), saw that their case, based on adding a line to a motion about French Polynesia that would make the UN suddenly declare Scotland independent, was not feasible. An inevitable parting of the ways followed.

Salvo is of the same ilk. It makes absurd legal claims for independence based on the 1689 “Claim of Right” passed by Scottish Convention of Estates that, in fact, upheld William of Orange’s deposition of the last Stuart king.

Another essential part of the nationalist movement however, is the Bath-based *Wings Over Scotland* blog run by Stuart Campbell. This did much good work in securing the downfall of the Murrells. It can be heartily recommended to readers wanting to follow the ins and outs of contemporary Scottish nationalism. The comments under the articles are notable for the calm and rational arguments that follow...

## The NCP badge



**£4.50 inc P&P from New Worker, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.**

# Stop arming the Zelensky regime!

by New Worker correspondent

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined fellow anti-fascists demanding an end to British support for the Zelensky regime at a protest picket in London last weekend. Members of seven different organisations joined activists from International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) in central London to demand that the British government stop sending missiles, shells, tanks, planes and bullets to the racist, corrupt, Bandera-worshipping NATO puppet government in Ukraine. They received a positive welcome from many passers-by in Britain's political heart, Whitehall, only hours after a major ceremony marking the King's birthday, with some people even stopping to join the protestors.

This was probably the



largest protest organised by the IUAFS in the nine years since the campaign was launched. We know from many sources that our campaign is becoming more and more widely known throughout Britain, mainly through circulation of photos and videos of the dozens of protests in

solidarity with Ukrainian anti-fascists in the past. Millions here in Britain have seen videos of the brutal kidnapping of men on the streets of Ukraine's towns and cities, along with the people courageously fighting back against the military recruitment gangs.

In addition, more and

more people in Britain are realising that the Zelensky mafia is essentially deeply corrupt and immoral, and that the people of Ukraine – the ones who haven't already left the country – don't support the war against the Russian, Donetsk and Lugansk military forces.

A flower-laying ceremony also took place at the protest in memory of the 21 young students deliberately murdered by the Ukrainian military in the multiple-wave drone attack on the Starobilsk student dormitory. Many of the protestors brought their own home-made placards, one of which declared that the tragic murders in Starobilsk were carried out by NATO's "Coalition of the Killing".

The Zelensky regime is an alliance of big capital and the state bureaucracy, relying on criminal and fascist elements under the political and financial control of the USA.

It is an alliance of neo-Nazis and Ukrainian oligarchs. Vladimir Zelensky's Jewish heritage has not prevented him from allying with the Banderite gangs in Ukraine who use him as a cover to mask their openly fascist ideology.

The Banderas, like the

SS in Hitler's Third Reich, serve as a shock detachment of big business. The only difference is that the Banderites, who worship those who collaborated with the Nazis in the Second World War, refrain from outright anti-Semitism having established a national front with the Ukrainian oligarchy. Banderas tightly control every move of state power, constantly blackmailing it with the threat of a coup, while the policy of Ukraine is determined by the US Embassy in Kiev.

International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity has been campaigning for nine years in solidarity with anti-fascists in Ukraine, thousands of whom have paid with their lives, torture or prison for resisting the regime installed in 2014 with the support of Britain, the USA and the European Union. Its activists have taken part in every protest since 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in

## Brighton: they did not pass!

by New Worker correspondent

Racist gangs were stopped in their tracks in Brighton last weekend when thousands of anti-fascist protesters took to the streets to stop the far-right marching. The motley crew of a few hundred racists and fascists had been mobilised far and wide for a planned "stop the boats" march through the town centre. But they barely got out of Brighton station.

Despite some quite brutal police efforts involving pepper spray, police truncheons and riot shields,



the "South East Patriots" Brighton & Hove City remained bottled in a nearby street until they were eventually escorted back to the station under police protection.

More than 20 anti-racist groups took part in the Carnival Against Racism counter-protest – coming together to "ensure a united resistance" and to show that "the far-right are not welcome in Brighton". Famed musician and DJ, Fatboy Slim, who lives in Hove, performed at the counter protest and said: "Never been more proud of my home town. More disco, less fascism."

Prior to the protest,

Brighton & Hove City leader Bella Sankey said that "far right agitators" were "stirring up division". The Labour councillor said: "Brighton and Hove is a proudly diverse city, where white residents, black residents, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, people of no faith, gay residents, trans residents, feminists, refugees and mixed race people like me, live side by side peacefully. We know better than to blame whole communities for the actions of individuals. This is our home, and in Brighton and Hove, difference is famously our strength."

