

# NEW CHINESE MOVE FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE

by our Eastern European Affairs correspondent

People's China has launched a new initiative to end the war in Ukraine with a 12-point plan that calls for a cease-fire and the resumption of peace talks between Moscow and Kiev. The Putin government has broadly welcomed the Chinese initiative. The Germans say it needs to be considered seriously amidst reports that Britain, France and Germany are proposing to send Ukraine a new tranche of weapons and economic aid as a sweetener for opening up a dialogue with the Russians. And even the Ukrainians are taking it seriously. Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky says he wants to meet China's leader Xi Jinping to discuss Beijing's proposals on ending the war in Ukraine, which he said showed that China was involved in the search for peace. But the Americans have already dismissed it out of hand.

China's plan calls for peace talks and respect for national sovereignty. The 12-point document does not specifically say that Russia must withdraw its troops from Ukraine, however, and it also condemns the usage of "unilateral sanctions" in what is seen as a veiled criticism of Ukraine's allies in the West.

Russia, meanwhile, hailed the Chinese peace proposals. "We share Beijing's views," the foreign ministry in Moscow said. Moscow values Beijing's desire to contribute to the settlement of the conflict by

peaceful means, and Russia supports this position. "We value the sincere desire of our Chinese friends to contribute to the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine by peaceful means," says Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova.

Russia agrees with the view of China on the matter of respect of the UN Charter, international law including humanitarian law, the indivisibility of security, and considers all restrictive measures unauthorised by the UN Security Council to be illegitimate, the spokeswoman added.

In Berlin the German Government's deputy spokesman, Wolfgang Buechner, in turn said that the Chinese plan contained valuable suggestions that should be discussed between Beijing and Kiev directly. "It is good that Beijing comes up with its own ideas. The plan contains a number of important points, such as a clear rejection of the use of nuclear weapons.



China calls for peace at UN

At the same time, it lacks important elements, from our point of view," he said. This primarily concerns the lack of a point specifying the complete withdrawal of troops, a condition put forth by Ukraine and fully supported by Germany, he added.

In Washington, however, American diplomacy moved into top gear to stop the Chinese plan gaining momentum. As soon as it came to a cease-fire in Ukraine, the White House suddenly remembered the principle of sovereignty. Washington claimed that it would not dictate to Ukraine the conditions for the end of this conflict.

Whilst China makes concrete plans for peace, US imperialism is only interested prolonging the military conflict.

Asked about the Chinese plan, Joe Biden told ABC News on Friday: "Putin's applauding it, so how could it be any good?"

"I've seen nothing in the plan that would indicate that there is something that would be beneficial to anyone other

than Russia," he added, whilst one of his senior diplomats, Victoria Nuland, stressed that the White House is against a "cynical ceasefire" – once

again confirming that the lives of people mean nothing to Washington.

## FUND

**It's been another difficult week. This is the second edition produced with the help of volunteers who are covering for our lay-out man who is still in hospital with a heart complaint. Problems still remain on the production side but we're getting there. In the meantime many thanks for all the messages of support and special thanks to the comrades in London and Virginia Waters who sent in stamps for our dispatch department.**

This week People's China has launched a new initiative to end the war in Ukraine while anti-war activists gathered in London to launch a new campaign to rally the genuine forces for peace and justice in Britain.

The New Worker stands for peace and socialism. If you believe in what we are doing – and you must do if you're reading this please guarantee our survival by supporting the fighting fund. All donations, big or small, help keep our presses rolling. Please send your donation 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>

**INSIDE**  
**UK arms for**  
**Ukraine...p2**  
**On the street**  
**..p3**



# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## No2NATO – No2War

A new mass movement was founded in London last week, at a meeting supported by a galaxy of anti-war campaigners including Workers Party of Britain leader George Galloway and Socialist Labour's Chris Williamson, the former MP hounded out of the Labour Party on trumped-up charges of anti-Semitism. Other supporters include Max Blumenthal, the founder and editor-in-chief of the Grayzone, an independent investigative news site, as well as the rapper Lowkey together with NCP comrades, supporters of the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign and many, many more right across the broad anti-war spectrum.

The hidden hand did it best to stop this meeting taking place. Venues were cancelled at the last minute. But the conference went ahead thanks to the generosity of the Venezuelan embassy, which opened the doors of its cultural centre in London to the anti-war campaign to allow its foundation meeting to take place.

On the street people are sick of the shortages, price hikes and soaring inflation due to the Ukraine war and the NATO sanctions regime against Russia. Millions want to see an end to the conflict that has brought death and destruction to Ukraine whilst impoverishing millions of working people in Britain and the rest of Europe over the last 12 months or so.

Now People's China has launched a 12-point peace plan that could lead to a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. The Russians have welcomed the initiative. So has the Global South or what we used to call the non-aligned countries of the Third World. But the Americans are trying to kill it stone-cold dead.

Biden doesn't want peace. He wants victory – regardless of the suffering of the Ukrainian people he claims to support.

The American establishment, the 'deep state' that cuts across the bogus political spectrum in the USA, is dominated by the war lobby that reflects the interests of the most aggressive and reactionary elements of the US bourgeoisie. They are supported by the venal elements of the British ruling class who believe that their global post-colonial interests are best protected by the military might of US imperialism.

Since the Second World War, crawling to the Americans has been almost compulsory for Tory and Labour leaders who drone on and on about "partnership" and the "special relationship" to justify British imperialism's slavish support of US power throughout the world.

The Stop the War movement has long ceased to play any positive role in the anti-war movement. It calls for "peace" whilst making the same demands as NATO for an unconditional Russian withdrawal from the Donbas and Crimea. But now we have the chance to close ranks around a new movement committed to genuine anti-war demands.

In Britain, the ruling class would have us believe that we live in what the Americans call the "free world", that the USA is some sort of democratic utopia and that anyone who opposes imperialism is evil, mad or both. Backed by bought-and-paid-for labour movement leaders and a daily dose of lies from the bourgeois media, they think they can play this cynical game forever and ever. We must prove them wrong.

# More British arms for Kiev

by James Tweedie

**Former prime ministers Boris Johnson and Liz Truss are again urging PM Rishi Sunak to gift the UK's jet fighters to Ukraine. Although Sunak has pledged Challenger 2 tanks and AS90 self-propelled howitzers to Ukraine, he and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace have stressed that providing high-maintenance combat aircraft is unrealistic whilst the conflict continues.**

Ukraine".

"We need to do all we can to make sure Ukraine wins this war as soon as possible," she added, reiterating the West's aim to cripple Russia. "We need to do all we can, as fast as we can."

"My view is that does include fighter jets," she added. "Having spoken to the Ukrainians about this, months and months ago, I know what they want is an option."

Truss also called for the illegally-seized assets of Russian citizens in the UK to be handed over to Kiev, and

newspaper that donations of complex jet fighters were unlikely until after the conflict was over.

The Royal Air Force has an active fleet of only around 100 Eurofighter Typhoons FGR4s, having retired its Tornado strike and interceptor jets and Harrier STOVL close support aircraft years ago. The Royal Navy operates US-made F-35B stealth fighters from its two aircraft carriers.

The Ukrainian air force had some 150 fixed-wing combat aircraft in flyable condition before Russia launched its



Anti-war protest in New York

The two former Tory leaders' calls came just a fortnight after Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky made a surprise visit to London, where he thanked MPs in Parliament "in advance" for the "wings of freedom" he wants from NATO countries to rebuild his air force.

"The Ukrainians are not just fighting for their freedom, but for the cause of freedom around the world," Johnson told Parliament on Monday. "We should give them what they need, not next month, not next year, but now."

Truss, who succeeded Johnson following his resignation in summer 2022 but was herself forced to quit six weeks later, said she "could not wait to see fighter jets over

for sanctions to be maintained until there was "reform in Russia".

Sunak attended the Munich Security Conference over the weekend, where Western leaders had many words of praise for Kiev but few concrete pledges of arms.

He has already pledged 14 of the British army's 227 operational Challenger 2 main battle tanks and up to 30 AS90 self-propelled howitzers – reportedly the army's entire stock of functional vehicles. He has also promised to train Ukrainian pilots in the UK.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace poured cold water on the hopes of Kiev's staunchest supporters at the weekend, however. He told a German

military operation in defence of the Donetsk and Lugansk peoples' republics, but even some US officials acknowledge that Russian forces have shot down most of those or destroyed them on the ground.

The USA claims it has supplied enough spare parts to get another 20 fighters airworthy and Montenegro has supplied four Su-25 ground attack jets.

For its part, Russia has repeatedly stressed that any cargo that contains weaponry for Ukraine will become a legitimate target for Russian forces.

**Sputnik**



# Workers' Notes

## Every Little Helps

by New Worker correspondent

**Shop workers' union USDAW have recently claimed credit for securing substantial pay rises for workers at two major supermarket chains. On Monday they announced that at Tesco pay was rising by seven per cent, bringing the basic rate up by 72 pence to £11.02 per hour. £11.02! Rejoice, Rejoice!**

Some 220,000 workers will benefit from 2 April. USDAW say this comes on top of increases made since July 2022 and that in all the basic rate has increased by nearly 15.5 per cent.

