

# RUSSIAN MISSILES ROCK UKRAINE

by our Eastern European Affairs correspondent

**RUSSIAN** missiles have rocked Ukraine this week to avenge the bombing of the Crimea Bridge that killed three people and caused a partial collapse of the main road and rail link between Crimea and the Russian mainland. Eight saboteurs have been arrested over the explosion last Saturday that the Russians say was organised by Ukrainian intelligence.

Two days after the terrorist attack Vladimir Putin told the Russian Security Council that Ukrainian energy, military command, and communications facilities in different parts of the country had been hit with precision-guided weapons. He said the crimes committed by the Kiev regime against Russia's civilian infrastructure, like the attack on the Crimean bridge, the attempts to blow up one of the sections of the TurkStream gas pipeline, and the efforts by Ukraine's security services to target Russia's Kursk nuclear plant, could not be left unanswered.

Hundreds of Russian cruise missiles and drones have hit targets in Ukraine including military and energy infrastructure facilities, as well as decision making centres in the capital, Kiev.

Wave after wave struck

Kiev and the western "capital" of Lvov as well as many other cities across Ukraine cutting off power supplies and plunging many cities into darkness. Military and railway facilities in the Ukrainian rear were singled out in order to disrupt the supply to Ukrainian troops on the front line and at least one high-ranking Ukrainian official involved in operations against Russia and the persecution of pro-Russian citizens was killed in the air raids.

Thermal power plants and substations were damaged. So far, some regions of the country remain cut off from the electricity supply. But not a single blow was inflicted on high voltage strategic facilities or Ukraine's nuclear and hydro power plants. The attack was not aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian energy system but at causing limited damage to it. And it did forcing Ukraine to stop exporting electricity to Western Europe in order to stabilize its own energy system.

In Moscow Russian communist leader Gennady Zyugnov says "Everything for the front, everything for victory!" in a call to the people to mobilise in these difficult times and to the Putin government to set up Soviet-style Supreme Com-



• Precision-guided missiles strike in Ukraine.

mand and State Defence committees. The leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is also calling for the nationalisation of key industries and strategic enterprises and the introduction of a progressive tax on incomes. Nationalisation and a progressive income tax would put significant additional funds into the hands of the state. Nationalisation will also allow for much more centralised management of the economy, which is crucial in the current situation. In addition, these measures will have an extremely positive effect on the mood of society, will contribute to its consolidation.

This was stressed on Russian TV by one of Zyuganov's deputies this week. Yuri Afonin, a member of the Russian parliament, said that while some oligarchs are supporting the war effort most are continuing to move their assets to the West and some are even directing

their money to the Kiev regime. That's why progressive income tax was needed to make them pay for the defence of the country.

The values of social justice, collectivism and mutual assistance remain strong in Russian society. "We need to rely on them, we need to

leave in the past everything that prevented us from developing," he said. "Today we are passing the most important point in the history of our country. It gives us a chance to move forward in the economy, in social policy, to strengthen our defence capability!"

## FUND

The October fighting fund has started with £570 in the post boosted by a generous £120 donation from a regular reader in Chigwell. We now have just under £3,000 to raise and we've got till the end of the month to do it.

It's not easy getting heard on the street these days. Paper pitches are few and far between and only two outlets, in London and Liverpool, stock our communist paper. So sales and fund raising relies largely on our supporters keeping us going.

Across the country resistance is growing. People are sick of the austerity regime. They want change. But will Starmer bring it?

You know the answer as well as us. So now, more than ever, we've got to get the communist answer to crisis back on the workers' agenda. Build the paper, get it read and jeep our presses rolling. Your donations, big or small, count. Please send them to: *New Worker* Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the '*New Worker*'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here:

<http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

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# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## For a just and lasting peace

**TRADE UNIONS are being urged to support the Stop the War conference in January specifically aimed at mobilising working people around “every effort... to pursue peaceful relations between countries through negotiations and disarmament”. The World at War conference that is open to all trade unionists takes its lead from the resolution passed at this year’s RMT national conference which rightly said that “workers have no interest in war with China, Russia, or any other country. Every effort should be made to pursue peaceful relations between countries through negotiations and disarmament”.**

But sadly the first call of the Stop the War coalition is not the immediate ceasefire call of the pacifist community but a demand for the complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops – which is precisely what NATO wants as well.

We are in the middle of a hate-campaign not seen since the dark Cold War days of the McCarthy era, we’re being swamped with hysterical anti-Russian propaganda to justify more and more sanctions on Russia and more and more military aid to the Ukrainian fascists.

The gurus of the mainstream media fill their columns with the usual stories of Russian atrocities to justify Britain’s deepening involvement in the anti-Russian offensive. The Tory government can count on the full support of the other bourgeois parties in parliament. Starmer and his Blairite clique openly embrace NATO and US imperialism while the fake lefters who pose as socialists essentially argue that peace is only attainable on imperialist terms.

The Blairites and the self-styled “communist” and “trotskyist” movements drum up support for NATO’s war within the labour movement and the anti-war campaigns in the name of bogus Ukrainian leftists while ignoring the very real plight of the genuine communist and left languishing in Zelensky’s jails under Pinochet-style laws designed to crush all opposition to the puppet regime.

Parroting imperialist demands in pseudo-leftist babble only spreads confusion amongst the millions who want to see an end to the conflict which could set the whole of Europe ablaze and possibly even trigger a nuclear war.

These sinister forces within the labour and peace movement have long acted as cheer-leaders for NATO and neo-colonialism. Some are dupes who actually believe the nonsense in the bourgeois press. Some believe, with some justification, that it will pave their way to the top of the labour bureaucracy and others are simply hired hands of the intelligence services that monitor and influence working class opinion in Britain.

Ultimately all these people serve the war lobby within the United States – the so-called “deep state” that represents the most venal and aggressive sections of the American ruling class that seek to dominate the entire world in the name of “globalisation” and the “new world order”.

Now, more than ever, is the time for a clear call from the anti-war movement for an end to the fighting and a just and lasting peace in eastern Europe. This can only come with a neutral and de-Nazified Ukraine that recognises the rights of the Donbas and Crimean republics to join the Russian Federation as well as equal rights for all the peoples of the regions of the Ukraine.

# Truss may back down over benefit cuts

by Svetlana Ekimenko

**LIZ TRUSS may cave in to rebel Tory MPs’ demands and U-Turn on real-term benefits cuts.**

After a growing Conservative revolt, the Government U-turned on 3rd October on plans to scrap the 45 per cent rate of income tax for higher earners, announced as part of a package of tax cuts by Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng. At the time, the Chancellor said the proposals had become “a massive distraction on what was a strong package”.

Truss may now perform another screeching U-turn, similar to her reversal on income tax, originally announced in the unfunded tax-slashing mini-budget on 23 September, the *Guardian* reported.

Tory MPs allegedly warned the Prime Minister that she risked a rebellion over a plan to uprate benefits in line with earnings – about 5.5 per cent – rather than inflation, which stood at about 10 per cent in September. For example, for claimants of Universal Credit under 25 receiving the standard allowance, a rise in line with wages instead of inflation would see payments drop by £140.04 in real terms next year. At the same time, uprating welfare by earnings would save the Treasury about £5 billion.

Truss has repeatedly said she has “not yet made a decision” on whether to stick to the inflation-linked benefit rise that her predecessor Boris Johnson promised and which is due to come into force in April. According to the PM, pensions would rise in line with inflation but people on welfare benefits were in a “different situation”, she told LBC radio on 4th October.

Dozens of Tory backbenchers have allegedly vowed to resist what they warn would deliver a real-terms cut to social security. The issue is said to have caused major fractures with-

in the Conservative party as MPs return to the Commons this week.

The PM is increasingly under pressure to guarantee that social security will keep pace with the soaring cost of living, with threats of a move to oust Truss ostensibly gaining fresh strength amongst MPs over the weekend.

Despite no formal vote being required, an amendment could reportedly be tabled to the finance Bill, prompting an estimated 30 rebel MPs openly to declare their stance. No 10 would be “forced to cave in”, a government source told the *Guardian*.

Senior Tories, including former Chancellor George Osborne, are cited as warning that the party risked a crushing defeat at the next election by embarking on a “political experiment”.

