

SUNAK: NOTHING TO OFFER THE WORKERS

by *New Worker* correspondent

RISHI SUNAK steps into Downing Street this week pledging to fix the “mistakes” of the Truss government and restore stability in the financial market. But the new Tory leader, who ended Truss’ disastrous 44 days in office on Monday, made it clear that he has nothing to offer working people.

Warning that there will be “difficult decisions to come”, Sunak said: “Right now, our country is facing a profound economic crisis...I will place economic stability and confidence at the heart of this government’s agenda. This will mean difficult decisions to come.”

To Tory cheers in the House of Commons, the new Prime Minister said: “My record is, when times are difficult in this country I will always protect the most vulnerable. We did it in Covid and we will do that again.”

Rishi Sunak became prime minister on Tuesday after meeting King Charles at Buckingham Palace, where the monarch asked him to form a government following the resignation of Liz Truss.

Left the only candidate standing in the Tory leadership race, after Boris

Johnson and Penny Mor-daunt failed to get the 100 MP nominations required to get on the ballot paper, the 42-year-old former Chancellor became Britain’s third PM in a year on Monday.

The youngest premier in modern British history may have played his cards right to get to the top but he’s got a difficult job ahead of him. Labour is still some 30 points ahead in the opinion polls. Inflation has topped 10 per cent. Food costs keep rising and gas shortages due to the continuing sanctions regime on Russia will send energy bills soaring in the winter.

But the 42-year-old former Chancellor says he will deliver on the Tory manifesto, including a stronger NHS, better schools, safer streets, levelling up and building an economy that embraces the opportunities of Brexit.

Sunak’s elevation, inevitable after he won the Tory leadership election unopposed under new rules devised to stop Boris Johnson standing, calmed the volatile financial market in the City and boosted the pound against the dollar.

But it cut no ice with Sir Keir Starmer, who led the opposition pack in saying



Sunak had no mandate from the people and clamouring for a new general election.

“The only time he ran in a competitive election, he got trounced by the former prime minister, who herself got beaten by a lettuce,” the Labour leader told MPs in a mocking reference to the shelf-life of a lettuce used by the tabloid *Daily Star* to measure the time Truss would spend in Downing Street.

Starmer, in top form, then told his Shadow Cabinet that Sunak was a “weak” man who “who will have to put his party first and the country second”.

“Rishi Sunak stabbed Boris Johnson in the back when he thought he could get his job. And in the same way, he will now try and disown the Tory record of recent years and recent months and pretend that he is a new broom,” said Starmer.

“...he was also the Chancellor who left Britain facing the lowest growth of any developed country, the highest inflation and millions of people worried about their bills. And now he plans to make working people pay the price for the

Tories crashing the economy.”

Starmer said Sunak “has only ever fought one leadership election battle his entire life and ‘got thrashed’ by Liz Truss. No wonder he doesn’t want to fight a general election”.

FUND

What a difference a day makes! Last week the useless Liz Truss was still in office. This week Rishi Sunak has taken her place. What the week after brings nobody knows. What we do know is that we bagged £997 for the fighting fund this week. That pushes the needle nearer the £3,500 mark thanks to regular contributors and special donations including £30 from a Yorkshire comrade and £8.20 from another in the East Midlands. The October fighting fund now stands at £2,077. We now need £1,923 by the end of the month to guarantee our future.

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INSIDE
Political
chaos...p2
TUC at the
seaside...p3

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

A pivot for peace

THE 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is over. A new leadership with Xi Jinping at the helm will lead the 96-million-strong Party as China continues down the road of modernisation and Chinese-style socialism.

Under Xi's leadership, People's China has made remarkable achievements in areas including poverty eradication, scientific and technological innovation, and the fight against the Covid pandemic, which has greatly improved the living standards of the Chinese people. Communists all over the world are now looking to see how the Chinese communists and the people's government that they lead will face the challenges of the next five years.

China has become a beacon of hope for all the peoples of the world struggling to build their own independent economies without imperialist interference. Whilst Anglo-American and Franco-German imperialism use their military and economic might to impose their neo-colonial rule throughout the Third World, the Chinese people can, and do, provide the Third World with an alternative source of high technology and economic assistance without the odious strings attached that always go with deals with the West.

China, whose economy is now second only to the USA, has become a pivot for peace in a world torn apart by imperialist greed and aggression. China is strong but it threatens no one. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. It stays true to the principle of equality of all countries big or small, strong or weak, and rich or poor, and it respects the development paths and social systems independently chosen by all the world's peoples. The people's government is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future.

This was a congress of victors, and we are certain that there'll be plenty more victories to come as the Chinese people march forward to build a modern, socialist China.

A focus for war

THE greedy eye of US imperialism has long focused on Ukraine. In 2014 the Americans used the craven Ukrainian oligarchs and the fascist gangs that they finance to overthrow the elected government in Kiev.

Determined to join NATO and tear up all the social gains made by the Ukrainian workers in Soviet days, the American pawns could only rely on the rabidly anti-communist neo-Nazi gangs for support whose pogroms against the Russian-speaking community led to the anti-fascist uprisings in Crimea and the Donbas.

Eight years later the Russians were forced to intervene after repeated Kremlin efforts to end the fighting in the Donbas were spurned by the puppets in Kiev and their masters in Washington.

The Americans armed Ukraine to the teeth. They sent in mercenaries and imposed punitive sanctions on the Russian Federation. They expected Russia to come crawling on its knees begging for mercy – but Putin is still there. The Russians are stepping up their war effort in the conflict that has brought devastation to Ukraine in its wake.

Now under a hail of Russian missile and drone attacks the Ukrainians, and their shadowy US intelligence controllers, are believed to be planning a false flag 'dirty bomb' provocation to justify direct imperialist intervention. They tried and failed in Syria. They must not be allowed to get away with it in Ukraine.

Communists must lead the call 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 right of Crimea and the Donbas republics to join the Russian Federation and equal rights for all the people of the regions of the Ukraine.

Political chaos in the post-Brexit era

by an Observer

FREQUENT CHANGES of governments or prime ministers are futile in addressing Britain's problems. And such practice will simply trigger even more problems.

After Liz Truss resigned as leader of the Conservative Party (and consequently as prime minister) following only 45 days in office, who would become the next prime minister once again became a hot issue. But it is not hot anymore. Rishi Sunak, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, was set to become Britain's next prime minister after his last remaining contender dropped out of the race on Monday.

In a short span of less than two months the British people have lived through three prime ministers. What happened in the UK's recent political life has added much drama to the British political soap.

Given the frequent changes of prime ministers and cabinets, the *Economist* even used "Britaly" as a headline on its cover to portray today's situation in the UK, which it says is now a "country of political instability, low growth and subordination to markets".

The political turmoil in Westminster is an embodiment of the country's confusion in the post-Brexit era. If Britain cannot get out of its current predicament, stability is unlikely to return to the political arena.

After the 2016 Brexit referendum, British politics entered a period of political confusion and more political instability.

Firstly, different views over Brexit have exacerbated divisions within the Conservative Party as well as in British society as a whole. Even though the UK has now finally left the European Union, the Remainers – those supporting staying in the EU – and the Brexiters who backed Leave represent very different ideas and positions on many fields, including the direction of the UK's economic development. This split will be long-standing and difficult to reconcile.

Secondly the Conservative Party is split over many

detailed policies, which can be exemplified by the contest between Sunak and Truss, especially on the economy. The Conservative Party cannot keep on the same page on how to deal with challenges at home either.

The recent political upheavals reflect the internal structural contradictions of capitalism says Shen Yi, a professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs of Fudan University. For a long period after the Cold War, the capitalist propaganda from Western countries such as the USA and the UK succeeded in effectively whitewashing these internal contradictions. These days, with the decline of Britain and the USA, such contradictions cannot be successfully concealed.

If Western countries such as the UK seriously intend to fundamentally tackle the turmoil, they need to adjust their political systems. But in fact, when confronting difficult problems, these Western countries work under the premise that capitalism is correct and it cannot be fundamentally adjusted, notes Shen. In this context, they therefore cannot achieve their goals regardless of how much they try.

Furthermore, as Cui Hongjian, director of the Depart-

ment of European Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, says, the UK's current political turmoil also has something to do with its political system. This is because, under this political system, rivalry is encouraged both within the Conservative Party and in parliament. When political competition and struggle intensify, rules and legal interventions lag behind. This only exacerbates the political turmoil.

Cui said that in order to maintain its ruling position, the Conservative Party now attempts to change government through a leadership reshuffle instead of a general election. This raises the question of legitimacy on whether the government represents the interests of the Conservative Party or the interests of the country.

Given the UK's current national strength and global influence following its withdrawal from the EU, it will be increasingly difficult to achieve the goals that were set in London before Brexit. Against this backdrop, the government's confusion will continue. More political instability will likely follow, and it will not be resolved effectively.

Global Times



• Protest outside the Tory conference.

