

Trump's military and diplomatic failures continue

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

TRUMP'S EMISSARIES return empty-handed after another bid to end the war in Ukraine. Putin goes to India for the BRICS summit in New Delhi. In the Persian Gulf two American destroyers were hit by Iranian missiles and a number of US warplanes were damaged in an Iranian strike on a key American airbase in Jordan.

The price of oil in the spot market soared over \$100 a barrel following the news of the sweeping victories of the Houthi-led north Yemeni government on the Red Sea coast and an Egyptian student suspended from King's College London last year for Palestinian solidarity campaigning has been allowed to return to complete the final year of his degree course.

At the BRICS Business Forum in New Delhi this week Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin criticised Western sanctions and urged the BRICS nations to deepen economic co-operation. Pezeshkian called for greater use of national currencies and argued that no country should be able to disrupt legitimate trade by controlling financial systems or technology. He also warned that the con-

flict involving Iran, the United States and Israel has entered a dangerous phase, with consequences for global energy markets.

Putin similarly condemned Western pressure on Russia, saying the Russian Federation faces more than 30,000 sanctions. He argued that BRICS provides a durable platform for economic growth and said Russia wants stronger co-operation with the Global South in trade, tourism and private investment.

While US imperialism tightens the screw against any of its allies still trading with Iran American attempts to weaken the Iranian hold on the Persian Gulf have back-fired. When they hit three Iranian oil-tankers on one day the Iranians retaliated hitting a larger number of Western tankers trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. They later announced that their naval forces had sunk a US sail-drone and seized an American state-of-the-art robot submarine.

However, in his latest rant, Trump vowed to attack "a lot more" Iranian vessels if the Islamic Republic continues to target American assets. He claimed Iran is pro-



Iran takes US submarine drone.

longing the conflict to influence the US mid-term elections, hoping for gains by Democrats, who overwhelmingly oppose the war. But in Tehran Foreign Ministry spokesman Es-mail Baghaei accused the Americans of destabilising the Middle East through its military operations. If the USA genuinely wants peace, he said, it should end its "malign and destabilising interventions in our region".

The double blockade still throttles the Persian Gulf as Iran and the United States confront each other for control of the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians say that in the coming days a new international corridor designated by Iran and Oman for passage through the strait will be announced, emphasising, however, that the corridor would be under Iran's management.

Meanwhile Brent crude topped \$107.6 a barrel as markets reacted to the liberation of Yemen's Red

Sea port of Mocha, near the Bab Al Mandab Strait. The Houthi-led north Yemeni forces, who have closed to Saudi vessels, now totally control access to the Red Sea and the southern passage of the Suez Canal.

Back in the UK Usama Ghanem, a third-year student at King's College London, has been rein-

stated following his suspension for pro-Palestine protests on campus following a complaint from the pro-Zionist Campaign Against Antisemitism. "After a year-long legal and public battle, I can now say that we took on a 200-year-old institution and we won" Usama told the media.

FUND

The September appeal has begun but with just £427 in the bag it's clear we've got a mountain to climb to hit our target for the month. But we've got to if we're going to get through the month. We need £3,073 to hit our target and if we don't get it this time round we're going to be in deep trouble.

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INSIDE

Far right in Germany...p5
The price of peace...p6

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

A step in the right direction

THE NEW Burnham government has moved against Israel, banning imports from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and imposing sanctions on individuals and firms providing services to the Zionist settlers. Foreign Minister Ed Miliband said this marked a “new approach” to relations with Israel telling Parliament that the occupation of the West Bank as a whole was unlawful – going beyond the previous position that only described the settlements themselves as illegal.

For some Palestinians this was welcome news. For others it was simply too little, too late. For those who run the autonomous Palestinian authority in the West Bank the Burnham move was a turning point in UK-Palestine relations. For others it was just a sop to appease pro-Palestinian sentiment on the street and win back the support of the Muslim community in Britain.

Maybe yes, maybe no. In the United States Bloomberg news reports that British diplomats are privately telling the Trump team that the measures are “largely symbolic” and would have no material impact on Britain’s wider trade or security relationship with Israel. But the Burnham move has provoked a fit of rage in the Zionist camp. The Netanyahu government accused the “morally distorted” Miliband of “outrageous lies” and responded with a range of retaliatory measures, including the closure of the British consulate in occupied Arab East Jerusalem and the expulsion of British officials from a Gaza coordination centre. Leaders of Arab-hating Zionist settlers are calling for support for Argentina over the Malvinas/Falkland islands while the UK’s chief rabbi warns that Labour’s sanctions against Israeli settlers in the West Bank will put British Jews in danger.

The Israelis think they can do what they like as long as they have Western support. But the tide is turning even in the imperialist heartlands. France, the United Kingdom and Canada are among the 12 Western bloc countries that have backed restrictions on trade with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. And even in the United States opinion is changing with more and politicians – mainly in the Democrat camp – coming out in support of the Palestinians.

Month after month hundreds of thousands have marched through the streets of London demanding justice for the Palestinian Arabs. The Labour government has, at long last, taken heed of them and taken the first step in redressing the balance. It would never have happened under Starmer, let alone Tony Blair – the former Labour premier who sees no shame in acting as Trump’s gofer in the Middle East.

The genocidal war against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip must end. Israel must be forced out of the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs restored including the right of return for all the refugees and the right to self-determination and an independent Palestinian state as envisaged by the United Nations back in the 1940s.

While not totally cosmetic the Burnham sanctions are, in fact, only a very modest step against Israeli interests. Nevertheless they are the thin end of the wedge and this is why the Zionists – and their masters in Washington – are outraged. This was the first step. Much more needs to be done.

France Withdraws Support for Infantino

by Laura V Mor

THE FRENCH Football Federation has unanimously decided to withdraw its support for FIFA President Gianni Infantino ahead of the 2027 elections, citing concerns over governance and transparency. The Executive Committee of the French Football Federation (FFF), convened last week at the request of its President Philippe Diallo, unanimously resolved to withdraw its support for Gianni Infantino ahead of the FIFA presidential elections scheduled for 18th March 2027 in Rabat, Morocco.

The French institution had initially endorsed Infantino at the end of June. But the circumstances have changed say the French football leadership. And the trigger for this change in stance is the project led by the FIFA leadership to privatise a percentage of the commercial rights of the World Cup through the opening of capital to external investors.

The French Football Federation – a founding member of FIFA – underscored that a project of such magnitude over the heritage of world football required a transparent, consultative and informed process. Although the coordinated action of UEFA and affiliated institutions temporarily halted this commercial initiative, the French federation emphasised that the discussion on ethics and institutional integrity in sport remains relevant.

In this context, the FFF announced the start of consultation days with specialists in sports governance and the international public sphere. The central purpose is to build a collective proposal that restores confidence, strengthens accountability, and ensures a model where solidarity prevails over commercialisation.

The decision by the FFF comes at a critical juncture for FIFA, as the organisation faces increasing scrutiny over its governance practices.

Gianni Infantino, who has been at the helm of FIFA since 2016, has faced numerous controversies during his tenure. These include allegations of corruption, conflicts of interest

and a lack of transparency in decision-making processes.

Other football federations and international organisations have also expressed concerns about FIFA’s governance. UEFA, for instance, has been vocal about the need for greater transparency and accountability within FIFA. The coordinated efforts of these organisations have put Infantino and his administration under intense scrutiny.

The FFF’s initiative to consult with specialists in sports governance and the international public sphere is a significant step towards promoting democratic reform in global football. By involving experts in the process, the FFF aims to ensure that any proposed reforms are well-informed and effective. This approach is expected to build a collective proposal that addresses the concerns of the global football community.

As the 2027 FIFA elections approach, the French initiative sets a precedent for other federations to follow, while the pressure on Infantino and his administration to address long-standing concerns about transparency and accountability increases.