**“I think a Tory wipe-out is potentially on the cards, but we’ve got two years to run,”**

**Osborne told Channel 4.**

**Former Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries, who called the cuts “cruel”, told the BBC on 9th October that if an election were held tomorrow, the Tories would face a “complete wipe-out”.**

After the government consigned to the dustbin the abolition of the top rate of tax – one of the most controversial proposals contained in the Growth Plan announced last month by Kwasi Kwarteng – some Tory MPs believe Liz Truss can be forced into another climbdown. “She gave in on 45p, she’ll have to do so again,” said one MP.

In an indication that the PM was likely to soften her stance, a Downing Street source reportedly said that

“nothing is decided”, adding: “[Truss] will listen.”

Reports of brewing opposition to the PM’s plans comes as new analysis by the Legatum Institute, cited by the *Guardian*, revealed that uprating benefits in line with earnings would plunge 450,000 more people into poverty in 2023–24, 350,000 of whom would be in households where someone works, and 250,000 in families that included a disabled person.

The institute estimated that, compared with the period before the COVID–19, over 1.5 million more people in Britain would find themselves in poverty this winter, despite the government’s energy support packages. Real-terms benefit cuts next April would boost the overall figure to 16 million, nearly a quarter of the UK population.

The option to reduce welfare benefits spending in the wake of the recently unveiled tax-slashing bonanza was condemned by anti-poverty campaigners as “morally indefensible”.

As she urged Truss’s ministers to uprate benefits in full, Tory peer Lady Stroud, the chief executive of Legatum, said: “Failing to do so ... would consign many on low incomes to a winter of impossible choices between heating their home, putting food on the table or putting fuel in their car to get to work.”

The think-tank’s findings were echoed in a separate study by the charity Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), which found that 200,000 children would be in poverty if benefits were raised in line with wages rather than inflation.

Stephen Crabb, a Conservative MP and former work and pensions secretary, said that the Legatum findings were “further evidence that cutting benefits in real terms will inevitably lead to an increase in poverty and hardship, at the worst possible time”.

*Sputnik*

## Workers' Notes

# State of the Nation

by New Worker correspondent

**ACCORDING to no less an organisation than the Office of National Statistics (ONS) workers in the UK suffered a 2.9 per cent decline in real pay in the three months from June to August due to inflation. This came even after a six per cent growth in average pay including bonuses and 5.4 per cent excluding bonuses.**

On releasing these figures on Tuesday ONS said: "This is the strongest growth in regular pay seen outside of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period." In other words an effective pay cut is a good thing.

However beneath the headline figure it was also made clear that while workers in the private sector got 6.2 per cent, those in the public sector were far behind on 2.2 per cent.

At the same time the total number of UK workers increased by 69,000 to 29.7 million between August and September, while unemployment decreased by 0.3 percentage points between June and August to 3.5 per cent, the lowest since 1974. This is deemed something of a glorious achievement in 21st century Britain.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng, boasted that these figures showed that "the fundamentals of the UK economy remain resilient" and promised that "our ambitious Growth Plan will drive sustainable long term growth, meaning higher wages and better living standards for everyone".

But even he had to admit that "the number of job vacancies remains high ... it has now dropped back a little, with a number of employers telling us they've reduced recruitment due to a variety of economic pressures". He

didn't mention that many of these "economic pressures" were of his own making.

However David Freeman, head of ONS' labour market and household statistics warned that: "the number of people neither working nor looking for work continues to rise, with those who say this is because they're long-term sick reaching a record level".

The numbers of working age (16-64) not working but

ty of economic pressures." Vacancies fell by 46,000 to 1,246,000 the largest fall since mid-2020.

Some bosses have been moaning that they cannot get staff. The BBC quoted the boss of PMG, a Bristol waste management company, saying that "we get a lot of interested candidates, we offer interviews, and then we get a lot of no-shows which is really disheartening and wastes so

research company Kantar states that the average annual grocery bill will rise by £643 this year, in other words an extra £12 weekly for food and other groceries. In June it predicted a rise of £380 in 2022. Now a 13.9 per cent increase is on the cards, the highest since Kantar started tracking in 2008.

The head of retail and consumer insight at Kantar warned that: "based on our

cent in favour of ending the indefinite and uninterrupted action, with the remaining 1,117 out of 2,605 holding out for the original demand of 25 per cent. The minority said the 15 per cent was too low and, with regard to backlogged cases, was not enough to retain junior members of the criminal bar. They were also disappointed that the demand for a Pay Review Body with direct power to recommend increased fees was unmet.

The majority took the view that the offer was worth more than 15 per cent because of the bolt-on payments, but all agreed that more needs to be done regarding some of the systemic issues facing the junior members of the criminal bar. Crown Court hearings resumed as normal on Tuesday.

The barristers have secured a package worth £54 million, including a 15 per cent increase in legal aid rates, which apply to the vast majority of Crown Court. Additionally there will be a £5 million annual increase in youth court cases from 2024/25, and £4 million more for defence barristers involved in pre-recorded cross-examinations. The deal also covers 60,000 backlogged cases.

After the announcement the CBA said that: "the Criminal Justice System remains chronically underfunded". Formed in 1969 the CBA has long argued that criminal defence work is unrewarding compared to what barristers can get working on behalf of bankers, currency traders and property developers.



not unemployed can hide a multitude of sins. It can include 10th Earls, lottery winners, students, and the early retired in various states of despair or comfort, but many are long term sick. Surprisingly the Tories have often tolerated, for a time, people claiming to be long term sick when not entirely so as a means of keeping the headline unemployment figures down.

### "economic inactive"

Those "economic inactive" but not unemployed have risen to 21.7 per cent of the working population or about two and a half million.

Freeman also warned that "while the number of job vacancies remains high after its long period of rapid growth, it has now dropped back a little, with a number of employers telling us they've reduced recruitment due to a varie-

much time". PMG claims to have raised wages to attract and retain workers, but it is obviously not doing enough.

The response of TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady to the figures was predictably insipid. The best she could do was to make the blindingly obvious observation that "millions of families face a bleak winter unless we get wages rising across the economy" and that "instead of handing out bungs to bankers and big business, the government should be focussed on getting money into workers' pockets".

She repeated standard TUC calls for a minimum wage of £15 an hour and a vague demand for "decent pay rises for all public sector workers, and allowing unions to go into every workplace to negotiate proper pay rises for all working people".

At the same time market

numbers, the average household is facing a £643 jump in their annual grocery bill to £5,265 if they continue to buy the same items. Taking that at a basket level, that's an extra £3.04 on top of the cost of the average shopping trip last year which was £21.89."

## The verdict is victory

by New Worker correspondent

**THERE IS ONE inflation breaking pay deal which readers can celebrate by toasting the victors with a glass of very select claret. On Monday members of the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) voted to accept a 15 per cent pay rise.**

The vote was 57 per

## Airport news

by New Worker correspondent

**ANOTHER substantial pay rise has been won by Unite on behalf of 50 American Airlines aircraft maintenance technicians and crew chiefs at London's Heathrow Airport. The three year deal is worth 19 per cent. This is composed of seven per cent for 2022, six per cent for 2023 and six per cent for 2024, a much better offer than the original one**

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• Lawyers' action succeeds.

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year offer of 5.3 per cent, a one-off payment in year two and a pay freeze for year three. The improved offer came after a threatened strike which has now been called off.

Unite Regional Officer Joe McGowan said: "The engineers at American Airlines have secured a much better pay deal because they were fearless, determined, and united. It is another reminder that workers looking to improve their wages, terms and conditions should join Unite and organise their colleagues to do the same."

It is to be hoped that McGowan's words will be heeded by another group of workers at the same airport. 700 workers employed by Dnata and Menzies (pronounced Ming-is) are balloting over pay. Like many workers they complain of pay offers which amount to cuts, and are starting a ballot on action.

The Dnata offer is five per cent with Menzies offering between two and six per cent. Dnata's last profit was £27 million and Menzies' £69 million.

The workers concerned are contracted to most of the airlines flying from terminals 2, 3 and 4 where they work on ground-handling, airside transport and cargo.

The ballot has been carefully timed see industrial action take place during the World Cup in Qatar. If strike action goes ahead it will particularly affect Qatari Airlines,

who are flying ten extra flights a week during the tournament.