Workers' Notes

At the seaside

by *New Worker* correspondent

FOR THREE DAYS last week the Trades Union Congress held its belated annual bash in Brighton, postponed by the passing of the late Queen from its usual position in the second week of September.

Until fairly recently this used to be one of the great political events of the conference season. It received wall to wall TV coverage, except when *Playschool* was on or when the Chair allowed the stranger speakers to mount the rostrum. Battalions of the now almost extinct tribe of thirsty labour correspondents from the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers religiously attended. Such was its influence its 1968 centennial was marked with a postage stamp – then a very rare honour. Its 150th bash went largely unremarked.

In those halcyon days no Labour Cabinet ministers or Shadow Cabinet ministers dared avoid the jamboree. Debates were listened to intently because they shaped policy, not just for the TUC but for the Labour Party and governments. Frequently the outcome of debates was uncertain due to the fact that there were a much larger number of unions, which have long since merged into more general unions.

This time round Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer was the only Shadow minister to address Congress. He used the occasion to pledge to abolish the 2016 round of Tory anti-union laws but took care not to support any current industrial action or to say anything about older anti-union laws, nor to support a decent pay rise for NHS workers. Unlike TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady, he did not take part in a picket line photo opportunity.

After Starmer's wishy-washy speech (which got an almost unanimous round

of applause), Unite General secretary Sharon Graham said: "Britain is in the middle of a horror story. When the government talks about 'difficult decisions' this is code for 'workers and communities will pay'. The UK is being lined up for austerity mark two. We need a change in government."

a message

She concluded by saying: "Warm words are welcome, but we now need a message

one. There are in all about 6,555,000 trade unionists in Britain, with over a million in non-TUC affiliated unions. These include those too grand for the TUC such as the British Medical Association (BMA) for doctors, street unions such as the United Voices of Workers for migrant cleaners, and staff associations such as the splendidly named Retail Book Stationery and Allied Trades Employees Association for WH Smith employees.

A slight majority of trade unionists are female, density

be seen all but one was passed, which was remitted for further consideration. This was an attack of the use of fossil fuels, curiously enough from the recently founded Artists Union England. No doubt this would have been brutally attacked by unions with interests in these industries.

mixed

The TUC was against some things and in favour of others.

It was in favour of "Higher pay to tackle the cost-of

There was not a single motion entirely devoted to international affairs, but there was a video address from the Colombian Minister of Labour. Colombia has long been a popular source of Congress House internationalism. It is not a controversial one because it does not involve any serious anti-imperialism, nor is it likely to provoke reaction from right-wing delegates as do Cuba and Palestine solidarity. The latter of course instantly brings up absurd charges of anti-Semitism that the TUC is too frightened of to oppose.

The large-scale murder of trade unionists under previous Colombian regimes made this issue an easy target but even so, little real action can be expected from Congress House. This correspondent recalls the TUC refusing to support a picket of the Colombian Embassy organised by London trade union councils until there was a nice round number of murders to make it worthwhile protesting about.

Of course, it is not only on this issue that the TUC does little. While the Congress passed worthy motions about a £15 per hour minimum wage and the "right to food", a great deal of work is required by activists to turn these motions into reality.

Controversial Motion

There was one motion that generated real controversy and a narrow card vote of 2,556,000 votes to 2,469,000 in favour of composite 2 "Economic recovery and manufacturing jobs", which recognised that: "Congress believes that rebuilding a modern, high-tech, manufacturing sector as the fundamental wealth creating aspect of the economy should be a priority. This will restore and redistribute wealth to ensure a more equal society for all workers."

The narrowness of the vote was due to the small print in the GMB motion supported by the Prison Officers Association (POA). Although mover Nigel Warn correctly said that job losses in manufacturing would be devastating for working-class communities "from Glasgow to Barrow-in-Furness to Derby", the manufacturing jobs he had in mind were largely those in the arms industry and

continued on page 5...

• Maria Exall is elected the new TUC president.



from Labour that is clear and action based that shows the country what they can vote for, not just what they should vote against." Best not hold our breath for that.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary of shopworkers' union USDAW, was in raptures at the same speech, however, saying: "[Starmer] promises a new deal for working people within the first 100 days of going into government. A new deal that will end low-paid insecure employment, give workers the dignity of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and security of employment." One wonders if he still believes in Santa Claus.

unclear

The TUC has 48 affiliated unions representing a total of 5,336,600 members, at least it had in July of last year. It is unclear what effect the recent upsurge in strike action has had on union membership figures. One suspects that there has been some increase for this reason but given that strike actions have generally taken place in hitherto well organised industries, the increase will be likely a fairly small

in the private sector is an abysmal 12.9 per cent, whilst 51.9 per cent of public sector workers are union members, over all, less than a quarter, 23.7 per cent to be precise, are in unions. Across the industrial sector density ranges from 51.4 per cent in education, 37.7 in transport and storage, down to a miserable 4.3 per cent in accommodation and food services. Not a pretty picture. In all about half the strength of the glory days of the late 1970s.

The largest union is now the giant public services union Unison with 1,206,000 members, with Unite on 1,171,000 being overtaken last year. The smallest TUC union is the pitiful remnant of the Nation Union of Mineworkers (NUM) with 199 members.

To return to the actual conference, as always the Congress had a theme: this time it was "We Demand Better" – which sounds militant without actually meaning anything. All in all, there were 72 motions before compositing to make them fairly harmless and acceptable to all sides.

Most were in union terms common sense. So far as can

living crisis", "Strengthening collective bargaining and employment rights following the P&O scandal", "Hot food for healthcare workers" and "Industrial strategy for UK to provide appropriate fit for purpose PPE", amongst other things.

At the same time, it was against "Inequalities in Health", fire-and-rehire, the "government's unlawful immigration system" and sexual harassment in the workplace.

worthy?

Not all readers of the *New Worker* will be delighted by the affection with which the TUC regards Channel Four. It describes the BBC as a worthy institution for which we should all cough up through the licence fee, but wisely did not say it was a source of truthful news as most delegates would know from experience how the BBC either ignores or distorts reporting of industrial action.

It also said that plans to privatise Channel 4 would be an act of "cultural vandalism that must be vigorously opposed".

...continued from page 3

it successfully called on the TUC to repudiate its “policy carried in 2017 in favour of diversifying away from defence manufacturing is no longer fit for purpose”.

High-minded opposition came from, amongst others, the National Education Union (NEU), who denounced it for “producing arms that will be sold to Saudi Arabia to kill kids in Yemen” and said that instead the TUC should follow the advice of a motion supporting “just transition” ... “as a solution to these high-skilled jobs in Barrow and Derby and elsewhere, not investment in pointless, unproductive, murderous weapons”.

Predictably however, the motion passed, in this case thanks to engineering union Unite weighing in with “serious reservations” to keep its lefty activists happy with the qualification that military spending should take place in these islands and, if so, increased arms spending was unnecessary to defend existing jobs.

too long

Unite assistant general secretary Steve Turner lamented that: “For too long taxpayers’ money has been used to prop up the economies of Texas, Pennsylvania and Virginia when government should be investing in jobs and communities here at home.” He said it was much better that “our naval support ships are

built here with UK steel and composites, cabling and technologies, in shipyards from Appledore to Belfast, Birkenhead to Rosyth”. So that makes military expenditure OK then.

The TUC obviously approved of this stress on arms production because the GMB’s motion on arms was actually composited with another from the POA that spoke of manufacturing industry in general.

Had the two motions been left intact delegates could have voted for the nice POA motion, rejected the nasty GMB one, and still supported manufacturing. As with the Fossil Fuels motion, there is a need to balance the risk of exterminating the human race through war or global warming with the need to save jobs and union dues.

Pot Calls Kettle Black

Connoisseurs of irony will be delighted at Composite 20 entitled “Sweetheart deals and unions working together”, which piously applauded “the solidarity of union members and affiliated unions standing together to take action against the poor employment practices of some employers in the education sector”, and equally denounced “some unscrupulous employers [who] have sought to avoid recognising affiliated unions with an occupational and established membership claim, including through the practice of ‘sweetheart’ recognition agreements”.

That is all well and good, but it came from teachers union NASUWT and the GMB. In May of this year the latter signed just such a deal with delivery firm Deliveroo, which was designed solely to shut out the small non-TUC union the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) that had spent six years actually organising Deliveroo drivers.

At the time, IWGB fumed that “this partnership benefits nobody except Deliveroo and the GMB leadership, and we call on the Government to review the Union Recognition legislation”.

GMB has form in this area – in June last year it signed a similar deal with taxi firm Uber, just after IWGB was gaining ground in organising them. In both cases wage negotiations were specifically excluded from the agreement with these notoriously anti-trade union companies. Signs of any GMB activity on behalf of Deliveroo and Uber drivers are hard to see.