USDAW thinks it is a great triumph that the rates apply to staff of all ages and exceeds the Government's compulsory National Living Wage (NLW), presently at £9.50 per hour until April when it will increase to £10.42 per hour for those over 23, and boasts that it is above the voluntary Living Wage Foundation hourly rate beyond London of £10.90 and ensures all staff in stores in London boroughs are on their rate of £11.95 per hour.

Tesco can easily afford to do that – and indeed to pay staff much more from its predicted £2.5 billion profits.

The small print is that Shift Leaders get an extra 40p per hour, taking their skill payment to £2.26 and their hourly rate to £13.28. There are now two new London Allowance areas, with staff in London boroughs getting an extra 93p per hour to take their basic pay plus location pay to £11.95. In outer London (within the M25, excluding London boroughs) staff will now be paid an extra 73p per hour to take basic pay plus location pay to £11.75.

The 1,800 "Shift Leaders" are a new grade created to replace 1,750 "Team Manager" posts in hundreds of its larger stores and get rid of other roles in smaller stores. They are at a lower rate of pay, obviously.

Less positively, Sabbath premiums will fall from 25 to 17 per cent, but apparently this will maintain the existing monetary amount.

USDAW National Officer Daniel Adams claimed: "This deal, which follows earlier agreements with USDAW on additional investment outside of the normal annual negotiations and bringing the 2023 pay negotiations forward, represents a significant step forward for pay within Tesco retail. It represents a third increase in pay in 10 months and ensures that the business continues to respond positively to the significant pressures our

members face. Furthermore, it demonstrates the value of employers engaging constructively with trade unions at this incredibly difficult time."

The union had no qualms about quoting the Tesco CEO, Jason Tarry, who said: "We are absolutely committed to supporting them with competitive base pay and exclusive colleague benefits. This agreement recognises the incredible work and dedication our teams show every day in serving our customers."

### Making a difference

Doing slightly better are workers in Asda stores in Northern Ireland who are to get a 10 per cent increase basic pay to a majestic £11.11 per hour, which applies to all staff regardless of age. The increase starts in July.

The deal was accepted by 88 per cent of the members in a ballot with a 78 per cent turnout.

Raymond Neal, the Area Organiser, was also deferential towards management, saying: "In the course of our ongoing negotiations with Asda, we raised the significant pressures our members face because of the cost-of-living crisis. So we are pleased to have secured a significant increase that will make Asda the top-paying supermarket from July and takes staff beyond the

real living wage."

To put the £11.11 into perspective, Asda had a third-quarter revenue of £5.2 billion last year.

Back in southern England, however, early last month Unite secured a 12.2 per cent rise for about 100 tanker drivers employed by Fuel Transport Logistics (FTL) on the Asda South contract. In addition, they have also secured a four-on four-off shift system, meaning that drivers will work 26 fewer shifts per year with no loss of pay, which by some calculations means a 25.7 per cent rise.

Perhaps USDAW members might agree with Unite national officer Tony Devlin, who claimed that: "It is a further reminder that those wanting better wages and working conditions should join Unite and get their colleagues to join as well."

Monday also saw the *Retail Gazette* issue a useful comparative survey of the state of pay in major British supermarket and other chains. Below are the basic rates for food retailers.

John Lewis and Waitrose do not have anything so common as workers but have partners who have a minimum of £9.90 per hour and those inside the M25 receive at least £11.05. Most are paid above this, however, and non-management pay is on average around £10.75 per hour.

At Sainsbury's £10.50 per hour is the minimum, this was obtained in the second rise in six months last month. They boast that all staff get at least the RLW. Since May, pay in outer London has risen from £10.50 per hour to £11.05 per hour – the RLW level for London.

Workers at Aldi will soon get £10.90 per hour beyond London and £11.95 within the M25, surprisingly it has the highest starting pay of any supermarket chains in the UK. Pay for warehouse staff has just increased by 20 per cent to a minimum of £13.18 per hour.

Workers at Lidl are paid a minimum of £10.10 per hour outside London whilst those in the capital will get £11.30.

As mentioned above, the hourly minimum is £11.02 at Tesco and £11.11 at Asda. Morrisons offer £10.00 for new starters. At Marks and Spencer hourly pay is a minimum of £10.20.

Iceland claims that all its jobs pay above the minimum, with workers in London getting £9.90 to start.

The caring sharing Co-op coughs up a minimum of £9.90 per hour and £11.25 in London, but it has good holiday and pension benefits.

The retail sector is not well organised. Marks and Spencer is very hostile to unions but gives

workers free food on night shifts to 'compensate'. At Waitrose bosses like to say the workers are the owners so they don't need a union. USDAW does not seem very active in recruiting in the downmarket chains. It produced a leaflet entitled 'The Union for Lidl Workers' in 2018 but there is little evidence of later activity.

Warehouse workers end to be better organised than store workers.

These rates are minimums and many workers are paid above that, but recently the fresh food counters have vanished from Tesco and Sainsbury's meaning some higher-paid jobs have gone, along with the bakeries which used to be a feature of Asda stores.

The downgrading of managerial jobs by Tesco is paralleled in other chains.

Further down the jobs food-chain automation is taking its toll on the number of jobs. It is increasing common to see a single assistant supervising a row of self-service machines.

When what was then the National Minimum Wage was first introduced in the early days of the first Blair Government the NCP was derided for claiming that the "minimum wage" would soon become the standard wage. Unfortunately, we have been proven more or less correct.



Chris Williamson addresses anti-war campaigners at the launch of the No2 Nato No2 War movement in London over the weekend. Other speakers included veteran campaigner George Galloway, former British diplomat and Aslef Vice President Andy Hudd.



...continued from page 3

## From Wards to Picket Lines

by New Worker correspondent

**Although they do not need to worry about the National Living Wage, the 48,000 junior doctors of England belonging to the British Medical Association (BMA) have just voted by an overwhelming 98 per cent on a 77.49 per cent turnout in favour of a 72-hour strike in order to secure a pay rise to compensate them for a 256 per cent pay rise that they say is their due. The 26 per cent represents the real-terms pay cuts they have suffered since 2008, to say nothing of declining conditions. The strike will be the first by doctors since 2016 and is a firm rejection of the two per cent on offer.**

BMA Junior Doctors' committee co-chairs Vivek Trivedi and Robert Laurenson said that members had "taken a giant step forward in restoring value to our profession".

Dr Trivedi added: "Within

the next few days, we will be confirming the dates of a 72-hour full walkout of junior doctors in all services. It is critical that we all participate together, as a union, bound together in defence of our profession. Strike action is an investment in our future, our careers, our profession, and our union. A union that can win full pay restoration is a union that can win anything."

His colleague, Dr Laurenson, told his members that: "This is still the very beginning of this fight but thank you for saying enough is enough. We are going to take this mandate and make it count. The excuses, flimsy arguments, and implicit threats will no doubt continue filtering out from Westminster, but make no mistake: this is a result the Government cannot ignore. The Government is not an immovable object, but we are an unstoppable force."

Junior doctors are not all young but are hospital doctors below Consultant rank. Their last pay rise of two per cent was part of a four-year agreement that increased wages by 8.2 per cent between 2019–2023.

Basic starting salaries are £29,000, with more for unsociable hours. After training, which can last up to 15 years, basic pay is more than

£53,000.

The BMA is thinking about strikes elsewhere in the UK as it awaits more information from ministers about their pay plans in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The BMA has hinted that the 26 per cent does not necessarily need to be paid in one go, but the government needs to restore salary levels or action would continue.

This is of course not the only dispute affecting hospitals. Members of the Royal College of Nursing will be having two 48-hour strikes at half the frontline services in England next week.

Unison, the biggest union in the ambulance service, is likely to announce more strike dates having secured mandates in nine of the 10 ambulance services in England.

Tuesday saw 4,000 health workers in all five health trusts in Northern Ireland and the Ambulance Service take action. The comes after an 87 per cent vote in favour of strike action.

Sharon Graham, general secretary of their union Unite, pointed out: "With chronic low pay making it impossible to recruit and retain essential health workers, the health service in Northern Ireland is facing an existential crisis."

"In the absence of a func-

tioning Stormont executive, the responsibility for resolving this dispute falls to the UK government. The PM and ministers have been missing in action but it is their job to ensure that NHS bosses make a realistic offer to the workers who keep our health and social care services running. They must get on and do so without delay."

Kevin McAdam, the union's regional officer for health in Northern Ireland, added: "Our members will be joining members of other health trade unions on the picket lines tomorrow and, unless sense prevails and our members are made a better offer, there will be a second day of strike action on March 16th."