## Terms & conditions

by New Worker correspondent

**TRADE UNIONS are not just about wages, and to prove it the Communication Workers Union (CWU) has been claiming a great victory at the recently merged Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) where it has secured 10 per cent pay rise, and has forced VMO2 to "significantly improve its family friendly offering to employees". The latest deal was supported by 85.7 per cent of those voting.**

The union claims that those working in O2 stores fare even better because, in addition to a ten per cent increase last January as part of an absorption of unpredictable target-driven bonus payments into basic pay, a lump sum 'Cost of Living Allowance' equals an overall pay increase for 2022 in cash terms of around 17 per cent.

The CWU almost acts as a recruitment advertisement for VMO2 saying it has brought together "the best that previously existed in Virgin Media and O2, along with some enhancements, into a single harmonised approach".

In particular O2 employees get paid maternity and adoption entitlements increased from 14 to 26 weeks

while paternity leave continues at 14 weeks (also subject to qualifying service) an increase from 2 to 14 weeks for ex Virgin Media employees.

In the event of serious neonatal complications up to 12 weeks paid leave is extended to all employees, with no qualifying service requirement. There are new harmonised arrangements for emergency leave, bereavement, pregnancy loss and caring & parental leave.

fashionable

VMO2 has also introduced more fashionable policies of funding "gender-affirming surgery and gender identity support for Trans and non-binary employees".

CWU national officer for VMO2 Tracey Fussey added that the pay rise was only obtained after a massive 95.7 per cent rejection of a below-inflation two year package that VMO2 unilaterally imposed in March, a useful reminder that pay rises are never the gift of the bosses.

## On the move or not

by New Worker correspondent

**IN ADDITION to the nationwide rail and postal disputes a number of**

**other industrial disputes are continuing. First in the south London borough of Croydon tram drivers on London Tramlink were on strike last Monday and Tuesday having rejected a below inflation pay rise. Similar action was taken in both June and July.**

Finn Brennan, Aslef's District Organiser for London, said "The management offer of 4.75 per cent is far below the current inflation rate and would mean our members face real terms pay cuts while their bills go through the roof. But what's especially galling is that managers at Tramlink have been offered an additional 4.5 per cent pay rise, backdated to November 2021 while drivers' pay has been frozen since 2020.

In neighbouring Kent, yet another dispute in the bus industry continues. On Monday and Tuesday 600 drivers based at Gillingham, Gravesend, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells, who are employed by Arriva Kent took strike action. If it is not resolved, further action will resume in October and November. They are seeking a rise in line with the real inflation rate to compensate for years of real terms pay erosion.

Unite regional officer Janet Nobbs said: "The latest round of strikes will inevitably cause considerable delays and disruption to Kent's bus passengers, but the industrial action is a direct result of the high-handed manner with which Arriva has acted throughout this dispute."

Commenting on the fact that Arriva is owned by the German state railway Deutsche Bahn, and that its UK bus division has paid £560 million to Deutsche Bahn in Germany in profits this year alone, Unite general secretary Sharon Graham added that: "Unite is stepping up its industrial action as a direct result of Arriva's failure to make

workers a fair pay offer. This is a very wealthy company that can easily afford to pay workers properly but refuses to do so".

Slightly further behind, a similar dispute is brewing in north London where 2,500 bus workers at 14 depots employed by Metroline in London are balloting for strike action having rejected pitiful pay offers as little as 5.5 per cent, well below inflation. At present some drivers paid as little as £12.35 an hour.

Strike action would hit most of north and central London. Once again Metroline is part of a huge multinational, owned by the ComfortDelGro, which in the first half of 2022 alone the company made £156 million in operating profits.

Unite's regional officer Laura Johnson warned: "If members vote for strike action then it will inevitably lead to large-scale disruption across London but this dispute is entirely of Metroline's own making. It has had every opportunity to make our members a fair pay offer but has chosen instead to offer a pitiful pay increase."

Further afield on the windy east coast 250 Stagecoach bus drivers at Hull are on an all-out strike until 29 December. They are clearly digging in for the long haul. Agency scabs have been put up in a posh hotel, a fact which makes the bosses' intentions clear. Here they are only paid £11.14 an hour and have only had a one per cent pay rise since 2019.

Tuesday also saw 200 Stagecoach workers organised by GMB at Sunderland start a five day strike while Somerset and Cornwall drivers took strike action under the auspices of RMT. Finally in Newcastle upon Tyne drivers employed by Arriva are fighting to oppose the closure of the Jesmond depot

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

**ANGLO-AMERICAN imperialism's drive against Iraq received further blows this week. The United Nations has agreed to a South African request for an all-member states debate at UN HQ on the arms inspections crisis and it started on Wednesday.**

**The terror bombing of a nightclub in Bali frequented by westerners and believed to be organised by Islamic fundamentalists has led to calls in Britain and the USA to return to combatting "terrorism" rather than planning a new war against Iraq.**

*Tony Blair and George W Bush are continuing to push for what their spin-merchants call a "twin-track" or "two-fronts" approach in the wake of the Bali bombing but their diplomatic offensive is now unravelling. Blair returned from Moscow empty-handed last weekend. France and People's China remain opposed to Bush's demands, and Russia's position if anything has hardened.*

*Russian leader Vladimir Putin made it clear to Blair that the way to resolve the crisis was to get the inspectors back into Iraq - which the Iraqis have already agreed to. The Russians, who are working closely with the French, stress that they are now ready to consider new UN resolutions defining the inspectors' mandate but not one that would give the USA blanket authority to invade Iraq without prior sanction of the whole UN Security Council.*

*Bush has already got the*

*approval of his own Congress for precisely such a move, but the draft Anglo-American UN resolution is no nearer agreement today than it was when it was first mooted a month ago.*

*"The American variant of the resolution has not undergone changes" Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov declared this week. "It is unacceptable and Russia cannot support it."*

*France, which has been arguing all along for two separate resolutions - one to get inspectors back and a second to consider further measures only if the inspectorate was being frustrated - has been even more outspoken. President Jacques Chirac, speaking after the Bali bombing, said he knew of no relationship between Iraq and Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda Islamic order, which some suspect may have been behind the attack in Indonesia.*

by John Maryon

**ALL LIFE FORMS** depend upon energy. Humans have used rapidly increasing quantities since our early ancestors discovered fire. Today modern civilizations would collapse without an abundant supply of usable energy. Its misuse, however, can create dangers and threaten to destroy the ecosystems upon which life, including our own, depend.

Our main source of energy is the Sun. A giant fiery furnace, 93 million miles away, in which nuclei of hydrogen under tremendous pressure and temperature fuse together, in a process known as fusion, to form a deuterium nucleus. This is the start of a sequence of events in which protons then collide with the new isotope to produce helium. In accordance with Einstein's famous equation, mass is converted into energy in the form of intense heat. This chain of events can continue for some seven-billion years until all hydrogen is converted into helium and our star becomes a red giant.

All existing commercial nuclear power stations on earth operate on the Fission process. Heat energy is created when a critical mass of heavy radioactive elements is brought together, in a controlled manner, to sustain a nuclear chain reaction. The atoms are split apart, which results in the conversion of mass into energy. One major problem is what to do with the highly radioactive fuel rods. Fusion, on the other hand, produces no long-life radioactive waste. For this reason, and the fact that hydrogen is plentiful, nuclear fusion remains the 'holy grail' to meet future energy needs.

The key to successful nuclear fusion lies in the ability to sustain and contain plasma at temperatures of up to 50-million °C. The Soviet Union played a pioneering role in the late 1960s by developing an experimental 'Tokamak' Reactor in which the plasma was contained by a powerful magnetic field. This approach has been adopted as a basis for further research in a number of countries.

Refined energy in the form of electricity is clean, convenient and efficient at the point of use. Traditionally fossil fuels, particularly coal, have been burned to produce steam to drive turbines for electricity

# Energy for Life



• Russian troops guard the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant from Ukrainian attack.

generation. When transmission and thermodynamic losses are added into the equation the overall efficiency is less impressive. The big danger comes from the release of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere; carbon that has remained locked in the ground for millions of years is transferred into the environment. Coal has played a major role in providing our essential energy needs for centuries, and we should never forget the skill and courage of those mining heroes who faced danger every day at the coalface.

Serious situations can arise if energy is used as an economic or military weapon. Nuclear power stations can

pose a risk to the environment even under normal conditions – but the unthinkable could result from terrorism or military attack. Currently the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant is being targeted with Western-supplied missiles by Ukraine armed forces.