Footnote to Congress

The Royal College of Podiatry nobly submitted a motion that deplored ill-fitting and wrong footwear. They properly declared that “whether you work on a building site, as a dancer or a professional sports person, access to the right footwear is vital to health of the nation’s feet” and called for a tightening up of health and safety legislation on the issue.

No strike, just yet

by *New Worker* correspondent

THERE IS no shortage of industrial action underway at present, but one which will not be taking place is at Amazon.

Despite 99.3 per cent of workers voting to strike in ballots conducted by GMB at the predatory retailer’s Doncaster and Coventry “fulfilment centres”, as its massive warehouses are known, the legal threshold needed for industrial action was missed by only three votes due to the turnout being too low.

This however was the first ballot in a British Amazon warehouse, at which GMB is not yet recognised, but at least it has a foot in the door of the viciously anti-union retailer. At the TUC even Sir Keir Starmer said that Amazon should recognise GMB, although that will likely be the extent of his commitment to the cause of trade unionism for this year.

Food supplies in danger

by *New Worker* correspondent

UNITE THE UNION has issued a warning that product supplies could be at risk as the result of industrial action at a Yorkshire factory. Thirty-six engineers at Fox’s Biscuits in Batley are taking strike action from Sunday 6 November, which will be followed by another four days from Monday 14 November. They have been offered a pathetic pay rise of five per cent, which is of course well below the rate of inflation. Even this comes with strings. Engineers would have to accept moving from weekly to monthly pay and their period of notice would also be

extended from one week to three months.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham pointed out that: “Our members undertake a highly skilled role ensuring Fox’s production lines run smoothly and they are simply not going to accept a substantial real terms pay cut.

“This is a hugely wealthy company and settling our members’ pay claim would be an absolute drop in the ocean for it. This is a classic example of a company that can pay but is choosing not to.”

Regional officer Chris Rawlinson added: “Unite’s members are taking strike action as a last resort. The union has given the company every opportunity to make a fair pay offer but it has failed to do so.

“The strike action will inevitably result in production problems and product shortages in the run up to Christmas but this dispute is entirely of the company’s own making.”

Fox’s is part of the multinational Ferrero Group. In the UK alone its revenues increased by 10 per cent to £450 million last year. Unite claim the total pay increase the engineers are seeking amounts to just £140,000.

Also in the food industry, about 70 HGV drivers and shunters at Müllers’ dairy company in Gloucestershire are striking for 11 days in opposition to imposed rota changes that will force drivers to work at least one day every weekend, in clear breach of an earlier agreement.

On Teesside, workers at Quorn’s factory in Billingham are continuing with all out strike action. The skilled fermenter and chiller technicians, maintenance and laboratory staff have rejected an offer of four per cent plus a one-off £1,000 payment and are seeking a nine per cent pay rise, which was the RPI inflation rate in April when negotiations began.

20 years ago this week in the New Worker

SOWETO TOWNSHIP was rocked by a series of bomb attacks on Tuesday night, killing one person and wounding another. Targets included railway lines, a mosque and a Buddhist temple.

White racist extremists are believed to be responsible although no-one has claimed responsibility for the explosions. Two white men were seen acting suspiciously in Soweto shortly before the bomb blasts in the black neighbourhood.

Police Commissioner Jackie Selbi said he suspects that a major right-wing

organisation was behind the bombings. “We think we know who did this,” he told the press.

South African President Thabo Mbeki warned that this could be the start of a prolonged terror campaign. “The information the Government has had for some time ... indicates that the right-wing have the intention to conduct a campaign of this type to destabilise the country,” he said in Cape Town, adding that they had no chance of removing the government.

The following statement was issued by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU): “COSATU condemns in the strongest terms the setting off of at least nine bombs in Soweto this morning. At least one person was killed and another seriously injured in this outrage. Our sincere condolences go to the affected family.

“While no person or group has claimed responsibility for this unprovoked attack, it is not hard to conclude that this is part

of the right-wing assault on our democracy, evidence of which has recently been uncovered by the police.

“COSATU, the largest mass democratic organisation in the country representing the biggest and best organised constituency, would like to warn the right wing that there is no extent to which we will not go to defend the democratic revolution. The workers of this country will fight and defeat any attempt to re-impose white supremacist rule in our country.

“All progressive white people in our country continue to put their shoulders to the wheel, helping to build a prosperous and equitable dispensation in South Africa. We commend and encourage them. We also condemn, and vow to destroy all reactionary elements that hide among them and refuse to accept the defeat of apartheid.”

Ukraine: Wage a class war against imperialist war

by John Catalinotto

THE LATEST US-NATO-Kiev aggressions in the Ukraine war theatre – bombing the bridge to Crimea and the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines – have escalated the fighting, threatening a continental or even a worldwide conflagration.

The world's richest bosses, bankers and billionaires, and their agents in Washington, London, Berlin and Brussels, have imposed the war in Ukraine on the world's workers.

From the US-incited Maidan coup in 2014, which established a reactionary anti-Russian regime in Kiev to enable NATO's expansion towards Russia's borders, the imperialists created an existential threat to Moscow, making war nearly inevitable.

The war's victims include the working class in Ukraine and Russia, who are paying in blood; the peoples of the Global South, who are denied normal sources of food; and the workers in Western Europe, who face enormous hikes in fuel and food costs and potential loss of jobs as their industry closes.

US workers face higher prices for food and housing, plus the diversion of government funds from social programmes to profits for the military-industrial complex.

Given the price workers pay for the war, anti-imperialists and others organising for a socialist world must find an opening to organise against the war. In doing so, they must dismantle a serious obstacle.

War propaganda

The USA and NATO answered the direct Russian intervention with sanctions and by arming the Kiev regime. The capitalist media monopoly, as dominant as the Pentagon, perpetuated lies, distortions, exaggerations

and absurdities, repeated a thousand times over, to shape the discourse.

The billionaire ruling class dominates ideology and imposes its war propaganda on the world. A major goal of this propaganda was to demonise Vladimir Putin, Russia's president. This started long before the war and tripled after Russia's intervention.

The 'Big Lie' in Europe

In Europe, the corporate media's Big Lie was that Putin threatened to re-establish a capitalist Russian Empire, with the old borders of the socialist Soviet Union, and even threatened neutral countries in Western Europe. The lie had an impact.

Up until this year, the anti-war movements in Finland

protect the class interests of the European bankers and billionaires by accepting the leadership of US imperialism, as they have in nearly every crisis since 1945. The apparent goal of the European ruling class is to hang onto their roles as junior partners in the US-led imperialist gang that exploits the world's producers.

When some in the German

France. Refinery workers, angry that fuel bosses are growing richer whilst they can't afford monthly necessities, have struck. French President Emmanuel Macron, whilst delivering weapons to arm Ukraine, has attempted to cut workers' pensions and conscript refinery workers to force them to work – breaking their strike. So far this has only spread the strike.

It is outstanding that organisations in France not only helped build the 18th October union protests but joined the working-class struggle with the struggle against imperialist war in Ukraine. A demonstration of 140,000 people in Paris on 16th October, demanding lower prices and more environmental protection, showed the potential for such a movement.

The anti-war movement in Portugal has called for demonstrations on 26th October in Lisbon and 27th October in Porto.

In many protests around the USA on 15–16 October against US/NATO aggression, slogans highlighted the class interests of the workers and how the war hurts them. At a rally in a neighbourhood plaza in New York City's poorest borough, speakers proclaimed: "Where's the \$60 billion+ for the Bronx?"

for socialism

While this embryonic international movement has a long way to go, the most conscious revolutionary actors should keep the same message alive that the Russian revolutionary VI Lenin taught during the First World War and which the French comrades reminded us of: the main enemy is the ruling class of your own country, and the goal is to turn the imperialist war (against the workers) into a war against the ruling class and for socialism.

Workers World (USA)



Putin's demonisation followed the pattern of earlier attacks on any leader Washington targets. To name only a few: Saddam Hussein of Iraq (twice), Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and Slobodan Milošević of Yugoslavia were all demonised before and during the time the imperialist military bombed and/or invaded their countries, destroying and tearing them apart.

US presidents actually did to those countries what Putin is accused of doing in Ukraine.

In much of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the populations treated the imperialist war propaganda as the usual US hypocrisy they had experienced many times before. And during United Nations' votes to condemn Russia – introduced with the heaviest US pressure – even the governments of dozens of these countries refused to go along, abstaining.

and Sweden could mobilise quickly and militantly against joining NATO. Under the avalanche of propaganda, the rulers of those countries were able to apply for NATO membership with only token opposition.

Taking advantage of the initial confusion in the anti-war movement, the German regime doubled its military outlay, shipped weapons to Ukraine and switched from relying on relatively cheap Russian gas to higher-priced fuel – much of it fracked natural gas from the USA. The German working class paid the price. London – of course – and Rome and Paris increased military outlays and sent weapons to the Kiev regime.

