

ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPERIALISM REJECTS PEACE PLAN FOR UKRAINE

by our Eastern European
Affairs correspondent

Russians celebrated the defeat of Nazi Germany this week with traditional parades and commemorations across the country. On the front-line it was business as usual, however, with Russian air-raids and missile attacks on strategic targets in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, and many other towns and cities throughout the country. Constant artillery exchanges rock the entire 800-mile front-line as the Wagner forces, Russia's 'foreign legion', push on to drive the Ukrainians out of their last remaining foothold in the Donbas city of Bakhmut.

Russia celebrated Victory Day with an annual military parade in Moscow's Red Square on Tuesday. The leaders of some of the former Soviet republics, including the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, along with the prime minister of Armenia, were there together with Putin to see this Russian show of strength and lay wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin.

In a 10-minute address Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia wanted a peaceful future. He compared the Soviet victory in 1945 to the Russian forces battling against the "cult of Nazism" that exists

today in Ukraine. "Civilisation again finds itself at a decisive, critical moment. A real war has again been launched against our motherland."

The Russian leader said all this is being done by the USA and allies in order to "further dictate their will, their rights and their rules", and to implement what is basically "a system of robbery, violence and suppression" on the international stage. "It seems that they have forgotten what the insane ambitions of the Nazis led to. They have forgotten who defeated this monstrous, total evil," he stressed. Now "a real war has been unleashed against our Motherland. But we resisted international terrorism. We'll also defend the residents of Donbas and assure our security".

At a wreath-laying ceremony on the eve of Victory Day, Russian communist leader Gennady Zyuganov said: "We are the heirs of victorious fathers and grandfathers. We, the Communists, have always been in the forefront of the struggle against fascism..."

"Today, the main terrorists on the planet are the Americans. The main financial terrorist is the dollar. The main rapists are Nazis, fascists and Banderists. And we must understand perfectly well that we are continuing the great work of our victorious fathers and grandfathers."

"Today, people expect a new victory from us, from all the people's patriotic forces. I want to thank the guys who are now sitting in the trenches, all those who defend our Motherland, working at the enterprises of the military-industrial complex. Solidarity, cohesion and victory are the three main slogans that will help us win. And this victory is awaited by all honest people on the planet."

People's China, meanwhile, is leading diplomatic moves to



• Wagner fighter after the liberation of Soledar in January

end the fighting with a 12-point peace plan that reflects the mediation efforts of Brazil and Turkey and been viewed favourably in Moscow. Needless to say, the Chinese proposal was rejected outright by Anglo-American imperialism.

This road-map to end the conflict was top of the agenda when Chinese leader Xi Jinping met French president Emmanuel Macron in Beijing last month. Even Vladimir Zelensky, the Ukrainian leader, welcomed a handful of its points when he spoke to Xi Jinping on the phone last month. But Zelensky is a US pawn and the Americans won't consider anything short of the total defeat of the Russian Federation at the moment.

The Biden administration still believes it can force Russia to its knees. Biden says he will continue supplying Ukraine with weapons "for as long as it takes" to achieve its war aims. But Biden may have to think again if the much-touted new Ukrainian offensive fails.

Henry Kissinger, the veteran US foreign minister during the Nixon era, certainly thinks so. He says that Chinese-brokered

peace talks could begin by the end of 2023. "Now that China has entered the negotiation, it will come to a head, I think by the end of the year," Kissinger

said. By that time, "we will be talking about negotiating processes and even actual negotiations".

FUND

The April appeal closed with £1,005 in the bag and a total of £2,966 for the month – sadly £534 less than what we need every month to guarantee our survival. The fighting fund is the life-blood of our paper – still the only communist weekly in Britain. We fight to put the communist answer to the capitalist crisis back on the working class agenda. We need to keep our presses rolling.

Another world is possible. Not their world of oppression, poverty and exploitation but our world. The world of the people's democracies we see in China, Cuba and Democratic Korea. The world built by the Vietnamese and Laotian revolutions and the better future that millions upon millions of communists are struggling to build all over the world.

If you want to guarantee our communist contribution to the struggle for peace and socialism the first step is to support the New Worker fighting fund. We need £3,500 a month to keep going. All donations, big or small, count. 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

Assange..p2

May Day..p3

Decline of \$..p6

Syria..p12

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

No grounds for complacency

Last week's local elections were bad news for the Tories. The Conservatives lost control of more than 40 councils in the polls, which Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer says has set them "on course for a Labour majority at the next general election".

It was certainly good for Labour but there are no grounds for complacency. Labour ended up nine per cent ahead of the Tories, picking up more than 500 seats and winning control of 22 more councils on the night. But the swing is nothing like the astronomical levels recorded by the pollsters at the beginning of the year, and although the Conservatives lost over a thousand council seats nearly half of them went to the Liberal Democrats and the Greens.

Although there's still a year or more to go until the next general election, if nothing changes a nine per cent swing will not be enough to give Labour an overall majority in the House of Commons. Starmer says Labour isn't interested in cutting a deal with the Liberal-Democrats or the nationalists, but this hasn't stopped speculation in Westminster and in the bourgeois media about a coalition to avoid a hung parliament.

The Liberal Democrats did join hands with the Tories to form a coalition under David Cameron. But it ended in tears at the 2015 general election with loss of 48 seats in the House of Commons, leaving them with only eight MPs. Nevertheless, the Lib-Dems would still like to be king-makers and if Starmer won't play ball then Rishi Sunak might have no choice.

Although local elections generally reflect national issues, local issues sometimes benefit campaigns like the Canvey Island Independence Party that increased their share of seats on their local council. But unlike the Scottish or Welsh nationalists, the only 'independence' they want is that of their old Canvey district council in Essex.

Needless to say, the left posers who call themselves part of an imaginary "revolutionary left" were well down with the also-rans in this election. The reality is that these 'alternative left' parties are rejected time and again by the same working class whom their programmes claim to advance. There isn't even a remote possibility of any of them taking office because the rhetoric and wild promises of these parties do not reflect reality.

The glittering display of pomp and circumstance for the coronation of King Charles at Westminster Abbey may have thrilled the royal fans and the gaping tourists who delight in these spectacles, but it did nothing to change the lives of the millions of working people trying to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

In ancient days the slaves were kept quiet with free food and entertainment in the arenas and circuses, the ruins of which can still be seen across what was once the Roman Empire. When the going was good even the barons and their feudal church would provide feast days, religious holidays and sports for the peasants who tilled the land that kept the lords in clover. But the workers get nothing from the capitalists.

The incompetence, greed and indifference towards the unemployed and the homeless sums up all that is rotten within the British ruling class.

We don't want the 'austerity-lite' of Starmer & Co. We don't want a mealy-mouthed compromise with the worthless Liberal Democrats that the liberal bourgeois pundits who pose as friends of the working class are now advocating. What we want is an end to austerity and the restoration of trade union rights. Saving the NHS, capping rents and building cheap council homes, raising wages, getting rid of the need for foodbanks, saving our schools, restoring the right to independence for the disabled, restoring proper care for the elderly and restoring legal aid to bring justice for all – restoring the public sector, cutting the defence budget and taxing the rich to make them pay for the crisis of their own creation will pay for all of this and more.

Getting rid of capitalism and replacing it with socialism is the ultimate objective of working people. Getting rid of austerity and replacing it with social justice must be the immediate objective of the working class.

Lula says free Assange

Brazilian President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, criticised the lack of global efforts to secure the release of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange during his visit to London for the coronation of King Charles III.

Lula expressed his dismay at Assange's four-year confinement in Belmarsh Prison, stating that it was embarrassing that a journalist who exposed wrongdoing was imprisoned without significant action being taken to free him.

"We talk about freedom of expression; the guy is in prison because he denounced wrongdoing. And the press doesn't do anything in defence of this journalist. I can't understand it," Lula told reporters.

Lula, responding to a question about Assange, said that he had forgotten to discuss this issue with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during his visit but intended to write to him upon his return to Brazil.

Lula called for a global press movement to defend the right to expose wrongdoing, emphasising that Assange had not "denounced anything vulgar" but had exposed state surveillance. He criticised the lack of action by the press to secure the journalist's freedom, stating that it was sad but true.

President Lula's latest comments stood in line with his openly expressed disagreement with the US government on geopolitical matters, particularly regarding the Ukraine conflict. His opposition to providing arms to Ukraine and his accusations against the USA and Europe for their role in inciting violence have drawn strong criticism from both the USA and Europe.