Meanwhile UEFA has formally lifted its boycott of FIFA competitions while launching legal pressure to force Infantino out. Despite the truce on the playing fields, the board led by Aleksander Ceferin has separated sporting activity from the leadership dispute. UEFA will now concentrate its resources on forcing the resignation of

FIFA President Gianni Infantino, whom it accuses of crossing an institutional line by attempting to commercialise the assets of global football.

As a first step, UEFA’s legal services has hired law firms in the United States to formally warn FIFA about the start of arbitration lawsuits over alleged mismanagement in the corporate structure. The warning marks the first concrete step of a strategy that combines arbitration courts with political pressure.

In parallel with the judicial route, the European football association is preparing an electoral strategy ahead of next year’s FIFA presidential elections. If Infantino decides to seek re-election, UEFA and its allied federations will promote a rival consensus candidate. Ceferin has ruled out heading that list, prioritising his support for a figure who promotes transparent governance, removed from the influence of external capital.

The legal proceedings in the United States could test the FIFA leadership’s management of the abandoned commercial project, while the March vote will determine whether Infantino retains control of world football. For European federations, the restoration of the international calendar solves the immediate competitive question, but the institutional battle has only just begun. Both battles will run in parallel over the coming months, and the outcome of either could redefine the balance of power in world football.



Workers Notes

by New Worker correspondent

AFTER A YEAR of activism and preparation, over 100 people joined the founding conference of the Anti Fascist International's British Chapter at the Bolivar Hall in central London last Saturday.

The Anti Fascist International was launched at a conference in Caracas in November 2024 that was attended by 1,100 delegates from 76 countries. The conference issued the *Antifascist Statement of Caracas - For a New World* which included a call for "a peaceful solution to the war instigated by the expansionist and warlike machinery of NATO in Ukraine, against the Russian Federation," and appealed to "all humanist and progressive forces in the world to unite all efforts to preserve the strategic security of all nations and avoid a nuclear conflagration".

Opening the conference this call was taken up by Alfredo Patallo of the British Chapter who said "the British Chapter of the Anti Fascist International is working together with British parties, and in solidarity with Venezuela after the abduction of Nicolas Maduro and Cilia Flores, to bring pressure on the Labour Party over issues of importance to the Latin American community in Britain. The British Chapter also actively supports the people of Cuba, Palestine and Iran".

Miriam Palacios, representing P120 (Platform 12 October, marking the date of Columbus' landing in 1492), said that the Cuban revolution had managed to survive decades of sanctions because "the experience of our Cuban mentality is the backbone of our resistance against imperialism. We know their trickery and their lies, we've been experiencing them since 1898. What is needed is one big push by people all over the world to end imperialism and wars once and for all".

Daniel O'Brien from the CPGB-ML pointed out that Cuba had trained more than 37,000 health professionals from 147 countries free of charge since 1960, including 250 Palestinians.

Building an anti-imperialist movement in Britain!



Alfredo Patallo opens the conference.

Professor David Miller spoke about winning his appeal against dismissal by the University of Bristol for alleged antisemitism in 2021, saying he had fought to spread anti-Zionist consciousness throughout Britain, including awareness of Israeli aggression against Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Iran, and its attempts to replace pro-Palestinian governments with pro-Israeli regimes in Latin America, Europe and around the world.

Part of the work of the AFI British Chapter is campaigning against NATO's proxy war in Ukraine aimed against the Russian Federation – highlighted by Theo Russell, who spoke on behalf of the New Communist Party and the International Ukraine Anti Fascist Solidarity campaign. Theo welcomed the fact that a large Donetsk People's Republic flag was among the banners on display. He spoke about the war being waged by Britain against Russia which was killing Russian civilians, while the war lobby in Britain claimed that Russia was waging war against Britain and called for welfare cuts to fund more military spending.

The conference consisted of three sessions: on Latin America, the attack on political freedoms and the imperialist drive to war, with other speakers from the Consistent Democrats, the Workers Party, the RCG, the Islamic Human Rights Commission and the SOAS2 campaign.

Building a war network around Russia

by Oleg Yanovsky

LAST WEEK Andy Burnham announced in Kiev that defence manufacturer MBDA had been authorised to give Ukraine information concerning the British components of SCALP, the French version of the long-range Storm Shadow missile.

Officially, the decision concerns documentation required to organise local assembly, but in practice, it could facilitate the transfer of blueprints, components, assembly kits or finished missiles.

red line

Moscow regards this technology transfer as crossing a red line, as London hasn't even attempted to shift responsibility onto intermediaries and the decision was publicly authorised by the prime minister. Britain has therefore assumed direct responsibility for the resulting escalation and deepened its involvement in military operations against Russia.

SCALP was developed through a joint British-French programme and its assembly requires classified information about British components and French sub-assemblies, as well as access to a secure facility. Ukraine doesn't possess a complete production cycle, but even

a partial transfer of classified data would integrate Ukrainian assembly into the British-French manufacturing chain and bind all three parties together for years.

Before this decision, Britain had been far more careful about covering its tracks. For example, the Flamingo missile, marketed as a product of the Ukrainian company Fire Point, is identical to a design unveiled in 2025 by the British-Emirati Milan Group. That arrangement allowed London to keep its distance, with formal responsibility for the missile's development and deployment resting with Kiev.

Britain is also attempting to free future missile projects from the American vetting process, so under Project Brakestop, the Ministry of Defence has commissioned MBDA UK, MGI Engineering and Rotron Aerospace to produce three prototypes of long-range missiles for Ukraine. The purpose is to reduce dependence on US authorisation and, consequently, on the position of the administration in Washington. London wants to determine for itself when and under what conditions such weapons are transferred.

British drones are already being used by Ukraine to strike targets deep inside Russia. They include the Nyan jet-powered drone, manufactured by Calen-Lenz, a subsidiary of BAE Systems. For its developers, the battlefield offers something particularly valuable: operational data with which to refine the weapon. Russia has also repeatedly pointed to the direct involvement of British special-

ists in the deployment of Storm Shadow missiles.

On the same day as the SCALP announcement, London secured access to Avengers AI Labs, an extensive body of data gathered by Ukrainian frontline sensors, so now British companies will be able to use this information to train target-recognition and autonomous-control systems, greatly shortening the journey from development to battlefield deployment.

Five British governments have come and gone during the active phase of the Ukraine conflict, but the country's anti-Russian course has remained remarkably consistent.

Boris Johnson began a programme to develop the Ukrainian navy, Rishi Sunak signed a ten-year security agreement, Keir Starmer followed with the Centenary Partnership Agreement and Burnham has now authorised access to classified missile technology. Each government has built upon the commitments made by its predecessor.

The same continuity is visible in Britain's strategic doctrine, where Sunak's Conservative government described Russia in its 2023 *Integrated Review Refresh* as the "most acute threat" to British security and Starmer's Labour government retained that position. The 2025 National Security Strategy called Russia "the most obvious and pressing example" of confrontation, while the *Strategic Defence Review* described it as an "immediate and pressing threat". That review established the principle of "NATO first, but not only NATO" and committed Britain to preparing for war.

These doctrines are supported by long-term financial obligations, given London has promised Ukraine three billion pounds annually until at least the 2030-31 financial year. The century-long partnership agreement provides for joint production, technology transfers and cooperation in the Baltic, Black and Azov seas where Britain's presence is intended to endure for decades, regardless of when the current military campaign ends.

The declaration signed by Britain, France and Ukraine on January 6, 2026, already outlines arrangements for the postwar period. These include multinational forces, military logistics hubs, secure facilities and a special legal regime for foreign personnel. In London's calculations, a ceasefire wouldn't end its involvement, but it would consolidate a new phase of Britain's military and industrial presence.

To coordinate these efforts, Britain is assembling several

continued on p4

continued from p5

overlapping structures, such as the Joint Expeditionary Force, the Maritime Coalition, the “coalition of the willing,” the International Fund for Ukraine and Lancaster House 2.0. Meanwhile, a classified British-German program known as *Deep Precision Strike* also envisages developing weapons with a range exceeding 2,000 km during the 2030s.