The politicians representing the German, French, Italian and British ruling classes, along with other capitalist politicians in Europe, have decided at this point to

regime appeared to question the wisdom of rejecting long-standing agreements to buy Russian gas, someone blew up the pipelines carrying Russian gas to Germany and closed the question. Only the US military had the motive and means to do this – and they had US and British ships near those pipelines at the time.

The challenge for those who oppose imperialist wars is to find a way to break the ideological hold of the ruling class and its dominant media on the working class. An important step is to join the defence of working-class interests to the battle against the war.

Class struggle breaks out

Whilst anti-war demonstrations have taken place in many countries, the central country for an outbreak of class struggle has been

My father's faith

by Lin Xiaoyi & Zou Zhidong

Chinese people believe that letters are as valuable as gold. For thousands of years, letters, across mountains and oceans, have been delivering the writers' sentiments, friendship and expectations. During the last decade, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese president, has managed to find time to reply to some letters from ordinary people despite his busy work schedule. This is about one of them.

"AFTER COMING to China, the Communist Party of China (CPC) became my father's faith. He witnessed China change from its backwardness. I know his past experience but have also witnessed the take-off of China. I firmly believe that the CPC has maintained its original aspiration of striving for the people's welfare," said Zhou Youma (1910–1988), the first foreigner extraordinarily approved to become a CPC member and obtain Chinese citizenship, when recalling his receiving a letter from Xi.

On 14th September 2021, Xi replied to a letter from family members of some international friends, including Edgar and Helen Snow, George Hatem, Rewi Alley and Israel Epstein, paying high tribute to China's international friends who had stood and fought shoulder to shoulder with the CPC and the Chinese people through thick and thin, and made invaluable contributions to the Chinese revolution.

China, Xi said, has always remembered their invaluable contributions to China's revolution, construction and reform and their earnest

friendship toward the CPC and the Chinese people, and will always cherish their memory.

"I am warmed and encouraged by the reply from Comrade Xi Jinping," Zhou said vowing to follow his father's example, actively promoting the spirit of internationalism, and co-operating with international friends to enhance friendship between the Chinese people and the people of the world, making the image of China and the CPC more vivid and lovely.

In 1933, George Hatem, an American doctor, came to Shang-

nese people," Zhou said. Deeply moved, in February 1937 Hatem officially joined the Communist Party of China.

"My father told me that when he joined the Party, the entire membership of the CPC was not enough to fill the Beijing Workers' Stadium. By 1947, however, the CPC members had grown by the millions, which reflected the rallying power of the CPC and the recognition of this Party by the Chinese people."

After the founding of the People's Republic of China Hatem officially became a Chinese cit-

izens who, like his father, dedicated themselves to changing the fate of the Chinese people.

"At that time, the living conditions of the people were poor, but the spirit and determination of the CPC members were high. At present, China is getting richer and stronger, and the living conditions of the people have been greatly improved. I am glad to see that the CPC has never forgotten its original intention and is still concerned about the most disadvantaged groups in this country," he said.

In 2021, China



hai to study tropical infectious diseases. Influenced by his friends, Hatem began to read Marxist works and study China's revolution. In 1936, Hatem arrived in Bao'an, in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, then the temporary headquarters of the Chinese Red Army. In the months that followed, he joined Red Army troops in their operations.

"When I was a child, my father often told me about his experiences as a military doctor in Shaanxi and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, where he witnessed CPC members fighting for the poor and for a brighter future for the country, changing him from a revolutionary sympathiser to a soldier fighting for the revolutionary cause of the Chi-

zen in 1950 and was appointed medical consultant of the Ministry of Health of the country, where he devoted himself to the pioneering and bolstering of health in the country, especially the prevention and treatment of and research on venereal diseases and leprosy.

"Since I was a child, my father was always traveling to save lives. Even in the year that he died, he still went to some leprosy hospitals personally, touching the feet of patients to check if they had ulcers," Zhou said.

Born and raised in Yan'an, the city which served as the base of the CPC-led revolution during the 1930s to the 1940s, Zhou said he has witnessed many events involving Party mem-

bers who, like his father, dedicated themselves to changing the fate of the Chinese people.

What personally moves Zhou is that at every momentous occasion in the country, the Party and the government deeply remember the international friends who made valuable contributions to China's development.

Currently, Zhou and his family are rooted in China, and just like his father's generation, are contributing to the country's development along with the vast majority of Chinese workers.

Global Times

• Zhou Youma, centre, with his mother Zhou Sifei and father George Hatem.

Red Theory: The historic emergence of capitalism

by J Sykes

DESPITE what bourgeois economists, the priests of property and profit, would have us believe, capitalism isn't the eternal way of things. It had a beginning, and it will have an end. As we begin our discussion of political economy, let's draw upon historical materialism to examine how capitalism arose.

Capitalism didn't arise out of nowhere, and it wasn't born from the minds of Adam Smith or David Ricardo. It emerged historically and materially from the womb of feudalism, and like any mode of production is limited and

conditioned by what came before it. There are several phases in its history, from agrarian to mercantile capitalism, and then to industrialisation and on to its current, monopoly stage.

An important characteristic of capitalism's early development emphasised by Marx in *Capital* is what he called "primitive accumulation". What is primitive accumulation? Marx calls it the "original sin" of how capital came to be in the first place. Marx explains the myth of the origin of capital like this: "In times long gone-by there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal



Karl Marx
Capital
A new abridgement

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living...thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins.”

But of course, this is just another lie the capitalists tell to justify their rule. The truth, Marx says, is much uglier: “The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.”

The capitalists originally accumulated their vast wealth by stealing it outright, through colonialism, genocide and enslavement. This primitive, or original accumulation, although fiercely resisted, has never really stopped. Despite the end of chattel slavery after the Civil War in the USA, national oppression still continues to form the basis of super-profits extracted from the oppressed nations within the US whilst imperialism continues to wage wars to plunder the under-developed countries the world over.

In broad terms, early capitalism grew out of the collapse of the manorial system in Europe, followed by the enclosure of the commons beginning in the 16th Century. The enclosure of common land and the clearing of the estates, primarily for grazing by sheep to profit from the market in wool, drove poor peasants off the land and into the towns. In chapter 27 of *Capital*, Marx refers to this as “the prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production”.

Poor peasants more and more were com-



• The Battle of Naseby was a key battle in the English revolution which signalled the end of feudalism.

pelled to become ‘free workers’, with nothing but their own labour-power to sell, leading to the early development of the working class. The towns became centres of handicraft industry, commodity production and trade, and thus became the growing centres of power for the rising mercantile bourgeoisie against the feudal estates in the countryside. In the towns the early mercantile capitalists began to build their wealth through the production and trade in commodities, or products made solely to sell, along with colonial plunder, including everything from mineral wealth, spices, coffee and tobacco, to enslaved

human beings.

The coastal cities of Europe, and later America, became the power centres for the merchant capitalist class, whose ports traded between Europe and its colonies. This period was characterised by violent class struggle between the rising bourgeoisie and the feudal lords, whose hereditary wealth and power were based upon the continuance of the feudal mode of production. Many of the modern, capitalist nation-states were formed in this period from the revolutionary defeat of the feudal principalities and kingdoms, as the capitalists seized and consolidated state power based on territories

encompassing communities of economy, language and culture.

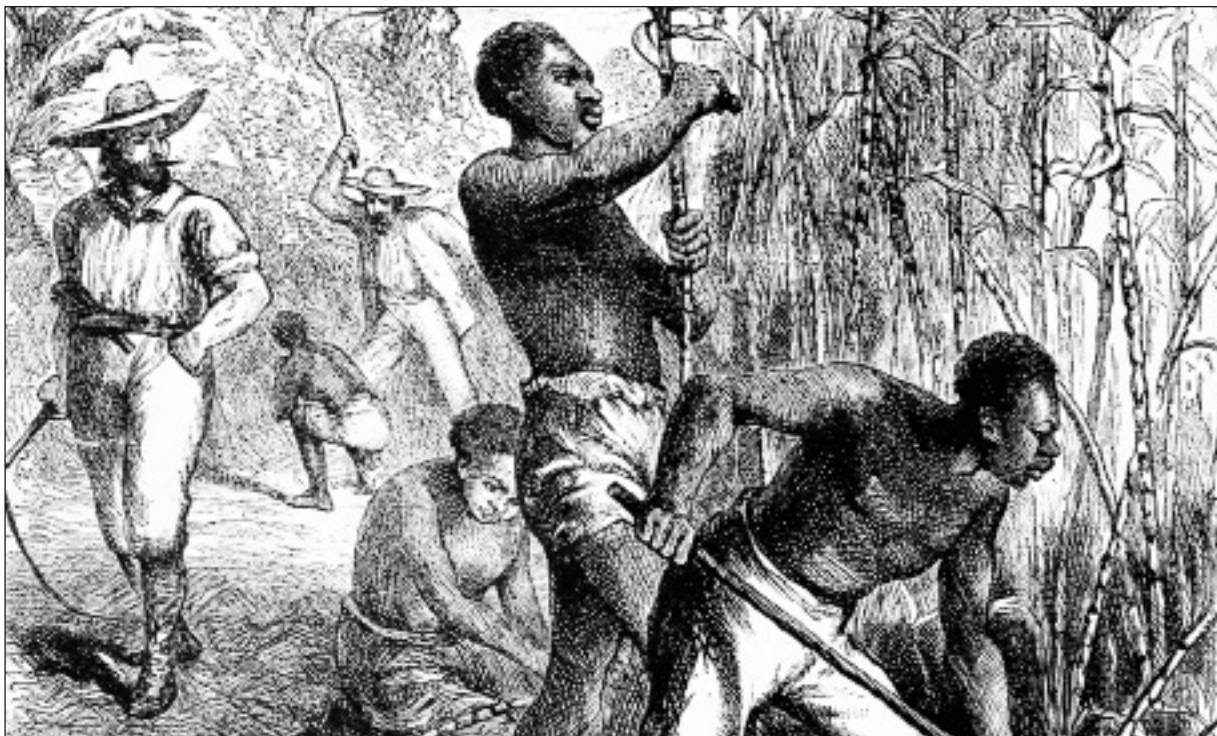
Having smashed the power of the feudal lords and established their own state power, the bourgeoisie was able to change the relations of production to suit their needs, clearing the way for the tremendous advancement of the productive forces in the industrial revolution and the development of the modern industrial proletariat.