Each day conveys of tankers leave eastern-occupied Syria loaded with stolen oil plundered by US Imperialism, oil which should have been used to finance the rebuilding of that war-torn country. The greed and bare-faced robbery of imperialism knows no bounds as it continues to plunder the world.

Both Nord Stream 1 (NS1) and Nord Stream 2 (NS2)

natural gas pipelines were severely damaged by a terrorist attack that is widely held to have been carried out in a special US-NATO operation on 26th September 2022. The action was intended to be the successful culmination of a long-running campaign to stop the supply of cheap Russian gas. Due to a failure however, NS2 could be restored quickly if required. As the supply of cheap reliable Russian gas is reduced to a trickle, large demonstrations are taking place calling for the lifting of sanctions against Russia.

Despite of massive anti-Russian propaganda by the bourgeois media an amazing event has occurred. At the Ok-

toberfest in Munich the crowd sang the Russian folk song *Kalinka*. An increasing number, apart from the German Greens, are no longer fooled as they face the prospect of a cold winter and dependence on limited supplies of very expensive US shale gas.

For decades the USA has been able to dominate the international oil market by controlling price, output and supply. Things are starting to change, however. At the recent meeting of OPEC 2, which followed appeals from President Biden to increase oil output and support a selective price cap, the decision was taken to reduce output by two-million barrels per day.

The days are fortunately numbered for the notorious petrodollar that has supported US domination of world trade and finance. Russia now trades oil not only in roubles but also other currencies such as Chinese yuan and Indian rupees. The replacement of the US dollar will represent the removal of another link in the chains that enslaves the world.

Until fusion is able to provide an abundance of cheap, clean energy a number of serious problems will remain. Conservation of energy is necessary by avoiding waste and unnecessary use and by improving thermal insulation standards. Importantly, the use of renewable energy is vital to help protect our beautiful blue planet. Such projects can be costly and have a long payback period. This undoubtedly deters capitalist investors who looking for a quick profit would prefer to finance a drive-in junk food outlet. An expanded, fully financed public transport system would cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions dramatically compared with private cars.

All types of renewable energy have their benefits and drawbacks. Solar power is fine on a nice sunny day but has no output during the hours of darkness. Wind energy has a major role to play but cannot function when the air is still. Hydro-electric power is making an important contribution and can provide great benefit but cannot be applied in flat, drought-ridden terrain. Tidal and wave energy projects can make a contribution, but as with all civil projects great care should be taken to protect nature. The effectiveness of all these measures can often be



• Protesting against fracking in Lancashire.

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improved when incorporating pumped storage schemes. The expansion of renewable energy is not helped by the insane, totally unjustified and disruptive attitude of the USA when it attempts to sanction Chinese solar panels on bogus human-rights grounds. It is important to avoid the potential disasters that can arise from fracking projects that can pollute the water table, increase the risk of earth tremors and emit more CO<sub>2</sub>.

The most cost effective measures in many cases may come from simple improvements to basic home insulation standards. Amendments to building regulations to improve U-values have improved greatly but further improvements are justified by increasing energy costs. Light-emitting diode (LED) lamps have an efficacy far greater than that of an incandescent alternative. We must not forget that many poor people, the victims of capitalism, just cannot afford the high energy costs of today. To avoid shivering in the gloom this winter we must unite and fight to remove the Tories and redistribute the wealth of the idle rich that they represent.

Common sense and reality are factors far removed from the collective stupidity and blinkered obsession of most European leaders today. They are apparently still unaware that they have fallen into a trap, set by the USA to destroy their industries and economies, by imposing sanctions against Russia that have backfired. Energy prices would fall by at least 70 per cent overnight if the full potential of Nord Stream 2 could be realised and negotiations are started to end the Ukraine tragedy.

Hydrogen as a fuel has a number of attractions. It is the most abundant element on earth and when burned as a fuel produces water as a by-product. An alternative to burning the fuel is to convert its energy into electricity directly

in a fuel cell. Electricity is generated through an electrochemical reaction. Cars are becoming available in which a fuel cell replaces the drive battery. The infrastructure, however, is not in place to store and disperse hydrogen. Whilst the emissions of such a vehicle would be almost zero, the same cannot be said for hydrogen production itself. The usual commercial method is to extract it from natural gas, which is costly and produces CO<sub>2</sub>. Another method is to use electrolysis but that requires electricity.

I have attempted to outline the chief physical considerations for a wide range of fuels used to meet our energy needs. Long-term security without pollution requires far more than relying on technological advances and leaving it up to the 'market' to decide. It requires political policies based upon a scientific, fair and objective analysis of the challenge. It requires a Marxist approach to apply the socialist planning, public ownership of natural resources and democratic control of the mechanisms of distribution to ensure a clean, secure, safe and affordable provision.

The New Communist Party campaigns for the following measures:

- Full Public Ownership of all natural resources and energy companies.
- A total ban on fracking.
- Restore rural bus services.
- Investment to expand the rail network and replace all diesel services with electric.
- Full Public Ownership of train and bus services.
- Greater investment into land and offshore windfarms, solar power and tidal power.
- Planting trees and creating more green spaces.
- Make all products and packaging recyclable.
- Opposition to the evil intrigues, exploitation and naked aggression of imperialism.

# In the end, who promotes fascism?

by Manuel Raposo

**ONE HUNDRED years after Mussolini took power, fascism is once again governing Italy. For weeks before the election, Giorgia Meloni's expected victory drew no comments from European leaders, and it seemed that they all saw it not only as inevitable but also as normal and acceptable.**

Only on the eve of Election Day, the Eurocrats' spokeswoman Ursula von der Leyen decided to issue a warning, as useless as it was stupid, brandishing the threat of sanctions if Italy's new leaders did not play by Brussels' rules.

This fascist victory has a different quality from the victories won in recent years by the extreme right in Europe. This time, it was not the ordinary right, more or less extreme, that took smaller fascist parties in hand in order to obtain the majorities necessary to govern. It was the opposite – the Brothers of Italy (who are open admirers of Mussolini) dragged behind them another fascist party, the Northern League [now called the League] and the extreme right of Forza Italia [Silvio Berlusconi's party].

The balance of power between the right and fascism was inverted, to the point that the ordinary right was now dispensable for the fascists to gain access to the government.

The victory in Italy followed by a few days another victory of a party of Nazi background in Sweden, one of the much-praised homelands of European social democracy.

Not to mention that in France almost half the electorate voted for [pro-fascist] Marine Le Pen a few months ago; that Austria has remained governed by the extreme right for some years now; that in the Netherlands the second parliamentary force is the extreme right;



that in Portugal and Spain, parties admiring António de Oliveira Salazar and Francisco Franco [fascist dictators in those countries for decades in the mid-20th Century] have gained strong popular support and parliamentary representation. Et cetera.

Far from being episodic and localised, the movement is widespread and seeks hegemony in Europe.

## Compromised silence

The silence of the European leaders is understandable. Those who hold out their hand to the extreme right in order to stay in government, those who unabashedly adopt parts of their extremist

programmes to capture votes, those who use elections as a mere formality to legitimise a political power that is really based on the power of money, have no moral right to criticise fascists when the fascists take the bit between their teeth and rise to that same power in electoral processes as normal as any others.

Those who use Nazi shock forces to bring Ukraine into their orbit, those who fuel an endless war disposing of people's lives and imposing unacceptable sacrifices on them, those who paint Vladimir Zelensky's fascist regime in the colours of democracy and freedom, have no political standing to attack fascist

parties wherever they raise their heads threatening to subvert democratic regimes.

The mainstream voice of the powers that be has used the easy argument that it is the 'autocracies' (taken, of course, as alien to the 'Europe of democratic values') that are the promoters of the European far right – in particular, Putin's Russian regime is blamed. That is as if fascism was not historically born precisely in Europe.

They act as if Trump's presidency had not charged his henchmen with the mission of creating an international that would bring together the European fascist formations. As if the current Polish regime, furiously



• Protesting against fascism in Italy.

anti-Russian, was not one of the pioneers of institutionalised fascism within the European Union and NATO's main spearhead against Russia.