They were joined by 11,500 ambulance workers in Wales who took strike action on Monday to Wednesday. The workers, belonging to both the GMB and Unite, took action after the workers said "no" and "na" to a miserable "Final offer" of a 1.5 per cent increase with a one-off payment equivalent to a further 1.5 per cent that was on top of a 4.5 per cent which has already been awarded.

Unite members rejected the offer overwhelmingly with 92 per cent of the workforce rejecting it on a huge 70 per

cent turnout.

Unite's Sharon Graham said the Welsh government should abandon "the political posturing it has engaged in, now is the time to get round the table and improve the offer".

Unite's NHS officer Richard Munn added: "The Welsh government has promoted the importance of social partnership – the relationship between the unions, employers and government. This social partnership is now being put to the test and talks are needed to try to resolve the dispute."

There are also many local actions by various NHS specialities. One concerns the 70 biomedical scientists at Royal Blackburn who were on Strike on Wednesday and will take further action if they are not listened to.

They are responsible for analysing patients' blood and other bodily samples at both the Royal Blackburn Hospital and Burnley General Teaching Hospital.

Unite regional officer Keith Hutson made the general point that: "NHS workers are striking because they know without a proper pay rise, more staff will leave the health service. This will turn the current crisis in patient care into a disaster."

Association (WRPA) is demanding that 80 per cent of their salaries are guaranteed with the other 20 per cent based on various factors, such as win bonuses. This, said the Association's Chair, Ashton Hewitt, is "massively important and I don't think it's something that anyone (among the players) wants to budge on," reported BBC Sport Wales.

He also warned that if agreement was not reached by the end of this month then the dispute would spread down to club rugby.

This would be the first such action in the world of professional rugby. Hewitt himself said he was coming to the end of his own contract resulting a great deal of uncertainty, particularly if he was injured.

## 20 years ago this week in the New Worker

**THREE** women who were employed by the pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline to pack tablets are to sue for damages after their health was affected by toxic ingredients in the pills.

The women were employed at the company's Dartford drug plant to pack the drug Imuran, which is used for organ transplant patients.

They say that exposure to it has caused severe problems, including a miscarriage, birth defects and cancer.

One of the women, Vanda Lewis, said she suffered a miscarriage after exposure to Imuran and that her four-year-old daughter has been

diagnosed with hydrocephalus (water on the brain).

She said: "My husband and I often talked about the amount of miscarriages there on the packing floor in such a short time. For a small amount of women working together there were so many different problems."

During the packing process pills were sometimes accidentally crushed, exposing the packers to chemical dust.

Angela Gurr and Jill Elliott believe the drug caused their breast cancer, and Jill Elliott also blames it for the death of her two-day-old baby.

The Trades Union Congress last week launched a campaign to defend the rights of workers to take time during working hours to go to the toilet.

This follows a survey last year that showed some employers cut the pay of workers who go to the toilet outside of official break times.

The survey found that more than half of workers in Britain are too busy to take time off for the toilet. A quarter of those questioned said the condition of workplace toilets was so poor they were put off going.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber attacked what he called "Dickensian bathroom policies".

The conciliation service ACAS is currently involved in a dispute between the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and Brown Brothers, a Dunfermline meat factory, on this issue.

The TGWU says workers pay is docked every time they take a toilet break. The company claims that the workers agreed to forgo toilet breaks in return for higher wages.

The whole issue is embarrassing for many workers, especially those who are pregnant or have health conditions.

## This sporting life

by New Worker correspondent

**A rather unusual strike may soon take place in Wales. This time the principality's rugby union players are threatening action.**

The national team have threatened not to turn out at the Wales versus England match at Cardiff scheduled for this Saturday unless their demands are met. This would deprive the Welsh Rugby Union of £10 million if entrance money had to be refunded and fees from broadcasting rights were lost.

The Welsh Rugby Players



# Face to face with terrorists: A Chinese scholar in Kabul

by Hu Yuwei

**On 13<sup>th</sup> February the Chinese embassy in Afghanistan issued a message stating that the security situation in Afghanistan is becoming more serious and complex, and reminding Chinese nationals not to travel to Afghanistan. The reminder came after terrorists targeted a hotel in the Afghan capital on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022, targeting a hotel in Afghanistan's capital, which saw at least three assailants killed and five Chinese nationals wounded amongst others.**

After the incident, the embassy urged Chinese nationals and institutions in Afghanistan to exercise more care with regard to their safety and to leave the country as soon as possible if their presence in the country was not necessary.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January, China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang held a phone conversation with Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister of the Afghan interim government, stressing that China hoped the Afghan side would take strong measures to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel and institutions in Afghanistan.

Wang Duanyong, an associate researcher at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs at the Shanghai International Studies University, works in Afghanistan and was in the hotel when it was attacked. He now speaks out.

**The attack on the hotel was shocking. What are the heart-stopping moments that you can still recall?**

**Wang:** I was on the sixth floor of the hotel on the day,

and the attack started on the seventh floor. At 2:08 pm on 12<sup>th</sup> December I suddenly heard two loud bangs from upstairs. I opened the door and made eye contact with a young man who appeared to be a local coming down from the seventh floor. That was the moment another loud bang suddenly happened upstairs, and then he stopped, pulled a pistol out of a small bag under his arm, turned, and walked back to the seventh floor.

I think he was one of the attackers who were meant to come downstairs to hunt people down. He must have seen me then. If there hadn't been a sudden bang upstairs, I would have been the first target.

The whole attack lasted for about two hours, and several fires were set in the building. In addition to the gunfight, there were multiple explosions, and the most violent was heard in the room next to me.

Hotel security personnel were the first to stand up to the terrorists. After about 20 minutes, Taliban reinforcements arrived. The furious gunfight and explosions lasted for about 40–45 minutes.

The attackers set fire to

a room on the fifth floor, and smoke immediately came up and engulfed the floors above. I choked on the smoke and had to open the window again, and I saw a shocking scene: A Chinese girl was hanging outside the balcony of a seventh-floor apartment from which I think she meant to escape through the balcony.

With a quick sudden loud explosion and a lot of flying debris, the panic-stricken girl fell straight down.

This scene was particularly heart-trenching for me. She was fortunately rescued soon after and is now recovering.

Two hours later, I was finally freed. One of the Taliban soldiers showed me a photo taken just at the scene of what was left of a terrorist suicide bomber – a head and an arm, the rest of the body was missing. Many survivors have developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**Why do you think there are terrorist attacks on Chinese nationals?**

The extremist group Islamic State-Khorasan (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack. I guess that as a bitter rival, the IS will of



Wang Duanyong with Chinese aid to Afghan earthquake victims in June 2022

course employ any means to undermine the Taliban's rule, including damaging the investment climate and confidence in Afghanistan. This time they set the target on the most important foreign group in Afghanistan – the Chinese.

These terrorist groups

receive support from some international forces, so the attack cannot be ruled out as being done by a third party. But no matter who instigated it, Chinese nationals are innocent victims, and it has seriously undermined the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan, a disaster-ridden country.

After the terrorist attack, many Chinese survivors began to exhibit relatively obvious symptoms of PTSD. For example, in the days immediately after the accident, everyone was nervous at the slightest noise. After we moved to a safe hotel, we didn't dare ring the doorbell or knock on each other's doors but could only communicate via text messages.

Some survivors returning to China couldn't even sleep all night on Chinese New Year's Eve because of firecrackers. It is difficult to imagine how we were dealing with fear even after around a month and a



Chinese aid supplies for Afghan students in harsh winter

continued on page 6...



continued from page 5...

half after the terrorist attack.

**What assistance and support did the Chinese Embassy provide after the terrorist attack?**

The embassy got in touch with us immediately after the attack. I remember that only about 10 minutes after the first shot was fired, I got a call from a senior diplomat at the Chinese Embassy. He asked about the situation in the building and told me that they had contacted the local military and police and that reinforcements were on their way. They also came soon after the call as the gunfire kept going.

The embassy staff then followed the whole rescue process, coming to the hospital several times.

The girl who fell and sustained serious injuries strongly wished to return to China for further treatment, so the embassy tried their best to co-ordinate various channels in the shortest possible time to assist and safely send her back to China. The difficulties that have to be overcome in this process are far beyond ordinary people's imagination.

On the second day after the incident, the Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan personally led a team to the hospital where injured Chinese nationals were recuperating to check on their injuries and discuss treatment plans with the hospital.

A group of six Chinese Embassy staff members, including the ambassador, donated blood at the hospital.

They also gave the medical staff small New Year gifts to thank them and encourage them for helping Chinese nationals, the details

of which were both unexpected and warm.

On the night of the terrorist attack, many local Chinese nationals came to the hospital to donate blood and money, and to volunteer to look after the wounded. The number of volunteers far exceeded our expectations.

**At present, how is the safety situation for Chinese nationals in Afghanistan?**

As early as August 2021, before the Taliban takeover of Kabul again, the vast majority of Chinese nationals had already returned to China with the encouragement and support of the Chinese Embassy. After the attacks, only a few stayed.

