

Talks continue but the guns still blaze

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

American and Iranian delegations meet in Switzerland to hammer out the details of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding that has extended the truce in the Persian Gulf. The double-blockade's been lifted. Oil prices fall to pre-war levels. But the guns still blaze in southern Lebanon as Israeli forces struggle to hold their positions in the face of fierce partisan resistance.

In Bürgenstock, a Qatar-owned luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, Pakistani and Qatari mediators are working overtime with the belligerents to sort out what has and has not been agreed over the last few months in order to prepare a final peace deal within the 60-day cease-fire tie limit. Although oil tankers are now passing freely through the Strait of Hormuz the Iranians have not given up their claim to charge a toll on what had been an international waterway before the fighting began in February. Although the Americans have agreed that an unspecified amount of Iranian assets frozen under imperialist sanctions would be "made fully



available for use" by the Islamic Republic during the truce, they say that some of it would be spent on buying American wheat, soybeans and corn.

A claim angrily rejected by Iran's chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who said: "America falsely claims our unfrozen assets will buy their agriculture. Interesting. The only

crop we're harvesting is what you planted: decades of mistrust. It's organic, abundant and home-grown. But apparently the US only exports GMO soybeans, broken promises and trash talks!"

But the real flash-point is Lebanon. The US-Iran cease-fire agreement calls for an end to the fighting and the total withdrawal of Israeli troops from the border strip they've occupied and covet as a "buffer zone" in southern Lebanon. The Americans have,

in fact, curbed the Israelis, who have pulled back from some exposed positions and stopped

bombing Beirut. But Netanyahu, the Israeli leader, is facing a general election in October and he wants to hold on to some Lebanese territory to claim 'victory' in a Middle East war he has so clearly lost.

Donald Trump, meanwhile, talks about getting the sectarian Syrian regime to move against the pro-Iranian Hezbollah militia that leads the resistance in southern Lebanon – a move that could trigger sectarian strife throughout Lebanon and re-ignite the civil war in Syria. The Syrians have, however, wisely heeded the Turks who still occupy parts of northern Syria. The Turks are the major backers of the powerful Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and they want to extend their influence throughout the region – but this can only be done at Israel's expense. The future doesn't bode well for the likes of Benjamin Netanyahu...

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

So long Keir Starmer...

It didn't take long to get rid of Starmer after all. His pathetic resignation speech marked the inevitable end of his dismal two years in office spent crawling to the Americans and what he believed was the dominant trend amongst the British bourgeoisie. No longer of any further use to the ruling class following the overwhelming Burnham victory at the Makerfield by-election. Stabbed in the back by his phoney friends in Parliament. No one will miss him.

In the corridors of power Labour politicians and senior civil servants are already drafting plans for the new Burnham administration while union leaders lobby for the return of the water industry and the power utilities to some form of public ownership.

Burnham's team say their man will revitalise a moribund party, head off the challenge of the Faragists and a resurgent Tory party, and lead Labour to victory at the next general election.

They like to present the "King of the North" as a new broom. But there's nothing new about Andy Burnham, who while not a Blairite, nevertheless comes from the 'Old Labour' class-collaborationist tradition that still holds sway through much of the labour movement.

Economic stagnation, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, drug abuse and crime. These are the problems that face the incoming Burnham government. These are the problems of end-days capitalism. Ultimately, the only answer is socialism. But in the meantime, there's plenty of scope for a country as rich as Britain to take on board the demands of the labour movement that include the restoration of the welfare state and the public sector that Britain once possessed.

The days when people listened to the rich men who told us that the greatest virtue of humanity was the possession of the largest amount of money are over. Great mass movements are again sweeping the continents. The masses are demanding social justice, democratic rights and an end to exploitation. It's capitalism that's finished – not us.

On the streets millions want a decisive break from the imperialist agenda that led to the Zionist genocide in Gaza and countless other Western war-crimes in other parts of the Global South.

The billions consumed by the arms race and the pointless nuclear 'deterrent' would be better spent restoring industry to provide work for the younger generation and decent pensions for the old. Progressive taxation for the rich, who can well afford it, would pay for the 'safety-net' benefits of old and guarantee free education and medical care for the sick and infirm.

Burnham says he listens to the unions and the street, unlike Starmer and the ageing Blairites the former Labour leader surrounded himself with. Whether Burnham will actually do anything about it remains to be seen. His decision to appoint former head of Labour Friends of Israel, James Purnell, as his chief of staff gives little ground for optimism...

Starmer goes: The view from Russia

The prime minister's departure is unlikely to alter London's support for Kiev or its confrontational stance toward Moscow, the Kremlin has said. While back in Washington, Donald Trump piled on the pressure on Starmer, blasting his record on migration and energy in a social media post before the Prime Minister announced his resignation on Monday. Trump's remarks come amid souring Anglo-American relations over the Iran war, while the US State Department has accused the UK of "two-tier policing".

In a Truth Social post on Sunday, Trump declared that Starmer would resign and said the Labour leader "failed badly on two very important subjects – IMMIGRATION AND ENERGY (OPEN NORTH SEA OIL!). I wish him well!" Commenting on Trump's remarks, British broadcaster Piers Morgan said the fact that the US president had announced the UK leader's resignation before Starmer himself had done so was "the final humiliation".

Sir Keir Starmer's resignation has drawn a mix of mockery and scepticism in Moscow, with officials and experts saying that his departure is unlikely to change London's hostile stance towards Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov dismissed the idea that Starmer's departure would alter bilateral ties, arguing that the British leader had "not done anything to distinguish himself on the issue of UK-Russian relations" and had consistently favoured keeping them "at a zero level". Peskov added that there was little reason to expect any successor to take a markedly different policy.

Meanwhile Russian Special Presidential Envoy Kirill Dmitriev appeared to celebrate the news on X, writing: "We did it. Starmer's resignation unites us all" echoing comments made earlier by US President Donald Trump.

The criticism extended to

ator Vladimir Dzhubarov predicted Starmer would be gone by autumn, branding him "a destroyer of everything possible" who "only sets countries against each other" and "hinders any negotiation process".

Speaking to RT on Monday, Nikolai Topornin, director of the Centre for European Information, said Starmer's departure is unlikely to bring any major shift in British foreign policy. "The British course to support Kiev, to punish Russia, and to provide military and financial support to Ukraine will remain unchanged," he said.

He added that British policymakers understand Moscow's arguments "very clearly" but pay little attention to what Russia sees as the root causes of the conflict.

Moscow has long insisted that any lasting settlement must address those issues, including Ukraine's neutrality, demilitarisation, protections for Russian speakers and recognition of territorial realities.

The UK remains bound by agreements with Germany, France, Brussels and Washington, Topornin argued. As long as they maintain a common stance on Russia and the Ukraine conflict, there is little room for any major shift in London's policy.

The analyst noted that much will depend on appointments to top foreign-policy posts but argued that no prominent British politician currently favours a meaningful change of course on the Ukraine conflict.

Topornin predicted that Labour politician Andy Burnham, the former mayor of Manchester, would succeed Starmer. Burnham "has not yet distinguished himself by some radical statements about foreign policy and changes in approaches to the conflict," he said, adding that the rhetoric towards Moscow is unlikely to become "more pragmatic" as the new prime minister is expected to follow "the politics of the previous cabinet".

Sergey Shein, a research fellow at the Higher School of Economics, echoed that view.

He argued that Starmer is likely to oversee a managed transition rather than a sudden exit, while any successor, including Burnham, would initially be preoccupied with uniting the Labour Party. Domestically, Burnham would likely focus on economic recovery, housing and healthcare, he added.

Starmer confirmed on Monday that he will stand down as prime minister and Labour leader but said he will remain in his post until a party leadership contest is complete.

Pressure on Starmer has built since Labour lost almost 1,500 council seats in local elections in May, with over 80 Labour MPs subsequently calling for him to go. The crisis deepened after Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham won a decisive by-election victory in Makerfield taking nearly 55 per cent of the vote and emerging as the chief contender to replace Starmer.