They claim Russia's invisible hand is behind the rise of the fascists. But this explains nothing and serves only as a smoke-screen to hide the true roots of the phenomenon, and Meloni proves it. The new leader of Italy's destiny is a convinced 'Atlanticist', aligned with US imperialism. Where, then, does the resurgent fascism in Europe spring from?

The difficulty of the European bourgeoisies in approaching this question, other than through the derivative route of the 'external hand', stems from the fact that it is the very maladies of European (and world) capitalism and the corresponding degradation of its institutions that are at the root of the problem.

The democratic regimes of the capitalist West (parties and institutions) were consolidated on the basis and condition of continuous economic growth that somehow provided some degree of progress for their populations.

#### middle class

At the expense of colonial and imperial exploitation [of oppressed peoples and nations], they created a vast middle class (both petty and middle bourgeoisie), which was content if it could avoid being part of the proletariat and which maintained its social status by politically supporting the dominant classes, as long as they reciprocated by securing privileges for them.

The prolonged stagnation of Western capitalism, which is aging and losing its hegemony, has, however, for decades been sacrificing not only the working masses but a large part of the middle classes. The social gap between 'rich' and 'poor', or rather between the haves and the have-nots, is continuously growing, generating an absolute impoverishment of the lower social strata and pushing even the so-called middle classes down the social scale.

Faced with this regres-

sion, the middle classes – who were the mainstay of parliamentary regimes, of bipartisanship, of political stability 'in the centre' – no longer have any reason to bet on such regimes. The parties 'of the centre' lose support in favour of right-wing extremist proposals, and institutions (from elections to parliaments and 'politicians') are rightly discredited. The 'mystery' of the breakdown of the 'centre' has its origin here and not in the mere demagoguery of the 'populists'.

The lack of an alternative, with mass influence of an anti-capitalist left, leaves a large part of the working and popular classes vulnerable to the 'change' demagoguery of the fascist forces, which win votes even on this social terrain.

To this background are now added the disastrous consequences of the policy pursued by European regimes in the face of war.

#### War accelerates disaster

Europe has given up any semblance of autonomy, whether in the face of the war in Ukraine or the confrontation promoted by the USA against China. Unthinking alignment with the USA drags European economies into disaster and nullifies any semblance of independence, leading all of Europe and each of its countries to the status of American vassals.

To the effects of the decadence of the economic system itself, barely recovered from the 2008 crisis and the [COVID 19] pandemic, are now added, as a consequence of the war, unprecedented sacrifices imposed on people under the pretext of defending already discredited 'values' of freedom and democracy – a path that can only accelerate even more the masses' contempt for the powers that be.

The arguments in defence of national and popular interests are left in the hands of the extreme right and fascists, who thus (even if doing so out of opportunism) assume the role of the only ones who seem to care about the suffering of the populations.

The accusations of 'populism' levelled



• Top: AZOV nazis in Ukraine. Above: Le Pen in France.

against the fascists – as if trying to win the support of the people were in itself reprehensible – only boosts their popularity, for two reasons: it absolves them as fascists, reducing them to the status of demagogues; and it promotes them as those who dare to make the

'popular' promises that the ruling power is unable to make. This is why you hear far-right voters saying: "Let's at least see what these candidates do."

The inconceivable statements (in Prague on 1st September) of the German 'democrat' Foreign

Minister, the 'Green' Annalena Baerbock – saying, with all effrontery that Germany will continue to support Ukraine even against the will of German voters ("it doesn't matter what my German voters think") – contrasts with the position of the 'autocratic' Hungarian



• Swedes march against the fascists.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who claims to put the interests of the Hungarian population first and therefore refuses to go along with the sanctions against Russia. This is one example, amongst many, of the service provided by 'democrats' to 'autocrats' and 'populists'.

What we are all witnessing is an updated proof of what history has shown: imperialism promotes war, and war feeds fascism.

The head of world imperialism today, the USA, using Britain as its jack, created the conditions that detonated the war in Ukraine by making it inevitable.

The rejection of the compromise contained in the Minsk agreements and later the sabotage, by US and British action, of the peace negotiations between Russians and Ukrainians – in Belarus and then in Turkey in the first weeks of the war – show beyond doubt who promoted the conflict and who wants to prolong it.

Almost all the powers of continental Europe committed to NATO have chosen to collaborate in the US war enterprise. The price of this capitulation is the drastic downgrading of Europe, namely the EU, as an economic power and translates into an accelerated poverty of the working population.

#### examples

That this should not have to be the case is proven by the solitary examples of Serbia, Hungary and Turkey, which, in one way or another, are resisting pressure from Washington or Brussels. Beyond the material reasons that tie Europe to US imperialism, perhaps simple cowardice helps explain the behaviour of Europe's leaders.

The EU, rendered irrelevant, torn apart by huge, barely disguised internal tensions, is on the verge of disintegration.

It is on such fertile ground that the extreme right and fascism rise, in this case with the additional help of a war promoted, financed and armed by regimes which, 24/7, fly the banners of "freedom" and "democracy".

**LETTERS****Dear Comrades**

Stop the War organised a meeting in early October under the title: "How to end the war in Ukraine" and comrades invited me to it.

Since I could not attend on the particular date, this was my reply to the invitation. Thank you for sending me the meeting's details to discuss how to end the war in Ukraine. I am glad there is a meeting, so there will be a debate, hopefully, and a search for answers. I feel the need to tell all the comrades involved, as well as my readers here, what I would have said had I been able to attend. Here it goes.

The first slogan advertising the meeting says: 'No Nato expansion'. What I say is that Nato will not stop its expansion. There is only one force that could have stopped it, and it was that of the Soviet Union. As things are, it is with a mathematical certainty that you can rely on Nato not stopping its expansion.

About 'Russian troops out' - the other slogan advertising the meeting, this is how I see the matter: Should Russia withdraw,

**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**

Nato will be even freer to continue and speed up its expansion. In their expansion eastwards, Nato and its allies do not hide that they have Russia and China in their sights. They do not hurry to take Ukraine into Nato because they do not want Article 5 to complicate their anti-Russian tactics before time.

The spectacular increase in the Western capitalists' war expenditure deserves more attention than it generally does; along with the 'in your face' rearmament of Germany and Japan, and the hundreds of new US bases being built around China and Russia.

No wonder the public services must wilt, or serve to enrich privateers like Serco with feet both in the health service and atomic weapons establishments.

Those who control Nato -- the US/UK in the main -- are guided by the implacable need for capital to conquer the world resources and markets stubbornly out of their reach. That, or crash in their own meltdown.

Add to this that, behind the Western hatred for Putin and Xi, there is the sadism of those who cannot accept that the ex-colonial world has freed itself once and for all.

I have no doubt that the humans are going to find ways to deal with the sadism, and with the implacable need of capital to draw life for itself out of what it sucks, vampire like, from the common people and the common good.

The question regard-

ing how to end the war for the working class, particularly if it cannot be ended, may call for ideas on how to win it.

**Marie Lynam  
North London**

**Dear Comrades**

Liz Truss, has come under fire for misleading parliament about raising human rights issues with Gulf officials. She has been accused of "lying" to a parliamentary committee about what was said during a meeting with the leaders of autocratic Gulf states. In a special meeting with the MPs two months ago, she claimed to have raised human rights issues with officials from the Gulf Co-operation Council countries, but failed to remember even one instance to substantiate that claim. Reprieve, the international NGO that campaigns against the death penalty tweeted: "Liz Truss must come clean about her failure to raise horrific human rights abuses with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain's leaders - some of the most repressive regimes in the world."

**John Hughes  
Bahrain  
Freedom Movement  
London**

**Dear Comrades**

As for the achievements of Third World leaders that Marie Lynam talked about in her letter in last week's *New Worker* I think the main one was the

creation of the mass democracies that once were the dominant trend in the non-aligned movement. Various forms of African and Arab socialism led to the socialist alignment of many countries in the Third World including Egypt that later became the United Arab Republic (UAR), Indonesia, Algeria, Guinea, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique.

Though Anglo-American and Franco-German imperialism has now restored neo-colonialist authority through much of the Third World the left wing of the Peronist movement is still a powerful force in Argentina, the Bolivarian movement still defends the Venezuelan revolution and the Ba'ath, the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party, remains the leading party in Syria.

Though we can't put the clock back to the heady days of the national liberation movements that rose after the end of the second world war to bring down all the old European empires we can certainly learn from the past and look forward to the future.