The security risks faced by Chinese nationals are still increasing. Security in Afghanistan also remains as a concern. The occasional detainment and search of Chinese nationals is also a source of insecurity to us.

**In general, how do you view the Taliban's performance in power over the last year and a half?**

The Taliban now still enforces some obviously controversial policies and measures, such as the recent announcement by the Taliban education authority that women will be suspended from taking university entrance exams.

But they have also done certain things better than expected. A World Bank report released on 25<sup>th</sup> January offers surprisingly high praise for the Afghan economy's performance in 2022, citing high exports, a stable exchange rate and strong tax revenues.

Based on my observations, the Afghan currency has been remarkably stable against the dollar for most of the year and a

half since the Taliban returned to power, especially after February 2022. One of the main reasons for this is that the international community has never been absent from supporting the country.

**A harsh winter continues to fuel ongoing humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, threatening those still struggling in poverty. According to your observations, how serious is the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan?**

Afghanistan has seen one of the world's worst humanitarian crises in years. Over the last year and a half, the humanitarian crisis has become even more serious as foreign aid has been drastically reduced, whilst military fire and terrorist attacks have become an occasional occurrence.

When I came here, I found out that, different from our initial imagination, basic living supplies such as food, clothes and fuel are not in a serious shortage, at least in major cities across the country. The real trouble is that most people do not have purchasing power, which is heavily manipulated in the country's dire economic situation and political turmoil.

At present, our non-profit charity the Friends of Hindu Kush Organisation (FHKO), which is registered in Afghanistan, continues to provide donations to the vulnerable in Afghanistan. The latest batch of food aid arrived on 7<sup>th</sup> January at two welfare schools in the central Afghan city of Ghazni, providing two-months-worth of winter rations for 320 primary and secondary school students.

*Global Times*

## Claudia Jones: The Communist Black woman feared by the FBI

by Clara West

**Claudia Jones (1915–1964) was a communist activist in the USA, holding several responsible positions within the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and for its publications until her deportation in 1955 to Great Britain. There, based in London, she played a leading role in the West Indian community, editing the left-wing *West Indian Gazette* and founding, in 1959, the Caribbean Carnival (now called the Notting Hill Carnival), a cultural event now attracting some two million people each year. The following biographical article originally appeared in American communist journal *Political Affairs* in 2007.**

Claudia Jones was born Claudia Cumberbatch in 1915 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, a British colony. Although her family was well off, the economic crisis after the First World War forced the family to migrate to the Harlem section of New York City in 1922 to seek work. Jones's mother, Sybil, worked in the garment industry to support the family but died in 1927. Jones's father, Charles, lost his job as an editor of a West Indian newspaper with the onset of the Great Depression and took meagre-paying work as a

drama group sponsored by the National Urban League and began to write a column called *Claudia Comments* for a Harlem periodical.

In the mid-1930s, Jones joined with thousands of Harlemites to protest the injustice surrounding the case of the Scottsboro Nine. In 1931, nine Black youths had been accused of raping a white woman. Tried without adequate counsel and before an all-white jury, the nine youths were quickly convicted. The International Labor Defense, a civil rights legal group organised by the CPUSA, took

Negro Congress and the Southern Negro Youth Congress. Her eloquence as a writer and speaker, her effectiveness as an organiser and leader, and her understanding of Marxist theory speeded her advancement through the party ranks.

In the early 1940s, she served on the National Council of the YCL, headed its educational section, and sat on the editorial board of its periodical, *Weekly Review*. In 1943, Jones took over as editor of *Spotlight*, the monthly journal of the American Youth for Democracy. Throughout this period,



Claudia Jones speaks at a Communist Party USA event in the 1940s

building superintendent. Poverty and poor living conditions caused Claudia to contract tuberculosis in 1932 at the age of 17, which would haunt her for the rest of her life.

Claudia was a brilliant student, earning academic awards and high honours; but career choices for a Black immigrant woman were severely limited. Instead of going to college after high school, Jones took work in a laundry, then a factory and a variety of other jobs in Harlem stores. Jones joined a

over the case and tied the appeal process to a global campaign to free the nine and to expose the racist criminal justice system prevailing in the USA.

As a result of these experiences, Jones joined the Young Communist League (YCL) in 1936. Soon after, Jones took a position on the staff of the US *Daily Worker*. Jones became politically active in the youth movement, becoming the YCL's Harlem organiser and an activist in both the National

Jones's political work focused on organising unemployed youth in the struggle for jobs and equality. She worked closely with Harlem youth clubs, civil rights and religious groups, and immigrant organisations.

In the summer of 1943, according to government documents, the FBI included Jones amongst those subversives they felt may be "considered for custodial detention". Under FBI Director J Edgar Hoover's direct orders, bureaucratic processes to have Jones



eventually detained were begun. It is important to note that when this order was handed down, the FBI appeared to know nothing of Jones's birthplace and believed her to be a natural-born US citizen. The documents do not seem to reflect that Jones's application for citizenship several years earlier had been denied because of her political beliefs. Orders for Jones's detention at this point were drawn up purely because she was an important figure in the communist movement.

Other than her political activities gathered by informants, FBI agents knew precious little about her except that she had "good teeth", a "neat appearance" and "attractive dimples on her cheeks". At this point, records indicate the FBI was unsure about her address and, until several months later, they failed to record that she was married to Abraham Scholnick. By 1947, the FBI labelled Jones a "top functionary" of the Communist Party and demanded "continuous, active, and vigorous investigation" of Jones from its informants and agents.

In 1945, Jones was appointed "Negro Affairs" editor of the *Daily Worker* as the paper's youngest staff person. That same year, she helped found and was assigned to the National Negro Commission of the CPUSA by the party's National Committee. She worked closely with organisations such as the New Jersey Labor School, taught symposia at the Jefferson School for Social Research, and worked with inter-faith groups on the issue of civil rights and racial equality. In 1946, Jones helped organise a mass demonstration in Albany, New York state, to protest the slaying of two Black youths in Freeport, Long Island in New York.

In the post-war period, Jones published numerous articles criticising the emerging Cold War mentality offered by the likes of Winston Churchill, rejected the anti-Semitism of the ultra-right and the anti-Communists, called for an end to lynching



Blue plaque in Notting Hill

and terrorism against African Americans, and opposed the anti-labour Taft-Hartley law. In 1947, Jones accepted the position of chair of the National Women's Commission of the CPUSA.

It was during her tenure at this post that Jones first formulated the theory of the "triple oppression" of working-class women of colour who represent a "vital link" to a "heightened sense of consciousness" of the need for a common, united struggle against oppression and exploitation. In her report to the Communist Party's 1950 national convention, Jones asserted the need to "demonstrate that the economic, political, and social demands of Negro women are not just ordinary demands, but special demands, flowing from special discrimination facing Negro women as women, as workers, and as Negroes". Jones also viewed racial oppression

as a strong motivation and justification for proponents of US imperialism and aggressive wars, making international solidarity, a strong peace movement and a vigorous movement for equality more necessary than ever.

In January 1948, Jones was arrested on immigration charges, despite the fact that the Immigration and Naturalization Service had told the FBI just a few months before that it did not view Jones as in violation of immigration law. Jones was held at Ellis Island and awaited deportation. The American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born came to her aid, providing legal assistance and \$1,000 bail. The Communist Party immediately launched a large campaign to prevent Jones' deportation. Marches were held in Harlem and at federal offices downtown, and thousands of readers

of the *Daily Worker* sent letters of protest to President Truman.

With able legal counsel from George Crockett, Jr, a prominent African-American lawyer and future member of Congress from Detroit, Jones was not deported at this point. In 1951, however, Jones was arrested again with several other Communist Party leaders, including James E Jackson, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Simon Gerson and others, for violating the Smith Act, which outlawed "advocating" the overthrow of the US government.

Meanwhile, she continued to advocate for equality. Working with the Congress of American Women, Jones protested the exclusion of women from juries, police brutality against people of colour, and full employment for African American youth. Along with the Civil Rights Congress, she led protests against McCarthyism and the imprisonment of Communist Party leaders.

Jones remained free whilst her case was under appeal until 1955. That year, the Supreme Court refused to hear

Jones finally succumbed to heart disease and died on Christmas Eve 1964. Her remains were buried near the grave of Karl Marx in London's Highgate Cemetery.

In an article that appeared in the journal *Masses and Mainstream* just months before her prison term would begin, Jones denounced the US government's continued imprisonment of Communist Party leader Benjamin Davis. In Jones's view, Davis had been arrested and imprisoned for the views he advocated, not simply for his party affiliation and certainly not for



Claudia's grave in Highgate Cemetery

Government agents and prosecutors ignored the fact that the CPUSA never taught nor advocated such a thing.

Jones was sentenced to a year in prison and ordered to pay a heavy

her appeal and she was sent to federal prison in West Virginia. Whilst behind bars, Jones suffered a heart attack and was weakened by a cardiovascular disease from which she would never fully recover. Released in October 1955 after a campaign led by the Civil Rights Congress to have her sentence reduced, Jones was forced into exile to Britain.