The International Fund for Ukraine is financed by Britain and 15 other countries, while the Ministry of Defence administers procurement. Participating states receive technology, contracts, guarantees and a place at the planning table while London turns the resources of its partners into instruments of British influence.

established

Ukraine is not the only front in this strategy, and across northern and eastern Europe, Britain’s coalition network already rests upon established military infrastructure.

The Joint Expeditionary Force coordinates national and NATO operations during the transition from crisis to conflict, at the same time Britain is doubling its contingent in Norway, expanding its presence in Estonia and deploying equipment stocks, command systems and targeting capabilities. A network of supply, communications and fire-control facilities is being constructed close to Russia’s borders to enable rapid combat deployment.

Britain also seeks a leading role in coordinating NATO defence initiatives. This allows London to shape allied plans, establish standards and monitor

their implementation, while also influencing how other countries build their armed forces and prepare for a possible war against a specifically identified opponent. Yes, Russia, of course.

Britain’s elected governments merely provide public legitimacy for this strategic course, as beyond the electoral cycle, the same network of intelligence agencies, professional bureaucrats, City financial interests, defence corporations, foundations and think tanks continues to operate.

This network establishes the institutional framework, distributes contracts, attracts investment and moves personnel between government departments and corporate boards. Ukraine has become one of its principal hubs, bringing together British standards, European manufacturing, Western capital, defence conglomerates and Silicon Valley start-ups.

This is the essence of the British approach, where London compensates for its shortage of resources by coordinating the capabilities of others and turning that coordination into political power.

The British establishment understands two arguments, a threat to its status and the prospect of unacceptable costs, and this status gives the UK the ability to form coalitions, exclude opponents and write the rules, and fear arises only when the consequences of escalation reach Britain itself. London will therefore support only a settlement that preserves its military and institutional position in Ukraine and it won’t accept any peace agreement that restricts British influence over the post-war order.

Russian attacks on port and

logistics infrastructure in Yuzhny and Izmail affect more than supplies to the Ukrainian armed forces. For Britain, which leads the Maritime Coalition and has extended its century-long partnership to the Black and Azov seas, these ports possess particular strategic value, given that military logistics, export routes, insurance markets and future maritime programmes all converge there.

Russian policy must recognise the networked character of Britain’s strategy and focus upon the coordination centres through which London harnesses foreign resources while diluting its own accountability. So long as Britain can raise the stakes while transferring the costs to its partners, its policy will not change. **rt.com**

On the Buses

by New Worker correspondent

LAST MONTH over 1,500 bus drivers employed at Arriva North depots in London were on strike for adequate air conditioning in buses – an urgent issue when some drivers recorded temperatures of 50 degrees in their cabs. The present air-cooling systems only reduce temperatures by a few degrees. But another wave of strikes has been called off after a new deal was secured by Unite.

Now drivers will only need to do 35 minutes before stopping and returning to their garage if the air-con fails. This is similar to current cold weather working rules. Defective buses used to be simply re-allocated to another driver. Now any vehicle

with a faulty cooling or heating system must be repaired before returning to service. The strike mandate, however, remains in place for a further 11 months.

In the Cloisters ...

by New Worker correspondent

THE NEW WORKER is indebted to a rival publication about the emergence of a new organisation devoted to improving the pay and conditions of a hitherto neglected section of the working classes. The Church Times, the Anglican weekly, tells us that Equity has established a Liturgical Singers Network.

The theatrical union has launched a code of practice, based on suggestions from choir singers, designed to “celebrate and build on best practice where it already exists, while also sending a clear signal to engagers about what dignity at work should look like for singers in this area of the profession”.

bad practices

Equity wants to see an end to such bad practices such as unpaid cancelled work, late payments, being held in cold rooms between sets, bullying, the lack of travel expenses and even alcohol between services, the latter which apparently results in bad behaviour.

As with most trade unionists they are concerned with pay, and Equity’s guidance is very modest: fair fees and transparent

pay agreed in advance with clear provisions for what happens if there is a cancellation. Fees should reflect the nature of the work with commercial concerts and wedding resulting in higher fees than for a regular service.

Like the richest of pop singers they should have clear provisions about streaming and recordings. Equity clearly have a dim view of church teaching if they think there is a need to ensure that “individuals should know whom to report to if they experience bullying, discrimination, or harassment”.

Other demands include access to clean toilets and drinking water, and to a warm space to rest during breaks or between services, and breaks within rehearsals lasting more than an hour and a half. Obviously not all singers are prepared to “rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven”.

The new Network demands that positions in choirs which are advertised as choral scholarships or professional-development opportunities should actually provide some “genuine and meaningful education opportunity”.

This correspondent does not see what the fuss is about. No sound church needs organs or choir. All that is needed is a precentor to lead the congregation in singing unaccompanied metrical psalms (no hymns) in God’s own languages of 17th century English and Scottish Gaelic.

...and on the Banks of the Cherwell

...we now turn our attention to the grand Oxford University Press (OUP) which claims to be in business since 1478 on the dodgy grounds that an edition of Tyrannius Rufinus’s Expositio in symbolum apostolorum was printed there that year.

OUP stopped printing in 1989, tragically leaving Britain bereft of a print shop that could handle Egyptian hieroglyphics. Now OUP plans to move 50 financial jobs to EXL Services in India, sparking a strike last week to oppose yet another round of redundancies. Last November 113 jobs were cut in its education and English language teaching divisions to boost its £47.1 million profits in 2025/26.

“Strike action is completely the fault of OUP” says Unite regional officer Naomi Gravett

“Its plans mark the latest in a long list of it putting profits over people. It is a wealthy employer and simply does not need to cut costs by outsourcing our members’ jobs abroad”.

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

**New Worker 8
September 2006**

EVENTS are moving fast as Labour MPs, junior ministers and even Blair’s best friends are lining up in force and publicly telling him he must go.

These are not the “usual suspects” – left-wing principled MPs and trade unionists who have been telling Blair to go for years now.

These are the “New Labour” careerists who fear

that Blair’s plummeting popularity and credibility is likely to drag them down if they don’t distance themselves from him publicly now.

On Monday a group of 18 Labour MPs, said to be the majority of the new intake of MPs in the 2001 election, led by Rhondda MP Chris Bryant and Birmingham Erdington MP Sion Simon sent Blair a “private” letter calling on him to quit now.

This followed the news that Blair was still refusing to set a firm date for his departure. His backers had said he was planning to stay in office for “another 12 to 18 months”.

This sparked a predictable show of public loyalty from the dwindling coterie still around Blair, who at the same time

hinted that Blair would probably announce the date of his resignation some time next May.

But Blair is notorious for giving vague hints that he is prepared to go in good time and then claiming he never said anything of the kind.

At last Labour MPs are now wise to this and both the supporters of Gordon Brown and Blair’s former supporters want him nailed to definite promises. They declared that next May was “not good enough”.

Then on Wednesday, a number of junior ministers resigned, adding to the pressure on Blair to resign now. Leading them was former junior defence minister Tom Watson, along with six parliamentary secretaries.

The Brownites are desperate that the handover of power should be as quick as possible and that there should be no debate about Labour’s policies. Brown’s lieutenant Ed Balls rejected the idea of a debate as “absurd”.

On the other hand, the party is in serious financial difficulties and the unions hold the purse strings. The unions – and the rank-and-file Labour members – do want a serious debate and a change of policy.

TGWU general secretary Tony Woodley said: “With a new leader must come a new agenda. Downing Street seems to be in a state of denial about the real state of the party – and indeed the real popularity of ‘New Labour’.

Far right on the march in Germany

SAXONY-ANHALT, a relatively small eastern German state with just over two million residents, rarely attracts global attention. But on Sunday, its capital Magdeburg became the centre of a political storm after the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) won a historic state election, securing around 44 per cent of the vote.