In recent years we have seen the end of the feudal monarchy in Nepal and south-south co-operation that includes People's China, India, Russia and Brazil while many of the gains made in Soviet days are still preserved in the former Soviet republic of Belarus and the people's republics of the Donbas now battling with their Russian allies to stave off the Ukrainian fascists and their NATO backers.

**Dave Danton  
Dagenham**

**Diary****SAT 15 OCT**

Marx Memorial Library: Book Sale 11:00-15:00, MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU

**SAT 15 OCT**

Free Julian Assange Campaign: Picket 12:00-14:00, HM Prison, Belmarsh, Western Way, London SE28

**FRI 14 – SUN 16 OCT**

International Brigade Memorial Trust: AGM and associated events. Manchester Conference Centre and Pendulum Hotel, Sackville Street, MI 3KW. Booking details on IBMT website.

**SAT 15 OCT**

Stand Up To Racism: International Conference. 11:00-17:00 Central London, location TBA and online. Book on STUR website.

**SAT 15 OCT**

Brent Trades Council: Centenary celebration of Willesden Labour Hall: 19:00, Willesden Trades and Labour Hall, 383 High Road, London NW10 2JR. £20.00.

**SUN 16 OCT**

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Public Conference. Details TBA.

**TUE 18 OCT**

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Camouflaging Injustice: Using Sport to Hide Oppression (Qatar World Cup). Webinar 18:00-19:00. Register on PSC website.

**WED 19 OCT**

Trades Union Congress: Mass Lobby of Parliament, 11:00-15:00, London SW1A 0AA. CANCELLED.

**THURS 20 OCT**

Marx Memorial Library: Andrew Murray on What is the "State" in Britain Today? 19:00. Online lecture. Book on MML website.

**MON 24 OCT**

Barry Amiel & Norman Melburn Trust: Ken-ny Coyle on Defining Imperialism in the Contemporary Context. Hybrid meeting at Marx Memorial Library and Online. Book on MML website.

**TUES 25 OCT**

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: When the wind blows. Sands Films Studio, 82 St Marychurch Street, London SE16. Online and in person film showing with discussion, 20:00. Book on CND website.

**THUR 27 OCT**

Marx Memorial Library: Ben Seller on: A bonfire of workers'. On site and online lecture, 19:00-20:30. Book on MML website.

**SAT 29 OCT**

Radical Options for Scotland and Europe: Conference on the present crisis and the way forward. 10:30-12:30 Unite HQ, 145-165 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 4RZ. Details TBA

**WED 2 NOV**

Trades Union Congress: Demand Better Lobby of Parliament. 14:00-18:00 Palace of Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA

**WED 2 NOV**

Working Class Movement Library: Ann Boran on Mining and Social Change in the Castlecomer [Kilkenny] Minefields, 14:00 to 15:30. 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX and online.

**SAT 5 NOV**

People's Assembly: National Demonstration. Assemble 12:00, Embankment, London WC2N 6NS.

**SAT 5 NOV**

Society for Cooperation in Russian and Soviet Studies: Christine Lindsey on Representation of Workers in Soviet Art. 14:00, SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6AB

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## Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

**LAST weekend the SNP headed up to Aberdeen for their 88th annual conference, the first in-person event since 2019. There were predictably no great controversies, such as those which engulfed the Tories at Birmingham, nor were there any fireworks to add lustre to the flames of modern Scottish nationalism.**

This is due to three reasons. Firstly, SNP members are remarkably deferential to their leadership and are easily cowed by claims that criticising the SNP leadership is “talking Scotland down”. Secondly, SNP HQ officialdom, headed by the spouse of the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, carefully shapes the agenda to ensure that no troublesome matters rear their ugly head.

These factors have been around for years, but a third factor has now come into play. This is the fact that the creation of Alex Salmond’s vehicle

Alba has drained off many of the malcontents, whilst a diminishing number of others now spend their time traipsing around the country attending the All Under One Banner (AUOB) demonstrations.

An alternative attraction on Saturday was the annual *Yestival* music event to mark the failed 2014 referendum. Dundee’s finest son, the actor Brian Cox who now lives in Hollywood, sent them a glowing tribute. “This is an important festival, the *Yestival*, because it gives us all a chance to come together and be united, be united in our desire for a free Scotland and that’s what’s important, more than anything else, is unity. Without unity, we will not have a free Scotland but with unity we will.” But only a few hundred from the nationalist fringe turned up to the rally in Glasgow’s George Square, which was shunned by the SNP.

### far down

In both this case and on recent AUOB events numbers are far down on previous years, and even the SNP’s membership has slightly dipped. In 2013 the party’s membership stood at just 20,000 but that number soared to over 100,000 by 2015. Last year the numbers peaked at over 119,000 but now the SNP claims only 103,884 members.

The SNP conference was held on the eve of the Supreme Court’s ruling on whether or not Holyrood has the right to hold another Independence Referendum. Although the case was heard this week, the ruling will not be given until just before Christmas.

In her keynote address First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said that she would respect the Court’s ruling. As that is almost certainly going to be a firm “No” this will be seen by some of the more impatient nationalists as a sign that 2023 will pass without a referendum. Many nationalists, and not just the loony fringe, have noted that no serious actions have been taken to mobilise SNP supporters. Sturgeon’s remarks that she “despises” Tories are not calculated to win over Tories in any future referendum.

The opinion polls on the question have not been favourable recently. The fact that there will almost certainly be a summer

round of regal jollifications to occupy attention in 2023 means that Sturgeon will privately be relieved at not facing a potentially career-ending electoral contest.

Another problem Sturgeon has is that with Labour riding high in the UK polls she may no longer have the Tories she despises to knock about verbally. In the same polls Labour has overtaken the Tories and are now a distant second behind the SNP, instead of a pathetic third. Whether that will be enough to see Labour make gains at the expense of the SNP at the next Westminster election remains to be seen. It will certainly not affect the SNP’s grip on Holyrood but any reduction in the SNP vote will weaken their constant demand for a referendum. Both the UK and Scottish Labour leaders have firmly ruled out any pacts with the SNP.

To return to the conference hall, there were 31 carefully selected resolutions for delegates to approve. Tellingly, there was one that welcomed a new ferry link between Rosyth on the East coast and Zeebrugge in Belgium, but unsurprisingly there was not one discussing the increasingly unreliable ferry service to the western isles that has been run by the SNP for 14 years. It is as if not a single island SNP branch dared to submit a motion, and was squashed by HQ, or that they are all wee fearties who knew better than to even think about raising such questions.

### omission

This was not the only significant omission. Inevitably there was nothing on the agenda about education or the health services, which are the responsibility of the SNP government – any discussion about their record in those fields would bring red faces to ministers. It appears that the only debates about the NHS came when some nurses campaigning for decent pay confronted the Health Secretary in the car park.

They also had two motions in favour of more trains and buses but could not bring themselves to denounce cars as that would upset at least some voters. Readers will be relieved to learn that the SNP is against Islamophobia, homelessness and pensioner poverty. They also want improved pensions – but

apart from wanting a “fair” tax system they say nothing about how all these reforms would be paid for.

Also out of bounds was any discussion about one of the SNP’s flagship policies, the ongoing Gender Recognition Reform Scotland Bill, which makes it much easier for men to self-identify as women. At time of the conference it was discovered that the party’s London Branch new Equalities Officer had elegantly voiced his support for the Bill by earlier saying he wanted to “beat the fuck out of some terfs and transphobes” – comments he has now retracted and apologised for. No wonder the leadership made sure that both supporters and opponents of the measure should be kept out of sight.

Ironically, another motion was about “Independence Principles – Building our Civic Movement”, which stated that the SNP should only work with nice polite nationalist organisations.

### delay

For weeks the SNP Government have been saying that they are about to publish new economic policy documents, but it has taken great care to delay it until after the conference was safely over. From the conference it is clear that the SNP is keen on green energy, but it remains vague on the merits of oil and gas. Whilst it dislikes Tory plans to increase North Sea production, simply because these are Tory plans, it does not want troublesome arguments about closing down the industry.

There were six motions on internal SNP affairs, about arranging the rules for the National Council

and conference and similar matters, the significance of which escapes this correspondent, but there was also a curious one that deplored “Disinformation and the 2023 Independence Campaign” and hoped that SNP members would not spread any. Even after a close reading it is unclear if the proposers deplore disinformation on other occasions.