The Starmer government has also been beset by numerous scandals, including the appointment of Peter Mandelson as UK ambassador to the USA despite his past ties with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Last month, the US State Department accused Britain of "two-tiered policing" after bodycam footage showed officers handcuffing 18-year-old Polish-British university student Henry Nowak as he died, while his killer – a 23-year-old Sikh – claimed to be the victim of a racist attack.

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Workers' Notes

Taking on the fascists in Liverpool

by Peter Hendy

Far-right anti-immigrant protesters clashed with anti-fascist and anti-racist counter-protesters organised by Stand Up to Racism in Liverpool on Saturday 13th June. The march called for “No More Illegals” and “Mass Deportations” following the terrifying riots and pogroms with homes and vehicles being set alight in northern Ireland.

Fear of anti-social disorder led to a major police operation in the County Road area near the former Everton FC home of Goodison Park. There was heavy police presence in the area, with police vans and lines of fluorescent jacketed police separating the two groups of protestors. This followed the targeting of hotels thought to be housing migrants earlier in the week.

Intensive surveillance involved continual filming and the use of a drone buzzing around overhead. The Police had been given extra powers and created a dispersal zone to “help prevent potential criminality and disorder” from 9am on Saturday until midnight on Sunday. Pubs and shops were closed and shuttered-down, with the streets prior to the protest march being eerily quiet for a Saturday afternoon.

Three-hundred anti-fascist counter-protesters gathered across the road of the Royal Oak pub significantly outnumbering the protesters but their numbers gained strength prior to the commencement of the march. The fascists shouted and chanted abuse, with tensions rapidly escalating. Individuals approached the anti-racists provocatively filming and goading.

Ryan Ferguson, the notorious Nazi agitator, casually infiltrated the counter-protest before being spotted and surrounded. His haughty demeanour quickly changed to fear as he was angrily jostled, with protestors angrily



shouting “Nazi scum! Off our streets!”. Loud cheers were heard as he was arrested, bundled to the ground and led away restrained to a police van pathetically moaning and squealing about being assaulted.

Ferguson shouted “Heil Hitler” three times and “Six million” at a ‘Bristol Patriots’ protest in Bristol earlier this year. The nazi was previously jailed for making hoax emergency calls and has 20 previous convictions for 29 offences. He was jailed in 2024 for nine months after shouting racist abuse at a player during a match between Forest Green Rovers and Fleetwood Town. Ferguson has been seen at far-right demonstrations across the country and been photographed wearing clothing with nazi imagery.

The march had been condemned by city leaders and community groups with Labour’s Liam Robinson, the Leader of Liverpool City Council, stating that it should not be permitted. “Liverpool has always been a proud, diverse and welcoming city, built on solidarity, respect and a deep sense of community. We condemn any attempt to cause division in our communities,” he said.

“This march is designed to intimidate, to provoke fear and to deepen division in our com-

munities, and it has no place in a city like Liverpool that stands for solidarity, decency and respect. Given the events on County Road in the summer of 2024 – when racially motivated violence and disorder led to Spellow Library being set alight – these concerns must not be dismissed.

“Shops were looted and firefighters attacked. We must not allow a situation to develop where our communities feel threatened again. Liverpool will always stand against hate, intimidation and attempts to divide our communities.

“Liverpool will always be a city of hope, not hate.”

Eight people were arrested for a variety of public order offences during the afternoon as the far-right march made its way up County Road flanked by counter-protesters before coming to a standstill at Walton Parish Church where the groups separated.

The political polarisation of the immigration issue is an indictment of Starmer’s government, capitalism and the product of imperialist wars. Economic failure, wages outstripping the cost of living, austerity policies, growing inequalities in healthcare and housing, extortionate food prices and energy bills while silently pumping £21.8 billion into the

fascist Ukraine war machine. Stirring up hatred and confusion while providing a toxic breeding ground for nationalist racist rhetoric and fascist ideological explanations.

Disappointingly, but unsurprisingly, there was an absence of local Labour MPs, Councillors, a Trades Council banner or any union banners underlining their political bankruptcy and the decline of working-class organisations on Merseyside. Instead, their absence and impotency fueling a growing lack of legitimacy and sense of dissatisfaction. A complete failure to confront far-right intimidation and fear on the streets at the frontline of working-class struggle. We need to fightback! We must unite and organise counter-protests to stop the far-right on our streets!

The long goodbye

by New Worker correspondent

At 9.35 on Monday morning a couple of fireworks were heard to go off near this correspondent’s house when Sir Keir Starmer MPKC announced his intention to resign as leader of the Labour Party and also as Prime Minister. But the reactions from trade unions was less exuberant.

Unite declared that “Keir Starmer’s decision to resign was the honourable and right decision” but now “...there is no time to waste, everyday people are literally on their knees. Labour has one last shot to learn from the errors of the last two years. A failure to act, will result in a doomsday scenario for Labour”.

Unite’s brief shopping list for the new leader includes: “immediate action on industrial strategy, with investment in jobs and industry. That investment must be made now and not at some far-off point in the future.”

At first glance that seems reasonable and desirable, but we should be wary of the unspoken details of that demand. Less than a fortnight earlier, on the occasion of another resignation, that of John Healey as Minister of Defence, Unite made clear what was a priority in its demand for an industrial strategy.

Then, general secretary Sharon Graham declared: “John Healey’s resignation letter has laid bare the utter chaos at the heart of government on this issue. Defending the UK and investing in our defence industry simply can’t be done on the cheap. British defence needs investment. Failure to protect UK defence jobs would be a national betrayal.” Along with the *Daily Telegraph* she bleated that “what is going on in regard to yet another delay on the Defence Investment Plan (DIP) is fast becoming a national disgrace. Make no mistake jobs and skills are at risk.”

In particular, Unite wants Starmer’s successor to pull up his socks up to ensure that contracts including a new tranche of Typhoon fast jets, the Skynet satellite, the Project Euston dry docks facility for nuclear submarines and the A400M transport plane are signed-off and production lines in Britain are rolling as soon as possible. Just what we need to get Britain working!

In the good old days, Nye Bevan and Harold Wilson resigned from Attlee’s Cabinet for precisely the opposite reasons. Unite need not worry, however. The chief contender for the soon-to-be-vacant throne, Andy Burnham, helpfully informed readers of the *Times* that: “I am not squeamish about saying that the plan would be to reduce the welfare bill. Not at all.”

These will be a different sort of cuts, however: “not the traditional Westminster way of just crude cuts, short-term cuts that then create a backlash and create more political turbulence. It is actually going to do things that will reduce the benefits bill, moving towards a more preventative state that makes the right investments to support people into work.” So that’s okay then...

As for increased military spending, this too was favoured but was described differently: “It’s defence and security but also resilience” that will bring equal opportunities to the arms race through “social value” such as apprenticeships and work placements.

Tearful farewells...

Other unions took a more kindly
continued on page 4...

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view, with USDAW's general secretary, Joanne Thomas, piously declaring: "Keir Starmer has made an immense contribution to our movement and we will always be grateful to him for turning around the Labour Party, after its worst defeat in living memory, and securing a landslide victory in an election most said he couldn't win."

That is nonsense when glancing at the actual voting figures which clearly showed that he could win only about the third of the electorate, even against a widely loathed Tory Government.

The shopworkers' union leader then claimed that under Starmer's leadership "Labour has delivered the biggest-ever uplift in workers' rights and substantial legislation to tackle retail crime and help prevent violence, threats and abuse against shop workers". She conveniently forgets that his government spent ages watering down the legislation promised in the manifesto.

The other achievements Thomas cites, that of the police taking more seriously small-time shoplifting, is one that pleased the supermarket chains rather than workers, and that the law against "threats and abuse against shop workers" is completely unnecessary as that has in fact long been against the law. She must be looking for a gong in the forthcoming resignation honours list.

Also in the brown-nosing stakes was the Musicians' Union,

which said it would like to "thank Prime Minister Keir Starmer for his commitments to improving workers' rights and improving the lives of musicians". This amounts to being grateful to him making it easier for musicians and their instruments to tour the EU.