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) suffered a heavy blow, plunging to 18.4 per cent, down from 37.1 per cent in 2021. The Left party came in third with 9.3 per cent, followed by the Greens with 8.7 and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) with 8.4 per cent. The newly formed left-wing Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) hovered right on the five per cent threshold to enter the state parliament, while the business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP) crashed out with just 2.2 per cent. In the 83-seat Saxony-Anhalt state parliament, the AfD is projected to secure 39 seats, three seats shy of an absolute majority needed to govern alone. The result marked an unprecedented setback for the ruling CDU and put the AfD in a position to install its first-ever state governor.

The political divide was already visible on the streets of Magdeburg during the election weekend. Local AfD leader, 35-year-old Ulrich Siegmund, hailed the result while signalling a shift from his pre-election stance of only seeking office through an absolute majority, noting that his party is now open to a coalition. However, all other mainstream parties have repeatedly ruled out entering a coalition with the extreme right. It remains unclear how a viable state government will be formed.

On Saturday afternoon thousands of people gathered at Magdeburg's Domplatz under banners defending pluralism and democracy. Music filled the square, but the mood among many participants was one of quiet concern.

"If the cultural landscape here suffocates, I'll pack my bags" says Anja, an artist who travelled from nearby Leipzig. She fears that an AfD-led administration could cut public funding for the arts and restrict space for independent expression.

Nearby, Matea, a local physical therapist, acknowledged the widespread frustration that has fuelled support for the far right, saying that she was deeply dissatisfied with the policies of the federal government. "Still, handing power to the AfD will only make things worse" she said.

Less than two kilometres away, outside the AMO Kulturhaus, police vans formed a security perimeter around a sharply different scene.

The AfD's final campaign rally before the election drew a packed crowd, with some supporters standing outside on the pavement. They applauded and chanted in support of Ulrich Siegmund, whom they described as "a good fellow".

Bastian, 40, travelled across the country from North Rhine-Westphalia to attend the rally. The employee of an automotive parts supplier sees eastern Germany as the forefront of a broader national backlash. "I look at the young apprentices at our plant and wonder whether their jobs will still exist in five years" he said citing economic stagnation and uncontrolled immigration as reasons why he wants to "bring back the old Germany".

By Sunday these compet-



ing anxieties had converged quietly at polling stations. Outside a downtown polling station, Lieas, a 20-year-old student of Syrian descent, was heading to cast his ballot for the Greens, hoping to help smaller parties cross the five per cent electoral threshold and prevent the AfD from securing an outright majority. "We have to vote strategically," he said, describing the election as extremely important. "The atmosphere here is changing, and it is very worrying" Lieas said. He also mentioned that his younger brother is preparing to move to Germany for university, and he had given him clear advice: avoid Saxony-Anhalt and consider other parts of

the country.

Last week, the Berlin Institute for Economic Research (DIW) published a study showing that demographics are a key factor in explaining the momentum currently enjoyed by the far right – especially in the east of the country.

In regions with a high percentage of people over 60 and where well-educated young people are emigrating, the AfD receives more votes. Some strictly economic factors such as income levels or unemployment rates, although relevant, play a secondary role. The DIW had already shown in previous studies that the AfD is not the party of the unemployed or

low-income earners and now reiterates that single-cause explanations fall short.

Although the AfD's main electoral asset is opposition to immigration, the study finds that the percentage of foreigners or asylum seekers in a given region is either irrelevant or even shows a negative correlation with the AfD's success. "The AfD was particularly successful in the 2025 elections where the percentage of foreigners was very low" the report found.

Despite the importance of demographics in explaining the AfD's success in eastern Germany, the study finds that structural differences between the east and west are not enough to explain the party's differing levels of support in the two parts of Germany and points to historical factors as well.

In this regard, there is a phenomenon known as "Östalgie" – a word that describes the tendency among some east Germans to idealise life in the former communist German Democratic Republic (GDR).

In its campaigns in the east the AfD frequently organises convoys featuring Simson motorbikes, a GDR brand that has become emblematic, to express the nostalgia some people feel for times past.

An AfD supporter told *Der Spiegel* magazine that he had owned his Simson since 1975 and had lived through good times until "the Mercedes people came from the West to ruin everything with their incompetence".

But the far right is gaining supporters not only in the eastern regions but also in the west of the country. "When people talk about the difference between the two parts of Germany, many hope that in the west the threat posed by the AfD will not be as great" said Eva von Angern, The Left party's lead candidate in Saxony-Anhalt. "But if you look at the percentages the AfD received in Baden-Württemberg or Rhineland-Palatinate, two states in south-western Germany, you can see that this is not just an eastern problem". In the elections, the AfD won 18.8 per cent of the vote in Baden-Württemberg and 19.5 at the polls in Rhineland-Palatinate.



Saying no to the AfD.

by Yuri Bocharov

WHY WOULD a victor today need to loot cities, haul away machinery and demand gold when, in the 21st century, it is possible to obtain oil fields for a hundred years, a transport corridor for nearly a century, and a share of all future revenues from the natural resources of the “defeated” side?

Donald Trump very much wanted to become the president of peace. He wanted it so badly that throughout almost the entire first year of his second term, he regularly reminded humanity that he was the one ending wars, the one capable of reaching deals where everyone else had spent decades merely talking, and that, for some reason, his name was still missing from the list of Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

Even before returning to the White House, he had promised to end the Russian-Ukrainian war within 24 hours. It later turned out that the 24 hours had been said somewhat “sarcastically.” But another calculation soon emerged: Trump claimed that he had stopped eight wars and therefore that the Nobel Prize was practically obliged to find its way to the White House. When it did not, the US president wrote an astonishingly candid letter to the prime minister of Norway in January 2026. Since he had not been given the Nobel Peace Prize for ending “eight wars plus” he said he no longer felt obliged to think exclusively about peace. Forty days later, on 28th February, the United States and Israel attacked Iran. Sometimes history has a sense of humour that no satirist could improve upon.

At the same time, Trump’s first year really did unfold under the banner of peace — only a rather peculiar kind of peace. America was simultaneously waging a global tariff war; the president was discussing the acquisition of Green-

The price of peace



land, turning Canada into the 51st state and taking back the Panama Canal; he was threatening European allies with tariffs if they refused to help with the purchase of Danish territory; and then, for several weeks, he effectively made relations within NATO dependent on Copenhagen’s answer to the question of whether it might finally be willing to sell the island. In January 2026, Trump even threatened additional tariffs against eight European countries until Washington was given the opportunity to buy Greenland. He later backed away from the threat.

It makes for a rather unusual school of peace-making: first explain to an ally that America really needs its territory, then threaten it with economic sanctions, and once a compromise has been reached, announce yet another victory for peace.

The Snarl of Capitalism

Old textbooks once explained all of this with a simple term — the “snarl of capitalism”. The expression has long since gone out of fashion, but Trump seems to have decided to give it a new commercial appeal.

It would be too simple, however, to claim that the American president hands government contracts to specific political sponsors: such an assertion would require evidence of a direct exchange of “election money for post-election contracts”. We do not have that.

But there is something else, and it is considerably more interesting: the Trump administration itself has almost officially turned the volume of contracts, investments, purchases of American weapons, access to raw materials and future profits for American companies into a unit of measurement for foreign-policy success. Peace can no longer simply be peace. It needs a business plan.

Trump does little to

hide this. His first major trip to the Persian Gulf in May 2025 was presented by the White House primarily as a gigantic commercial operation. The administration counted more than \$2 trillion in agreements and commitments: Saudi Arabia a declared investment package worth \$600 billion; Qatar — economic agreements and a proposed exchange worth up to \$1.2 trillion; and the Emirates — more than \$200 billion in new commercial contracts, on top of a previously announced investment framework worth \$1.4 trillion.

Not all these figures represent real money already sitting in a bank account. Some involve long-term promises, memorandums, purchases and projects that had already been under discussion. But the logic of the trip remains unchanged.

One Arab official summed it up with almost indecent precision: “business, business and business”. The White

House valued the Saudi arms package alone at nearly \$142 billion — aircraft, air-defence systems, missiles, naval and ground systems, communications, training and maintenance. In other words, years of orders for the American military-industrial complex. Peace was being strengthened. The accounting books of American corporations were being strengthened particularly well.