There’s an important point to be made here that is often misunderstood. Marx and Lenin both said that capitalism was a progressive historical force, and they said this knowing full well what horrors of exploita-

tion and oppression capitalism brought with it. So, what does it mean to say that capitalism was progressive?

At its core, historical progress is a scientific concept, not a moral one, and it is measured in two ways according to historical materialism. First, by the development of the productive forces, and second, by the expansion of democracy.

In terms of the advancement of the productive forces, capitalism freed the productive forces from the fetters of feudal productive relations. This allowed for the development of modern industry and a more advanced division of labour.



• The evil of slavery was a corner stone in the building of capitalism.

Advancement in the productive forces reduces the socially necessary labour to produce human needs, thereby reducing scarcity and paving the way, materially, for the possibility of more equitable distribution of the products of labour. In terms of the expansion of democracy, the social revolutions that established the rule of the bourgeoisie overthrew feudalism and took power from the small class of hereditary lords and put it into the hands of the larger class of the bourgeoisie. By both criteria, capitalism was progressive by leaps and bounds over feudalism, which was inferior in terms of both the superstructure and the economic base. Simply put, the feudal mode of production took more work to produce less for the benefit of fewer people. By further developing the productive forces, capitalist relations of production establish the material conditions necessary for socialism. This is the progressive side of capitalism, according to Marxism.

This isn’t to say that capitalism doesn’t have a reactionary and oppressive side as well. It certainly does. For working and oppressed people that has always been how capitalism has been experienced – as a system of misery, poverty, oppression and exploitation. As we shall see more and more in the articles that follow, capitalism contains its own exploitative and oppressive contradictions that must also be overcome. In doing so socialist revolution will likewise remove from the productive forces the fetters of capitalist relations of production and create a system that is far more democratic, “a million times more democratic”, as Lenin said, by taking power from the relatively small ruling class of capitalists and putting into the hands of the working class for the benefit of the broad masses of the people.

Fightback News

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The New Communist Party of Yugoslavia (NCPY) informs you that Neo-Nazis have attacked our Headquarters in Belgrade. They smashed our windows and wrote anti-communist and Neo-Nazi slogans on its walls. Reactionary forces attacked our Headquarters five times last year. In the last few years it has become standard practice – but the last attack on our Party was the biggest.

In the last few years Neo-Nazis have become very active. They constantly destroy a lot of anti-fascist monuments and other symbols of socialism in our country. The NCPY is the most active Party in our country that defends socialist and anti-fascist symbols. The police and the authorities don't want to do anything about it. Our security services and police are very familiar with the Neo-Nazi groups. They created a lot of them.

The anti-people government of Serbia and the reactionary forces are disturbed by our political programme.

Pressure on our Party has intensified in the last few years. Attacks on our Party have to be seen in the context of the huge anti-communist hysteria in Serbia and the crisis in the world. The anti-communist campaign in Serbia goes hand in hand with the offensive against the workers and people's rights and it has been going on for many years. Many films, TV series, and "science programmes" are made to discredit the socialist construction that existed in our country. They are be-

ing shown every day. The media portrays communists and revolutionaries as criminals and adventurers, and on the other hand, they portray collaborators as patriots and "saviours of the nation". They want to show that the struggle for social justice is an absurdity, while treason is something to admire. By order of the European Union, Serbia brought in the law of rehabilitation and 3,000 Second World War collaborators were rehabilitated.

The reactionary forces in Serbia with last actions wanted to scare the communists in our country. The members of NCPY are supporters of the partisans, who, led by the communists, defeated fascism and the collaborators who served the Nazi occupiers and slaughtered their own people.

Communists are proud of that struggle, because after that glorious victory, a more just world was built, which was tailored to humanity and foresaw a future worth living in. A more just world that spread fraternity and unity among nations, not a policy of hatred and exploitation.

The NCPY is sending a warning to the cowards who are hiding behind the Neo-Nazis that communists will not back down because of empty threats.

Communists are people of a special kind who are not afraid of cowardly Neo-Nazis attacks.

The Communists will unreservedly and ruthlessly fight to the last breath and drops of blood for a world without exploitation, racism, fascism, chauvinism, interethnic hatred, and all other reactionary forms of government.

The NCPY calls on

our sister communist and workers' parties to organise demonstrations in front of the Serbian Embassy in the next two weeks or to send protest letters against the discrimination of NCPY to The President of the Republic of Serbia by e-mail: kontakt.predsednik@predsednik.rs

We thank you in advance for your solidarity!

**Aleksandar Banjanac
General Secretary
New Communist
Party of Yugoslavia
Belgrade**

Dear Comrades

A young child's world is for just a short time one of sweet innocence, kindness and fairy-tale make-believe. Soon enough as adulthood approaches they must be made aware of the harsh realities of life, especially in bourgeois society with its greed and high levels of stress. They need to be made aware that the world is not just populated with good kind people but that it also includes criminals, fanatics, perverts and capitalists eager to exploit them in any way they can.

Throughout our lives we all need to keep learning. If we stop and think we know it all then it is inevitable that we will start to decline and ultimately fail. In some ways, like a developing child, adults must continue to learn both from their experiences of life and by developing a thirst for knowledge. Bourgeois propaganda, however, does not encourage people to think deeply, leave their comfort zones or even approach important matters with an open mind. They are kept under the illusion that we live in a free democratic society that should be the envy of an admiring world.

Meanwhile, seduced by fake and biased news from the mass media, they become ideal candidates to be exploited for their surplus value or to end up as cannon fodder in an imperialist-inspired war. The bourgeois media attempts to fill our minds with trivia, lies and misinformation.

The fake left peddles social democratic class collaboration and defeatism. Pseudo-intellectuals posing in front of rows of books they have never read sow the seeds of apathy and confusion. Our *New Worker* is becoming a rare beacon of truth amongst our newspapers and provides a platform for the discussion of ideas and action.

It often requires courage to speak out in defiance of the imperialist narrative. We are not supposed to discuss religion or politics in polite company, but we have to do so to analyse the real world and put forward our alternative views of events. It is important not only to identify the failings of Western societies but also to put forward practical solutions and attempt to show the way forward. An element of the class struggle is the battle of ideas, which we need to approach from a Marxist perspective. We must try to light a candle to show the truth and also the need build the labour movement.

Enough is enough is the new battle cry from the streets as voices are raised against the hardships faced by working people as a direct result of the capitalist crisis. People are taking to the streets and we are with them. With little prospect of Starmer fighting their cause the movement must build to become the lever for change. We must work to highlight the need for revolutionary changes to society. And whereas the right-wing dominated Labour Party appears unwilling and unable to support those changes, the New Communist Party is committed to doing so.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

Consolidation has begun of the four oblasts that recently voted to become part of the Russian Federation. Martial law will allow for the Russian armed forces and the indigenous militias to increase security and better protect the populace against terrorists who will be out to try and wreck

any growth and stability in those areas, probably resorting to desperate measures in the coming weeks.

Whilst peace may still be some way off what the people can be assured of in those regions will be access to electricity, heating, fresh food and water, health care, bank credit (with deleted overdrafts) and trade union rights. Many of those essentials are no longer available for those living under the Banderite regime. As regards labour laws, in August law 5371 was ratified by Zelensky; this removes trade union rights from all businesses employing up to 250 employees, which accounts for 70 per cent. This will remove collectively agreed holiday and sickness entitlements, remove the union veto of workplace dismissals and replace the national labour code with an individually negotiated contract making each employee effectively self-employed.