There, Jones continued to advocate for racial equality and the liberation of Britain's colonial possessions. She published the *West Indian Gazette*, founded London's Caribbean Carnival (now called the Notting Hill Carnival), and travelled to the Soviet Union and China in the early 1960s. Jones may even have visited Vietnam during her trip to the East, although the details remain unknown. Diseases she had contracted whilst in US prisons plagued her in her remaining years. In and out of hospitals,

advocating the overthrow of the US government. Davis had called for peace, workers' rights, full equality for African Americans, all racial, ethnic and national minorities, and women, and for the rights of the poor and exploited.

In a statement that would foreshadow her own future and even our own time, Jones wrote: "They've jailed Ben Davis. But his ideas are still abroad. It is Ben Davis himself who can best express his ideas from ladders on the streets of Harlem, in the broad arena of political and legislative struggle, in unity meetings with his people, Negro and white, and with white allies, and in the councils of his own Party. Until he can do so, the McCarthyites and the racists will have a strong weapon with which to spread fear and subversion."

People's World (USA)



Arrested in New York. June 1951



# A new challenge to NATO's domination

by Theo Russell

**The launch of No2NATO – No2War last Saturday at the Bolivar Hall in London marked an historic new page in the British peace movement, with a new organisation challenging the domination of NATO in British and global politics and calling for an end to sending billions in arms to the Ukrainian government.**

N2N-N2W is the initiative of George Galloway's Workers Party and expelled Labour MP Chris Williamson's Socialist Labour Party.

In an atmosphere of censorship and demonisation of any criticism of the UK's unconditional support for the Kiev junta, two previous attempts to hold a N2N-N2W meeting were cancelled after the venues were deluged with threats and hate-mail. The venue for Saturday's meeting was withheld until the last minute.

But the enormous pent-up demand for a new organisation that understands the reality of the Ukraine conflict was proven when the event was fully booked weeks in advance, and even then each of the three sep-

arate sessions held on Saturday – with many unable to get a seat – had twice as many people as both the recent Stop the War Coalition meetings on Ukraine in London and many more would have attended had enough tickets been available.

This reflects the mealy-mouthed liberal position of the Stop the War Coalition, which held only one national meeting in eight years prior to the Russian intervention, and which instead of condemning the shocking repression and violence of the fascist-infested Zelensky regime calls for the Russian and Donbas forces to withdraw, leaving the people of the Donbas and many other parts of Ukraine at the mercy

of fascists and Banderites who regard them as sub-human pro-Russian traitors.

Opening one of the sessions, Galloway said: "The talking tailor's dummy Jens Stoltenberg recently revealed that NATO had been actively involved in Ukraine for at least six years prior to the western-backed coup in 2014."

He described the current phase of the war as "a volcanic, tectonic shift which has accelerated by two decades the prize of a multipolar world", and said that in the West "the political dwarves we have elected are presiding over the rapid economic, cultural and social decline of their countries".

Galloway lambasted Washington's warnings to countries not supporting NATO in Ukraine, declaring: "The days when China could be ordered around by anybody are over, over, over!"

"When South Africa was attacked for holding naval exercises with Russia and China, it responded by saying that the only countries which gave us weapons and bullets when we were fighting for our freedom were Russia and China."

"The world is not against Russia and China", he said, "the 'West' is only 13 per

cent of the world's population, and even in the West there are millions and millions of us who reject your domination".

Fiona Edwards from No Cold War told the meeting: "Western governments want to silence and discredit us, but we want to say no to war and yes to peace." She condemned the incredible hypocrisy of governments which have fought wars in Asia and North Africa with huge civilian casualties, economic and social devastation.

"The greatest threat to humanity is the warmongers in Washington and their NATO allies. Having caused this war, they are now escalating it, and for them the people of Ukraine are nothing more than cannon fodder. We need peace, an end to sending billions in arms which we need for our hospitals, schools and public sector workers."

Edwards pointed out that a 50,000 strong demonstration in Denmark had succeeded in stopping savage cuts to finance higher defence spending, showing the potential strength of peace movements backed by working people.

Andy Hudd, ASLEF Vice President, said: "I'm a socialist, but I'm not a pacifist be-

cause unfortunately in this world workers have to defend themselves. I'm a socialist because it's only in a socialist world we will get peace, and an end to the bloodshed of the working class in the interests of the wealthy and privileged."

Hudd criticised the response of British trade unions and the Labour Party to the war in Ukraine, pointing to the GMB-backed TUC motion last year supporting increased military spending "on the back of food banks and overworked, underpaid nurses, poverty on a scale we've never seen before". He said the TUC had supported Stop the War resolutions and at the same time sending arms to Ukraine.

"Trade unionists should be calling for solutions which bring security for Russia and Ukraine, and supporting campaigns against NATO and for a negotiated end to the war in Ukraine."

Chris Williamson said that he had believed that being an MP "was a platform to achieve positive change, but I discovered that almost every Labour MP only cared about their careers".

"We are told that Zelensky is defending democracy, but he's banned any political opposition, and he's even going for the Orthodox church. The Labour Party is calling for more arms to be sent, while a Ukrainian woman received a 10-year sentence for posting communists on social media. This is the regime which burnt to death dozens of trade unionists in Odessa in 2014. We're told to support people like that – I say never, never, never!"

"No2NATO has been attacked by toadying trolls and sycophantic media hacks who have pulled out all the stops to prevent this meeting today. But we can only go from strength to strength, because what we are asking for is pure common sense."

Chris Williamson's call for the immediate release of Julian Assange was met with a prolonged standing ovation by the entire audience.

Former British diplomat and now peace campaigner Craig Murray said that in the 1950s Russia's military arsenal was only 40 per cent of NATO estimates, and that: "Today we are being told that Russia is planning to march to Berlin, Brussels and even London. All this is designed to justify massive military spending by NATO members."

A motion backing the appointment of an interim leadership of No2NATO – No2War comprising George Galloway, Chris Williamson and Andy Hudd was adopted unanimously by the session.

Members of International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity distributed around 1,000 leaflets and received a warm welcome from all at the meeting, and the 25<sup>th</sup> March Whitehall protest against the fascist terror in Ukraine was announced from the platform several times.

We can only look forward to the future of N2N-N2W, and building a new peace movement that is genuinely against the all-powerful domination of NATO and US-led imperialism in the West.

## THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

### SUBSCRIBE NOW!

4 weeks: £6; 3 months: £20;  
6 months: £30; annual: £50

Name.....

Address.....

Post code.....

Cheque/P.O.s, made out to

New Worker, to: NW Subs, PO Box 73,

London SW11 2PQ.

## CONTACT US...

Post: NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Phone: 07497 393263.

New Worker National –

[www.newworker.org](http://www.newworker.org)

email– [party@ncp.clara.net](mailto:party@ncp.clara.net)

London District NCP –

<http://londoncommunists.blogspot.com/>



JOIN US!

For peace!

justice!

socialism!

I would like to join the New Communist Party....

I would like more info about the NCP....

Name.....

.....

Address.....

.....

.....


.....

.....

postcode.....

phone.....

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



BOOST OUR FUND

Make your commitment to sustaining the New Worker in the struggle for peace and socialism

COMPLETE THE BANKER'S ORDER FORM BELOW:

The Manager.....

.....

bank. Banks address.....

.....

Please pay to the New Worker account No. 50492464, 08-90-34, Co-op Bank plc, 17 High St, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 1LP. the sum of £.....

(in words) each month starting on.....

.....

Signature.....

.....

RETURN THIS FORM TO:

NCP Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Peoples's China in perspective £2 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

The case for communism £2 plus 50p P&P.

The basis of scientific socialism, the 1st chapter of Anti During by F Engels £2 plus 50p P&P.

On Stalin £2plus 50p P&P. (New Worker reprint).

Stalin & the BRS £2 plus 50p P&P.

How we got in the State we are by Daphne liddle £1 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint)

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

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

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

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

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

(cheques to New Worker)

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Oh! What a Lovely Civil War

For the next few weeks we can join the assorted malcontents of the Scottish opposition and sit back to enjoy the spectacle of leading SNP politicians knocking bits out of each other and denouncing the very policies they were fervent supporters of just a few weeks ago.

Some big names have already decided that the game's not worth the candle, including three present-day Cabinet ministers: former leader John Swinney, Justice Secretary Keith Brown and Constitution Secretary Angus Robertson.

Three others have thrown their bonnets into the ring: Kate Forbes, Ash Regan and Humza Yousaf. The choice of SNP members will be announced on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March. Nominations close on Friday, so there is still time for a dark horse to enter the race.

It is a pity that the formation of the Alba Party has taken away many of the critics of Sturgeon who could have enlivened the contest. The winner will almost certainly become First Minister – but there is also the very remote possibility that the Greens could frustrate them if the winner is not trendy enough. In that case some very interesting constitutional questions would arise.