Reparations old and new

The very idea of receiving material compensation for victory is hardly new. In the Middle Ages, a victorious army would simply enter a city and take — or, more precisely, loot — whatever it could carry away. Later, this became known as reparations and indemnities.

After World War II, everything happened in a much more civilised manner, on the basis of international agreements. Germany handed over

equipment, factories, rolling stock, foreign assets and technology.

The Potsdam agreements explicitly provided for the dismantling of industrial equipment and its transfer to the victors. The Soviet Union received factory equipment from its own occupation zone and part of the equipment from the Western zones. The United States, meanwhile, extracted German technologies and brought more than 1,500 German and other foreign scientists, engineers and technical specialists to America under Operation Paperclip and related programmes. The difference from ancient looting was substantial: everything was now documented through acts, commissions and departmental protocols.

These days machinery no longer needs to be dismantled. It is cumbersome, expensive and looks bad on television. It is far more convenient to establish an investment fund, a concession or a special-purpose company, sign an agreement granting preferential access, secure development rights for 49, 99 or 100 years, and ceremoniously present the whole arrangement as a programme of reconstruction and prosperity.

Formally, nobody is looting anything. The defeated side is even promised investment. Yet after the war, it somehow turns out that the most attractive assets have already been incorporated into the economic structure of the victor. The 21st century version of reparations does not arrive in a convoy. It arrives with lawyers.

Ukraine is one of the first major examples of this new model. It is important not to exaggerate here — the actual arrangement is interesting enough without journalistic embellishment. In January 2025, Kiev, clearly in gratitude for military support, concluded a 100-year partnership with Britain, under which London became a preferred partner

in a number of areas, including energy and critical minerals.

Trump did not cancel or “outbid” the British agreement. He did something much more practical: a separate American system of economic participation appeared alongside it.

On April 30th 2025, the United States and Ukraine signed what the media primarily presented as a “rare-earth minerals deal”, although it was actually an agreement to establish a joint Reconstruction Investment Fund.

Ukraine agreed to direct 50 per cent of future state revenues from new licenses for the development of critical minerals, oil and gas into the fund. Existing fields and current budget revenues were not formally transferred under the agreement, state ownership was preserved, and the fund’s management was structured on a parity basis.

But the United States received a preferential opportunity to purchase the resources or determine their buyer. The structure itself extended beyond minerals to hydrocarbons and related infrastructure.

Behind the attractive phrase “rare-earth metals” lay considerably more: oil and gas infrastructure, refineries, pipelines and terminals, including infrastructure at the port of Odessa – in other words, everything that could potentially generate revenue as part of Ukraine’s future reconstruction.

And naturally, after that, Trump, now effectively defending America’s own economic interests in Ukraine, threw himself into persuading Putin to end the war with renewed energy. It did not work.

But whatever form the conflict’s eventual end may take, the main thing had already been accomplished: Washington had secured itself a seat at the table where future profits from the development of Ukrainian resources and the

reconstruction of related infrastructure would be divided.

And this is where a characteristic feature of Trump’s diplomacy emerges. Peace becomes highly desirable not only because people stop dying. After peace comes, it is finally possible to build mines, extract oil, lay roads, launch funds and earn a return on invested capital.

As long as missiles are flying over a deposit, it is a poor investment asset. Once the missiles stop flying, an investment banker immediately begins to see the surrounding landscape in a much more favourable light. That is why the peacemaker and the developer can quite successfully coexist in the same person in modern politics.

main part of Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan while simultaneously becoming an important link in the Trans-Caspian route from Central Asia to Europe. And here, once again, peace immediately acquired a commercial component.

According to the US-Armenian framework published in 2026, the TRIPP Development Company is being established, with the American side expected to receive 74 per cent and Armenia 26. The company receives exclusive rights to use and develop designated sections initially for 49 years, after which the agreement may be extended for another 50 years. Following the extension, Armenia’s share rises to 49 per cent. But what is particularly interesting is that this is by no

at one of the key bottlenecks of the Eurasian transport system.

China may build the Silk Road across thousands of kilometres. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan may develop the Middle Corridor. Turkey may connect it to its own transport network. Europe may wait for the cargo.

But one of the critical links in that chain now carries the name of an American president, an American controlling stake and, no less importantly, the potential ability at some point to block or restrict the flow – for example, if the partners suddenly decide they would like to discuss a fairer distribution of the profits. Not a bad peace dividend.

Then came Iran and turned the entire concept

waterway through which roughly one-fifth of the world’s oil passed before the war.

Six months later, Hormuz had become one of the central issues in American policy towards the war. From there, the situation becomes almost comical.

In early August, mediators were discussing a temporary arrangement for reopening the strait, one that could have satisfied some of Tehran’s demands and given Iran more formal control over shipping than it had before the war.

In other words, a war launched partly to limit Iran’s capabilities could theoretically have ended by formalising a new Iranian role in the region’s main oil artery. But a few days later, Trump decided that this was not enough.

And the original dispute over Iran’s nuclear programme gradually turned into an entirely different story: who exactly would keep a hand on the valve through which the world’s oil flows. And so a new foreign-policy formula gradually emerges.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies pay for security through orders and investments. Ukraine offers future resource revenues. Peace in the South Caucasus comes with an American transport company for decades. War with Iran unexpectedly leads to discussions about control of the Strait of Hormuz.

It is not necessary to regard every one of these cases as a secret conspiracy or a plan prepared in advance. It is enough to notice the pattern: Trump constantly seeks to turn a political outcome into an economic asset.

If America provides security, it would be good to get a contract. If it helps broker peace, it would be good to get a project. If it ends a war, preferably there should be oil, gas, minerals, a port, a road or at least a very long concession nearby.

But all these stories pale beside what happened with Venezuela. There is no need to search for complicated analogies or calculate indirect benefits there. Following the US military operation, the capture of Nicolás Maduro and the change in the country’s de facto leadership, Washington gained the opportunity to discuss not individual contracts or a share of future budget revenues, but 65 billion barrels of oil and development rights lasting 100 years.

If a modern form of war reparations exists, this is where it begins to take on almost classical contours. Only instead of a victorious general with a sword, oil executives, bankers and lawyers arrived at the defeated side.

Pravda.ru

The US makes billions selling arms to its ‘allies’.



The American price

In the South Caucasus, this philosophy received an almost perfect embodiment. In August 2025, with Trump’s mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan took a major step toward ending their decades-long conflict. Peace between two states that had fought each other for decades is, in itself, undoubtedly valuable.

But together with peace came the ‘Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity’ – TRIPP, a transport route through Armenian territory connecting the

means just a railway line.

Official documents list railways and highways, bridges, tunnels, electricity networks, oil pipelines, gas pipelines, fibre-optic lines, terminals and supporting infrastructure.

The company will be able to collect fees for access, commercial activity, leasing and services. Armenia retains sovereignty and control over its borders and customs – something that is explicitly emphasised.

Yet the economic meaning of the arrangement is obvious: a company with a controlling American stake appears

into political satire. The US-Israeli war against Iran began with talk of the nuclear programme, missile capabilities, regional proxies and the need to eliminate threats to America’s allies. Six months passed.

According to Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, US military spending had already reached \$37.5 billion by 21st July, while the Pentagon requested tens of billions of dollars in additional funding. At the same time, the strategic objectives increasingly shifted towards the question of who controls the Strait of Hormuz – the

He announced that the strait was already under the complete control of the United States. Then he wrote: “I THINK WE WILL KEEP IT.”

He subsequently began discussing the possibility of making the Strait of Hormuz American territory.

On 28th August 26 the White House issued a separate statement under the magnificent headline: “President Trump Was Right: America Controls the Strait of Hormuz”. It stated that nearly 1,500 commercial vessels carrying 750 million barrels of oil had passed under American protection.