Australia's PM, Anthony Albanese, also voiced his support for Assange, stating that "enough is enough" and that there was no benefit in prolonging his incarceration. Last November, Albanese made it clear to the US administration that the matter needed to be resolved. "...it is time that this matter be brought to a close," stated Albanese.

Assange's father, John Shipton, has been campaigning for his son's case and sought support from Mexico's President López Obrador and Australia's Albanese to raise the issue with US officials, including President Joe Biden.

Assange, an Australian national, was charged with espionage and computer misuse in the USA, related to WikiLeaks' release of classified documents in 2010. He has been trying to avoid extradition ever since.



In addition to discussing Assange, Lula mentioned that King Charles III had asked him to cope with the problem of the Amazon rainforest, to which Lula responded that he needed resources to fulfil that responsibility. Sunak promised to transfer £80 million to Brazil's Amazon Fund to combat deforestation, joining contributions from Norway and Germany. US President Biden also recently promised to seek congressional approval for \$500 million towards this cause. Lula deemed the British pledge insufficient, however, indicating that more support is needed to protect the Amazon rainforest.

In the run-up to the coronation Assange invited King Charles to visit him at the Belmarsh prison. In his letter Assange said it was "only fitting to extend a heartfelt invitation" to his "liege" as the monarch prepared to be officially crowned king, months after the death of his predecessor and mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

"I thought it only fitting to extend a heartfelt invitation to you to commemorate this momentous occasion by visiting your very own kingdom within a kingdom: His Majesty's Prison Belmarsh," the letter reads. "After all, one can truly know the measure of a society by how it treats its prisoners, and your kingdom has surely excelled in that regard."

The letter, which was published on the Declassified UK website, pointed out that the UK is the country with the largest number of prisoners in Western Europe.

Assange also noted that the living conditions in Belmarsh are bad, mentioning the poor quality of food and sanitation.

"During your visit, you will have the opportunity to feast upon the culinary delights prepared for your loyal subjects on a generous budget of two pounds per day," the letter continues.

"Savour the blended tuna heads and the ubiquitous reconstituted forms that are purportedly made from chicken. And worry not, for unlike lesser institutions such as Alcatraz or San Quentin, there is no communal dining in a mess hall. At Belmarsh, prisoners dine alone in their cells, ensuring the utmost intimacy with their meal."

The WikiLeaks founder also noted that inside the prison walls, "you will find the most isolated place within its walls: Healthcare, or 'Hellcare' as its inhabitants lovingly call it.

"Here, you will marvel at sensible rules designed for everyone's safety, such as the prohibition of chess, whilst permitting the far less dangerous game of checkers.

"Deep within Hellcare lies the most gloriously uplifting place in all of Belmarsh, nay, the whole of the United Kingdom: the sublimely named Belmarsh End of Life Suite. Listen closely, and you may hear the prisoners' cries of 'Brother, I'm going to die in here', a testament to the quality of both life and death within your prison."

Assange concluded the correspondence by underscoring that a visit from Charles "is an honour befitting a king".

Since April 2019, Assange, an Australian citizen, has been held in the high-security Belmarsh prison in London whilst facing prosecution in the USA under the Espionage Act. If convicted, he may get 175 years in prison. In December 2022 he appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to challenge his extradition.

WikiLeaks was founded by Assange on 4th October 2006, but rose to prominence in 2010 when it began to publish large-scale leaks of classified government information, including from the USA.

Workers' Notes

Last week millions of people all around the world took part in May Day parades to celebrate International Workers' Day. Britain was no exception, with traditional labour movement marches in London and many other towns and cities throughout the country.

May Day in London...

by *New Worker correspondent*

Thousands of trade unionists, socialists, communists and members of the Turkish, Kurdish and other communities living in London gathered in Clerkenwell Green outside Marx House for the start of the annual May Day commemoration. London comrades with the New Communist Party banner marched alongside Ukraine anti-fascist solidarity supporters through central London for the traditional rally

in Trafalgar Square. There they were joined by striking Unite workers who left their picket outside St Thomas' hospital to join the rally in the afternoon.

"It's great to see such a diverse range of people coming together to celebrate our day," Mick Lynch, the leader of the RMT transport union, said at the rally. "There's a lot of talk about a big day coming up," he said referring to the Coronation. "But this is about our history and our culture: the working people of the world, the people that generate all of the wealth so that these rich people can live on the cream of the world. That's got to change; that's what our movement is about."



In Liverpool

by *New Worker correspondent*

Thousands marched through the streets of Liverpool to celebrate International Workers' Day on May Day and to support striking nurses and other workers.

The march, which was noisy and well received by the people of Liverpool who have a proud history of political and industrial struggle, ended in a rally held in Derby Square organised by Liverpool Trades Council.

Speakers from striking unions were angry yet determined to fight and show solidarity in the onslaught of attacks on the working class and trade unions. The march and rally took place within the context of national

industrial struggles involving striking workers against imposed wage restraints whilst the multinationals rake in vast profits, and widespread militant protests taking place in France.

Despite being told by the Tories that there is no money in the coffers and that our demands for pay rises are unjustified, £250 million of tax payers' money can be found for the Coronation of King Charles III and £3.9 billion sent to the fascists in the Ukraine.

Striking Nurse Carmel O'Boyle, Chair of the NW Regional Board of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), defiantly and passionately explained the need to fight against austerity. "We need you to stand up to fight for us as we fight for you! There is a nurse at every stage of our lives from the cradle to the grave and even in the darkness of this government

when they tell us we aren't good enough, not good enough to strike and not good enough to pay properly... we will be the light!

"We are the light in the darkness! On International Workers' Day we stand together with you and all our trade union colleagues to build a better Britain and world for the for the generations to come!"

Tracy Hylton from PCS, the main civil service union, told how civil servants are being balloted for a new wave of strikes having had no pay rise since 2012 and against attacks on pay and conditions. "We have to fight for our rights! They are seeking to divide us all the time. This is class war! We are collateral damage to the elite and they don't care if we don't have enough to eat. We must show solidarity and strength!"

The need for industrial

struggle after four years of wage freezes and 13 years of austerity was made by Denise McEveley of the RMT transport union. She said: "We must come together to beat the vile political attacks from the Tories!"

Many spoke of the need for nationalisation, to resist, and for further industrial action.

Continuous action with other unions to bring down this Government was being demanded by rank-and-file workers declared Saira Weiner from the University College Union (UCU): "Solidarity to the RMT! Solidarity to workers fighting back! We need to say enough is enough. We need to organise ourselves. The union leaders' jobs are to negotiate and when the bosses don't negotiate, they tell us nothing can be done but to accept it."

"I'll tell you how we deal with it. We show solidarity and strike! It's shocking how they try and blame others like refugees while that parasite gets his crown next week! We are told we are expected to pledge allegiance. They want us to swear allegiance to him! I will be swearing because we need to get rid of them and this feudal system that pays out millions of pounds to these parasites!"

The electrifying growth of the striking trade union movement seeking inflation busting pay rises was described by the UCU's Mark O'Brien. "New members, activists, joint rallies, co-ordinated actions and joint initiatives are bringing and building solidarity on picket lines."

"On International Workers Day we need to build the rank and file. We want to see the full power of the movement unleashed!"

He called on the need to resist attempts to divide us using racism before triumphantly declaring: "Liverpool is a fascist free zone!"

Felicity Darwin (Campaign

to Save the NHS and Save Liverpool Women's Hospital) was blistering in her attack on the Tories and the privatisation of the NHS. "The NHS is being robbed! We are fighting to save the NHS! Fight with us to save the Women's Hospital! For all our Mothers, our Sisters, our friends, our lovers, and for every single baby born there! Fight back for the Women's!"

International messages of working-class support and solidarity to Liverpool Trades Council from France and Pakistan were read out, including from the General Secretary of the Balochistan province Labour Federation who reported on job cuts, wage freezes and attacks on unions' rights to organise workers. "We are bearing the brunt of this crisis that the ruling class has created. We agree with your slogan 'Enough is Enough' and wish to be part of this struggle to change this elitist system!"

Unfortunately, glaring omissions were evident from speeches with a complete lack of references to the US imperialist proxy war in the Ukraine and the economic impact on workers, emphasising our need to develop and expand the anti-war campaign within the trade union movement.

New Workers were sold and masses of International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) campaign leaflets were distributed, which was very important considering the forthcoming pro-Ukraine Eurovision Song Contest 2023 due to take place in Liverpool.

A rousing end to the march and rally had everyone chanting: "The Workers, United, Will never be defeated! The Workers, United, Will never be defeated! The Workers, United, Will never be defeated!"