The Candidates

Humza Yousaf is the most famous and experienced, but it is his very experience that could be a drawback as his opponents will constantly remind us of certain aspects of his less than distinguished career.

Yousaf has been a Glasgow MSP since 2011, presently for Pol-

lock. He has had two junior ministerial non-jobs as Minister for External Affairs and International Development and Minister for Europe and International Development between 2012–2016, matters which Holyrood has no powers over. Before becoming an MSP the US State Department took a shine to him by giving him a place on their International Visitor Leadership Program.

He was Minister for Transport and the Islands 2016–2018, during which time his most noteworthy achievement was to be fined £300 for driving a car without insurance.

This earned him promotion to the Cabinet as Justice Secretary because he was trained as a lawyer. Here he was responsible for the Hate Crime legislation that managed to unite the Roman Catholic Church and National Secular Society against it. Former deputy leader Jim Sillars described it as "one of the most pernicious and dangerous Bills ever produced by any government in modern times in the UK" because it could potentially criminalise comments made over the breakfast table. It later had to be amended to prevent libraries being prosecuted for holding controversial books.

His pandemic policies included freeing many prisoners, of whom 142 were returned to jail for serious crimes involving attempted murder, serious assault, robbery and sexual offences.

When the incumbent Health Secretary stood down as an MSP in 2021 Yousaf was promoted, where he has continued to work his customary magic with a record more likely to be discussed by his rivals than himself.

At his campaign launch Yousaf distanced himself from Ms Sturgeon's independence strategy of turning the next election into de facto referendum and attacked the chaos of the Green's deposit return plan. Nevertheless, he is the continuity candidate. Some cynical journalists have suggested that the short election

period has been set with a view to giving the party machine's favoured candidate a better chance.

The baby in the pack is Kate Forbes, who was suddenly elevated from her junior ministerial post of Minister of Public Finance to that of Finance Secretary in 2020 when her incumbent boss suddenly resigned on the eve of the Budget after the lurid texts that he sent to a 16-year-old boy appeared in the *Scottish Sun*. The fact that she was able to read out the prepared Budget speech elevated her into the top flight of Scottish politics.

She is presently on maternity leave and so was able to keep out of the issues that brought down Sturgeon, but that that did not stop her throwing her hat into the ring. Like many SNP politicians (including Yousaf), she has never had a proper job apart from working for the MSP she succeeded. Like the many of the more sober residents of her Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency she is a member of the Free Church of Scotland, which was founded in 1843 and whose members think we should go back to 1843, if not 1560. Forbes's economic views are also those of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

She was one of 15 senior SNP figures who urged a delay to the controversial Gender Reform Bill, but being on maternity leave did not have to vote against it, a move which would see her sacked.

Within 24 hours of announcing her can-

didacy her evangelical views have cost her the support of five of her original supporters when she gave an interview saying that she would not have voted for gay marriage. One wonders why on earth they supported a Wee Free for supporting Wee Free views in the first place. Her early pledge not to alter existing laws and to support buffer zones around abortion clinics was obviously not good enough. Tuesday saw the party's LGBTQ+ group officially complain to the SNP's conduct committee for her breaking rules on transphobia, when she stated asked in an ITV Border interview: "I believe that a trans woman is a biological male who identifies as a woman."

In contrast, Yousaf, who publicly supports gay marriage and the gender reforms, is unlikely to say so when visiting his local Glasgow Central Mosque. He actually wants to continue the legal battle with Westminster over the gender issue.

The final candidate is Edinburgh Eastern MSP Ash Regan, who first came to public notice when she resigned from her junior ministerial post in protest at Sturgeon's gender reforms last November.

Before she was first elected in 2016, she worked the public relations trade. After winning her seat from Labour leader Kezia Dugdale she soon secured the important role of parliamentary liaison officer to the

...continued on page 10

New Worker Supporters' Groups...

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

postcode.....



...continued from page 9

culture, tourism and external affairs secretary, before being promoted in June 2018 to Minister for Community Safety. Unfortunately it has proved impossible to find a list of her ministerial achievements to discuss. On searching the SNP website there were only four hits for her name, three in lists.

She has however earned distinction for being an SNP minister to resign on a point of principle. This is almost unprecedented because they normally only depart after continued gross incompetence or in the wake of a scandal. As with Forbes, the Greens have stated they would not work with Regan.

When the votes are counted and the winner installed there will still be a lot of unhappy bunnies merrily backstabbing each other at all ranks in the SNP. Sturgeon's legacy is not very impressive.

Her many party enemies point to Alex Salmond raising support for independence from 30 to 45 per cent, whilst the eight years of Nicola Sturgeon raised it by only 0.9 per cent. Her 2015 General Election win that saw the SNP secure 56 of the 59 seats was squandered, and her opposition to Brexit won her press plaudits from Remoaners, but little else.

It has been estimated that in 2014 there were 23,000 green jobs in Scotland, now there are 20,000, but the First Minister did a splendid job in collecting 84 selfies at COP26...

# Breaking down language barriers

by Seán Nolan

**I often wonder how different life as an expat must have been before Google Translate, Apple Maps and instant messaging apps. In many ways, it's impossible to imagine living in Vietnam without these tools. In the words of former post-war UK premier Harold Macmillan, we've "never had it so good".**

Now, a new technological milestone has emerged, one that, in 10 years' time, expats might also be saying: "How on earth did we live without that?"

Last November OpenAI released ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot. Powered by

vast amounts of data and access to near-unlimited information on the internet, ChatGPT has encyclopædic knowledge and mimics speech patterns to provide a seamless conversational experience.

It has taken the world by storm, racking up over 100 million worldwide users within two months of launch. For context, the same achievement took Google a year, Instagram two years, and Facebook four years.

Its potential is massive, and its impact on breaking down barriers in language and knowledge is near-unlimited.

Although experts have raised valid concerns about relying on AI chatbots for fact-driven

writing, such as in journalism or academia, due to accuracy and ethical reasons, the technology has already proven invaluable elsewhere.

For expats, AI going mainstream will further break down language and communication barriers.

Companies are already examining how to incorporate AI into existing instant messaging platforms, and this is where the technology is perhaps most exciting for expats.

For example, a message could be written and sent in English, with the AI translating it into Vietnamese and ensuring that the recipient receives it in their own

language. The conversation could be conducted entirely in English on one end and Vietnamese on the other, with the AI translating in real time.

The incorporation of voice technology would further enhance this experience, allowing for real-time translations during phone conversations.

Of course, as with all technological advances, there will also be a cost, the biggest being that the motivation to learn another language will be gently whittled away by the ease of which technology can do the leg work for you.

Already many expats in Vietnam don't even have a basic understanding of Vietnamese

because there simply is no need to, and I fear that position will become even more entrenched.

As another British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, famously pointed out, however: "The white heat of this revolution will be no place for restrictive practices or outdated methods."

Perhaps the ability to communicate better with technology at the cost of communicating without technology is the price to pay.

Get ready for the world to get smaller and for communication to become even more accessible, online at least.

VNS

## Jazz and solidarity

by Oni Acosta Llerena

**Havana's Jazz Plaza Festival brought Cuban artists and fellow musicians from all over the world together for over 100 concerts in Cuba in January.**

Today I want to show the face of solidarity and tenacity. Such is the case of Nachito Herrera, an Artemisa-born pianist and composer who has been living in the USA for more than 20 years.

The pianist is known for his solidarity trips aimed at trying to alleviate the lack of instruments and accessories in the country's music schools.

In this musical adventure, he returned to Havana with donations that exceed the carrying capacity of an aeroplane, so more than one flight had to be made.

In addition to his own personal efforts, he was assisted by US organisations, foundations, friends and artists who have sent him not only great musical materials, but also medical supplies for Cuban paediatric hospitals.

A special load of wind instruments, both woodwind and brass, along with their accessories and other stringed instru-

ments, were donated this week to several music schools, as well as some electronic instruments, such as synthesisers. A digital grand piano from the prestigious Roland company, valued at approximately \$15,000, stands out.

This instrument – the Roland GP609 – belongs to the high-end pianos of that brand and integrates a new combining technology whereby the traditional physical mechanism of a piano is merged with digital sensors. It retains the same architecture and way of hammering through the wooden hammers, but it does not do it on physical strings but on electronic sensors capable of reproducing the desired sound taking account of the conditions of the acoustic system.

In this way this piano achieves and identifies – with nanoseconds of response – the dynamics and sound desired by the performer whilst maintaining the appearance of a three-quarter grand piano.

This is the first of three that will be brought to Cuba thanks to Nachito. It is, undoubtedly, an incentive for the various concert halls in the country. This work of altruism, according to him, is a way of thanking his country for having made him the artist he is, because those who do not love Cuba have no heart, he said.