LETTERS

IN LAST year's Polish Presidential election Solidarnosc endorsed Karol Nawrocki from the far right, populist Law and Justice Party. In the 2022 Presidential election Solidarnosc backed Andrzej Duda, who again was from the Law and Justice Party. It should come as no surprise really.

Solidarnosc was always a reactionary force bankrolled by US imperialism. Indeed the CIA secretly laundered \$10 million over the course of five years to Solidarnosc, starting in 1982.

The National Endowment for Democracy, set up by the US Congress, sent \$4 million.

Plus the American labour federation the AFL-CIO, often dubbed the AFL-CIA, gave them \$300,000.

Arthur Scargill rightly denounced Solidarnosc as an "anti-socialist organisation which desires the overthrow of a socialist state." Bob Crow was also critical of Solidarnosc. And even Tony Benn noted in his diaries that Labour and the TUC in supporting Solidarnosc were "supporting Polish Thatcherism".

Sure enough, when Solidarnosc won the elections in Poland in 1989 it implemented IMF backed "shock therapy." Poland went from a socialist economy to a capitalist one virtually overnight. State industries, including the shipyards, were sold off and unemployed spiralled to 20 per cent.

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

I WAS a bit shocked to see a tribute in the *New Worker* to the late Dolly Parton republished from the US *People's World* (a revisionist newspaper). Surely as communists and anti-imperialists we should be rejecting Yankee imperialist culture?

Culture is part of class struggle. Culture does not exist in an ideological vacuum. Culture always represents ideology.

Of course a tiny minority of US celebrities such as Harry Belafonte have supported progressive causes but Ms Parton was not one of them. Ms Parton's union membership is mentioned in the article but so what? Ronald Reagan was President of the Screen Actors Guild. And in Britain many right wing actors belong to Equity, a trade union.

Parton may well have come from the working class but she was a keen supporter of US imperialism. Although Dolly Parton never actually served in the US armed forces she often entertained American troops and released the album *For God and Country* in 2003 when the US aggression against the Iraqi people was at its height. According to the US website Pulptastic "Parton's contributions extended beyond music. In 2004, she unveiled patriotic nose art featuring her likeness on a KC-135 Stratotanker at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, an aircraft dubbed 'Miss Dolly'.

Her image also appeared on other military aircraft during the Gulf War era, symbolising her enduring bond with the armed forces. She autographed and performed for airmen and their families".

Clearly Ms Parton was happy to support US imperialism's aggression against Iraq and other countries. Her music, with its awful drawl, represents the intrusion of American cultural imperialism into Britain. Surely as anti-imperialists we should be rejecting US cultural imperialism not trying to eulogise it!

President Kim Il Sung once wrote, referring to the revisionists, that "in the field of art, too, they draw no distinct line between the revolutionary art of the working class and the reactionary art of the bourgeoisie, and advocate the supra-class 'art of mankind'. The revisionists consider that the working class ought to learn the corrupt capitalist way of life, and believe that the revolutionary working class ought to learn the foul songs and dances which the capitalists enjoy when getting drunk and taking licentious pleasures. They maintain that the class character of art is absolutely unnecessary".

A future socialist

Britain should develop a culture that is socialist in content and national form and reject imperialist ideological and cultural infiltration.

**Dermot Hudson
London**

FOR OVER 15 years, Danish human rights defender Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Swedish activist Mohamed Habib al-Muqdad have been languishing in Bahrain's prisons, as their governments and the European Union have failed to secure their release from unjust detention. As the EU launched negotiations for a "Strategic Partnership Agreement" with Bahrain in July, it should have used them to ensure that al-Khawaja, al-Muqdad and others unjustly jailed would finally be freed and reunited with their families. The EU had their annual meeting with their counterparts from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC) recently, and should have raised these cases but, it is clear, that they had not done that. The EU has always shied away from infuriating the GCC leaders.

Bahrain's Khalifi regime has been escalating the war on the majority Shia Muslim population. People now have to obtain permission to hold religious gatherings, in a clear violation of the common and religious laws. Permission is also required for religious events including the anniversaries of Shia Muslim Imams. This is contrary to the long-standing traditions of Bahrainis to mark these events as a matter of routine, without the need for permission from the Khalifa family.

Meanwhile in Saudi Arabia the much-celebrated NEOM project is on the verge of collapse. According to the Wall Street Journal the Saudi's futuristic mega project has come to a standstill, as the extraordinary costs of the planned city have collided with financial reality. After sinking more than \$50 billion into Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's dreams of a sci-fi metropolis, the kingdom is now spending billions of dollars more to wind down contracts, leaving mammoth-sized partially built structures to gather sand in the desert.

**Saeed Shehabi
Bahrain
Freedom
Movement London**

Diary

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.

UNTIL 22 OCT

Prince Charles Cinema: Series of films by Soviet director Andrei Tarkovsky. 7 Leicester Place, London WC2H 7BY. Details and tickets on PCC website.

UNTIL 2 NOV

People's History Museum: On the Line – 100 Years of Strikes and Solidarity. PHM Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER.

UNTIL 26 FEB 2027

Working Class Movement Library: Two exhibitions: 1926 General Strike and Grunwick 1976-8. Wed-Fri afternoons. WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

FRI 19 - 20 SEPT

Peace and Justice Project: Annual Conference. Blizard Building, Queen Mary University, 4 Newmark Street, London, E1 2AT

SAT 19 SEPT

Scottish Palestinian Campaign: Scotland Palestine Demo: 11:30 Glasgow Green to Buchanan Street Steps.

SAT 19 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Open House Day 11:00–15:00. 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU.

SAT 19 SEPT

Society for the Study of Labour History: Chartism Day 2026. Friends Meeting House, 39 High Street, Warwick CV34 4AX. Details from SSLH website.

SAT 19 SEPT

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Vigil against American nuclear weapons in Britain. 12:00–14:00. RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk IP27 9PN.

TUE 22 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Introducing Marx & Marxism. 19:00, free online taster. Book on MML website.

THUR 24 SEPT

General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM). Online lecture. 19:00–20:30. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 26 SEPT

International Brigade Memorial Trust: Commemoration of Five volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. 11:00. Memorial stone, Forth Avenue, Kirkcaldy KY2 5PR; later social at KUSI Club, 8 St Brycedale Avenue KY1 1ET.

SAT 26 SEPT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Stop Arming Israel: march to Labour's annual conference. 12:00–16:00, 12 noon on St George's Plateau, Liverpool L1 1JJ.

SUN 27 SEPT

International Brigade Memorial Trust: Evening of films about solidarity. 17:00–21:00. The Nest, Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HU. Register on WeGotTickets.

MON 28 SEPT

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: End the siege on Cuba. 17:45. The Casa, 29 Hope St, Liverpool L1 9BP.

WED 30 SEP–SAT 21 NOV

Townsend Theatre Productions: Ribert Tressell's Ragged Trousered Philanthropists. Touring play. See TTP website for venues and booking.

THUR 1 OCT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: NO to Palantir in the NHS. See PSC website for local actions across England.

SAT 3 OCT

Palestinian Film Club: The Voice of Hind Rajab. 19:00. Pictureville Cinema, National Science and Media Museum, Bradford BD1 1NQ.

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

TRADE UNIONS and opposition parties have expressed alarm at the SNP's "Pro-gramme for Govern-ment" which is prom-ised to bring about a "rewired and reim-ained" Scottish state which will see "The most radical reshap-ing of public services since the establish-ment of Holyrood" ac-cording to First Min-ister John Swinney. For starters Scotland's 14 health boards will be reduced to two. Coun-cil boundaries will be under consideration for redrawing.

Glasgow City Council which is tottering on the edge of bankruptcy (£110 million deficit) is seeking to become a Manchester style city

region. This would in-volve swallowing up prosperous neighbour-ing towns – something which has already sparked a strong reac-tion from the bourgeois voters in Bearsden and Milngavie terrified of seeing their council taxes rising to pay for Glasgow drug clinics.

in the oven

The SNP's plans for the health boards seem to have been in the oven for a long time, and the new heads al-ready appointed. Two Subnational Planning and Delivery Com-mittees (SPDC) for all health boards were set up in November on an east-west basis with the CEOs of Lothian and Glasgow health boards getting the top jobs without any competi-tion and a 10 per cent pay rise.