And Southampton...

by **New Worker**
correspondent

On May Day, a crowd of several hundred people marched from Southampton's historic Bargate to nearby Palmerston Park to commemorate International Workers' Day.

The crowd included numerous trade unions, including Unison, Unite and the RMT, as well as

numerous community groups. Also present were members of Socialist Party and the CPB, as well as a small number of Labour councillors.

The march ended with a number of speeches from trade unionists, political parties and community groups. The most rousing speech of all was made by *New Worker* media correspondent Ben Soton, who lives in Southampton. He emphasised

the importance of joining a trade union and stated the importance of putting working people first. Ben commented that: "We need to put the nurse above the CEO, the teacher above the tax dodger and the railway worker above the Hedge Fund Manager!"

The event also included songs by Southampton's *Red Star Choir*, including *Bella Ciao* and *The Red Flag*.



Doctors at Large

by **New Worker**
correspondent

Members of the British Medical Association's (BMA) General Practitioners' Committee for England have voted for industrial action if the government does not alter contract changes imposed on doctors. These, the BMA say, "threaten patient safety" and they have balloted for industrial action if they are not addressed.

In February the doctors rejected the changes that were imposed in the 2023/24 GP contract, despite repeated warnings that they worsened rather than improved patient care.

Protests from the BMA only resulted in a few minor changes before it was imposed last month. As might be expected, the Health Secretary decline to discuss the matter.

Kieran Sharrock, acting chair

of the GP's committee, said: "No GP wants to have to consider taking industrial action – and it's something we still hope to avoid – but the committee has been flatly ignored each time we've explained why this contract isn't workable and needs to be renegotiated."

"General practice is under unprecedented pressure, and these contract changes will only make things worse by taking GPs away from their patients when they need us the most. This is a time to support the health service, not wave through policies that only pummel us further into the ground."

In Scotland, 97 per cent of junior doctors voted in favour of a 72-hour strike action on a 71 per cent turnout to secure a reversal of a 23.5 reversal of real pay since 2008.

BMA Scotland junior doctors' committee chair Chris Smith said: "Investing in today's junior doctors by paying them the salary they deserve is essentially making a down payment on the future of Scotland's NHS – today's junior doctors are the GPs, specialist doctors and consultants of the

future. Without a serious plan to reverse pay erosion, these doctors will go on leaving Scotland's NHS, undermining any plans to build a sustainable NHS for generations to come."

The response of the SNP Health Secretary was to dismiss the claim as "simply unaffordable because it would result in a very significant cut to the health service budget, which would have a detrimental impact on the level of patient services that we could provide".

Pay erosion means that the starting salaries are as low as £29,036, which means the basic hourly rate for a newly qualified doctor is as low as £14 per hour based on a 40-hour week.

The same demand is being made in Wales where junior doctor pay has been cut by 26 per cent in real terms since 2008, at the same time as the number of patients waiting treatment has increased nearly threefold. We are not worth a quarter less than we were in 2008.

As pay has declined student debt has increased, making things worse for trainees. The BMA's Welsh committee notes that

as result: "Doctors are leaving Wales to work in other countries. Students are leaving medical school before finishing their training or deciding not to study medicine at all."

One thing that can be said in favour of the Tory Government is that its policies are doing much to develop the health service in Australia – due to low wages and an effective ban on new recruitment except to replace departing staff.

Heathrow hit

by **New Worker**
correspondent

Some people who fled the coronation by flying out from Heathrow Airport Terminal Five on Thursday were hit by strike action by 1,400 security officers involved in a pay dispute, which will be repeated on the 9–10 and 25–27 May. This means that passengers will only be able to carry two carry-on items through security on strike days. Passengers will also have to arrive at least two hours before short-haul flights.

At Heathrow Airport security staff are paid £6,000 less than at other airports, making "Heathrow the poverty pay citadel of London airports". According to Unite, security officers at Stansted and Gatwick airports are paid £5,000–£6,000 more than at Heathrow. Even at the smaller Luton airport security officers are paid over £500 more. At Heathrow, security officers get a basic pay of £26,000, boosted by a £4,000 shift allowance.

Unite cites research demonstrating that since 2017, average real-terms pay for Heathrow workers fell by 24 per cent. The CEO of Heathrow, however, saw his pay nearly double to rise from £800,000 to £1.5 million!

Unite regional co-ordinating officer Wayne King said: "Unite has given Heathrow Airport every opportunity to make an improved pay offer, which could have led to the strike action being

suspended. Sadly, they refused to grasp the opportunity to make an offer which could meet members' expectations."

At Edinburgh Airport a similar battle is in its earlier stages. Unite, which represents 275 of the airport's 500 workers, is balloting its members for action.

During the pandemic workers reluctantly accepted cuts to terms and conditions, but now with the airport busier than ever they are demanding decent pay to meet the cost-of-living crisis.

Edinburgh workers have rejected an offer that was inferior to that made at Gatwick by the same owners (Global Infrastructure Management, GIP). At London's second airport a 12 per cent rise plus a £1500 one-off was accepted.

Edinburgh Airport is highly profitable. It has made £691.9 million in payments to GIP including £387.7 million in dividends in the last seven years, at a time when real wages fell 9.8 per cent.

And finally...

By **New Worker**
correspondent

His Majesty the King would have been relieved that his coronation was not disturbed by his coach getting a parking ticket whilst it was parked outside Westminster Abbey during his crowning. This was because traffic wardens employed by Westminster Council's contractor NSL were on strike that day.

GMB Organiser Alex Etches said: "Our members have once again rejected another below inflation pay offer from the company. There is no reason why our members, who do a difficult and dangerous job, should be poorer this year than the last."

"People in this country are fed up of private companies making millions off the public purse while the people that do the job that generates that money are asked to justify maintaining their standard of living."

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

New Worker 9th May 2003

PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair last Wednesday came near to defeat in the House of Commons vote on foundation hospitals after Tories and Liberal Democrats joined Labour rebels in opposing the Health and Social Care Bill.

In the event, a quarter of Labour MPs either voted against the Bill or abstained. This is the Bill's second reading and it was passed with a majority of just over 70 votes. It still has a long way to go and could well be defeated before it gets to the final stage.

The Bill would set up elite

hospitals with the freedom to borrow money and act virtually as independent companies, selling services and engaging in commercial enterprises.

It is the sort of measure the Tories would normally support completely. But sensing Blair's vulnerability, they decided to vote against.

Blair's complacency that he could always count on the opposition to back him against back-bench rebels has left him out on a limb now they have decided not to play the game.

It would have been unprecedented for a Prime Minister with such a large majority to lose a House of Commons vote. Even though he won, this has still been a big set-back.

The unions have consistently opposed this Health and Social Care Bill, which would lead to a two-tier NHS.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The health unions support the development of a more flexible,

responsive and innovative NHS that can deliver higher standards of care to meet the needs of patients.

"None of the normal consultative processes took place before these proposals emerged in the current Bill. The Government failed to consult through a Green Paper or White Paper."

The giant public sector union Unison, which represents thousands of NHS workers, urged MPs to vote against the Bill.

Both Blair and his Health Secretary Alan Milburn have been peddling the old Tory lie about increasing patient choice.

Most patients are too ill or elderly to drive themselves to hospital – or do not have cars anyway. Those who arrive by ambulance as emergencies have even less choice as to where they are taken.

Behind liberty's lie: America's shameful treatment of immigrants and refugees

While the US continues to buy into the dual fallacy of being the "city upon a hill" and a "beacon of democracy," the reality on the ground tells a different story - an increasingly large swathe of the American population struggles with drug abuse, growing worries around gun violence, an ever-widening economic gap between the haves and the have-nots, intensifying political polarisation, more arbitrary detention of and hatred toward minorities... These sustained forms of unrest not only exacerbate social inequality and worsen domestic human rights conditions, but also expose US hypocrisy as it is unable to resolve its own issues, yet it never stops criticizing other nations' human rights records. The Global Times is publishing a series of articles that examine these and other sociopolitical and economic forms of chaos in the US. This is an instalment in the series that delves into the shameful and inhumane US history of its treatment of immigrants characterised by discrimination, exclusion, arrest, detention, and expulsion.

The fire on 27th March at the "Ciudad Juarez Temporary Station" - an immigration detention centre in the Mexican state of Chihuahua a few metres from the Mexican border with the US, which killed 39 people has once again brought the issues of US violations of immigrant and refugee human rights to the fore with

global experts calling for prompt, thorough, and independent investigations into detention centres for migrants in the custody of the US government.