That sure puts Starmer's support for the Israeli genocide in perspective.

Recently elected Unison general secretary Andrea Egan, who was expelled from the Labour Party by Starmer, hopefully said that: "The next prime minister has an opportunity to break with tinkering-around-the-edges and deliver a complete transformation of this country, permanently shifting wealth and power to working class people."

She added that "that means full implementation of the plan to Make Work Pay, a massive programme of public investment and insourcing to repair our public services, and national public ownership of utilities".

She'll be lucky if Burnham's achievements in Manchester are anything to go by.

That consists of lots of fancy tower blocks such as the 40-storey development in Manchester's Deansgate Square, which had a £2.5 million penthouse flat that was remarkable for being named after Friedrich Engels.

At the same time (two years ago), there were 15,000 applications for social housing in the city, all of whom faced long waits. Needless to say, even the

other more modest one-bedroom flats in the building start at £309,000 and were not going to help in the slightest.

Egan also added that "breaking with the failed approach of the current Labour government also requires standing up to the migrant-bashing of the far-right rather than imitating it". On the Makerfield campaign trail Burnham gave his views on these matters. Just after it was reported that net migration added 171,000 to the UK's population in 2025 he told the BBC that he "supports the broad thrust" of Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood's restrictive plans.

RMT transport union general secretary, Eddie Dempsey, made vaguer points in favour of Andy Burnham and hoped that this will see him "intervening in the economy to expand public ownership, to raise wages, improve living standards and for the state to intervene to help working class people, not hang them out to dry at the mercy of market forces". But the National Education Union (NEU) put the boot into Starmer, with general secretary Daniel Kebede accurately pointing out that "the country had seen enough of Keir Starmer's government to know that it is not going to deliver the meaningful change that was promised by Labour two years ago". He pointed out that an NEU poll showed that a mere five per cent of teachers think that the Government have performed well on education over the last two years.

"Keir Starmer was wrong to claim credit for ending austerity. Part of the reason why his Government is so deeply unpopular is that they have failed to fix the funding crisis in schools, which risks condemning another generation of children to bear the brunt of austerity-level school budgets." Kebede is wise enough not to express any great hope for his successor.

Scottish TUC General Secretary Roz Foyer made the valid point that "winning a mandate that promises change then failing

to deliver it has been the mortal wounding of the Prime Minister". She denounced such matters as the two-child benefit cap and the winter fuel payment, but being aware of the interests of certain affiliated unions, made no mention of his military policies.

The National Union of Journalists have said nothing so far, but they must be pleased at Starmer's resignation as it will mean more overtime for their members who will now spend hours interviewing each other about what will happen next...

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**20 years ago
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23rd June 2006

Two-thirds of the Labour Party's 200,000 members want Tony Blair out of office by next year's party conference, according to a YouGov poll conducted in the run-up to last weekend's conference of the pressure group Compass in Brighton.

The poll also found that one-third of the members want Blair gone by this year's conference.

It was conducted for a commission on Labour democracy, chaired by Michael Meacher, MP for Oldham and Royton, to investigate the sense of a lack of democratic

accountability within Labour.

When questioned about policy issues, a quarter of current Labour members said they had come close to quitting because of the invasion of Iraq.

When asked to name the party's six biggest mistakes, Iraq came top of the list, cited by 52 per cent; subservience to the USA came second on 49 per cent; privatisation of public services came third at 46 per cent and failure to raise the top rate of income tax came fourth at 36 per cent.

Around three-quarters of Labour members believe that ordinary members have little or no influence on Government policy.

Supporters of Gordon Brown, like Ed Balls, spoke continually of the need for the party to "renew itself", including at the top – hinting that Blair should make way for Brown as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Michael Wills MP, another Brown supporter, called

for the creation of a constitutional convention of 300 "ordinary people" to be elected to provide a bridge between the "political class" and the public. Anyone who had ever stood for Parliament should be excluded from the "convention".

Trade union leaders Derek Simpson of Amicus and Dave Prentis of Unison came nearer the mark when they called for strong new policies to defend workers' rights, to raise Labour's standing in the polls.

Simpson said: "Labour will lose unless it recognises the deep concerns of its core supporters. Without a serious change in direction, drawing away from the business agenda that recognises people's desire to be safe and secure, we will definitely lose."

Prentis warned Gordon Brown that he should not take his union's votes for granted when he sought to replace Blair. "You'll have to earn it," he said. "We've been let down before. We want to work with you to build trust in Labour. That means abandoning ideological attacks on our public services."

Reformed capitalism – the grand illusion

by Prabhat Patnaik

Progressive liberals and social democrats in general have this common belief that capitalism can be ‘reformed, to become more humane and acceptable to society, and that this can be done by the use of state power that can be acquired through elections in a political democracy; this state of reformed capitalism can be institutionalised for ever, which makes any struggle for socialism unnecessary.

The theoretical basis for this belief was provided by the economics of JM Keynes (who himself had drawn upon the reformist intellectual tradition of the Cambridge School of economics). Keynes had called his philosophy “new liberalism”, the pre-fix “new” being added because it advocated not the absence of state intervention as liberalism traditionally had done, but, on the contrary, effective state intervention to achieve full employment and greater equality in income distribution. In post-war Europe, the Keynesian agenda had been adopted by several social-democratic governments that came into being in order to usher in high levels of employment and welfare state measures; their idea was to build ‘capitalism with a human face’.

Yet, within a few years of this post-war experiment, neo-liberalism had overtaken Europe. State expenditure for increasing employment, which, to be successful, had to be financed either by a fiscal deficit or by taxes on the rich, had become impossible because of the opposition of finance; and the welfare state measures that had been put in place, though not exactly withdrawn, had been run down.

A clear inkling of this changed scenario was provided when Francois Mitterrand was elected President of

France against the background of rising unemployment, and adopted standard Keynesian measures to increase employment; but instead of employment rising, finance flowed out of France, the French franc fell on the foreign exchange market, and Mitterrand had to withdraw his Keynesian measures in order to restore the “confidence of the investors”, which is just a euphemism for appeasing a bunch of speculators. Instead of the state intervening to ‘improve’ capitalism, the state itself had become a prisoner of globalised finance capital, willy-nilly doing its bidding. ‘Reformed’ capitalism had proved to be an illusion, belying the high hopes reposed in it by the liberal-social democratic intellectual-political circles.

The vision of a controlled capitalism, however, was not confined only to the advanced countries in the post-war period. In many countries of the Global South, where the national, patriotic (as distinct from comprador) bourgeoisie had been sizeable, and had been a part of the anti-colonial front, the economic policy regime that came into being after decolonisation envisaged a role for the capitalists even as the country was embarking on a public sector-led ‘socialist’-oriented development path. In India, for instance, the objective of development was described as the building of a “socialistic pattern of society” and the presumption was that the island of capitalism that remained within the economy as it was moving towards this goal, would help in developing the productive forces, while being amenable to control so that the achievement of this ultimate goal would not be sabotaged.

And yet today India has a level of income inequality higher than at any time in the previous 100 years, and one of the highest in the world. What is more, this sharp rise in in-

equality represents a reversal of the trend that existed till the early 1980s: the top one per cent of the population that had around 12 per cent of the national income at the time of independence, had seen a decline in its share to six per cent by 1982; since then this share has climbed to 22.6 per cent by 2022–23 under the regime of neo-liberalism (these figures are taken from the World Inequality Database).

The question arises: why has the vision of a controlled, and by implication reformed, capitalism turned out to be an illusion? Even if in countries of the Global South, the re-assertion of spontaneous capitalism became unavoidable once such re-assertion had already occurred in the metropolitan economies, the question still remains: why did the latter see such re-assertion?

The answer to this question lies in the very nature of capitalism. Keynes had only half understood the nature of capitalism. What he had seen clearly was that the aggregation of individual decisions in this system, even when each such decision is taken on the basis of some ‘rational’ calculations, does not add up to a ‘rational’ outcome. Put differently, the system is subject to anarchy; Keynes recognised this anarchy and wanted the state to intervene to overcome this anarchy.