The SPDCs were created without any consultation and clear-ly were designed with more than a tempo-rary task of dealing

with long waiting lists. Keir Greenaway, of the GMB, said "it now seems clear this process was not, in fact, about encouraging co-opera-tion between boards but merging them". Unison Scotland head of health Matt McLaughlin added that "similarly patients, communities and rank-and-file health workers are worried that this new structure will sim-ply turbo-charge the ex-isting central belt dom-ination of services and jobs."

The two unions pre-dict chaos and warn that the merger will expose massive differences in local shift allowances which will trigger huge, massive equal pay claims. Caithness, Suth-erland & Ross Lib-Dem MSP David Green made the obvious point that "I cannot imagine anyone in the Highlands will think that their health service will get better with decision-making

being stripped to Glas-gow". He also point-ed out the SNP plan to dodge having a Holy-rood vote by making the changes based on an ob-scure clause in the 1978 NHS Act.

This is very similar to the way regional police and fire services were centralised in 2013, and the later failed National Care Service. The main purpose is reducing the £4.7 billion hole in pub-lic finance, rather than improve efficiency.

slash and burn

Unite warns that it is considering all options for resisting plans which it says will see the loss of 20,000 jobs which will result from a "slash and burn programme for the NHS". Instead of job cuts it says that a modest two per cent wealth tax on Scot-land's richest wealthiest individuals and families alone could raise alone

could raise nearly £500 million annually.

Water Wars

For a long time the SNP Government liked to boast that the quality of water from publicly owned Scottish Water is much better than that of privatised England. One of the reasons for this is surprisingly sim-ple. Much less moni-toring of pollution in-cidents took place so less pongs are reported, so the figures look bet-ter, however last year 100,041 spillages or discharges took place, up from 24,398 in 2024. The increase was due to the belated installation of over a thousand new sewage flow monitors. This means that annual monitoring data is now available for 30 per cent of all sites. In contrast only six per cent had been monitored earlier.

Liberal Democrat environment spokes-person Sanne Dijk-stra-Downie said the new figures were "a real horror show" add-ing that the SNP Gov-ernment must "treat this crisis with the serious-ness it deserves" and outline a plan to "bring sewage discharges un-der control".

She added that "this is the equivalent of 274 dumps taking place every single day" and that this was likely to be a gross underestimate because, unlike Eng-land, not all Scottish

overflow sites are mon-itored.

Ms Dijkstra-Down-ie, who represents Ed-inburgh Northern in the Scottish parliament, called for a Clean Water Act to replace outdated 30-year old standards with modern enforce-able regulation. How-ever Scottish Water denied there was much of a problem, saying most of the discharged wastewater from sewer overflows was usually during heavy rain and was "grey" water from households and not sewage.

splash out

She also points out that Scottish Water re-sembles Thames Wa-ter in its eagerness to splash out "bumper bo-nuses to its executives while sewage is being dumped into our rivers, lochs and beaches more than 100,000 times". These bonuses include £115,000 to up the CEO's £315,000 salary which brought him up to £432,000 (with pen-sion and perks includ-ed).

The Chief Finance Officer gets £79,000 bonus on top of his £217,000 giving him £363,000. Pity a poor Chief Operating Of-ficer who has to make do with a mere £64,000 bonus on top of his £176,000 salary. This largesse comes after bills increased by 8.7 per cent in April...

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NCP back at Burston

by John Maryon

THOUSANDS of workers gathered again in the beautiful Norfolk village of Burston for their annual trade union rally last weekend. Like those courageous teachers Tom and Kitty Higdon, who defied the power of the local gentry and church authorities in 1914 to defend socialism and trade unions, today people once again assembled to show their own determination to fight the class struggle. Unions are as alive and vital as ever they were to defend the rights of working people. And appropriately enough this successful event was well organised by the Unite trade union.

After an absence of a number of years the New Communist Party was back with its *New Worker* stall supported by young comrades who proudly carried the party banner on the traditional march. The gathering was an important opportunity to build



NCP East Anglia banner on the march.

unity, support each other and demonstrate working class power. A wide range of trade unions including Unite, Unison, RMT, NASU-

WT and USDAW were represented in addition to the Norwich trades council. Stop the War, Palestine Solidarity, CND, pensioners

groups, hunt saboteurs and antifascists were in attendance. And along with the NCP were other left parties including the CPB and the Corby-

nistas' Your Party, the Greens and the CPGB-ML and a number of sectarian Trotskyist parties whose chief interest appeared to be their opposition to key aspects of Marxism-Leninism!

A well received keynote speech was given by Jess Barnard, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign TU Organiser. She spoke about how Israel continues to make life impossible in the occupied lands and highlighted the inaction of Andy Burnham in ending military co-operation with the aggressor. Political pressure was needed to force the government to act as had been the case in Ireland where the government now opposes Israel's actions. People were urged to support the forthcoming International Day of Action events. The call 'Free Palestine' resounded across the village green.

Another important speech was given by Clive Lewis, the Labour MP for Norwich South. He made strong criticism of Keir Starmer and criticised Andy

Burnham for not including more left-wingers in his Cabinet. The speaker made rousing calls for supporting the NHS, taking water back into public ownership and investing in infrastructure. But what he failed to say how this could be achieved without cutting military expenditure and ending total subservience to US hegemony.

The rally enabled good discussions to take place between parties and individuals to develop trust, cooperation and friendship. A comrade from Syria, who visited our stand, said that that China had done more for his country than anyone by constructing a metro system in Damascus and other infrastructure projects. Friendly exchanges took place with CPGB-ML members who share our concerns over important issues including Gaza peace and the NHS. The message is clear – Workers of the World Unite! The spirit of Burston can move this process forward!

Young Chinese diplomats visit the Royal Society

by New Worker correspondent

A DELEGATION of young diplomats from the Chinese Embassy, led by Minister Counsellor Bi Haibo, visited the Royal Society in Westminster on 26th August. The Royal Society is an independent scientific academy, dedicated to promoting excellence in science for the benefit of humanity. Members include many of the world's most

eminent scientists, engineers and technologists, and it is the oldest scientific academy in continuous existence, founded in 1660 by King Charles II soon after the restoration of the monarchy following the collapse of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland & Ireland, the republic that had been led by Oliver Cromwell until his death in 1658.

At the Society's headquarters in the heart of London the two sides held candid exchanges on topics including the

theory and practice of China's diplomacy and China-UK cooperation in science, technology and education.

Both sides spoke highly of the exchange, noting that the development of science and technology transcends national borders and that international exchanges and cooperation in this field contribute to the common development of all countries and the advancement of humanity.

Building on

the complementary strengths and fruitful cooperation between the two countries in science and technology, both sides expressed their readiness to further enhance mutual learning and tap into the potential for and expand the scope of collaboration, with a view to making new contributions to the development of a long-term and consistent strategic partnership between People's China and the United Kingdom.



The mentality of the witch-hunt

WE'VE GOT Chinese “fridge spies”, routers spies, smart meters spies... now even tractors have joined the list. But perhaps what is more alarming than the “tractor spyware” narrative is the reflexive tendency to suspect espionage whenever a Chinese-funded company is seen. This inevitably brings to mind the witch hunts of European history.

The *Telegraph* recently reported another version of the China espionage narrative fabricated by British politicians. The so-called Coalition on Secure Technology (CST), led by Labour MP Graeme Downie, claimed that China could use spyware in tractors and other connected agricultural machinery to spy on British farmers and gain intelligence on food security, arguing that “Chinese chips were now commonplace in farm machinery, including GPS-guided tractors, agricultural drones and automated irrigation systems”.

Depicting tractors as spy tools may sound absurd, but it is far from accidental. As an informal think-tank group, CST has long focused on so-called “risks from Chinese technology”. It has previously hyped claims that Chinese components in smart home appliances and electric vehicles could be “weaponised” into spyware.