As is the custom on these occasions, delegates were allowed to pass motions deploring Tory policies on matters for which Holyrood has no responsibility but that make them feel good about themselves. This year they condemned proposals to send prospective immigrants to Rwanda and wanted “alternatives to detention” for asylum seekers.

Another old favourite at the conference was a motion on land reform, which is something the SNP specialise in talking about rather than doing anything about. Delegates also approved a motion to raise the school starting age to six with “play based kindergarten provision from the age of three”.

Finally, we turn to the most important issue exercising delegates: the ordering of the names of candidates on local government ballot papers. In single transferable vote (STV) voting systems it appears that when two candidates from a single party are put up for multi-member wards, the one further up the alphabet has a five times better chance of being elected.

Dundee West Branch wants individual randomisation of ballot papers. No doubt there will be mass demonstrations to bring out that urgently needed change...

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# Fighting for Assange!

by *New Worker*  
correspondent

**JEREMY CORBYN** joined protesters in Westminster last weekend to demonstrate against the extradition of Julian Assange. The former Labour leader joined left-wing comedian Russell Brand, retired union leader Len McCluskey and thousands of other Assange supporters to form a human chain outside Parliament that stretched from its perimeter railings and across Westminster Bridge to the other side of the River Thames.

Claudia Webbe, the independent MP for Leicester East who was expelled from the Labour Party following a conviction for harassment last year, also took part in the London protest that was part of a day of international demonstrations in soli-

arity with the WikiLeaks campaigner.

"I would say to MPs – actually of any party – you're there to represent democracy and rights," she said. "That's what you sign up for... if Julian Assange is extradited, it will set forth fear among other journalists of doing anything to expose truth."

Assange, who is currently being held at London's high-security Belmarsh Prison, will face espionage charges if he is sent to face trial in America. The High Court has ruled that Assange can be extradited to the USA to face a life-time in jail for exposing American war-crimes in Iraq and other parts of the world. The WikiLeaks founder is accused of publishing information detailing crimes committed by the US government in the Guantánamo Bay concentration camp, Iraq and Afghanistan.



• Corbyn joins the human chain.

Assange's wife Stella said the British government should speak to the US authorities to stop the

extradition attempts. "It's already gone on for three and a half years. It is a stain on the United Kingdom

and is a stain on the Biden administration," she said.

She also voiced her fears for the jailed WikiL-

eaks founder's health after he tested positive for COVID 19.

"He tested positive for Covid on Saturday, the same day thousands of people came out onto the streets to support him," she said, concerned that the prison authorities had only given her husband some paracetamol for his symptoms.

"I am obviously worried about him, and the next few days will be crucial for his general health. He is now locked in his cell for 24 hours a day," Stella stressed.

In the USA, supporters of the Australian-born activist gathered outside the Justice Department to call on the federal government to drop its extradition bid. The protesters said they hope Assange never steps foot on US soil because he would not be treated fairly by the judicial system.

"Julian wasn't trying to help dictatorships, he was trying to stop the United States from becoming one! And that's why they want him in jail, and that's why it's crucial that we fight to set Julian free," 2020 Libertarian Vice Presidential candidate Spike Cohen said at the rally.

Human trafficking survivor Eliza Bleu urged the "global elites, the ruling class" and employees of the CIA and FBI to "be a hero, quit your job and become a whistleblower".

"If it's a choice between free speech and the United States government, trust and know, one's gotta go! If one has to go, it ain't gonna be free speech!" she said, adding that she is so passionate about freedom because she knows what it is like to lose it.

## Chinese language learning broadens children's horizon

by Shi Xi & Liang Jun

**AS CHINA** is a major country on the global stage, to study China and its language can broaden children's minds and improve their career prospects.

"China is at the centre of many developments. It's going to be important for our next generation of young people to understand China's culture and to also be able to work in the Mandarin language," said Joan Deslandes, head teacher of Kingsford Community School in Canning Town in east London.

She made the remarks at the prize-giving ceremony in London's Chinatown for the winners of the Chinese proficiency competition – *Chinese Bridge* – for primary- and secondary-level students. Altogether, nearly 500 British students participated in the two competitions held online earlier this year.

"But more important

is that I recognise that China has a wonderful history and culture that is unknown to many of the young people in the UK and I felt it would be broadening their minds and broadening their understanding and supporting their development as global citizens if they were to learn the language," she said.

In 2000, Kingsford became the first school in Britain to introduce compulsory lessons of Mandarin Chinese into the curriculum.

Around 140 students and teachers from 17 schools were present at Friday's event. They interspersed the prize-giving ceremony with performances including Chinese songs, Chinese traditional dances and Chinese musical instruments.

"And those were just only a small number of them who won the competition, but behind that there are very many schools teaching Chinese, and a lot of enthusiasm about having



• Kingsford School students at the Chinese Bridge prize-giving ceremony.

Chinese as a language option in this country," said Katharine Carruthers, director of the UCL Institute of Education Confucius Institute for Schools.

"China is playing an important part in the whole world global vision. We need to equip the children with all the skills and that involves language and cultural understanding, to be able to stay connected as they grow up," said Suzanne Haigh, head teacher at

Kingsford Wade. The London-based school is the first prep school in Britain to offer a bilingual immersive English-Chinese education for boys and girls from ages 3–11.

"In terms of prospects for employability, knowing the Chinese language, being able to communicate effectively with people from China can only benefit the young people of this country," said Deslandes.

"In our diverse world where there are so many challenges that have to be faced, it's only through bringing our young people together, through learning each of those languages, learning about each other's cultures that the important co-operation that we need between all our nations for the future success of every country on this globe can continue," she added.

*Xinhua*

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# Raising villagers' incomes in Tibet

by Tao Xing

**“A PARTY member shall serve the people and work together with them to solve problems,” says a young member of the Communist Party of China (CPC) from the Tibet Autonomous Region. What she said reflects cherished Party values, and she has matched her actions to her words.**

As the leader of a working team stationed in Xamkyim village to help its residents, 30-year-old Kelsang Chodron has guided locals in developing the Tibetan turnip industry since 2019 – the year she was assigned here. The village, which is under the jurisdiction of Riwoqi County, Qamdo City, has 591 residents.

As part of its poverty alleviation programme, the central government dispatched working teams, whose leader usually served as the first secretary of a village Party branch, to under-developed villages from 2013. A first secretary is part

of the village leadership together with members of the village Party branch and the villagers' committee. Team members usually came from government organisations, state-owned enterprises and public institutions. The model has continued after China eradicated absolute poverty in late 2020 and embarked on its pursuit of rural revitalisation.

Xamkyim shook off absolute poverty in 2017, Kelsang Chodron said, adding that caterpillar fungus and beef were major income sources, but their output was limited.

She helped bring about a change after realising the village is suitable for planting, on a large scale, high-quality Tibetan turnip, an edible and medicinal plant cultivated in Tibet's farming and farming-pastoral regions. Although it has long been consumed as a vegetable, the villagers had overlooked its medicinal value.

Kelsang Chodron persuaded more villagers to



• Tibetan villagers meet to discuss and decide on village business.

plant the herb by convincing them of its potentially large profit margin. The dried substance can be sold for up to 100 yuan (\$14.06) per kg and the fresh one for two yuan (\$0.28) per kg. Usually, one kg of dried turnip can be obtained from 2–3.5 kg of fresh ones – depending on the quality.

A group of Party members took the initiative in setting up a co-operative, which dries the turnips and then sells them in the county seat. The co-operative purchases high-quality raw turnip from locals. In 2020, a factory that can produce over 1,500 kg of dried turnip per year was

built in the village with government funding.

To boost sales through e-commerce, Kelsang Chodron acts as a live-streaming hostess and promotes the goods online. The co-operative's profits are divided amongst villagers.

When Kelsang Chodron came to the village

in 2019 she was on a one-year assignment. Before that, she had worked as a police officer in her hometown in Riwoqi County after graduating from a police academy in Tibet's regional capital Lhasa in 2014.

“An industry cannot be developed within one year and the villagers want me to stay,” Kelsang Chodron said, so after completing the one-year term she chose to continue her mission.

“I believe it is the right choice,” Kelsang Chodron said, adding that as a Party member, she is aware of the need to go beyond oneself for the greater good.