Anarchy, however, is only one of the features of capitalism. There is an additional property of capitalism, apart of course from its exploitative nature; and that is its being a spontaneous or self-driven system. Individual agents act in the ways they do because they are compelled by competition to do so, and the overall functioning of the system which is independent of the will and consciousness of the individual economic agents, is characterised by a set of spontaneous tendencies.

One such tendency that

Marx had talked about was the tendency towards centralisation of capital, that is, the formation over time of larger and larger blocks of capital. But an intrinsic tendency of capital that is not much discussed, is that capital seeks to overcome or by-pass whatever constraints are placed upon it. This is exactly akin to the tendency of capital to introduce new processes and new products. In one case the drive is to overcome state-imposed constraints, for whoever does so first gets an extra profit; in the other case the drive is to overcome the technologically-given production constraints, for whoever does so first earns an extra profit.

Capital may not succeed, of course, in by-passing the constraint placed upon it by the state at any given time. But over time since centralisation keeps increasing the size of capital, the ability of capital to overcome or by-pass this constraint also increases, as larger capital is better able to overcome such a constraint than smaller capital. Hence even though some constraints upon capital may be binding in any given period, or over a succession of periods, these same apparently binding constraints of today would tend to get by-passed tomorrow as centralisation occurs over time.

Controlled capitalism, it follows, is unlikely ever to be a permanent state of affairs. Even if controls hold for a time, and controlled capitalism appears to have become a frozen state of affairs for a time, the centralisation occurring all the time acts to undermine it over time.

This is not just speculative talk. The undermining of Keynesianism occurred exactly in this manner. Among advanced capitalist countries, those needing temporary balance of payments support, found it convenient to accept short-term funds from other

countries. Such short-term funds in the beginning did not interfere with the ability of the state to intervene in the economy to maintain high levels of employment and the tempo of welfare expenditure. But as centralisation of capital occurred and the short-term funds coming into an economy increasingly belonged to large agglomerations, such as pension funds, whose withdrawals too would be on a much larger scale, state policy became geared towards preventing such withdrawals; and it did so by pursuing policies approved by globalised finance.

Put differently, the autonomy of the nation-state to pursue policies that it considers to be in social interest, an autonomy that Keynesianism had assumed, which was not off the mark in the beginning, got subverted over time. This was not accidental; it was innate in the nature of capitalism.

If capitalism, unlike what is taught in text-books, does not meekly accept whatever constraints are placed upon it, if it forever attempts to overcome such constraints and becomes more and more capable of doing so over time because of centralisation of capital, then any vision of a reformed capitalism, or welfare capitalism, becomes an illusion. Any such vision must entail a degree of control over capital by the state; and if such control by the state, exercised by placing constraints upon capital gets subverted over time, then such a vision obviously becomes untenable.

It is this simple truth that also underlies the current crisis of social democracy, why it is increasingly losing ground to neo-fascism. Its political crisis in other words is the expression in the sphere of politics of its theoretical crisis, arising from the undermining of Keynesianism.

Welfare capitalism being

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an illusion, there is no

alternative to socialism; and if in the transition to socialism, small cap-

italist enterprises are allowed to exist, care must be taken to ensure that

the intrinsic tendencies of capital, such as centralisation that produces

ever larger blocks of capital, are kept under strict check.

People's Democracy
(India)

The blood of Soweto: When children confronted apartheid's guns

by Braidon Naidoo

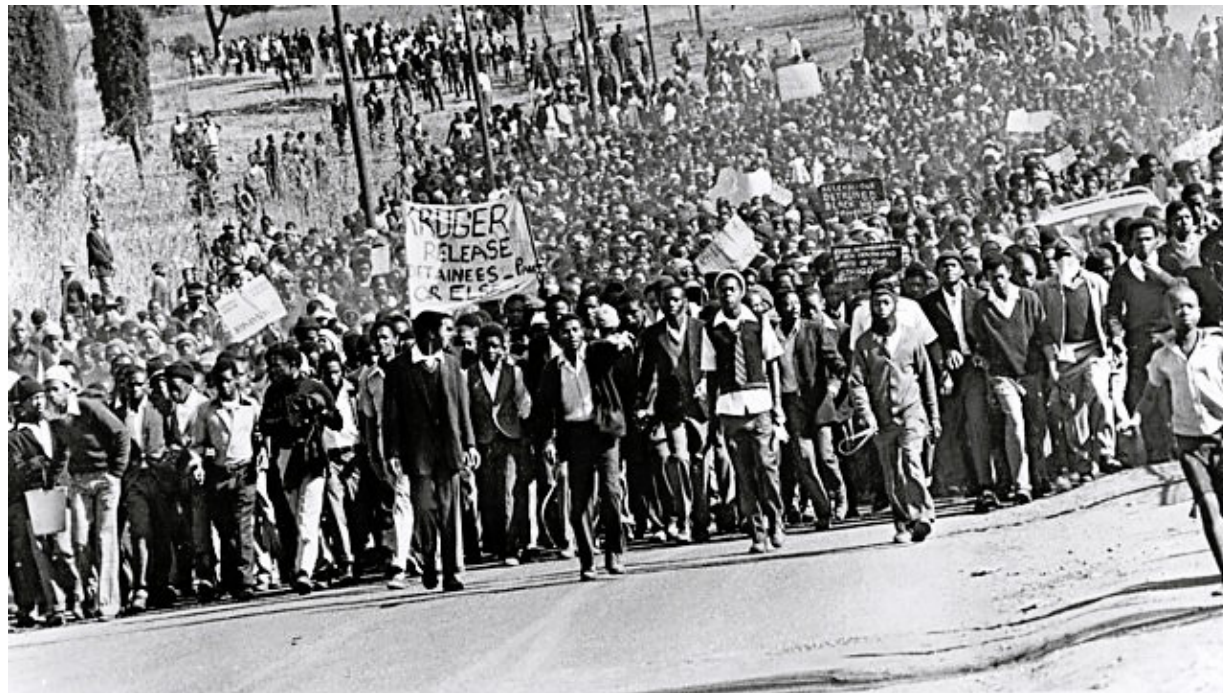
The historic rebellion of 16th June 1976 became a catalyst that ultimately dismantled racial segregation.

South African photo-journalist Sam Nzima's iconic black-and-white photograph of the lifeless body of Hector Pieterse being carried by Mbuyisa Makhuba – with Pieterse's distraught sister, Antoinette Sithole, running alongside – exposed the world to the sheer brutality of the apartheid regime.

Hector, just 12 years old, was among more than 10,000 schoolchildren participating in the Soweto Uprising on 16th June 1976. The march was a mass protest against a government mandate requiring key school subjects to be taught in Afrikaans – a language largely foreign to black students and deeply associated with the oppressive ruling class.

By the end of that violent day, official state reports indicated that 176 people had been killed in Soweto, 1,139 wounded, and 1,298 arrested. Meanwhile, in New York, the United Nations Committee on Apartheid estimated that the true death toll of black South Africans exceeded 1,000.

Eyewitness accounts placed the actual death toll in Soweto between



200 and 500, with Hector Pieterse among them. Although he was rushed to a nearby clinic, he was pronounced dead on arrival.

The rise of apartheid

Apartheid was a highly organised system of legalised racial segregation and white supremacy. For nearly three centuries, indigenous Africans had been dispossessed and exploited by British and Dutch colonisers. In 1948, apartheid (meaning 'apartness' in Afrikaans) became official state policy when the National Party, voted into power by an all-white electorate, formalised discrimination into a rigid legal

structure.

The regime utilised hundreds of laws to enforce strict segregation. The most devastating of these measures stripped black South Africans of their citizenship, tightly controlled their daily movements through notorious 'pass laws', and dictated where they were allowed to live.

For black South Africans, this meant being forced into inferior, neglected residential areas, barred from white-only restaurants, cinemas, and beaches, and restricted to segregated public transportation and low-wage labour.

Afrikaners are a Southern African ethnic group primarily descended from Dutch, German, and French Huguenot settlers who first arrived at the Cape

of Good Hope in 1652.