As the country with the world's largest immigration detention system and more than 200 detention facilities in its border states, the tragedy at the "Ciudad Juarez Temporary Station" is not an isolated incident.

A total of 21 people died in US immigration detention facilities in the fiscal year 2020, US media reported, more than doubling the death toll from the fiscal year 2019 and the highest number since 2005. Up to 80 per cent of the more than 1.7 million immigrants detained in the US in the fiscal year 2021 were held in private detention facilities, including 45,000 children.

The above data is just the tip of the iceberg of the litany of human rights abuses perpetrated by the US. How a country treats its most vulnerable groups is the touchstone of its democracy and human rights situation. Immigrants and refugees are among the most vulnerable groups. While the US has declared itself a "beacon of democracy and human rights," its shameful record of immigrant and refugee mistreatment has erased its facade.

On 30th March China released a report which revealed the US' egregious record and its lies and double standards on issues of refugees and immigrants. As the



• Local residents attend a vigil for the victims found in an abandoned truck in San Antonio, Texas

report was released on the second day of the US' second so-called 'Summit for Democracy', analysts said it highlights the US' hypocrisy on human rights, and the dysfunction of US democracy.

A bloody road

Looking back on the US' development history, it was a bloody road full of contributions and sacrifices made by immigrants at different times, from black slaves and trafficked laborers, to today's

newcomers and their families, says Li Daojun, an expert in law and human rights.

"The US' development largely depended on immigration, but authorities have turned a blind eye to this fact and [treat some immigrants harshly] to protect the vested interests of certain groups," Li said.

Take Chinese immigrants as an example. Since the mid-19th century, Chinese laborers were trafficked in large numbers by Americans to the US as coolies, and by the 1880s, the total number had exceeded 100,000. Chinese laborers undertook the most arduous work in the construction of the Central Pacific Transcontinental Railroad and thousands of them died.

They made enormous contributions to the development of the US with their hard work and even gave their lives, but were not treated with respect or kindness. In 1882, the US went further and enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act, putting an absolute end to immigration from China and denying resident Chinese immigrants US citizenship.

Aside from discrimination, Chinese immigrants have also suffered from violent attacks. On 24th October 1871, 19 Chinese immigrants were killed by hundreds of white people around Calle de los Negros in Los Angeles. On 2nd September 1885, white miners rioted at the

Stone Springs mine in Wyoming, destroying the residential village inhabited by Chinese workers, and killing at least 28 Chinese immigrants.

Anti-Chinese sentiment increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and so did the violence toward Asians. A poll released by the Pew Research Center in April 2021 showed that the vast majority of Asian adults (81 per cent) also say violence against them had increased, far surpassing the share of all US adults (56 per cent) who say the same.

As a country founded on immigration, US has been the catalyst of numerous inhumane tragedies for local immigrants and refugees. That not only severely hurts the country's reputation and international image, but also prevents more people from migrating to the country, which will harm its own development in the long run, observers warned.

Human rights violations against refugees and immigrants in the US have seen no improvement in modern times. In the 21st century, US governments have increasingly restricted immigration and treated immigrants harshly and inhumanely, with arrests, detentions, deportations, and the repatriation of immigrants on a large scale annually.

To curtail illegal immigra

continued on page 6...



• Outside a refugee camp in Tijuana, Mexico ten miles south of the US border

continued from page 5...

tion, the former Trump administration implemented a “zero tolerance” policy put in place on April 2018, forcibly separating illegal immigrant families. It reportedly resulted in the separation of at least 2,300 minors from their families, most of who were from Mexico.

merciless policy sparked outrage

The merciless policy sparked outrage across the country, as hundreds of marches took place nationwide on June 30 that year with protestors demanding for the government to reunite families separated at the US-Mexico border.

At a rally the same day in Washington DC under the theme “Families Belong Together,” actor and songwriter Lin-Manuel Miranda told MSNBC that they “will not stand for a country separating children from their families.” “And if you (Trump) are silent on that issue, or you are somehow for that issue you’re not getting re-elected.”

The USA the only country in the world that had not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the US and its law enforcement agencies have never stopped abusing migrant children.

Among the 266,000 migrant children held in US government custody in recent years, more than 25,000 have been detained for longer than 100 days, nearly 1,000 for more than a year, and at least three for over five years.

detained in deplorable conditions

Worse still, many children are detained in deplorable conditions. An article published by the *New York Times* on 26th June 2019, revealed how hundreds of children were locked up in one cell in a detention centre at a border station in

Clint, Texas.

The children there were held in prison-like conditions with virtually no adult supervision, the article said. The detention centres could be compared to “torture facilities,” a pediatrician who visited the facility said.

brutal treatment

The US authorities’ brutal treatment of immigrant children has long raised social concerns. In the report *Detention of Immigrant Children* released in 2017, the American Association of Pediatrics noted that in accordance with internationally accepted rights of the child, “...immigrant and refugee children should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be exposed to conditions that may harm or traumatise them.”

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet was incredibly shocked by overcrowded US detention facilities, poor sanitation conditions, and lack of access to adequate healthcare or food at the detention facilities, according to a UN website report on 8 July 2019. She stated that detaining migrant children may constitute cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment that is prohibited under international law.

racial discrimination

Analysts noted that deep-rooted racial discrimination in the US is a major cause of its immigration problems while political polarisation has hindered the government from taking effective measures in solving these long-seated problems.

For example, the partisan divide has prevented any significant immigration reform bill from passing in Congress since the comprehensive Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Both Democrats

and Republicans have put forth their own immigration reform proposals, but said proposals are usually dead on arrival.

Ironically, setting aside its own poor human rights record, the US is keen on pointing fingers at others on the issue. It has released *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* annually since 1977. The most recent report published in March, just like the previous ones, is filled with groundless accusations attacking China.

These so-called human rights reports the US began to release in the late 1970s, reflect the country’s lack of confidence after the Vietnam War (1955-75) and the oil crisis (1973), Li pointed out.

The US’ international position was shaken after the two incidents, Li said. “To maintain its previous hegemony, the US tried to suppress countries with similar strengths or international statuses, including today’s China,” he said. “US politicians have used lots of overt and covert means to curb the rise of China, and inauthentic ‘human rights reports’ are no more than one of its tricks.”

“Look at how the US has suppressed some Chinese companies and technologies, and even attempted to possess them, it’s ridiculous that a brigandish country talks about human rights all day,” Li said.

Global Times

“These so-called human rights reports the US began to release in the late 1970s, reflect the country’s lack of confidence after the Vietnam War (1955-75) and the oil crisis (1973)”

Li Daojun

Decline of US dollar dominance – what it means for workers



By Betsey Piette

The US sells more than \$175 billion in military weapons every year; yet for decades, its greatest weapon has been the US dollar’s global dominance.

Imperialist wars and US dollar hegemony go hand in hand. To prevent them from developing alternative currencies to the dollar, the US military invaded Iraq in 2003 and attacked Libya in 2011, murdering both countries’ leaders. The dominance of the dollar also impacted Venezuela’s ability to benefit from the sale of its vast oil resources, driving that country deeper into poverty.

Through its control of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the US has set political conditions for countries to receive monetary support. Most often this has involved adopting neo-liberal policies and opening their markets for Western corporations to super exploit their workers. An example of how these global financiers operate can be seen in the 2001 film *Life and Debt*, which

documents how high-interest loans from the IMF destroyed Jamaica’s economy, leaving it permanently indebted to and dependent on the West.

The US dollar became the dominant global reserve currency after then-President Richard Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard in 1971. Since then the US has used that position to force countries to do its bidding, more frequently freezing or even confiscating a country’s assets, as it has done with Iran and Venezuela.

Using the excuse of the US/NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, the US government imposed sanctions on Russia in February 2022. But it may have gone too far when it froze the Central Bank of Russia’s \$300 billion in foreign exchange and gold reserves on 26th March of that year, for that resulted in a global backlash as countries looked for viable alternative currencies to the dollar.

Along with the economic sanctions imposed on Russia, Washington has used

the war in Ukraine to promote the export of American shale gas and oil as an alternative to Russian energy.

An initial sign of growing opposition from countries in the Global South was the result of the United Nations vote condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in March 2022. While the resolution passed, abstainers included China, India, Iran, Iraq, Mozambique, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. An analysis of the vote by Global Policy found that “of the 7.7 billion people represented by governments taking part in the vote, only 42 per cent were from countries approving the motion.”

Many of those abstaining were countries that have suffered under crippling US economic sanctions. The website SanctionsKill.org identifies over 40 countries currently subject to deadly US economic sanctions.