Kelsang Chodron submitted her application for Party membership in 2016 and joined the CPC in 2018 after two years of procedure.

“I will try my best to live up to the belief that the CPC works for the well-being of all Chinese people including ethnic minority groups,” she said.

*Beijing Review*

## Che amongst the youth

by María Josefina Arce

**FIFTY-FIVE YEARS have passed since the death of a man who shared part of his short life with the Cuban people, together with whom he fought for their independence and stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the beginning of this transforming work that is the revolution.**

The heroic guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara is an example of perseverance, sacrifice and selflessness, who put all his energy and determination in favour of the welfare of others. A tireless fighter and worker, it was not uncommon to see him, together with the

people, in any task that was needed.

His legacy is alive and well and is strongly present in the Cuban youth, who in the difficult times that the country has had to live through, are marching in the vanguard.

Cuban youth have been fully committed to help in the provinces affected by the recent passage of Hurricane Ian. From all parts of the island they have come to the west, especially to Pinar del Río, which suffered the greatest damage.

As Che taught us, they work tirelessly in the recovery of that province together with the people of Pinar del Río. They can be seen repairing the electricity



• Young Cubans gather to trace Che's march during the military campaign.

network, clearing up the damage, helping in the reconstruction, working in the fields and giving assistance to the most vulnerable people.

And there they are on the day of voluntary work, which takes place today and will continue tomorrow throughout Cuba, convened by the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba. It is

also undoubtedly the best tribute to Che, the main promoter of this activity.

There are many examples of solidarity and invaluable contribution of the younger generations. The students at the University of Havana have contributed to the collection of donations for the families most affected by Hurricane Ian in Pinar

del Río.

In Mayabeque, also badly hit, students and professors at the Agrarian University gave their assistance to those most affected in the municipality of Batubán, in that province.

“The hands and encouragement of the youth will not be lacking...” said the first secretary of the Communist Youth Union, Aylin

Alvarez. And it certainly has not been lacking, just as it was not lacking when there was a fire at the super-tanker base in Matanzas last August, nor when a gas explosion wrecked the Saratoga Hotel, in the Cuban capital, two months earlier.

During the two years of the Covid pandemic, the youth was also in the front-line, giving medical attention to the sick, in the community-by-community investigations, in the isolation centres and in the assistance to the most vulnerable people.

Che is replicated in every young Cuban who fights for the advancement of the country and the improvement of the living conditions of every compatriot. Today, as the heroic guerrilla aspired, Cuba's youth is the first on many fronts.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## German anger at soaring prices

**GERMANS took to the streets of Berlin last week to protest against soaring energy prices as the European Union warns of a dark winter.**

People gathered in the German capital to protest against soaring energy and commodity prices, and denounced their government's stance on the war in Ukraine. Demonstrating for the second time in three days protesters said the government's policies on the war in Ukraine had led to the energy crisis, a stagnant economy and soaring prices.

"People can't afford to heat their homes and, what's more, the situation is still worsening," said one protester. The protesters also called on US-led NATO to immediately stop sending arms to Ukraine and to work to resolve the crisis peacefully through diplomacy.

Since the start of Russia's military offensive in Ukraine in late February, Germany has offered substantial support to Ukraine, sending the country billions of dollars in military aid and heavy weaponry. Russia has in turn cut off gas supplies to Europe, causing a worsening energy crisis.

Germany, along with other European Union countries, is scrambling to support homes and industries burdened by a further surge in energy prices. Berlin accuses Russia of wielding energy as a weapon. Russia blames Western sanctions for the delay of necessary repairs to supply pipelines.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz recently announced a €200 billion plan to protect companies and households from the impact of soaring energy prices. Under the planned measures, to run until



• "Enough is enough" – Germans march against price rises.

spring 2024, Berlin will introduce an emergency price brake on gas.

The plan, however, was criticised by other EU member states, including France, which said Berlin's plan went beyond those of its European neighbours. Scholz pushed back against

the criticism, saying other countries were also taking steps to shield citizens from price shocks. "The measures we are taking are not unique but are also being taken elsewhere and rightly so," he said at a press conference.

EU Crisis Management

Commissioner Janez Lenarcic, meanwhile, warned that the continent could face widespread and long lasting blackouts this winter amid the crisis. Asked by Germany's RND media network if EU countries would possibly need disaster relief

due to the energy crisis, Lenarcic responded, "Yes, that is quite possible." The commissioner said the EU is more generally preparing for a winter of crises.

In a related development, Portugal's Economy Minister Antonio Costa Silva said that the EU wouldn't have been in this situation if it had set up a single market. Not establishing a single market, he said, "was a huge strategic error."

He also warned that it was "highly likely" that with the Ukraine war and the EU sanctions on Moscow continuing, Russian President Vladimir Putin would fully cut off gas exports to Europe in "the depths of this winter." Costa Silva further said Europe would need to develop a solid plan to deal with this situation.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## French workers fight on!

**THE CGT, the biggest union bloc in France, has rejected Government proposed wage talks and has vowed to continue their industrial action that has hit petrol supplies throughout the country.**

The strike by French tanker drivers responsible for delivering fuel, gas, and chemical products, is over low wages and harsh working conditions amid a cost-of-living crisis in France.

French motorists have been made to wait in long queues across the country to refuel their vehicles as petrol pumps run dry amid an ongoing strike in the country's energy sector.

The industrial action at TotalEnergies, which coincides with strikes at two Exxon Mobil refineries in the country, follows similar protests held across the European Union against soaring

inflation and the rising cost of living caused by sanctions imposed on Russia in the wake of the Ukraine war.

French President Emmanuel Macron has called for putting a quick end to the persisting crisis as his government is under increasing pressure to act as the strike continues and more fuel stations run out of some products. "Negotiations are under way and on track...I hope that in the coming hours, the soonest, this can be resolved. Blocking is not a way to negotiate," the French leader said during a visit to the Mayenne in western France on Monday.

In a statement on Sunday, Esso France, Exxon Mobil's French business, said it had put an improved offer for a 6.5 per cent rise in 2023 and a €3,000 bonus on the table. According to the statement, the offer means an overall wage increase of 10.7 per cent, plus €4,000 in bonuses, over the period from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023.

The strikes have already taken offline over

60 per cent of the country's refining capacity, making diesel prices climb and forcing Paris to increase imports of fuel. The strike has forced TotalEnergies' 240,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) Gonfreville refinery offline.

The CGT has blockaded some fuel depots around the country and in the greater Paris region of Ile-de-France. The oil strikes have mounted added pressure on Macron, whose government is already facing discontent among the public over inflation and higher cost of living.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## China's communists pave the way

**THE COMMUNIST Party of China leads the Chinese people towards rapid development, says Australian communist leader**

**Vinnie Molina.**

China's modernisation is based on development in the interest of its people, hence great support from the Chinese people for the initiatives from the Communist Party of China (CPC) in its leadership, said the leader of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

"Everything that we do, in the end, it has to be backed by the people," said Vinnie Molina, the national president of the CPA. "I see that the CPC has got the backing of the Chinese people."

The CPC, he said, has given "a strong leadership to the people of China in the development towards a socialist society," not least in rapid economic development including lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and impressive technological development, particularly in the area of space.

Molina was a carpenter who had been

working with the construction union for about 25 years and likes watching videos on construction in other parts of the world.

"Some of the infrastructure that China has been able to develop is very impressive," he said. "As a construction worker, I feel very happy when I see those developments."

During the past two pandemic years, Molina saw China's respect of people's life from its handling of the disease. "We can contrast this with the treatment of Covid in other parts of the world." While lots of people across the world died from the Covid, he said, in China, "every life is precious."

Molina praised China for providing the Covid vaccine to the world. "Millions of people could benefit out of the Chinese biotechnology," he added.

China has provided more than 2.2 billion

doses of Covid-19 vaccines to over 120 countries and international organisations.

China's development is also in line with the interests of the world, Molina said. The CPC is committed to promoting peace, cooperation, mutual respect and development for a shared future.

"The development of the Belt and Road Initiative is very important, in which it treats developing nations with respect on an equal basis," he said.

In spite of these efforts, China is not reported fairly by some Western media, Molina said. "I think what goes on with some Western media is they only see things through their own lens."

Molina voiced hope that the Australian government could improve its relationship with China. "We should treat China as a partner," he said.

*Xinhua*