The transition from British colonial control to total Afrikaner hegemony occurred in two phases. First, the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 established a power-sharing agreement between British and Afrikaner elites. Second, the watershed 1948 election brought the nationalist National Party into sole power, institutionalising apartheid. By this stage, various colonial-era laws had already marginalised the indigenous population, whose native languages included Zulu, Xhosa, and Setswana.

In 1953, the regime introduced the infamous Bantu Education Act, which transferred the control of black education from provincial authorities and missionary

schools directly to the central Department of Native Affairs (DNA), headed by Dr Hendrik F Verwoerd. The provisions of this act, along with policies enacted by its sub-department, the Bantu Education Department, laid the groundwork for the uprising more than two decades later.

Verwoerd argued that black South Africans should not receive a standard academic or professional education. To enforce a strict racial hierarchy, he insisted that their schooling be restricted to vocational training designed solely to prepare them for subordinate roles in society. As Verwoerd declared "Natives must be taught from an early age that equality with Europeans is not for them".

During the apartheid era, the term 'Bantu' was officially used by the white-minority government to refer to black Africans. Over time, it became synonymous with the state's most oppressive policies – most notably the Bantu Education Act and the forced creation of the 'Bantustans' (impoverished, ethnically segregated homelands).

Although the 1953 act technically made classrooms accessible to more children in Soweto than the previous missionary system had, the state-run 'Bantu' schools suffered from a catastrophic shortage of teachers, facilities and basic resources. Nationally, student-to-teacher ratios rose from 46:1 in 1955 to a staggering 58:1 by 1967. Simultaneously, the government spent several times more on the education of a single white child than it did on a black child.

In 1974, the Bantu Education Department issued the Afrikaans Medium Decree. This policy mandated that half of all school subjects, including mathematics and social studies, be taught in Afrikaans – a language largely foreign to black students and widely despised as the tongue of the oppressor.

The government's plan was to enforce a strict 50:50 split between English and Afrikaans

in the classroom. Opponents of the decree tried to mobilise educators to resist, particularly because many teachers did not understand Afrikaans themselves, let alone possess the training to teach in it. Though teachers harboured deep concerns, as civil servants they had no choice but to comply under threat of dismissal.

By 1976, this systemic provision of inferior education had created a groundswell of outrage among youth. Classrooms rapidly transformed into the ultimate battleground of anti-apartheid resistance.

The darkest of days

As the language dispute intensified throughout early 1976, school boycotts began to ripple across Soweto. By early June, the Soweto Urban Bantu Council had warned the state that unless authorities quickly addressed the language decree, the mounting tension would erupt into violence. The warnings went unheeded.

On 13th June student leaders gathered secretly to plan a mass demonstration. They deliberately chose to exclude their parents from the planning, fearing that older generations, weary of state brutality, would attempt to talk them out of the protest.

Three days later, on the morning of 16th June, more than 10,000 students – mobilised by the South African Students Movement's Action Committee and energised by the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) – marched peacefully through the streets of Soweto. Their destination was a rally at Orlando Stadium, where they planned to draft a formal memorandum



of grievances to deliver to the Department of Education. Instead, they were met by the full, militarised force of the apartheid state.

Outside Orlando West High School on Vilakazi Street, police armed with batons, tear gas, and attack dogs confronted the column of youth. What had begun as a disciplined, peaceful march quickly dissolved into terror.

The police first lobbed tear gas and fired warning shots into the air. When the students stood their ground, holding simple hand-painted placards reading “AWAY WITH AFRIKAANS”, “AFRIKAANS MUST BE ABOLISHED”, and “WE ARE BEING CERTIFIED BUT NOT EDUCATED”, officers opened fire directly into the crowd. Unarmed, the children grabbed garbage can lids and stones to shield themselves. Hector Pieterse was among the very first to fall.

Despite the use of

live ammunition, the young demonstrators refused to disperse. In response, the authorities unleashed indiscriminate violence, killing hundreds of children over the hours that followed.

As darkness fell, the police lost control of the Soweto streets. Outraged communities retaliated, burning down government administration offices and engaging in running battles with the police. In response, the state deployed heavily armed para-military units and troops to enforce a brutal lockdown.

The uprising lasted for three days in Soweto before spreading like wildfire across South Africa, igniting one of the most widespread and significant rebellions against white-minority rule in the nation's history.

The state's response to the uprising was systematic and ruthless. Over the course of the protests and their immediate aftermath, thousands of people were

arrested. According to historical records and testimonies presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), more than 1,000 people were detained in the opening weeks alone. Many were held in tiny, windowless isolation cells, forced into agonising stress positions for days on end, and subjected to severe torture.

In the two years following the initial march, the apartheid machinery prosecuted more than 42,000 people. At least 9,000 of those put on trial were children under the age of 18.

For Antoinette Sithole, the enduring legacy of Soweto is the proof that a politically conscious youth can fundamentally alter the course of history. Sithole, who was 17 at the time, still shares her brother's story with the local and international visitors who come to the Hector Pieterse Museum in Orlando West, Soweto, where

she works as a guide.

She recalls that on the day of the fateful protest, her 12-year-old brother was never meant to participate. “He was too young to understand what was going on,” she explains.

When the chaos began, she tried desperately to reassure him that they would be safe. Sithole knew that a confrontation with the apartheid police was highly likely, but she resolved to stay brave for her younger brother.

The state's lethal crackdown forced thousands of young people to flee South Africa into exile. Among them was Mbuyisa Makhuba, the 19-year-old who carried the dying Hector Pieterse in Sam Nzima's defining photograph. Hounded by the security police, Makhuba fled the country, eventually disappearing in Nigeria in 1979. To this day, his whereabouts and ultimate fate remain unknown.

While liberation

movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) were not involved in organising the 16th June march, they soon experienced a massive influx of thousands of young exiled recruits. These students had realised that the apartheid regime would only intensify its violence, and they chose to join the armed struggle.

A turning point for freedom

The Soweto Uprising was the definitive turning point in the anti-apartheid movement. It shattered the illusion of state control, galvanising international outrage and triggering a wave of global sanctions that isolated the Pretoria regime. The courage of the Soweto schoolchildren set off a chain reaction of domestic resistance and international pressure that ultimately led to the dismantling of apartheid and the birth of a democratic South Africa in 1994.

Following the 1976 unrest, the regime scrambled to manage the fallout. It took three years of continuous unrest for the hated Bantu Education Act to be replaced by the Education and Training Act of 1979, which made tentative concessions toward educational funding. However, it was only after the fall of the regime that institutionalised educational segregation was completely and legally abolished under the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Fifty years after those children marched into live ammunition, the streets of Soweto stand as a testament to a generation that refused to be certified for subjugation.

LETTERS

Did monetarism actually start with Labour?

Denis Healey was made Chancellor by Harold Wilson when Labour returned to power in February 1974.

He said that "Keynesianism had really had its day by the '70s". As Chancellor he "believed that keeping control of the money supply was very important". He also believed that "the market had a major role to play".

Healey cut public expenditure in April 1975 and later in the year he imposed "cash limits" on fellow Ministers.

He reduced public expenditure in January 1976, and July 1976 saw the biggest cuts of all. It is little surprise then that the right-wing economist Milton Friedman claimed Healey was a "monetarist without knowing it".

James Callaghan would go on to succeed Wilson in April 1976. He too felt that "Keynes' ideas were beginning to show their age". He told that year's Labour Conference that "we used to think you could spend your way out of recession". He added: "I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists."

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

The International Organising Committee for the Restoration of Activities of the International Organisation of Journalists strongly condemns the ongoing pressure on Cuba, the island of liberty.

For decades, its people have been forced to live under an economic blockade, the consequences of

which have caused serious damage to the country's development. Today, aggressive US circles have increased pressure to the limit, committing an act of genocide against the Cuban people.

According to Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), genocide specifically means acts committed with intent to destroy a group including "the deliberate infliction on any group of conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part" (paragraph "c"). Creating an artificial shortage of medicines, food and fuel is direct evidence of this criminal intent, and the sanctions regime itself is a gross violation of international humanitarian law and the UN Charter.