# Maceo and Che: Never Surrender!

by  
Ortelio González  
Martínez

The calendar, capricious as it may be, often weaves destinies. Every 14<sup>th</sup> June, the Cuban people and much of Our America know that this is no small coincidence.

On that date, separated by 83 years and more than 6,000 kilometres, two men were born who, by their own right, rest in the most sacred place on the altar of the Fatherland.

Antonio Maceo and Ernesto Che Guevara never met. However, their gazes converge on the same horizon: a free and sovereign Cuba, and a united Latin America.

Both came from vastly different families materially, but identical in the shaping of their character. Maceo was born in San Luis, Santiago de Cuba in 1845. His father was Venezuelan and his mother Cuban, both small farmers who instilled in their 12 children a love of the land and a hatred of slavery.

Che, on the other hand, was born in Rosario, Argentina in 1928. His was a well-to-do middle-class family with an intellectual background and a large home library. Also possessing a profound critical consciousness, his father, Ernesto Guevara



Lynch, was a builder of progressive ideas, and his mother Celia de la Serna, a cultured woman who taught him to read Marx and Neruda.

Both became leaders by choice and action, not by inheritance. At the age of 23 Maceo joined the first major Cuban fight for independence, the Ten Years War against Spanish colonialism, which began in 1868. And, without prior military rank, his courage and tactical intelligence allowed him to rise rapidly to become General Máximo Gómez's lieutenant.

The wounds he re-

ceived in combat, his famous Protest of Baraguá – his rejection of the surrender agreement with Spain – established him as the ‘Bronze Titan’, a leader who never wavered until his death in battle with Spanish forces on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1896.

Che, a doctor by profession, forged his deepest convictions after witnessing the misery of Latin America during his famous motorcycle trip with his friend Alberto Granados.

In Cuba, during the war of liberation (1956–1959), he went from being the doctor on the *Granma*

yacht to commander of the Rebel Army, which would liberate Santa Clara in a decisive, epic battle. Then, his struggle spread to other lands of the world, until his death in Bolivia.

The similarities between Maceo and Che are a mirror across time. The spirit of unwavering commitment: Maceo said “I understand no other word than freedom”; Che wrote that “Our freedom and its daily sustenance are the colour of blood and are filled with sacrifice”.

Leadership by example, internationalism and the absolute rejection of

mediation with the enemy were points of convergence in different times: both fought on the front lines, without privileges, sharing hunger and bullets with their soldiers. Maceo dreamed of a free Cuba and then helped liberate Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico. Che took the fight to Africa and South America, convinced that “the homeland of man is humanity”.

Che arrived in Cuba on a yacht. He had already seen the misery of the continent and understood that one's homeland does not end at the border. He became Cuban by choice,

by dedication, by the rifle. From the *Granma* to Santa Clara, from the Ministry of Industries to the Nancagua Guerrilla – the National Liberation Army of Bolivia – he always led by example.

He did not waver, not even when the USA pressured him, nor when the enemy rifle was pointed at him in the Quebrada del Yuro. “Calm down and aim well. You are going to kill a man,” he said before the shot that ended his life. His body was violated, his hands cut off, but his image – his gaze fixed on the infinite – echoed around the world.

Both died fighting: Maceo at 51 in San Pedro in 1896; Che at 39 in Bolivia in 1967. One with a machete in hand, the other with a rifle at the ready. They did not surrender. They demonstrated that greatness is measured by the causes for which one is willing to fight and die. One in the liberating wilderness of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; the other in the Bolivian jungle.

Today, as the blockade intensifies, as media campaigns attempt to caricature the revolutionary, as some promote the idea that resignation is maturity, the figures of Maceo and Che resurface as both a warning and a spur to action.

*Granma*

## Cuba strengthens its defences

by  
Daimy Díaz Breijo

As part of the activities for National Defence Day, the Vice President of the National Defence Council, Salvador Valdés Mesa and Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz, both members of the Politburo of the Communist Party

of Cuba, assessed the preparedness of the Siboney Defence Zone in the Havana region to defend the people and guarantee the continuity of basic services. Other members of the Politburo, Party and Government officials were also present at the meeting.

The president of the Siboney Defence Zone,

Joel Barreto Rodríguez, reported on the updated plans to maintain troop readiness in the event of enemy aggression and to protect the families residing in the community. He reiterated that the functioning of the production and defence brigades is crucial to guaranteeing food security for the population, based on local resources.