Connectivity is a fundamental feature of the information society; if “potential hacking” or “possible data collection” is enough to presume something guilty, then all connected devices could be branded as spy tools – including those produced in the USA and Europe themselves. By this logic, should

legations of so-called “Chinese agents” infiltrating Parliament have repeatedly surfaced; MI5 has issued multiple warnings suggesting that “recruiters” on job websites may be Chinese intelligence officers; even fridges have been called spies – like the imaginary spyware in routers, smart meters, mobile

early modern period. Back then, an accusation alone – without a shred of evidence – was enough to send someone to the stake. Today, the attitude of some British politicians and think-tanks towards China and “Made in China” carries more than a hint of the same witch-hunt mentality. The playbook is familiar:

my” narrative to shore up consensus and deflect internal tensions. At home, this serves to mask deindustrialisation, crumbling infrastructure, and social fragmentation; abroad, it aligns with certain geopolitical frameworks.

The result is an attempt to use “witch hunts” to mask a lopsided psyche: China’s

and citizens, but also translate into restricted market access, overstretched investment reviews, and obstruction of routine business activities. For the UK, meanwhile, hyping tractors as supposed spy tools not only erode bilateral trust, but also undermines Britain’s own credibility as a rule-of-law nation and an open economy. In fact, whether removing Chinese-made surveillance cameras or excluding Chinese companies from 5G networks, every act of stigmatizing China comes at the cost of slowing Britain’s own development and weakening its competitiveness. Ultimately, it is British taxpayers who foot the bill.

Historically, the witch-hunt frenzy eventually receded under the light of rationality brought by the Enlightenment, but the price Europe paid for that collective madness was immense. If some British politicians and think-tanks continue to turn China into the target of a witch hunt campaign, what they will ultimately reap is more expensive equipment, a more closed market, a more divided society, and missed opportunities to cooperate for mutual benefit with the world’s second-largest economy.

The flames of a witch hunt will only burn those who light them; they will do nothing to help Britain overcome its own difficulties.

Global Times



we throw all internet-connected devices into the Thames?

Such baseless accusations are not “security analysis” but rather a form of pre-judgment where targets are drawn first and arrows are shot later.

automatic

More alarming than the “tractor spy” narrative is the automatic response to suspect espionage whenever a Chinese-funded company is seen. In recent years this kind of anti-China paranoia has become an assembly-line product output in the UK. Al-

payment terminals, electric buses, wind turbines and civilian drones. Now even tractors have joined the list!

Fabricating baseless espionage cases targeting China, maliciously smearing Chinese companies and damaging their reputations has almost become a routine task for some UK intelligence agencies as well as a tool for certain think tanks to pollute public perception and undermine China-UK relations.

This inevitably brings to mind the witch hunts that swept Europe from the late Middle Ages into the

Normal technological cooperation and trade are portrayed as infiltration and threats; Chinese companies’ market successes are rebranded as “strategic risks”; and even agricultural machinery is cast as potential espionage equipment.

Behind this mindset lies anxiety and unease over the West’s eroding edge in its competition with China – and, ultimately, a lack of confidence in its own strengths. Economically, they seek co-operation with China’s markets and supply chains; politically, however, they feel compelled to manufacture an “ene-

development is automatically viewed as a “loss” for the West, co-operation is treated with suspicion as a trap and normal market competition is stigmatised as “China Shock 2.0”.

manipulation

It is not difficult to see what lies at the heart of this manipulation: blame-shifting and an attempt to evade reality.

The result can only be harmful to both sides. For China, such accusations based on the presumption of guilt damage not only the reputation of Chinese companies

Can BRICS beat the blockade?

by Hedelberto López
Blanch

THE 18th BRICS Summit will take place in New Delhi this weekend with member countries, associate members, and special guests, under the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability”. The conference will be held at the Bharat Mandapam Convention Centre in New Delhi, and attendees will exchange views on strengthening internal BRICS co-operation around common priorities and share perspectives on global and regional issues of mutual interest.

This would be a good opportunity for the BRICS, as a progressive organisation striving for a multipolar world, to take the political initiative in sending fuel to Cuba, breaking the inhumane and arrogant measure imposed by the United States, which seeks to overthrow the Cuban Revolution with a rigid oil blockade.

Cuban leaders and solidarity and progressive organisations all around the world have denounced what the criminal US president, Donald Trump, and his Secretary of State Marco Rubio are committing as genocide against the Cuban people. And in the Final Declaration of the meeting of BRICS foreign ministers held in New Delhi on May 12th and 13th of this year, the participants reiterated the need to end the economic, trade, and finan-

cial measures against Cuba.

It is worth recalling that on 29th January Trump signed an executive order declaring a “national emergency” in response to what he absurdly called the “unusual threat” to the security of the United

States and the region posed by the Caribbean island. On these grounds the USA announced the imposition of tariffs on countries that sell oil to the Caribbean nation, along with threats of reprisals against those who defy the White House executive order.

severely affected

By reinforcing the blockade that Washington has maintained against Cuba for more than 60 years, and by preventing Cuba from acquiring oil on any market, services such as electricity, food, healthcare, education and transportation have been severely affected.

At the meeting of

foreign ministers, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla said that “with this criminal act, a violation of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the United States intends

to impose on the entire world the obligation to comply with the blockade against Cuba, regardless of the sovereignty of each government and the will of its people”. He then explained that only a broad and resolute international coalition will allow for a successful confrontation of the United States’ global depredation, which will be doomed to failure if states do not allow themselves to be intimidated. In this context, he noted, reforming global governance and the multilateral system is not merely an aspiration, but an urgent and indispensable political necessity.

The strength of the BRICS group is undeniable. Initially

formed in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China, and later joined in 2011 by South Africa, it was joined as a permanent member in 2024 by Egypt. This was followed by the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Iran and subsequently Indonesia. Since January 2025, Cuba, Bolivia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Uganda, and Thailand have been partners.

Havana has maintained a significant friendship and cooperation with all its members and associates over the years. Currently, the group wields global influence, representing 46 per cent of the world’s Gross Domestic Product and 55 per cent of the world’s population.

Given these circumstances, I ask: Will the governments of the world, and specifically the BRICS nations, allow a genocide to be committed against Cuba, as is being carried out by the aggressive and inhumane policy implemented by the US empire against the

island? Will international organisations such as the United Nations, BRICS, the African Union, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and ASEAN, with which Havana maintains good rela-

tions, continue to accept the United States’ continued pressure on countries to withhold the necessary oil?

how long?

How long will nations friendly to Cuba (many of which have also suffered extortion euphemistically called “sanctions”) obey Washington’s genocidal and unjust actions?

Can’t they all agree to send fuel to Cuba, a country suffering one of the most ruthless wars waged by a declining but extremely aggressive empire?

During his speech commemorating the start of the revolution on 26th July Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel

Bermúdez said “we denounce those who designed, implemented, and sustained this policy of suffocation as being responsible for the suffering of the Cuban people. We also denounce those who remain silent and tolerate the excesses of the emboldened, fascist, far-right in the United States, which lies, steals, kills, and pretends to be the arbiter of all destinies”.

Recently, in response to the substantial aid of food, solar panels, and other supplies that the People’s Republic of China has sent to the island, Díaz-Canel emphasised that “when an empire strangles us with a blockade that has lasted for over six decades, a sister nation decided to extend its hand unconditionally...it is pure solidarity, not charity. It is justice”.

He added that “Cuba gave the world doctors, teachers, vaccines. We sent brigades to the most remote places on the planet. We shared what little we had. We are an example of humanity. Now, when we need it most, someone is reciprocating that gesture. And it’s not a favour, it’s an acknowledgment that the blockade is not a problem for Cuba, but a problem for humanity”.

That’s why I think it’s time to put a stop to this phantom unipolar world that the United States wants to continue imposing and move to political action to finally create a truly multipolar one.

**Resumen
Latinoamericano**