Sanctions fuel challenge to dollar hegemony

In April 2022, China announced a Global

Security Initiative for the purpose of opposing the use of sanctions on the international stage. This followed the establishment of the New Development Bank by BRICS, a financial alliance that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The global conflict resulting from the Ukraine war is proving to be the driving force behind the BRICS expansion, with Argentina, the UAE, Mexico, Algeria and Saudi Arabia all showing interest in the initiative.

The pace of challenge to the hegemony of the dollar then picked up in late March of this year, when Brazil and China announced a trade agreement using the two countries' national currencies — the real and the yuan. Other South American countries, especially those that have felt the yoke of US sanctions, are expected to follow suit, and they are not alone.

Finance ministers and central bank governors of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced plans to reduce their reliance on the US dollar, following their March 30-31 meeting in Indonesia. They also agreed to support cross-border trade and investment in the ASEAN region.

Rise of the Global South

While the rise of the Global South is receiving increasing attention from world media, it is not a new phenomenon. In 2004, Cuban President Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez established the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of our America — ALBA — which now includes Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and the Caribbean island nations of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda and Santa

Lucía.

In 2003, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was formally established. It now includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Iran.

Both organisations share a common decision to build a world free of the economic strangulation and neocolonial aggression of the US and its allies. Along with BRICS, they offer viable alternatives to reliance on the US-dominated World Bank and IMF.

Impact on global working class

There is clearly a global move away from dependence on the US dollar, which will benefit the BRICS countries and others. But what does the diminishing hegemony of the US dollar mean for the working class?

Lessening American hegemony means that countries in the Global South may have the chance to develop their economies without dependence on the dollar, the IMF and the World Bank, and the inherent debt cycle which that dependence entails. But that does not mean an end to US imperialism or capitalism as we know it. It is a setback for US imperialism but not a defeat.

The end of American hegemony creates conditions for the global working class to break with imperialism and for the working class to rise up and carry out its historic role.

However, defeating US imperialism and capitalism will take serious, revolutionary intervention by the global working class.

Global class struggle is at a crossroads. On this May Day, let's dedicate our efforts to promoting workers' power through revolution!

Workers World (US)

The Forbidden City – not so forbidden anymore

By Omar Badr

Let's face it: it's a cliché. A foreigner in Beijing who visits the Forbidden City, also known as the Palace Museum today, and snaps a couple of pictures to post on Instagram is a cliché. My own experience, nevertheless, has been anything but.

I must've been five or six when I first saw a photograph of it. I remember flipping through a colourful kids' magazine and stumbling upon a double-spread that depicted the Chinese wonder in impressive detail. I turned to my father, who didn't look as impressed, and asked why this stunning place was forbidden. It would take me 30 more years to find out the answer.

After taking the renowned *A Crash Course to the Forbidden City* courtesy of Beijing Postcards, a small, history-focused company in Beijing, paying a couple of solo visits, watching *The Last Emperor* and reading *The Last Eunuch of China*, I decided it was time to share my passion for that magical place with the world. And so I did. I invited a group of colleagues to join me as I gave them a pro-bono tour of China's historical seat of power.

On a warm spring day, we made our way to the Palace Museum armed with some paper maps and the knowledge of an amateur guide—i.e., me. We spent a good three hours exploring the central axis that extends all the way from the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen) in its south to the Gate of Divine Prowess (Shenwumen) in the north while admiring the main six



• Not so forbidden these days...

halls and palaces across the outer and inner courts.

The Forbidden City (Gugong in Chinese means former palace) is an imperial palace complex in Beijing of Ming and Qing dynasties from 1420 to 1911. Five times the size of Buckingham Palace, it is the biggest palace and the largest wooden structure in the world.

What I personally find mind-blowing is the harmony and calm it invokes in oneself. From such names as the Palace of Heavenly Purity and the Hall of Terrestrial Tranquility to the breathtaking symmetry of the design, everything there screams (or rather, whispers) order. The whole place is a living testament to the craftsmanship of generations of skilled Chinese masons and artisans and, above all, an embodiment of ancient Chinese philosophy, one steeped in balance and order.

There are some hidden "Easter eggs"—if you will—that will make your visit all the

the place's intrigue.

As impressive as the Forbidden City's past is its present—the care it receives in the form of year-round restoration works, a superb fire prevention and fighting system and world-class themed souvenir shops that sell quality merchandise. The city that was once off-limits to commoners is not forbidden anymore. Millions of tourists visit it every year, and that number is anticipated to increase.

Before exiting, we managed to get lost in the labyrinth that is the six eastern and western palaces which currently house a range of museums and galleries. In Egypt, we say that whoever drinks from the Nile River is bound to return. And I shall venture to say that whoever visits Gugong is bound to return as well. Or at least that's how I keep the hope of coming back soon to admire it in person alive.

The author is an Egyptian working in China

Beijing Review

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LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The US imperialists and south Korean fascist puppets recently held a summit in the USA. This was very much a meeting between a master and servant. The pathetic south Korean puppet boss, Yoon, even sang the song *American Pie*. What a stooge, what a flunkey, what a traitor to the Korean people!

At the summit the imperialist warmonger and liberal fascist 'Sleepy Joe' Biden went as far as to threaten People's Korea with nuclear annihilation, saying that if the DPRK took self-defensive measures against the USA, it would result in "the end of whatever regime". This is a most brazen and bellicose threat against People's Korea and shows the intent of the US reactionaries to destroy people-centred socialism. The talk of "no hostile intent" and peaceful co-existence by the USA is just a big lie.

Comrade Kim Yo Jong, vice department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, rightly describes Biden as a man in "his dotage who is not at all capable of taking the responsibility for security and the future of the USA, an old man with no future".

The USA also announced the open deployment of US submarines equipped with nuclear weapons. The presence of US submarines with nukes is not new of course, and the USA has on many occasions brought strategic nuclear assets into the Korean peninsula. What is different is that it is being done very openly and on a permanent basis and with brazen threats.

It is the USA that created the nuclear tension on the Korean peninsula by bringing nuclear weapons into south Korea in 1957, in direct violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement, and stationed 1,000 nuclear weapons in south Korea. The DPRK's

development of nuclear weapons is a purely defensive measure to cope with the US nuclear threat.

The measures announced at the recent summit will take the tension on the Korean peninsula to new and higher levels.

We must step up solidarity with People's Korea, with No 'Ifs' or 'Buts'.

**Dermot Hudson
South London**

Dear Comrades

Labour MP Diane Abbott has apologised for her comments on racism that were published in the *Observer*.

Following an outcry she apologised and said that her words were badly chosen and that she did not intend the meaning many people took from them. She has been condemned by the Labour Party, has had the whip removed and is awaiting investigation for possible anti-Semitism.

In August 2020, Labour MP Barry Sheerman, referring to the failure of two prominent Jewish businessmen to be appointed to the House of Lords, said: "Apparently there has been a bit of a run on silver shekels!". Following an outcry he apologised and said that his words were badly chosen and that he did not intend the meaning many people took from them. A Labour Party spokesperson said: "Barry has apologised. He deeply regrets the offence caused." That was the end of the matter.

This is double standards.

**Brendan O'Brien
North London**

Dear Comrades

Another puff of blue smoke on the airport runway and another welcoming reception in Beijing underline the growing importance and influence of People's China in business relations and diplomacy. Heads of State, Prime Ministers, political leaders and business leaders arrive to discuss world problems, exchange opinions, promote trade, and build political and economic relations. On the other hand Western leaders, from Imperialism's sinking ship, come to threaten and lecture about exceptional US values. These craven hypocrites of course care nothing about human rights, not even in their own countries; their aim

is to preserve US hegemony at all costs.

Realistic observers are aware of the importance of China in stimulating world trade. China's foreign trade in Q1 increased by 4.8 per cent, to reach 9.8 trillion Yuan, despite US trade restrictions. Notably, Belt and Road surged by 16.8 per cent during the same period. US political leaders and their more stupid lackeys would like to decouple from China. In reality, some German companies may flee to the Asian nation where production costs, particularly prices of energy, are much lower.

Desperate moves by the USA to cripple the Chinese economy, by blocking supply chains and attempting to destroy their microchip industry, are starting to backfire. As China makes technical progress it is able to produce more of its own, which has led to big fall in the sales from western nations.

Recent months have seen record numbers of world leaders arrive in China. It has become a major centre for diplomatic activity. New friendships have been born and peaceful developments advanced. In what can only be called a colossal setback for US Imperialism's evil plans for the Middle East, China has brokered the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. China has even been willing to discuss Ukraine with Zelensky by phone link.