## REVIEW Allie Burns returns

by Ben Soton

**1989 by Val McDermid. Softback: Sphere 2023; 464pp, rrp £8.99. Hardback: Little, Brown 2022; 432 pp, rrp £20.**

**1989 was, by the standards of those of us belonging to the progressive part of humanity, a pretty dreadful year. The main news stories seemed to have been counter-revolution, leading to the destruction of socialism Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and AIDS. These two events are reflected in 1989, the most recent novel by Scottish crime writer Val McDermid.**

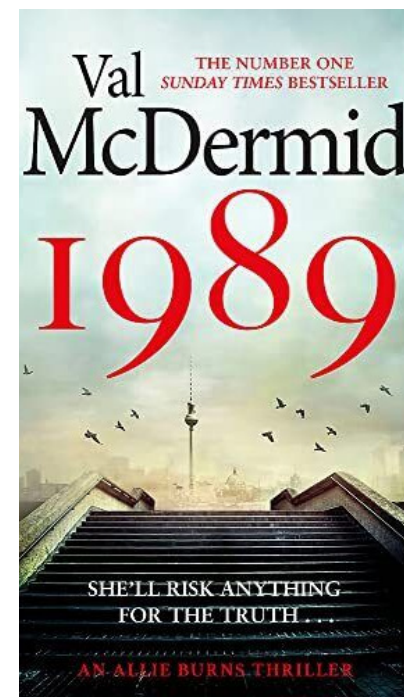
The story features the adventures of the investigative journalist Allie Burns, the lead character in McDermid's previous novel 1979.

Ten years on, Burns finds herself working for Ace Media and living with her girlfriend Rhona, also a journalist. Both women work for Ace Media, owned by the multi-millionaire Wallace Lockhart. Lockhart, who has striking similarities with Robert Maxwell, is not painted in a good

light. He is portrayed as power grabby and venal, and the story covers the theft from his company's pension fund. Meanwhile his slightly wayward daughter Genevieve, a parody of Maxwell's daughter Ghislaine, is portrayed as reckless and devious as well as willing to cheat her own father out of money.

Essentially two stories – the first being about HIV-infected Scots migrating to Northern England in the hope of better treatment for what was then a fatal illness. The second and longest part of the book, takes Burns to the German Democratic Republic on the brink of the notorious counter-revolution.

The novel exposes the author's lack of awareness about left-wing politics and the former socialist countries. At one point in her novel she describes life in East Germany as so bad that it would make the Trots who sell *Socialist Worker* vote Tory. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that *Socialist Worker* sellers were and still are on the same side as the Tories when it comes to supporting the



overthrow of people's democracies past and present.

McDermid's lack of understanding of left-wing politics should not necessarily diminish her abilities as a crime writer. Her politics can best be described as *Guardian*-reading left-liberal; constantly exposing capitalism's failings whilst showing an innate hostility to its only alternative. The book possibly represents an evolution in the development in the lead character Alison Burns from investigate journalist to private detective, two jobs with a very similar skill-set. In other words, watch out for future novels featuring the investigative journalist turned private-eye.

## The NCP badge



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



# How a Wandering Balloon Caused an Anxiety Attack

by Liang Xiao

**American foreign minister Anthony Blinken was expected in China last month. His first trip to China as US secretary of state should have made headlines during the first weekend of February but a stray balloon made him reportedly postpone the high-stakes diplomatic trip, casting yet another dark shadow over the relationship between the world's two largest economies.**

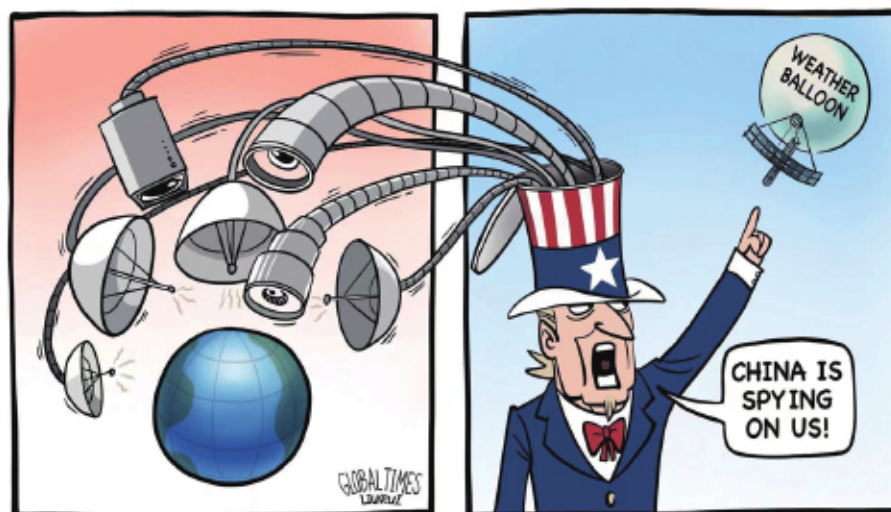
The 'balloon episode' can be summed up as follows: A Chinese high-altitude balloon was first detected near the Aleutian Islands on 28<sup>th</sup> January, but it wasn't until 1<sup>st</sup> February, when it traversed Canada and re-entered US airspace, that it attracted a great deal of public attention and was seen as a violation of US sovereignty. The Republicans in opposition also took the opportunity to launch a political attack on the ruling Democratic administration, demanding President Joe Biden show a

tough stance towards China. The balloon was eventually shot down off the coast of South Carolina by an F-22 fighter jet on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

China repeatedly stated that this balloon was a civilian airship mainly used for meteorological research. Affected by the westerlies and with limited self-steering capability, the airship had deviated far from its planned course and unintentionally drifted into US airspace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. Yet very few Americans seemed willing to believe China's explanation, even if it did sound reasonable: At such a sensitive time in China-US relations, China does not need to employ a 'surveillance balloon' that is so easily detected – and rather impractical.

Now imagine if the balloon belonged to the UK, Japan, or any other US ally. Would there be such a fuss?

It was precisely because the balloon came from China, a country the USA considers a long-term strategic competitor, that it triggered a diplomatic



maelstrom and blew up all over the news. Whether it flies into US airspace intentionally or unintentionally, the USA will still regard it as a major security threat.

This brings us to what might be the root cause of the current low ebb in the Sino-US relationship: the USA might be suffering from hegemonic anxiety and subsequently views any action by China as potentially undermining its own power.

The 'balloon episode' is not an isolated case; there are many more 'anxiety-inducing'

examples. Not too long ago, a corn processing plant in Grand Forks, North Dakota, was considered a major threat to US national security after receiving investment from a Chinese company, because the plant was about 24 km away from a US Air Force base.

Chinese telecommunication companies participating in the construction of 5G infrastructure in the USA are suspected of stealing the personal information of their US subscribers. Chinese scientists and students going to the

USA for exchange and study purposes are suspected of stealing advanced technologies; even the super popular TikTok app, originally developed by Chinese tech titan ByteDance, has been branded an electronic device that poisons the American youth and collects too much of its users' data. These ideas, which sound absurd to the Chinese, nevertheless prevail amongst their US peers.

As two runaway Chinese balloons floated across the skies of North America

and Latin America in early February, with the second one's accidental entry into the regional airspace confirmed by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 6<sup>th</sup> February, cinemas in China were screening a sci-fi film called *The Wandering Earth II*, which, along with its 2019 precursor *The Wandering Earth*, tells the story of a near future where the Sun is rapidly burning out and the world has to come together to escape from the solar system, taking planet Earth with them, and find a new home for humanity.

And so, with the drifting vessel trending on Chinese social media, one of the most popular memes dubbed it "The Wandering Balloon" – a play on the film, with netizens turning photos of the white orb into movie posters.

Indeed, as a champion of planet Earth, the USA should perhaps be a little more concerned about the future of humanity rather than letting unintentional incidents balloon.

*Beijing Review*

## Warmonger Bolton hails plan to send troops to Taiwan

by Ilya Tsukanov

**Iraq War architect and former Trump National Security Advisor John Bolton has praised President Biden over the White House's purported plans to send hundreds of troops to Taiwan, saying he was confident that "this is the right thing to do".**

Last week the US media reported that Washington is considering sending between 100 and 200 troops to Taiwan for training purposes, in violation of foundational agreements on relations with China.

"I would homeport a couple of American naval vessels at Kaohsiung, Taiwan's big harbour, and show the Chinese we're gonna be there training and assisting the Taiwanese against any possible Chinese attack," Bolton said in a TV interview last week.

The hawkish former official, whom his former boss Donald Trump once famously characterised as someone who "has never seen a war he didn't like", assured viewers that "the aim" of ramping up tensions with China in Taiwan via the troop deployment "is not to win a war that China starts" but "to deter China from doing it...and believe me, we can do a lot more to do that".

The USA already has a token force of 30 Marines stationed on Taiwan, and has rotated small numbers of troops on and off the island since at least 2005, both to guard the USA's de facto embassy in Taipei and to engage in training with Taiwanese troops.

China has repeatedly said that these deployments are a "severe violation" of the agreements underpinning China-

USA diplomatic relations and other treaties, pointing out that they run counter not only to international law but to US laws as well.