Other laws passed in July stop payment to workers called up to fight and the other (5161) legalises zero-hours contracts. Some of these are supposed to be only valid until martial law is lifted but that's very unlikely to happen because the anti-worker laws are long-standing policy of the ruling Servant of the People party, which is an oxymoron given they only serve themselves and the oligarchs.

Its implementation was argued because of the war, although the laws were originally mooted last year but shelved owing to mass protests. Now, under the guise of disaster capitalism, all these anti-worker laws are being pushed through. There's one to have trade union property sequestered by the state and another to have a maximum 12-hour day and to allow for a worker's dismissal without any justification. Trade unionists in the UK should be under no illusions as to blatant fascism being practised in Ukraine.

Along with the banning of any political opposition by the Ukrainian fascist clique, it would seem that there is no inherent opposition. However, I would expect that the coming winter season will rally a mass of Ukrainian people to remove the puppet Zelensky, demand a restoration of workers' rights and to negotiate for peace with Russia despite the efforts of NATO/EU/USA to prevent it.

**Mark Z Campey
North Yorkshire**

Diary

SAT 29 OCT

Radical Options for Scotland and Europe: Scotland Needs Democratically Controlled Public Ownership for all Basic Services. Hybrid. 11:00-12:30 Unite HQ, 145-165 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 4RZ and <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86945686592>

SAT 29 OCT

Korean Friendship Association UK: Picket of the BBC against anti-DPRK propaganda, 15:00, Portland Place, London W1A 1AA.

SUN 30 OCT

Pathfinder Books: Book launch: Tomas Diez Acosta's "The 1962 Missile Crisis as Seen From Cuba" 14:30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL

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

MON 7 NOV

Barry Amiel & Norman Melburn Trust: Andrew Murray on Competing Imperialisms: A New Cold War. 19:00. Hybrid meeting at Marx Memorial Library and Online. Book on MML website.

TUES 8 NOV

Socialist History Society: Kryss Katsiaviades on Iraq's cultural heritage: Theft of Artefacts following the US/UK Intervention. 19:00, Zoom Lecture. Register on SHS website.

WED 9 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: Science as Technology. Online Seminar. 19:00-20:30. Book on MML website.

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

SCOTTISH local government is a fascinating topic. Parish pump politics often make the battles amongst the Borgias and the Medici in the Renaissance look like teddy-bear picnics.

When, after the First World War, Labour started gaining influence and control in industrial towns and mining areas from the "Moderate" and "Progressive" coalitions as the Tories and Liberals called themselves, the regimes they built were not terribly inspiring.

True they provided some municipal improvements, particularly in the field of decent housing, at least for the better-off workers. But the best of municipal improvements built upon earlier Liberal developments and private philanthropy.

In rural areas something akin to feudalism long-persisted, with many county councils chaired by earls and even dukes pre-

siding over their carefully chosen councillors who were very often their own tenant farmers.

Councillors usually micromanaged their fiefdoms. Getting council jobs or a council house depended on keeping on the right side of councillors. Corruption was the norm, not the exception. Selection meetings for Labour councillors sometimes involved taking old ladies out of care homes for the evening on the pretext they were going to the bingo. Otherwise-unemployable nieces and grandchildren of councillors often found gainful employment in the lower reaches of council departments – as a result efficiency was noticeable by its absence.

reorganised

Scottish local government was reorganised twice in the late 20th Century. In 1973 the old counties and burghs were abolished and replaced with a new system of regions and districts. This usefully got rid of very small town councils, but the main feature of this reform was the giant Strathclyde region, which covered most of the west of Scotland and almost half the Scottish population. This was designed by the Tories for the purpose of submerging the powerful Glasgow Labour mafia in a wider council.

This did not happen as Labour's influence grew as the only viable alternative to the Tories. Indeed, the remoter Highland parts of Strathclyde benefited from it with the introduction of novelties such as tarred roads that could not be afforded before.

The powerful Strathclyde authority could not be allowed to continue so a harder-nosed Tory government created the present system of 32 single-tiered local authorities that were elected in 1995. These closely mirror the historic councils, with smaller counties being merged and the more populous ones split. There are also four city authorities. A post-devolution change to the voting system to a single transferable vote means that few councils now have a single party in control. Assorted coalitions and minority administrations are the order of the day.

The demise of Labour as the overwhelming force has not seen an improvement in standards the SNP promised that they would bring. The SNP enthusi-

astically picked up all the less-edifying aspects of Labourism. On capturing Glasgow, the SNP's Lord Provost was forced to resign for claiming expenses for posh shoes and clothes that even included underwear. The leader of the council also came under fire for providing her husband with a rent-free shop under a re-development scheme.

Takeover

Despite being in control of much of it, the SNP have a deep loathing of local government. One major sign of this was taking police and fire services out of local control and putting them under the control of Holyrood ministers. In both cases the centralisation has not been an overwhelming success. Police Scotland have been involved in scandal after scandal involving the very highest command. Of course, none of this can of course be blamed on the SNP who do not involve themselves in "operational matters".

More is to come in this centralising direction. Plans for a cuddly sounding "National Care Service" are in the pipeline, which will repeat the earlier follies.

Despite their recent hard-fought battle over wages, CoSLA [the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities] and the two main local government unions Unison and Unite have united to denounce the SNP's National Care Service legislation, which would see 75,000 council workers (to say nothing of the physical assets) transferred to a national structure controlled by SNP ministers.

under the thumb

Another source of concern is that instead of being responsible to local councillors, social work and care services would be under the thumb of unaccountable local care boards that would deliver services.

CoSLA Health and Social Care Spokesperson Councillor Paul Kelly said: "Instead of investing to improve care services now, the Scottish Government are choosing to prioritise unnecessary expensive structural reform which will disrupt services, staff and our communities who rely on support."

For Unison, Tracey Dalling added: "The National Care Service plans

leave tens of thousands of staff, not just in local government but across many public services, uncertain about the future of their jobs and their pensions."

Wendy Dunsmore, her opposite number at Unite, said: "The Scottish Government's proposals represent the biggest power grab in the era of devolution. Ministers will be able to unilaterally decide what services are to be delivered nationally or locally which is the direct opposite of local democratic accountability." She also made the point that: "There remains next to no detail on major elements of the National Care Service proposals including how local and special care bodies will work independently, and with each other, and crucially what this in reality means for the workforce."

Counting the Pennies

The *Daily Record* recently reported on a secret assessment from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) that 6,000 council jobs are likely to vanish in the next few years due to SNP underfunding of councils to the extent of £119 million.

Labour MSP Mark Griffin complained that: "Years of raiding council budgets has left social work on its knees, roads crumbling, libraries closing, and bins overflowing." Anyone who doubts this need only keep their eyes open on a brief walk through any town centre. To add to this, this correspondent would note that on seeing this correspondent's neighbouring streets any latter day wandering lonely as cloud William Wordsworth would write about 10,000 weeds rather than daffodils. It has been observed that one sure

sign of a ministerial visit is the appearance of street cleaners and gardeners the day before.

"We are all paying the price with cutbacks in services, but it is tragic and unforgivable that 6,000 people will now be out of work due to the SNP's failures," he added.

In detail, 26 out of 29 councils reported funding gaps, ranging from £1-47 million, with another £130 million likely to be required in the future simply to cover the recent pay settlements.

CoSLA also complain that apart from long-term reduced funding levels, the introduction of one-year budget cycles makes it difficult to do any long-term planning and the low level of wages makes it difficult to recruit and retain staff.

The convention's Resources Spokesperson, Councillor Katie Hagmann, said: "Throughout Scotland we are seeing this cost crisis beginning to really take hold and it is only going to get worse for many people across our communities. The money [that workers] spend locally supports businesses – without a fair pay deal that helps them to face the cost crisis, that spending power is reduced and local businesses will feel the effects."

Another serious issue is that with the recent rise in interest rates councils could face unexpected burdens for decades to come.

In December, Highland Region set its 15-year capital programme. It now reports it has already spent the largest portion of its annual revenue budget simply to fund the repayment of loans charges that it blissfully set when interest rates were historically rock bottom. Some of its school building projects were financed on 60-year loans.

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.
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The ones that got away

REVIEW

by Ben Soton

Act of Oblivion
by Robert Harris.
Hardback:
Penguin, London,
2022; 480pp;
rrp £22. Also
available as an
audiobook.

AS WE ENTER the reign of Charles III it might be worth taking a brief look at his two previous namesakes. Charles II was a play-boy King, restored after the brief English Republic. Converting to Catholicism on his deathbed he paved the way for the end of the worthless Stuart dynasty.

His father Charles I was the first monarch to be executed for crimes against his own people. But what of those who sentenced him to death – the men the Royalists called the “regicides”?

Some died before the Stuart restoration. Others were arrested for high treason and brutally executed by the Restoration government. And some fled to Europe or New England to escape the wrath of the vengeful Stuarts. Their fate is the subject of Robert Harris’s recent novel *Act of Oblivion*.