The negative diplomacy of US Imperialism is illustrated by numerous attempts to stir up trouble and provoke conflicts throughout the world, which they then attempt to exploit for their own advantage. They would love to start a war with China over the Taiwan issue. They dream of provoking China and India into a serious border conflict to destroy relations between those two great nations. India, I am sure, realises that once it becomes an economic challenge to the USA it then risks being slapped-down hard as the USA attempts to preserve its domination. India, unlike Japan and south Korea, will not submit.

Chinese airports are busy again as COVID19 restrictions are lifted. Thousands of new tourists will arrive and be able to see for themselves the powerful progress China has made. As with the other

socialist countries, they will see a very different way of life. They will be able to see that they were told lies, with unrelenting propaganda by the BBC and the rest of the decadent bourgeois media, designed to blur the vision of what wonders socialism may achieve.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

The Bahraini Labour Movement reacted angrily to the decision by the dictatorship to ban this year's march on 1st May to mark the International Labour Day. The Bahrain Labour Union had asked the regime for permission to hold the traditional march but this was not given. The Khalifis [Bahrain's ruling family] have refused to allow any march to mark the occasion since 2011.

So the people have resorted to social media to highlight the predicaments of the labour force in the country. There are many complaints about low wages, rocketing prices and fewer job opportunities as the regime prioritises foreign workers for jobs, unfair contracts, unsafe working conditions, and sectarian and political discrimination. The rising cost of living is adding an extra burden on the work force. Labour Day marches in Bahrain demand higher wages and economic justice amidst high inflation, rising unemployment and ongoing discrimination against Shiite citizens. Social media has become the only available platform to express anger at the regime.

Last week the khalifi ruler, Hamad Al Khalifa, decided to promote his notorious son, Nasser, to the rank of Lieutenant-General despite his lack of proper military experience. In addition to his new role, Nasser is the supreme defence council secretary-general, a national security advisor and a royal guard commander. The dictator lavished praise on his son, who is embroiled in internal conflicts with his other brothers, especially Salman, the crown prince. The move is seen as a serious form of corruption and cronyism.

**Saeed Shehabi
Bahrain Freedom
Movement
London**

Diary

UNTIL 9 SEPT

John Rylands Library:
Workers' Playtime:
culture and community
in industrial Lancashire.
Exhibition, 10:00-
17:00 Weds-Sat. Free.
Deansgate, Manchester

EVERY SATURDAY

Committee to Defend
Julian Assange:
Protests: 12:00-14:00,
HMP Belmarsh,
Western Way, London
SE28 and 16:00-18:00,
Eros statue, Piccadilly
Circus, London SW1.

SAT 13 MAY

Palestine Solidarity
Campaign: Nakba 75
march 12:00-16:00.
Assemble at BBC,
Portland Place, London
W1A 1AA.

SAT 13 MAY

Cuba Solidarity
Campaign: Latin
America Day School.
09:45 Venue: Quaker
Meeting House, 10 St
James Street, Sheffield
S1 2EW.

THUR 18 MAY

Marx Memorial Library:
John Foster on Class
mobilisation and class
consciousness: language
and the 'practical
moment'. 19:00, Online
lecture. Book on MML
website.

SAT 20 MAY

Korean Friendship
Association UK:
Dr Dermot Hudson
on the US threat to
People's Korea.
14:00, Casa Bar,
29 Hope St, Liverpool,
L1 9BP

SAT 20 MAY

Levellers' Day:
Republicanism, Then
and Now, 10:30-16:00
Burford, Oxfordshire,
OX18 4RY

SAT 20 MAY

Campaign for Nuclear
Disarmament: Protest
against the return of US
nuclear weapons
RAF Lakenheath,
Wangford Road,
Brandon, Suffolk, IP27
0SJ. Details on CND
website.

SAT 20 MAY

Marx Memorial Library
at 90: Clerkenwell
Our Home Radical
History Open Day
11:00 onwards, 37A
Clerkenwell Green,
London, EC1R 0DU

SAT 20 MAY

Society for Cooperation
in Russian and Soviet
Studies: Jane Rosen on
100 Years of SCRSS
14:00, SCRSS, 320
Brixton Road, London,
SW9 6AB.

**WED 24 MAY – 14
JUNE**

Marx Memorial Library:
Women Work & Trade
Unions: Four week
online course.

THURS 25 MAY

Marx Memorial Library:
John Foster on Class
mobilisation and
class consciousness:
contemporary
understandings. 19:00,
Online lecture. Book on
MML website.

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political
affairs correspondent

The Stone of Scone returned to England for the coronation in Westminster Abbey last week as part of the ancient ceremonies that surround the ruling family and to remind the Scots that Charles is king of Scotland as well as England and the other realms that still uphold the House of Windsor. Scottish royalists cheered when Edinburgh castle fired off a 21-gun salute as the King was crowned in a ceremony that was also screened in Glasgow Cathedral and venues in other towns including Aberdeen and Stirling. Even First Minister Humza Yousaf joined in the fun donning a kilt for the ceremony in Westminster.

Yousaf, a nationalist republican told the press that "it's no great surprise what my views are. But also I've said very clearly, the job of First Minister is to represent everybody in Scotland – the office of First Minister requires that. The fact that we do have a monarchy means that there's got to be a coronation, there's going to be money spent on it. I hope that money really gets kept to a minimum. My focus up here in Scotland is making sure every penny we spend in the Scottish Government is focused towards reducing poverty".

Yousaf's view by no means represents the entirety of nationalist opinion. At the time of the 2014 Referendum the then SNP leader Alex Salmond assured us that after the win the Queen would remain Head of State. Nicola Sturgeon said the same thing. While in office both Salmond and Sturgeon were very keen to be photographed in the Queen's company.

Salmond knew that raising a republican standard was not a good way of winning votes. While it might rally the nationalist faithful it would alienate many more respectable

bourgeois types and Unionist workers who have swung over to the nationalist cause in recent years.

But now Salmond has changed his tune. He complains about his successor allowing the Stone of Scone out of Edinburgh Castle and said a "self-respecting nationalist First Minister should be with the masses in Glasgow not the classes in London". It is unknown if this change of heart is due to him not being on the Westminster Abbey guest list.

Scottish republican sentiment follows traditional lines. There are some "Jacobites by name" who still think the House of Stuart ought to be on the throne. Some, whose loyalty is to the Throne of St Peter in Rome, are opposed to what is, after-all, a Protestant king who is head of the Church of England and automatically a member of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Very few are proper Cromwellian republicans, and Irish republicanism has only a niche market appeal. On Saturday a large number of Celtic fans sang "You can stick your coronation up your arse", but the equally numerous Rangers fans have very different views.

Apathy towards the monarchy is far more widespread rather than strongly held republicanism.

In any case, all this talk about a republic is academic. Yousaf calls himself a republican and has once said he would like to dump the Crown and replace the King with an elected president when and if Scotland gets its independence. But that's not going to happen before a second referendum and there's not going to be one in the near future as far as Sunak and Starmer are concerned. No wonder the SNP do not have any detailed policy on the question.

Courting trouble

Many do, however, hold firm views on all sorts of other issues like Joanna Cherry MP KC who elegantly accused her fellow party members of being a shower of numbskulls saying "people forget that the SNP was founded in the

1930s by intellectuals, artists, poets, thinkers, former diplomats like Compton Mackenzie – people with a rich hinterland" adding that "I think there's an awful lot of people in the SNP just now who don't like debate, are afraid of debate and hostile to it and very insecure in their beliefs". Curiously enough, her roll of honour carelessly excluded Alexander Donaldson. He was interned for six weeks as a suspected German sympathiser during the Second World War but that did not prevent him later becoming SNP leader in the 1960s.

Ms Cherry was grumbling that she had been banned from speaking at an event during the Edinburgh Fringe at the Stand Comedy Club, which is owned by another SNP Edinburgh MP, Tommy Sheppard. The Club's staff complained that her views on women's rights, particularly the fact that she does not think it a very clever idea to lock up rapists in women's prisons, are unacceptable.

Ms Cherry also said that her colleagues were too spineless to stand up in her support. The First Minister piously said that "Jo and I have a disagreement around the Gender Recognition Reform Bill, for example, but at the same time, I do hope there's a way that her show can go ahead". Some believe that Yousaf privately agrees with her, but obviously cannot say so for fear of alienating the Greens and those of the ancient regime in his party.

It will be a comparatively minor problem for Yousaf if lawyer Cherry takes legal action against the Stand.