We express our solidarity with the heroic Cuban people, who are defending their right to independence, sovereignty and an independent path of development. We demand an end to all aggressive actions against Cuba, lifting the blockade and strict compliance with international law and the principles of respect for the sovereignty of states. We consider it the duty of every journalist to widely and objectively inform the world community about the humanitarian catastrophe and the causes of its occurrence.

Cuba is not alone!
**International Organising Committee for the Restoration of the Activities of the International Organisation of Journalists
Moscow**

A political earthquake has shaken the USA. Claire Valdez and Darializa Avila Chevalier are going to Congress next year. And we have put the Democrat establishment on notice.

Both campaigns were fuelled by a ground game from our movements. Jew-

ish Voice for Peace (JVP) members came out across Harlem, Queens, and Brooklyn to engage tens of thousands of neighbours about the issues that unite us – taxing the rich, abolishing ICE, and fighting for an end to genocide, and for a free Palestine.

JVP Action was among the earliest endorsing organisations for Claire and Darializa – and our members showed up every week to make this victory possible. We launched canvasses that knocked on more than 72,000 doors, worked shifts at phone-banks, and drove grass-roots dollars to show that when people organise, anything is possible. We are solidifying Palestine as part of a popular politics intertwined with the fight for working people across the country.

Before last night, the JVP Action slate had already won with Reverend Frederick Haynes III's landslide in Dallas, Representative Chris Rabb's defeat of the establishment in Philadelphia, and Dr Adam Hamawy's victory in New Jersey.

And last night, we notched our third and fourth with Claire and Darializa for Congress. Our fifth win was electing Aber Kawas – who will be the first Palestinian American in the New York State Senate; and our sixth, seventh and eighth with NY House Assembly victories for David Orkin, Samantha Kattan, and Diana Moreno.

Next week, we're going to elect Melat Kiros to Congress in Denver. Melat is a lawyer and an organiser who was fired from her job when she refused to take down an op-ed defending the students organising Gaza solidarity encampments across the country. Now she's running to oust a 30-year establishment Democrat – and JVP Action is going to help her win.

Onwards.
Beth Miller

**Jewish Voice for Peace
Washington DC**

Alan Stewart and Dermot Hudson raised some interesting points about the Gaddafi leadership in Libya.

The 1969 Free Officer revolution kicked out a worthless feudal king who was a puppet of Anglo-American imperialism and paved the way to the rapid closure of the British and American bases on Libyan soil and the nationalisation of the oil industry, whose immense profits were soon put to use for the benefit of the Libyan masses and the broader Arab national movement.

Libyan workers got free housing, education and medical treatment. There was no unemployment. The wages, terms and conditions for the hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers from other parts of Africa and the Far East were, by far, the best in the Arab world.

Dissolving the Libyan Arab Socialist Union in 1977, partly to resolve problems within the Free Officer Movement, may well have been a mistake. The "Green Revolution" eventually led to the establishment of the Libyan Jamahiriya in which all political parties were banned. A move meant to empower individual Libyans actually strengthened traditional tribal relations which were eventually exploited by the imperialists and their feudal Arab lackeys during the "Arab Spring" that led to the NATO intervention that brought down the Gaddafi government in 2011.

Anarchy, high inflation and broken public services. That's the Libya of today. The country is now run by feuding war-lords who serve imperialism and the big oil corporations of the Western world. The slave trade, outlawed by the Italian colonial administration in the 1920s, has returned

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.

MON 29 JUN

29th of June-KFA UK online meeting for the 10th anniversary of the election of Marshal Kim Jong Un as President of the State Affairs.

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.

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.

FRI 3 JUL

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: NATO in crisis: time to overcome the war machine. 18:00–20:00. Online summit. Book on CND website.

SAT 4 JUL

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Independence From America demonstration. 13:00–15:00. RAF Fairford, Fairford, Gloucestershire, GL7 4DL

SAT 4 JUL

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Independence From America demonstration. 13:00–17:00. 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.

SAT 4 JUL

Korean Friendship Association: Joint seminar on the DPRK's global role. 14:00. John Buckle Centre, 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2LA

SUN 5 JUL

Caribbean Labour Solidarity: Sunday Zoom seminar. Subject TBA. 14:00. Register on CLS website.

MON 6 JUL

Global Justice Now: Get Palantir out of the NHS. 18:30. Highbury Roundhouse Community Centre, 71 Ronalds Road, London N5 1UB.

SAT 11 JUL

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

SAT 11 JUL

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: NATO in crisis: time to overcome the war machine. Online summit. 14:00–16:00. Book on CND website.

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.

MON 20 JUL

Campaign Against the Arms Trade: Various protest events at Farnborough International Airshow. ETPS Road, Farnborough GU14 6FD

THUR 23 JUL

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Protest at Elbit Systems. 11:00–13:00. Elbit Systems, 38 Bolingbroke Way, Bristol BS34 6FE.

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.

THUR 6AUG–SUN 9AUG

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings nationwide commemorations. See CND Events for details of local events.

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

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

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Send to NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.



...continued from page 8

with slave markets openly trading in a number of cities in Libya including the capital, Tripoli.

For good or bad, Muammar Gaddafi will ultimately be judged by Arab public opinion but there's no denying the remarkable achievements that were made when he was at the helm of the new Libya he helped to create.

Dave Danton
Dagenham

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

While Andy Burnham gets ready to move into Downing Street another former politician is settling down to more modest accommodation in Scotland. On Tuesday former SNP CEO Peter Murrell was sentenced to five years and three months for embezzlement. His new home is a cell in Dumfries prison where inmates have a garden to keep them occupied. It is not thought likely that he will be able to take his £608.98 Eco Shape garden edging tool and a £3,070 robotic Husqvarna lawnmower with him. Still things could be worse, he avoid-

ed the cruel sentence suggested by one particularly vindictive person: being sent home to live with Nicola Sturgeon again.

He might find that the prison will be a bit overcrowded due to the Court of Session forcing a reversal of one of his wife's favourite policies. After a series of court cases the SNP finally accepted that it is not a good idea to send male sex offenders to women's prisons. On the same day as Murrell's conviction, it admitted defeat and announced that it would not appeal against the judgement and the Scottish Prison Service started moving them.

If the SNP leadership think that Murrell hearing his cell door slam behind him will be the end of the matter, they are going to be disappointed. The more Nicola Sturgeon claims that she never knew about the fraud, even fewer people believe her and question why she spent her police interview about the matter saying 'no comment' or why the Crown Office, which was directly answerable to the First Minister (and stuffed with her appointees), told Police Scotland to back off when the boys and girls in blue thought they had enough to charge her.

It is important to remember that Murrell's conviction relates only to his embezzling SNP funds and does not even touch on the separate matter of why money solicited by the SNP exclusively for a second referendum was frittered away on routine expenditure. Former SNP MP Joanna Cherry is not the only one who thinks Murrell's conviction is "just the tip of the iceberg".

The Makerfield by-election...

...hit the headlines. Two others, in Scotland went

comparatively unnoticed. Aberdeen South, the seat vacated by the former Westminster SNP leader Stephen Flynn, saw the Tories triumph with Douglas Lumsden, who has already represented the area as both a councillor and MSP. As he is abandoning Holyrood for Westminster and because he was a List MSP, his departure will not set off another chain of by-elections as another Tory, a local councillor, will take his place.

As a councillor, Lumsden made the headlines by suggesting the UK government directly fund Aberdeen Council and ignore the SNP Government as his city got a bad deal. As an MSP, he was the first Tory parliamentarian to demand the resignation of Boris Johnson seven months before he did so. In January 2025, he asked a record 987 written questions to the Scottish Government, more than half the total. These include vital issues such as the number of salt and pepper sachets at Holyrood and making sure that the beeswax used for the Great Seal of Scotland comes from Holyrood's own bees. At least that makes a change from SNP ministers writing out questions for backbench MSPs to ask. London civil servants had better look out.