The title is a reference to the Act of Free and General Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion of 1660. Technically the Act pardoned those who had rebelled against Charles I. This was essential considering many of those who invited Charles II to return had fought for

lish colonies in North America.

The novel charts their continual shifting from hiding place to hiding place, with numerous Puritan settlers taking considerable risks to ensure they avoided capture. The pair are portrayed as defeated revolutionary exiles separated from their families and home, unlikely to return. Although this is not the fate of all revolutionaries, it has been sadly repeated time and time again.

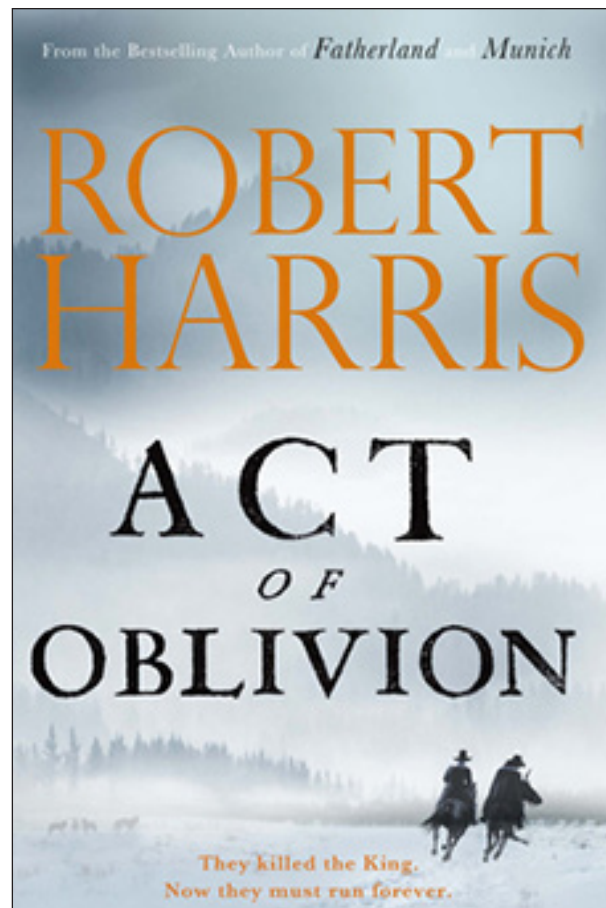
There’s a price on their heads, and the book also charts the story of their tormentor Richard Nayler who is entrusted with the role of hunting down the regicides. Nayler, a creation of the author, has a personal grudge against Whalley and Gough whom he holds responsible for the death of his wife.

The novel, which is well researched, gives the reader an insight into the mindset of the major characters. The younger of the two men, William Goffe is ardently committed to the return of the English Republic and believes the year 1666 will see

Parliament during the Civil War.

But those who had signed Charles I’s death warrant were exempt from the Act. Some, most notably Oliver Cromwell and his son-in-law Henry Ireton, had already died. A few including John Milton, known for his seminal work *Paradise Lost*, were pardoned. Many of those remaining such as Colonel Thomas Harrison and the Puritan preacher Hugh Peter were hanged, drawn and quartered.

Some, however, got away. Some, like the maverick general Edmund Ludlow, sought sanctuary in Calvinist Switzerland. This book focuses on the fate of Colonel Edward Whalley and his son-in-law Colonel William Goffe, who fled to the Eng-



Building links with German friends

by New Worker correspondent

DERMOT Hudson, the Chair of the Korean Friendship Association in Britain (KFA UK), visited Germany from the 14–18 October at the invitation of KFA Germany. There he met members of the KFA of Germany, the Communist Party of Germany (known as the KPD-Ost) and its youth wing, the KJVD.

During the visit Dermot took part in a KFA Germany online meeting, via Telegram and Zoom, that included a cultural programme by

a local folk singer. At a second online meeting the KFA UK chair talked about the nuclear policy of the DPRK and then answered questions from the participants.

Dermot had many discussions with local communists and members of KFA Germany. In run-down East Berlin, the former capital of the German Democratic Republic (DDR), he went to the Socialist Memorial that includes the graves of former East German leader Walter Ulbricht and Ernst Thälmann, the German communist leader jailed by the

Nazis after they took over in 1933 and shot in Buchenwald concentration camp in 1944.

The KFA Germany delegation treated him to an excellent lunch at the popular East German-themed Volkskammer restaurant. Unfortunately the Volkskammer restaurant, whilst having a great atmosphere, does not charge GDR prices. It was pointed out later that the famous East German soft drink, Vita Cola, was being sold at a price nearly 10 times that of its old GDR price, a sure sign of the restoration of capitalism!



• Remembering the good old days at the Volkskammer restaurant.

the Second Coming of Christ. The more cynical Whalley becomes more disillusioned in exile and turns to writing memoirs about his time close to the corridors of power under Cromwell’s ‘Protectorate’, pointing out some of its shortcomings. The sections of the book where Nayler appears delve into the politics of the Restoration Court.

With considerable hindsight, *Act of Oblivion* predicts the

American colonies’ eventual independence from Britain. But the sympathy for the regicides may have been a contributing factor in the colonists’ desire to become independent a century later. Although the book could be regarded as slow moving in places and has a somewhat odd ending, it does give an insight into the period, the story being largely based on fact.

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Kremlin fears Ukraine false flag dirty bomb explosion

by Ilya Tsukanov

ON SUNDAY Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu informed his NATO counterparts that Kiev may be preparing a false-flag dirty bomb attack on its own territory to accuse Moscow of nuclear terror. If such a provocation takes place, it could irradiate wide swathes of land, endanger thousands of lives, and dramatically escalate the crisis.

Russia has expressed fears that Kiev may detonate a radiation-spewing 'dirty bomb' and blame Moscow for using a tactical nuclear weapon against its forces. Russia's nuclear doctrine forbids the use of nuclear weapons (WMDs) of any kind unless the country is attacked using weapons of mass destruction or faces a conventional attack so severe it threatens the country's existence. But that fact is unlikely to stop the West from blaming Russia in the event of a false-flag dirty bomb attack, Moscow fears.

What is a dirty bomb and how does it work?

A dirty bomb is typically a conventional explosive device that contains radioactive material, be it uranium, plutonium or other radioactive waste material by-products generated by things such as nuclear power generation or radiological medicine.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu held a series of telephone talks with his French, British, American and Turkish counterparts on Sunday in which he conveyed concerns about possible provocations by Kiev involving the use of a dirty bomb.

Washington, Paris

and London dismissed the warning the same day, saying they "reject Russia's transparently false allegations that Ukraine is preparing to use a dirty bomb on its own territory" and suggesting that "the world would see through any attempt to use this allegation as a pretext for escalation".

On Monday, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov emphasised that the dirty bomb threat was real and would not cease to exist just because Western officials refuse to believe it. Separately, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov vowed to bring the matter up at the UN Security Council and stressed that Moscow has "specific information" about the Ukrainian scientific institutions that have the technology to build a dirty bomb.

Dirty bombs do not cause nuclear explosions, and as such do not cause the same kind of widespread material destruction that nuclear weapons do. Instead, their main purpose is to spew radioactive contamination across areas spanning dozens or even hundreds of kilometres, leaving them uninhabitable and dangerous to the health of the surrounding population and/or troops.

Ordinarily, dirty bombs are the refuge of the weak. At the height of the USA's so-called "War on Terror" in the early 2000s, lawmakers fretted about what would happen if terrorists got a hold of radioactive materials and detonated them in, say, Lower Manhattan or the centre of Washington, DC. Dirty bombs can be surprisingly easy to build. In 2016, a Congressional investigation revealed how simple it was to

create fake companies to circumvent restrictions on the purchase of radioactive materials.

Are there other ways to use deadly radioactive materials?

Notwithstanding the potentially horrific consequences of the use of nuclear waste for military purposes, some governments have also not shied away from the idea. In 1950, after China entered the Korean War, US Supreme Commander Douglas MacArthur famously proposed "sowing a band of radioactive caesium across Manchuria as a kind of 'cordon sanitaire' against the Chinese advance".

Similarly, during the US-led wars in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Syria, US and NATO jets dropped thousands of tons of depleted uranium bombs, shells and missiles on enemy targets, contaminating wide swathes of territory and giving thousands of civilians, enemy troops and their own soldiers lethal doses of radiation poisoning. Britain used these weapons during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Does Kiev have the capacity to build a dirty bomb?

Yes!

In a briefing on Monday, Russian Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defence Troops chief Igor Kirillov said Ukraine has the technological capability and ample radioactive material reserves to build a dirty bomb. This includes some 1,500 tons' worth of spent nuclear fuel from the country's three operating nuclear power plants, and 22,000 spent fuel assemblies stored at

the defunct Chernobyl nuclear plant's waste repositories, including Uranium-235 and Plutonium-239 – the primary fissile isotopes used in nuclear weapons.