The new SNP leader has plenty more on his plate. He has managed to unite the legal profession against one of the policies he hopes will distract SNP members from their financial troubles.

Plans to hold trials for sexual offences without juries have come under attack from both lawyers and judges who say they will boycott such cases. Retired judge Lord Uist described the plans as "repugnant" and a "serious attack upon the independence of the

judiciary" and accused the Scottish government of "treating the courts as forensic laboratories in which to experiment with their policies".

Paisley based Terry Gallanagh of one of the largest criminal defence firms in Scotland said he would boycott the pilot scheme adding "I am very confident this will be a nationwide action by all solicitors. Jury trials are a bedrock of a democratic society. To refuse or remove that particular facet of democracy in allowing people to judge their fellow citizens is a significant miscalculation of all involved".

Murray Etherington, President of the Law Society of Scotland, said the planned pilot was "based on the dubious premise that jurors are returning the wrong verdicts in sexual offences case". He added that changes could be made without abolishing juries. The Scottish Solicitors Bar Association is sternly opposed and all the lawyers in Dumfries plan a boycott if it comes to pass.

Yousaf is also going to have another fight on his hands over the Gender Recognition Reform Bill, which would make it easier for "trans" people to change their legal gender, that was vetoed by the Westminster government in January.

Rishi Sunak's Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, says the national UK government will "robustly defend" the veto on the grounds that it could have had an "adverse" impact on the UK's equality laws. This will take the form of contesting the SNP's petition for judicial review, filed last month.

Humza Yousaf claims this is an "undemocratic veto" while his Social Justice Secretary deplored the Tory move saying it was "an unprecedented challenge to the Scottish Parliament's ability to legislate on clearly devolved matters and it risks setting a dangerous constitutional precedent". That may or may not be strictly true, but it is not an issue which is going to rally the nationalist troops, either within or without SNP ranks, given that it is so unpopular.

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(cheques to New Worker)

Abolish the Monarchy Now!

by New Worker correspondent

British republicans have condemned the Metropolitan Police's oppressive treatment of protesters, who had gathered in their thousands in Trafalgar Square to denounce Charles III's coronation as the country's king. The protesters against the antiquated monarchical system said on Sunday that there is now no longer a right to peaceful protest in Britain after dozens of republican demonstrators were arrested.

Overall, some 64 people were rounded up during the ceremony at Westminster Abbey before King Charles and Queen Camilla were driven back to Buckingham Palace. The police described the alleged offences that had led to the arrests as a breach of the peace and conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

Those detained included Graham Smith, the leader of the Republic movement, which campaigns for the abolition of the monarchical system in the UK and its replacement with a directly elected head

of state.

"This was a heavy-handed action which had the appearance of a pre-determined arrest that would have occurred regardless of the evidence or our actions. The right to protest peacefully in the UK no longer exists," Smith said. "These arrests were not about protecting people from harm, but about protecting the King from embarrassment."

"I have campaigned on the issue of the monarchy for 20 years," Smith said. "Time and again I have been told the monarchy protects us from tyranny, that the monarch guards our democracy and freedoms, defending us against the excesses of government. These arrests put the lie to those claims and are another example of the weakness of our constitution and the failure of our constitutional monarchy."

"The Crown is one part of our failing constitution that concentrates too much power in the hands of government at the expense of parliament and people. We need a fundamental shift in power. We need elected representatives who are

able to resist such draconian laws as those introduced this week, and a constitution that empowers the people to defend their rights.

"These arrests have also destroyed whatever trust might have existed between peaceful protesters and the Metropolitan police. What is the point in being open and candid with the police, working with their liaison officers and meeting senior commanders, if all their promises and undertakings turn out to be a lie?"

"It is notable that King Charles has said nothing about these arrests. Rather than defend our liberty and values he is content celebrating his anointment as monarch while citizens are locked up. What is the point of a head of state who will say nothing and do nothing to defend the people?"

"These arrests were not about protecting people from harm, but about protecting the King from embarrassment. It was the state wanting to stamp down dissent in order to present an image of a grateful and consenting public at



the time of the coronation."

Trying to explain the reason behind the arrests, the police, however, alleged that their so-called duty to prevent disruption outweighed the right to protest.

Republic said that its members began to be released late on Saturday evening after nearly 16 hours in custody.

The Metropolitan Police had deployed some

11,500 officers for one of its biggest-ever security operations for the day of the coronation. The police had warned that it would have an "extremely low threshold" for protests, and controversially planned to use mass facial recognition technology to monitor the crowds.

"Our tolerance for any disruption, whether through protest or otherwise, will be low," the Met

warned in the run-up to the coronation. "We will deal robustly with anyone intent on undermining this celebration."

The Republic movement was set up in 2006 to raise the case for a republic to a wider audience whilst scrutinising the actions of the royal household. It is strictly non-party political and claims to have over 80,000 supporters.

Northern Ireland—what next?

by New Worker correspondent

Northern Ireland today—still divided by partition and sectarian division. There's clearly still a job to do but there's hope for the future. And at a meeting at the House of Commons in London on 25th April, MPs on both sides of the Irish Sea joined in the discussion on the current situation following the historic 1998 'Good Friday Agreement' (GFA).

Chaired by the Sinn Féin MP for Fermanagh & South Tyrone Michelle Gildernew, the panel included Pat Doherty, who was part of the Sinn Féin (SF) team at the negotiations, John Finucane, SF MP for North Belfast, Helen Jackson, a former Labour MP who was secretary to the late Mo Mowlam during the talks, former



• John Finucane addressing the meeting

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady, and the actor Adrian Dunbar, star of the TV series *Line of Duty*.

Pat Doherty gave a gripping account of the

peace talks before 1998, including the two IRA cease-fires, describing the "huge conflicts" between the Unionist parties, and saying that those who didn't join the talks (the

Democratic Unionist Party walked out and the Ulster Unionist Party didn't take part) "made a huge strategic blunder".

Doherty also said that the Women's Coalition,

led by Catholic academic Monica McWilliams, "was a breath of fresh air" during the talks.

Adrian Dunbar reminded the meeting that Belfast still retains a segregated education system, "with millions spent every year bussing children across the city", adding: "The GFA sadly hasn't delivered on an integrated education system."

John Finucane said it was important "never to underestimate the success of the GFA", pointing to the economic successes in finance technology, cyber-security and two Belfast film studios, but condemned the Sunak government for pushing through a new bill "which will undermine the reconciliation process".

He said "there is still a job of work to do" with major problems with inadequate spending grants from London, in health and job creation.

Finucane pointed out that "for the first time since 1921, Sinn Féin is the largest party" but was unable to govern due to the suspension of the Assembly by the DUP. With the largest number of seats, the Sinn

Fein president Michelle O'Neill is now in line to be First Minister.

He also pointed out that the Biden administration in the USA has made clear that "there will be no trade deal, and no prime ministerial or state visits" until London resolves the North-South border situation and removes any threat to the GFA.

Looking to the future, Finucane said: "A new Ireland is not about rubbing out the border on the map and saying 'job done', but about equality, parity of esteem and resolving power sharing."

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Zelensky Government 'Now a Legitimate Target'

The Kremlin was hit by a pair of explosive drones last week that were downed by anti-drone defences before causing major damage. Russia has accused Ukraine of trying to assassinate President Vladimir Putin. Scott Ritter puts things into perspective, commenting on how the US would respond to this sort of provocation.

Officials in Washington and Kiev have joined forces to deny any involvement in last week's drone attack on the Kremlin in Moscow. "We don't attack Putin or Moscow. We fight on our territory. We are defending our villages and cities, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated during a visit to Finland.

"I can assure you that there was no involvement by the United States. Whatever it was did not involve us," White House National

Security Council spokesman John Kirby chimed in. "We don't endorse, nor do we encourage, we do not support attacks on individual leaders," he said.

The Russian government holds a different view says Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov. The Kremlin knows "very well that the decisions to carry out such actions, such as terrorist attacks, are not made in Kiev," but rather "in Washington."

"Such decisions, determining targets, determining means and so on, this is all dictated to Kiev by Washington," Peskov said.

Investigators have opened a criminal case into the incident, and Russia has vowed to respond in kind at a time and place of its choosing.

"Let's just put this in perspective: if a hostile nation that was actively

engaged in combat operations against the United States stated that they believe that striking the White House would be fair game, and then two drones struck the White House, I think we could assume that a) the hostile power that threatened to strike the White House was behind this attack, and b) that the United States would be fully justified in holding those who perpetrated such an attack to full account," says former US Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter.