No less than 38.1 per cent of the electorate turned out. The Tories doubled their percentage to 49.5, with the SNP falling slightly to 28.6 from their previous winning 32.8 per cent. Reform was third on 8.6. Labour slumped from 24.7 to 5.4, only just saving their deposit in a seat once held by Labour's father of devolution, Donald Dewar.

Tory leader Kemi Badenoch played a large part in the campaign, which focused on the future of North Sea oil and gas. Starmer was too busy trying to save his own skin to visit. Energy secretary Ed Miliband was also conspicuous by his absence. This was wise as Labour's

energy policies, like the SNP's, are unpopular in the capital of the UK oil industry.

The Tories made the contest a referendum on continuing North Sea oil and gas production. Although they did not use Donald Trump's "drill baby drill" phrase, that was what they meant. In contrast, neither the SNP nor Labour could give a direct answer about their policy. From the discovery of North Sea oil, the SNP adopted the slogan "It's Scotland's Oil" and for decades claimed it would be the underpinning an independent Scotland's economy, while deploring control of it in London.

When the SNP allied with the Greens in 2021 this had to change – but only at the expense of alienating many of their own supporters, who fled to Alba. Present day SNP policy about oil and gas depends on what day of the week it is and to whom they are talking. Before the election they tried to back-pedal on their opposition, but just before the by-election a Freedom of Information request showed that SNP ministers had not worked on any such strategy. The Tory candidate was able to claim that "it is concrete evidence that the SNP's policy of presumption against new oil and gas has never changed".

Further south had better news for the SNP. Their candidate, London resident Pyla Lara Bird-Leakey, increased the SNP vote in the constituency of Arbroath & Broughty Ferry (the posh part of Dundee). To get elected she ditched half her names and traded as 'Lara Bird'. Her election represents a great boost for diversity – an increase in the number of parliamentarians who come from the under-privileged minority professions of lawyers and parliamentary staffers.

On a 31.4 per cent turnout she increased the SNP vote from 35.5 per cent to 41.1., with the Tories in second place on 19.4, Reform UK came third with 18.2. It was disaster for Labour on 15.2, well down on the 33.4 that nearly brought them victory at the General Election.

Because of the distraction of the struggle for the national Labour leadership in London there have been no open calls from anyone who matters for Anas Sarwar to be replaced as the Scottish Labour leader. During the Aberdeen contest grumbles were made about him making it the 'Glasgow Labour Party' rather than Scottish Labour. But there's no doubt the knives will be out in coming weeks and months once the question of the premiership is settled.

New Worker Supporters' Groups...

New Worker supporters groups exist to support the weekly newspaper of the New Communist Party.

Individual membership is £10.00 (8 Euros or \$10) for all or part of the calendar year and every member will receive a New Worker Supporters Group (NWSG) card and a copies of the Internal Bulletin for the year.

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Remember their sacrifice!

by New Worker correspondent

In Russia, the 22nd June is the Day of Remembrance and Sorrow. On that day in 1941 Nazi Germany and its allies launched a treacherous attack on the Soviet Union. This marked the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, one of the most tragic chapters in our history. It claimed the lives of 27 million Soviet citizens and left millions more wounded, bereaved and scarred by its devastation.

Vasili Tsyganov,

Minister-Counsellor of the Russian Embassy in London, laid flowers at the Soviet War Memorial in the gardens by the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth.

Unveiled in 1999, the monument stands as a symbol of the British respect for the heroism and self-sacrifice of the Soviet citizens and soldiers who lost their lives during the Second World War in the struggle against Nazism. It serves as a reminder of the price of victory and the enduring importance of preserving historical memory.



FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

The Middle "Class" by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The ruling class, fascism and the State by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The poisoned well (an insight into imperialist intelligence work). £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Communists and the united front by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p. (New Worker reprint).

New technology and the need for socialism £2 plus 50p p&p.

Communists in Britain today £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

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All in the family by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Arab nationalism and the communist movement by Andy Brooks. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Killing ourselves to live by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The first 30 fighting years of the New Communist Party of Britain £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.
(cheques to New Worker)

REVIEW

The right to roam

by Ben Soton

Contested Commons – A History of Protest and Public Space in England
by Katrina Navickas. Reaktion Books, London 2025. Hbk: 384pp, £20.

The pages of the *New Worker* are full of articles and stories about protests be they progressive, reactionary or anything in between. But what of the places, usually outdoors spaces, where protests take place?

Sometimes these places are the subject of protest themselves. In *Contested Commons*, Katrina Navickas provides the story of these places. Her book covers the history of public spaces and their role in popular protest.

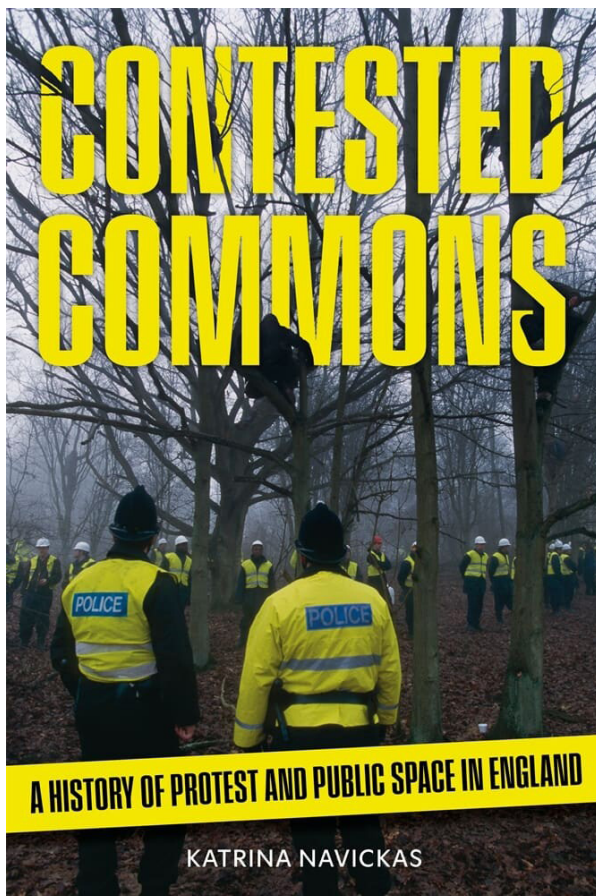
A book like this should be welcomed at a time when the right to protest is under attack.

First of all it challenges the "myth of the commons" – the idea that at some point in time we all had access

to common land that was later on stolen by the landowners. The problem is that no such Golden Age existed. Although enclosures of common land did become widespread from the Tudor times, there is little actual evidence that any such Golden Age ever existed.

Another theme is the concept of Enclosure versus Commoning. For instance, in her section covering the anti-roads protests of the 1990s, Navickas sees the road-builders as enforcing enclosure and the anti-road protesters as defending the ancient commons.

The book is written in two halves. The first concentrating on the rural man-made landscape; with chapters including



Commons, Waste and Verges. This section begins with examples of enclosures of common land in the 18th Century as well as the mass Kinder Scout Trespass protest in the 1930s and the Right to Roam.

The second part of the book covers urban protest with chapters named after street furniture such as Railings, Pavements and Barricades. Railings is a reference to the protests during the Second Reform Act of 1867 (which enfranchised urban, male property owners), where protesters used the railings surrounding Hyde Park to defend themselves from attack by the police. Barricades is a reference to the Battle of Cable Street, when the people took to the

streets to beat back the Mosleyites on the streets of London's East End in 1936. Later chapters cover events such as the Battle of the Bean Field in 1985; an event that took place during the miners' strike that the author makes no mention of. And it ends with coverage of the New Age Travellers of the 1990s, which she refers to as New Travellers.

In a recent article in the *Morning Star*, Ian Sinclair points out that "92 per cent of land and 97 per cent of rivers in England" are not legally accessible. Subsequently, a book that covers issues of land ownership and common land is to be recommended, whilst with the legitimate right to protest under attack it is reminding us of the long history of protest in the country.