Washington withdrew its troops from Taiwan and closed down the United States Taiwan Defense Command in 1979 as it moved to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Under agreements on relations, the USA is compelled to adhere to the One China principle – which states that there is only one sovereign state under the name China, that People's China is the sole legitimate government of China, and that Taiwan is part of China. A separate 1982 joint communiqué obliged Washington gradually to whittle its arms sales to Taiwan down to zero (although the USA has refused

to do so in the decades since).

The Taiwan question became a major sticking point in Sino-US relations after President Biden stated that Washington would come to Taipei's aid in the event of "Chinese aggression", and as a stream of US officials and politicians, starting with now former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, travelled to the island to shore up diplomatic contacts – in violation of agreements with Beijing.

At the Congress of the Chinese Communist Party last October, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasised that the People's Republic of China remains committed to peaceful reunification with Taipei under the One Country, Two Systems model applied to Hong Kong and Macau. Xi warned however, that "Taiwan is China's Taiwan"

and that Beijing will "never compromise to renounce the use of force" to resolve the island's status in the event of "interference by outside forces and the few separatists seeking 'Taiwan independence'".

John Bolton has been a well-known fixture of Washington politics for decades. Before being picked as Trump's national security advisor from 2018–19, he served as the US ambassador to the United Nations, and as an undersecretary of state for arms control and international security affairs, during the George W Bush administration.

He's widely seen as one of the architects of the Iraq War and worked as the director of the Project for the New American Century, a neo-conservative Washington thinktank that proposed one

year before 9/11 that the USA would need "some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor" to cement its post-Cold War global hegemony through a series of military interventions abroad.

Bolton has had a humorous and well-publicised falling out with Trump after getting fired from the job of national security advisor, calling the former president a "danger for the republic" and intimating that he was a fool who "very rarely read much" during intelligence briefings. Trump countered, calling Bolton "one of the dumbest people in Washington" and suggesting that if he'd ever "listened to him" on foreign policy matters "we'd be in World War Six".

*Sputnik*



## Resistance will end Zionist terror

by Ed Newman

**The Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah has strongly condemned the deadly Israeli raid on the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank that claimed the lives of nearly a dozen Palestinians.**

Hezbollah issued a statement last week, offering its deepest condolences to the Palestinian people and resistance groups, especially the Islamic Jihad. Hailing the Palestinians' resistance against the invading forces, Hezbollah said the martyrs

"wrote epics of heroism and valour in the city of Nablus and confronted the Zionist terrorism and aggression with patience and steadfastness".

The statement added that the Israeli occupation forces' brutal and merciless targeting of the innocent civilians confirmed that this enemy could not be deterred except through recourse to the resistance's "honourable arms".

Attacking Nablus earlier in the day, Israeli troops shot and killed at least 11 people, including a 72-year-old man, a 14-year-old boy and two commanders of the

Palestinian resistance movement of the Islamic Jihad that is based in the Gaza Strip. More than 100 others were also wounded, some critically, during the raid.

Hezbollah also said Palestinian resistance fighters would seek revenge on the vicious regime by "letting the enemy realise the extent of its foolishness and through putting an end to its arrogance and terror".

The Israelis have intensified their crackdown on Nablus and the nearby city of Jenin since late December when Benjamin Net-



Thousands participating in the funeral of the 11 Palestinians killed in the Israeli assault on Nablus

anyahu staged a comeback as the regime's prime minister at the head

of a cabinet of hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Late last month, Israeli forces shot and killed at least 10 Palestinians and wounded over a dozen others during a violent raid on the refugee camp that is adjacent to the nearby city of Jenin.

Sixty-one Palestinians, including resistance fighters and civilians, have been killed as a result of deadly violence waged by the Israeli regime's forces and its illegal settlers so far this year, says the Palestinian health ministry.

**Radio Havana Cuba**

### The empowerment of women

By Maria Josefina Arce

**Women from more than 100 countries have gathered in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, for an international summit on women's rights. They share a common goal, to achieve the empowerment of women, which despite a long history of discrimination has made great contributions to the development of humanity.**

The International Women's Summit 2023 is a new opportunity to exchange experiences and criteria on how much women are doing and can still do in favour of peace and the socioeconomic advancement of their nations.

In 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325, which called for greater participation of women in peace-building to lead to more just and inclusive societies.

But there are still many obstacles facing women. Conflict shows how vulnerable women are. Women represent the majority of the population displaced from their homes and they are subjected to sexual violence.

UN Women is the UN body that delivers programmes, policies and standards that uphold women's human rights

and ensure that every woman and girl live up to their full potential. It says that women are almost never present at peace negotiations and that they are excluded from reconstruction efforts, which limits their access to opportunities for recovery or to obtain justice for violations of their rights and to participate in the reform of laws and institutions.

The Covid pandemic has also deepened the gender gap. Women were the most affected by the loss of jobs and income, due to their greater presence in the hardest hit sectors, such as accommodation and food services and the manufacturing sector.

Also, quarantines, school closures and other measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus led to an increase in domestic and intimate partner violence.

So, the event in the capital of the United Arab Emirates, as stated by its organisers, is taking place at an historic moment when humanity needs to overcome the repercussions of the Covid pandemic and the social and economic crises plaguing nations.

The Abu Dhabi Summit is therefore a space to seek solutions to common challenges such as the gender gap, domestic violence and for greater participation of women in decision-making.

Gender equality is a human rights issue, and is essential to achieving sustainable and lasting

peace. Women have strongly demonstrated that they are capable of bringing about change. It is time for them to take their rightful place.

**Radio Havana Cuba**

### They don't care about Ukraine

by Yang Shilong and Zhang Mocheng

**The US involvement in the conflict in Ukraine is "really an awful thing...they don't care about Ukraine. They care about world hegemony and defeating Russia," says a renowned American anti-war activist.**

"If we keep going in the direction we're going, not only will we bankrupt ourselves, but we could destroy the world. And that's very, very scary," says Eric Garris, director of Antiwar.com.

On one hand, the US involvement in the conflict in Ukraine is hurting Americans by taking so much money away from them to support arming another conflict. "But the other problem is that the United States has tried, has succeeded in killing peace talks on multiple occasions," said Garris, 70, who has been an anti-war activist since his childhood.

He says that in the early part of the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict, there was a peace deal that "could have been agreed to," but that the

US tried hard to keep the crisis going.

"It makes no sense. It's like a big bully who goes around the world and tries to tell every other country what to do, what the outcome of things should be."

It seems like the US administration's only solution "is not to promote diplomacy, is not to promote ways to resolve differences, but rather to stoke them. And this is really, really bad," Garris said.

"And it's really not our business. We need to get out of the foreign affairs of other countries ... the only thing we should do is to help them make peace, not make war. We need to stop arming all of this belligerence."

"Unfortunately, a lot of the politicians here are heavily influenced by and contributed to by the defence industry," which is really pushing this crisis and "bought the politicians". The United States has spent over \$100 billion on the conflict in Ukraine, with "close to \$50 billion is just for weapons".

"I hope the American people can tell their politicians that this is too much. Enough is enough. We need to stop this. We need to focus on trying to make peace and nothing else abroad," said Garris. "That's why we have to build a movement in this country that relies on talking to people and getting out this information. That's why we have Antiwar.com, we publish every day the news of what's happening."

Garris founded Antiwar.com in 1995 and it is the premier anti-war website in the USA. "Unlike a lot of anti-war organisations, we are very broad-based and ecumenical. We have people from across the political spectrum who support peace ... We have tried to be non-sectarian ... and it's completely reader supported," he said.

**Xinhua**

### French workers keep up fight on pensions

By G Dunkel

**Opinion polls show a massive rejection of the government's plan to 'reform' France's pension system. President Emmanuel Macron means to increase the age workers may retire from 62 to 64 and to increase the qualification for a full pension from 42 years to 43 years worked. His plan would make it harder for workers who hold a harsh, difficult job to qualify for needed special treatment and make it much harder for women to qualify for a full pension.**

Macron's government claims the French pension system is in financial distress and that expenses must be cut. A team of French economists examined

the projections the government made and concluded that the French system could go until 2070 before its financing would have to be changed.

The polls indicate that seven out of 10 people living in France oppose this reform and that nine out of 10 workers oppose it. An online petition saying no to the changes has gathered over a million signatures.

French workers have expressed this opposition not just by words. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets many times since 19<sup>th</sup> January. The eight major French union confederations, acting as an inter-union political coalition, issued the call, and the people – even those who are not members of any union – responded by joining the actions.

Union membership is less than nine per cent in France; but French unions have a major political clout and often lead big political struggles.

If Macron's government refuses to consider the people's demands regarding pensions, the inter-union coalition is calling for hardening the unions' struggles and a total work stoppage in all sectors of the economy for 7<sup>th</sup> March. They plan a big effort on 8<sup>th</sup> March – International Women's Day – to explain the pernicious effects these pension changes will have on women's retirement.

**Workers World (USA)**