For his part, Valdés Mesa urged increased preparedness for defence in the face of escalating aggression from the USA, as this is where our greatest strength lies. It is essential, he said, for every commander, every officer, every member of the Zone to understand in practice what they are responsible for doing to ensure invul-

nerability.

Meanwhile, Marrero Cruz insisted on defining the demand for basic supplies in order to focus efforts on finding alternatives that guarantee the vitality of the Zone. It is necessary to know precisely the demands of each location and, in accordance with available inventories, determine to what extent and

for how long those needs can be met.

The participants discussed the work of the groups that make up the Defence Zone, the warning plans, the operation of medical services, drinking water supply points and the availability of renewable energy sources in the area.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

# Protests in Albania enter third week

by Sue Harris

The popular protests in Albania are now in their third week. On 14<sup>th</sup> June between 100,000 and 200,000 people poured into the streets in the capital city of Tirana to defend their country's islands, wildlife and dignity. Other demonstrations that are part of what is being called the "Flamingo Revolution" took place in the cities of Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastra, Korça, Kukës, Lezha, Shkodra and Vlora.

The demonstrators included children, the elderly and entire families, with areas set aside for children to draw and paint. There were reports that police used water cannons against protesters in Tirana.

Now, the protests have spread to other countries in the area, including neighbouring Greece. The struggle is ostensibly about a



business deal started by Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Donald Trump's son-in-law and daughter, to start a 10,000-room luxury resort on the Albanian island of Sazan.

This island is alternate-

ly described as beautiful and pristine, a home to flamingos and other wildlife. Ivanka Trump told how she and Jared swam to the island and then walked to the mountain barefoot to the place where they want

to build their resort. The proposed real estate deal involves approximately 4 billion euros.

However, Sazan has also served as a military base in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, particularly when it was used by

the Italians and Germans as a submarine base in the Second World War and later as a Soviet base during the 1950s. It has not been touched since the end of its military use by the Albanian armed

forces in the 1990s, so it still contains a great deal of ordinance from the time it functioned militarily.

The protests first raised demands involving environmental concerns, to protect the flamingos and other wildlife that live on Sazan. For that reason, the protests have been labelled as "The Flamingo Revolution".

The reasons for protests however, have grown to include the failure of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama to listen to the people, instead of handing over Albanian territory to a foreign power with no regard to the needs of the country's people. There have been calls for the prime minister to step down, demands for new elections and denunciations of the wealthy elite such as Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner.

*Workers' World*  
(USA)

# Elon Musk: What kind of system produces a trillionaire?

by Nikos Mottas

**"If a man tells you he got rich through hard work, ask him: 'Whose?'" The old remark by Don Marquis has never been more relevant.**

Elon Musk has officially become the world's first trillionaire. Predictably, the newspapers, television networks and business magazines are treating it as a historic achievement. A monument to innovation. A triumph of genius. Proof that capitalism rewards talent. But a trillion dollars is

not a measure of talent. It is rather a measure of power.

No human being creates a trillion dollars. No human being earns a trillion dollars. A trillion dollars represents the labour of countless workers – miners, engineers, technicians, drivers, factory workers, programmers, cleaners, warehouse employees – whose collective work is transformed into private wealth. The billionaire appears at the end of the process and claims the credit.

The defenders of capi-

talism want us to marvel at the size of Musk's fortune. We ask a simpler question: Who produced it? Not Musk alone. Not even remotely.

Behind every billion stands an army of workers. Behind a trillion stands a social system that allows one individual to appropriate wealth created by millions. This is the part they never mention. They never will.

When workers demand higher wages, we are told there is no money. When hospitals need funding,

there is no money. When schools deteriorate, when pensions are cut, when families struggle to pay rent, there is suddenly no money. Yet somehow there is enough for the first trillionaire.

That is not an accident nor a policy failure. It is capitalism functioning exactly as designed.

The existence of a trillionaire is not evidence that the system works. It is evidence of HOW the system works.

Capital concentrates. Wealth concentrates. Power

concentrates. At one end of society stand those who work. At the other stand those who own.

The gap between them grows wider with every economic crisis, every privatisation, every anti-worker reform, every technological breakthrough whose benefits are captured by capital rather than society.

The first trillionaire should not be remembered as a symbol of progress. He should be remembered as proof that humanity has developed productive

forces powerful enough to generate immense wealth but still lives under a system incapable of distributing that wealth rationally.

The scandal is not that Elon Musk may become a trillionaire. The scandal is that millions who create the world's wealth still struggle to live. According to figures from the World Bank, roughly 700,000,000 people worldwide continue to live in extreme poverty. That contradiction has a name: Capitalism.

IDoC