Putting people first in People's China

by
John Maryon

People's China has launched its new 15th Five Year Plan, which aims for high quality growth. A far more ambitious project than merely increasing industrial and agricultural production and expanding the nations GDP. Boosting the service sector, continuing to invest at a high rate in infrastructure, further improving health and welfare provision to meet people's needs and ensuring stability by the reinforcement of supply chains are all given priority. The country's defences will be strengthened to resist imperialist aggression. Traditional growth strategies are being replaced by new development methods aimed at transforming the economy to higher value production levels driven by innovation.

It is a sustainable and comprehensive programme that includes boosting domestic consumption by upgrading technology to develop new, high quality productive forces and also to extend a new development pattern. This consists of two drivers for growth. Firstly, domestic circulation whereby production, consumption and innovation within China is used to provide a main driver for growth. Secondly, international circulation with trade, Investment, technology transfer and tourism reinforcing domestic development. The plan lays the basis for the major task of achieving basic



social modernisation by 2035.

With its commitment to multilateralism, China has become a major contributor to global development and a defender of the international order. China has increased its influence within the Global South countries through its participation in development projects that are open and honest without interference or political pressure. Belt & Road is a symbol for win-win in international development. Such measures all contribute to stable international economic growth. China opposes unilateralism and protectionism that challenge global stability.

A priority feature of the Five Year Plan is the construction of a unified national market. This allows for resources to be allocated efficiently, discourages the preservation of uncompetitive industries and replaces

redundant capacity with new investments that drive quality and innovation. Steps will be taken to allow for remote less well-developed regions to access a wider range of goods and services.

Green and sustainable development is a cornerstone for China's development. The country will move quickly to adopt an increasing number of eco-friendly production processes and lifestyles to ensure that carbon emissions peak by 2030, paving the way for achievement of carbon neutrality before 2060. Being the world's leading industrial powerhouse and with one of the world's largest populations, China is faced with an important and monumental challenge. During the next five years green and low carbon technologies will be expanded with more wind turbines, solar panels and hydro power stations being built. The

new generation of safe thorium nuclear reactors will continue their development. An additional 60,000 km of zero-carbon transport corridors will be constructed and over 100 zero-carbon industrial parks will be built. China's electric car numbers will continue to increase rapidly. China now leads the world in both renewable energy capacity and manufacturing.

The Five Year Plan puts people's welfare and fulfilment as a top priority. The country's bio-diversity will be improved further as endangered aquatic species are reintroduced into upgraded water streams and lakes. Steps will be taken to ensure that the increasing number of once rare animals can live safely with the human population. Nature reserves will be upgraded. Work will continue with large forestation projects to tame the des-

erts. More people living in the great cities will experience the freshness of countryside quality air. An already harmonious society will develop further with the respect given to the environment and its creatures.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications across key sectors will continue to play a major role in building a Smart Economy. A faster achievement has been called for by the government to build more intelligent terminals and to promote an increasing number of large-scale commercial applications. Unlike the capitalist system with its basic contradictions, a reluctance to invest and the constant threats of surveillance and war, the people's republic is in a good position to use the technology for the benefit of everyone. Repetitive, unpleasant and hazardous tasks may be carried out automatically leaving comrades

more free time to engage in sports, cultural activities, music, the arts and study. While some Western powers become excited over the prospect of using AI for war, China views it as an essential tool for the full advancement of a people-oriented society.

The Chinese revolution that established the people's government in 1949 has transformed the country that was then the poorest in the world. China has now risen from being a weak semi-feudal, semi-colonial country to become a force for peace in the global arena, with the second largest economy in the world. Productivity gains, innovation and consumption needs have become the main drivers of growth. China's manufacturing, innovation and construction now serve the entire world. As China transforms it shares what it has learned with other developing countries facing similar challenges. And equally the communist party, which led and continues to lead the Chinese people's march to socialism, is always ready to share its knowledge and experience with the rest of the communist movement around the world.

People's China, under the leadership of its Communist Party, has made remarkable progress in the transformation of a poverty-stricken land into a leading power within a few short decades. It looks forward with confidence to the future and offers friendship and respectful relations with all good people.

Portuguese workers defeat anti-union labour package

On Thursday 18th June thousands of workers marched outside the Assembly of the Republic, the Portuguese parliament, demanding that the right-wing government kill the anti-worker “labour package” they were poised to vote on. The next day, in a vote that shocked most pundits, the package was voted down by the legislators even though there is a right-wing majority in the assembly. How did this happen?

Over nearly a year, the governing right-wing parties tried to push the proposal through, presenting it as absolutely necessary and its passage as inevitable.

But Portugal’s militant union federation, the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP), had different ideas. They sprung into motion, and over 11 months they carried out several mass marches and two general strikes – one on 11th December 2025



• Workers march through Lisbon during the June general strike.

and another earlier this month, on 3rd June.

While Prime Minister Montenegro publicly claimed that not many workers participated in the general strikes, he and the right-wing parties knew that the reality on the ground was different. The general strike brought transportation systems, education and health-care

in the country to a near halt, and many private corporations, large and small, had significant numbers of workers go on strike, stopping production in important industries and sectors of the Portuguese economy. The working class spoke in a loud and united voice, saying that the labour package has to fall.

Even up to the day before the vote, the governing right-wing coalition thought they had the votes to pass it. But their negotiations to assure the votes of the right-wing Chega [Enough!] bloc continued until a half hour before the vote. Chega is a far-right populist party not dissimilar from Trump’s MAGA movement. Ultimately, Chega likely feared

losing the working-class voters in their base to the left if they voted in favour of the bosses’ labour package. So, Chega voted with the left-wing and centrist parties, sending the package to defeat.

The constant militant mobilisations by the CGTP turned the labour package into a social question that drew sharp class lines. This made it impossible for the right-wing parties to simply craft labour policy behind closed doors at the behest of the rich. The working class took the stage and made this vote into a “which side are you on” question. The capitalists’ dream – of passing new labour laws that would increase profits for the rich by driving down workers’ living standards and peeling back union rights – turned into their nightmare of awakening the unity and militant action of the working class.

After the vote in par-

liament the leader of the CGTP, Tiago Oliveira, said: “It was 11 months of struggle that translated into 11 months of workers mobilising constantly, building two huge general strikes, building a set of initiatives that translated today into the defeat of the labour package. So today I give a huge recognition to the determining role of the workers’ struggle that developed over these long 11 months. It was the workers who were essential in all of these developments. The workers were the key that determined the position of all the political parties that today voted against this labour package. In the name of the CGTP, a word of solidarity and gratitude to the workers, because they are the true creators of everything good in our lives. Today it’s proven that it’s the workers’ struggle that determines whatever outcome.”

Fightback! News
(USA)

Communist elected deputy mayor of Tel Aviv–Jaffa

Attorney Amir Badran, a leading member of the communist-led Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) and chair of its branch in Jaffa, was elected Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv–Jaffa on 22nd June, becoming the first Hadash representative to hold the position. A Palestinian citizen of Israel, Badran is widely known for his

involvement in struggles defending the rights of the Arab population in Jaffa, including campaigns against evictions, housing discrimination, and the displacement of local residents.

He has also been active in anti-war mobilisations and protests against the occupation and Israel’s military operations in Gaza and the broader region.

His appointment follows an agreement that includes a commitment by the municipality to withhold support from organisations that promote racism, discrimination, or the displacement of communities. As Deputy Mayor, Badran is expected to focus on social issues affecting Jaffa, including housing, employment, education, community services and

the fight against crime while promoting equal rights and co-existence among the city’s diverse communities.

The election of a Hadash representative to such a prominent municipal position is viewed as a significant political development, reflecting growing support for democratic, anti-racist and progressive forces within local government.

At the same time, ef-

orts by right-wing forces continue to block the appointment of another Hadash representative, attorney Fakhre Bayadsi, as Deputy Mayor of Haifa, despite a coalition agreement reached following the municipal elections. Bayadsi’s candidacy has become the target of a campaign by right-wing councillors seeking to prevent Hadash from as-

suming the position.

The developments in Tel Aviv–Jaffa and Haifa underline the continuing political struggle between progressive forces advocating equality, peace, and social justice and the right-wing currents seeking to marginalise them within Israeli public life.

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