Additionally, Kirillov said that Ukraine also has the capacity to store tens of thousands of cubic metres of radioactive waste at several

factors such as detection of above-ground seismic activity, damage to the surrounding environment and estimates on how many kilotons of force were involved in the blast can help to determine the culprits.

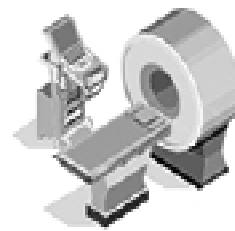
As General Kirillov warned in his presentation, however, if Kiev did proceed with its dirty

ing the chemical weapons provocation at Khan Sheikhoun in April 2017, which prompted the US to launch airstrikes – before any investigation could begin.

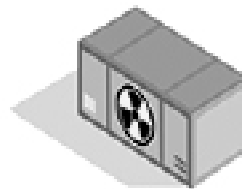
The same tactic was repeated a year later, when a suspected chemical attack against the Syrian city of Douma prompted Washington,

Making a dirty bomb

1 Source
eg hospital equipment



2 Radioactive material
extracted



3 Radioactive material
placed with conventional explosives



waste disposal facilities and can mine up to 1,000 tons of uranium ore every year.

Furthermore, Kiev has the scientific know-how allowing it to easily build a dirty bomb, including the legendary Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology involved in the creation of the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons, and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences' Institute for Nuclear Research, which operates the BBP-M research reactor.

Would experts recognise the difference between a dirty bomb and a nuke?

In the absence of eyewitnesses of the detonation of a dirty bomb or a low-yield nuclear weapon, it may not be possible to immediately determine what caused the explosion. Over time, however,

bomb provocation, the West would be likely to stick to its well-worn tactic of escalation first and asking questions second.

"The Kiev regime plans to camouflage an explosion of this kind of ordinance as a Russian low-yield nuclear warhead containing highly enriched uranium as its charge. The presence of radioactive isotopes in the air will be recorded by the sensors of the European International Monitoring System, with the further accusation of Russia using tactical nuclear weapons," Kirillov said.

"It is to be noted that this kind of information warfare technology has already been used by the West in Syria when the White Helmets were filming propaganda footage about the use of chemical weapons by government forces there," he added, recall-

Paris and London to launch another wave of airstrikes against the country, again before any investigation was started. Later, whistle-blowers revealed that even when the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons conducted its probe into the Douma attack, inspectors pointing out efforts to doctor the report were censored and smeared.

If the Zelensky government does move forward with a dirty bomb provocation, the Russian military would undoubtedly be able to dig up iron-clad evidence proving Kiev's responsibility. Whether the average Westerner, propagandised to believe their governments' narrative on Russia and the Ukraine crisis, would believe it remains to be seen.

Sputnik

Australia heeds Palestinian opinion

by Roberto Morejón

BY REVERSING the decision taken by the previous administration to recognise Arab East Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the new Australian government has stirred the agitated and thorny political scenario towards peace in the Middle East.

The Labor government led by Anthony Albanese has reversed the decision of his predecessor, Scott Morrison, to move the Australian embassy to Jerusalem – a step taken shortly after former US President Donald Trump broke the international consensus on the status of East Jerusalem, which was captured by the Israelis during the Arab-Israeli war in 1967.

Trump did so by recognising the Holy City as the capital of Israel and transferring the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Trump's controversial move generated anger and repulsion, and Morrison's action provoked the same reaction.

That is why the Israeli regime is now enraged by the determination of the current Australian government, which said it re-affirmed the criterion that the situation of Jerusalem is a final status issue, ie it must be resolved as part of peace negotiations.

Indeed, until Trump's uncharacteristic outburst, the international community was reluctant to make proclamations regarding Jerusalem prior to the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is now bogged down.

So controversial was the former US president's gamble that only three states subsequently established their embassies in Jerusalem. They are Guatemala, Honduras and Kosovo,

the latter a territory with limited recognition.

Emboldened by Trump's endorsement, the Israeli regime was counting on more adherents in Washington and to make diplomatic inroads in the Levant.

Australia's recent diplomatic move puts Tel Aviv's plans on hold and emphasises the more coherent line, prioritising peace negotiations in the quest for progress towards a just two-state solution.

For the UN, the status of Jerusalem should be the subject of an agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, and, in the meantime, countries should not establish diplomatic headquarters there.

As is well known, the city is home to sites deeply sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967 in the 'Six-Day War' and then annexed it, declaring it their "eternal and indivisible capital".

This position, together with the widespread construction of settlements in the West Bank, makes a peaceful solution to the regional conflict more difficult, something to which the Canberra agreement does contribute.

Radio Havana Cuba

Cuba still under US blockade

by Yosley Carrero

SIXTY YEARS on and the Cubans are still undergoing ruthless American sanctions. For Sandra Cruz, a civil engineer from the Havana district of Marianao, the intensification of the US trade embargo has led to a rising cost of living.

"The US unilateral policy towards Cuba continues to harm our quality of life," she said, adding that the US blockade, claimed to be targeting only the Cuban government, brings immense pain and suffering to the Cuban people.

Manuel Veliz, 43, runs a mobile repair workshop in Havana. He said that he "cannot use any software and applications licensed in the USA due to the US economic sanctions," adding that the US economic sanctions deprive local businesses of the right to import raw materials from the American market.

"The US blockade is more harmful than bullets and artillery. It is a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights," he said.

"Between August 2021 and February 2022, the US blockade caused Cuba losses valued at \$3.806 billion, which constitutes an historic record for a seven-month period," Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez said recently, adding that the US embargo is like "a pandemic" and "a constant hurricane".

The Cuban government is expected to submit a draft resolution to the UN General Assembly in November to call for an end to the decades-long US trade embargo against the island nation.

It will be the 30th time Cuba has moved such a resolution at the UN, and for 29 times in a row the UN General Assembly has voted in favour of the small island's request. But the USA has ignored the repeated international calls and turned a blind eye to the huge losses its unilateral sanctions have brought to Cuba's economy and people's lives, especially during

October 1973 – an Arab victory



• The look of defeat. Israelis surrender on the Suez canal.

by Reem Haddad

The October War Of Liberation is said to have been one of the hardest wars ever fought between the Arabs and Israel. Although this war was legendary in so many ways, only Egypt and Syria commemorate it today.

At the time, the Zionist-promoted myth was that Israel was invincible and logic would counsel against another challenge. Full of arrogance and self-esteem the Israelis didn't expect another war – but war was what happened!

How did it all start? It started with the Syrians and Egyptians attacking simultaneously on two different fronts. The Syrian army attacked from the direction of the Golan at exactly 2pm on 6th October 1973 and that day was an incredible success!

As for the Egyptian army, it managed to cross the

Suez Canal and capture the Bar Lev Line, which was a fortified sand-wall on the east bank of the canal in an offensive called 'Operation Badra'.

The war continued for three weeks, with victories achieved by both Syria and Egypt. Syria regained Kuneitra, the capital of the Golan Heights, and huge swathes of land.

In the fighting 8,528 Egyptian troops were martyred and some 20,000 were injured, whilst from the Syrian army 3,000 were martyred and 20,000 were injured. As for the opposing Israeli side, 2,656 were killed and 9,000 wounded.

The armies of Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia were in a state of alert waiting to help the armies of Syria and Egypt if need be, and indeed some of these armies participated alongside Syria

and Egypt. Why is this war not commemorated as it should be?

Maybe because it didn't go exactly according to plan because Anwar Sadat, the then president of Egypt, let down President Hafez Al Assad of Syria and sought his own version of separate peace!

Coming after Nasser, Sadat had big shoes to fill, and he wrongly thought he could make his mark on history by deviating from the pan-Arab stand at that point. This deviation of Sadat is responsible for many of the problems facing Syria and the Arab world today.

The real victory in the October war of Liberation of 1973 lies not only in the material gains made by Syria and Egypt, but in the fact that morale of the Israeli army was broken – the 'unbreakable' broke and the 'undefeated' were defeated.

Syria Times

the pandemic years.

"During the Covid pandemic, the US government blocked Cuban access to medical supplies to combat the virus. It is really criminal," said Sonia Mendez, a 62-year-old doctor in Havana.

Mendez said the US embargo has triggered medicine shortages and a power shortage on the island and "affects all walks of life in Cuba".

According to Cuban

official data, the US sanctions over the last six decades has cost the Cuban economy a total of \$154.2 billion. The amount would balloon to \$1.39 trillion if the dollar's devaluation against gold is factored in.

First imposed in 1962, the embargo was tightened by former US President Donald Trump, who put in place 243 more sanc-

tions, including banning all flights from the USA to Cuban destinations except for Havana and capping remittances Cuban Americans can send to their families back home.

The current US administration has allowed airlines to resume flights to other Cuban cities and lifted the cap on remittances, but the web of sanctions against Cuba remains largely in place. *Xinhua*