Sooner or later, he said, Russia will complete its investigation and determine with certainty who was responsible for the drone attack – including what kind of UAVs were used, what kinds of guidance systems were on board, etc.

"But in the meantime I think it's safe to state with

near certainty that Ukraine or Ukrainian proxies were behind this attack and that it was carried out with the full knowledge and permission of the Ukrainian government. Which means the Ukrainian government is now a legitimate target for any Russian retaliation," Ritter said.

Ritter suspects Washington had prior knowledge of the attack, either approving it directly or knowing about it and making no effort to prevent it from taking place.

He dismissed any suggestion that the escalation and provocation may be a sign of President Zelensky "going rogue," doing something illogical or against the wishes of Kiev's Western patrons.

"Zelensky hasn't gone rogue. Zelensky is trying to perpetrate an escalation of this crisis to break Russia

out of the current comfort zone it enjoys in terms of its military supremacy, to redefine this conflict with the potential of either getting more equipment, such as F-16 fighters, or getting active NATO involvement. Either way, Ukraine understands that unless something happens, it's going to lose this conflict," Ritter stressed.

As for the Biden administration's behavior, Ritter noted that US policy throughout the Ukraine crisis has consistently been about "escalating" the conflict, "expanding this conflict, dragging this conflict out because ultimately, their stated objective is the strategic defeat of Russia. And with that comes the infliction of so much pain on Russia and the Russian military that Russia would never again seek to do something like the invasion

of Ukraine, the initiation of the special military operation in February of 2022."

As evidence, Ritter pointed to the \$300 million in additional direct American military aid to Kiev announced by Washington just this week, designed to facilitate a Ukrainian spring offensive, whose ultimate goal is to bring "pain and suffering to Russia and hopefully achieve the strategic defeat of Russia."

"We'll find out if this is a gross miscalculation, because again we have to come back to what started this: two drones hit the Kremlin, and I can guarantee you if two drones hit the White House, the people who perpetrated that attack would cease to exist. That's probably the future of Zelensky's government," Ritter summed up.

Sputnik

Sudan: Popular movement demands civilian rule

by John Catalinotto

Reports from Sudan's largest seaport, Port Sudan, located on the Red Sea, describe a chaotic scene of thousands of migrant workers and their families attempting to leave the country in order to escape a conflict between two military factions fighting for control of the government.

The corporate media in Europe and the United States confine their coverage to describing the suffering of civilians and the numbers killed. Their analysis is limited to dissecting the personalities of the two generals commanding the two opposing military forces: Gen. Abdelfattah al-Burhan, who commands the army, and his one-time ally and deputy, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), who commands the Rapid Forces Militia.

These analyses omit the role of the major imperialist powers in the

region and their local client states. Involved up to their necks are US imperialism and its junior partner Britain, which was once the colonial power in Sudan, plus Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While these states, known as "the quad," claim to be promoting negotiations to end the fighting, they all have economic and geopolitical interests in who runs Sudan.

The capitalist media also make sure to omit the very active role played in the last five years by popular civilian movements, which represent the majority of the people of Sudan. It was this popular movement, in which Sudan's Communist Party played a leading role, that in 2018 deposed the military government which had run Sudan for decades. At the time, Washington manoeuvred to keep the civilians out of power.

Even after its 2011 split into two countries – Sudan and South Sudan – Sudan alone is still the third-

largest country in Africa by area and has a population of 48 million. Washington promoted the split, which left South Sudan occupying most of what had been Sudan's oil reserves. The US aimed to control the south, especially to keep its oil from being traded with China.

Sudan has ample arable land and access to water and is the world's third-greatest producer of gold. Sudan borders on seven other African countries and its long coast on the Red Sea faces Saudi Arabia.

Washington, along with others in the quad, has staked out a position of promoting negotiations, taking advantage of the chaos and misery caused by the fighting. This position hides US imperialism's interest in controlling the resources of Sudan and keeping any potential rivals out – especially Russia and China.

Washington has been extending its intervention, first using its military

to extract its diplomatic personnel from the embassy in the capital, Khartoum, and then arranging bus transport for some of the 18,000 US citizens who were in Sudan on 15 April when the fighting broke out. While this has the appearance of rescuing civilians from a nasty war, it allows Washington to put its most powerful face forward: the military might of the Pentagon.

A united popular movement, which overthrew the military regime in 2018 and has opposed the new military coup that took over in October 2021, is continuing to mobilise, while faced with the bloodshed caused by the two warring armed forces. Here are excerpts from its April 19 statement, signed by 42 organisations:

"We, in the resistance committees and democratic political, civil, and professional forces, hereby declare that our country has slid into the abyss of total war, in which generals use

their weapons to eliminate everything in their path, and excessive violence has been used by the regime forces as a tool to settle the disputes and conflicts over power. This is contrary to the rules of democratic transition and peaceful power-sharing.

"Despite our differences in political views, we are completely united in our stance against the war and its continuation, and in our opposition to the return of the remnants of the previous regime to the political scene.

"We call for an immediate cessation of the war and the silencing of the clamor of guns, and we reject any results of the war, no matter what they may be. We emphasize the necessity of unity among the forces of the revolution in the face of the schemes of the remnants, those who are striving to regain control of the country, even if it means tearing it apart. We assure them that their efforts will fail, and they

will never return to power, as the glorious December revolution is still alive and burning.

"In this regard, we intend to agree on a joint mechanism to monitor developments, coordinate positions, and confront anything that threatens the security and safety of our country and its citizens. We hold the warring parties fully responsible for any violation of human rights.

"We should mobilise to declare a comprehensive political strike and civil disobedience, which is the duty of the moment that we must all rally around, and not allow speeches of sedition, fragmentation, and hateful rhetoric to tear this country apart, and to undermine its unity, sovereignty, safety, and the dignity of its people."

Workers World (USA)

Syria returns to the Arab League

by Fan Anqi

Arab League member states have agreed to reinstate Syria's membership following a series of progressive steps towards reconciliation amidst the waning influence of the USA in the Middle East.

After having its membership revoked in 2011, Syria's decade of regional isolation has been effectively ended in defiance of US warnings as the Arab League voted for the country's return into the 22-nation bloc in Cairo ahead of the heads of state summit later in the month.

The League also agreed to form a committee comprising Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt and the league's secretary-general to continue "direct dialogue with the Syrian government to reach a comprehensive solution to the Syrian crisis".

Mohammed Hasanein Khaddam, Syrian Ambassador to China, said that Syria, as a founding member of the Arab League, has closely followed the positive developments leading to the decision to reinstate it, and that Syria, as always, welcomes all efforts aimed at joint Arab co-operation that will serve the stability, security and prosperity of the region and its people.

positive development

"This positive development is the result of regional developments that reflects the global atmosphere initiated by the efforts of peace-loving and responsible global powers, including China," the ambassador said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry congratulated Syria on its return to the Arab League, saying that the decision will help Arab

countries strengthen their unity, accelerate regional development, and promote peace and stability in the Middle East, which is in the long-term interests of Arab countries, according to spokesperson Wang Wenbin.

Wang added that China has been actively engaging with all parties concerned on this matter and has always supported the unity of Arab countries and the re-joining of Syria to the bloc.

The decision comes amidst a flurry of regional normalisation of ties with Damascus in recent months, aiming to form an "Arab-led political path" in solving the crisis.

It began after the deadly earthquakes that rocked the Turkish-Syrian border and the China-brokered re-establishment of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

In March, the Syrian Foreign Minister held talks with his Egyptian counterpart in the first visit by a top Syrian diplomat to Egypt since the start of the Syrian civil war 12 years ago.

The Saudi Foreign Minister visited Damascus last month for the first time in more than a decade, as the two countries move to restore embassies and flights between them.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi also visited Damascus last week, signing memorandums of understanding for "long-term and comprehensive co-operation" in various fields, including oil, communications, civil aviation, railways and agriculture, amongst others.

Zhu Yongbiao, director of the Centre for Afghanistan Studies at Lanzhou University, regarded the decision as a "landmark event" because it is rare for the Arab world to reach a

consensus on the Syria issue, which is complex and has long been a significant divide created by the USA within the Islamic world.

China's role in this process has been exemplary and leading, said Zhu. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, he said, China has taken the initiative to mediate between conflicting parties, and this will have a guiding effect on other members of the Council and boost confidence in the Middle East reconciliation process.

Furthermore, China has taken a number of practical steps both in diplomacy and economic co-operation that have demonstrated its willingness and competence in contributing to regional peace rather than merely paying lip service, observers noted.

The Arab League de-

cision to disregard US reservations reflects America's waning influence in the oil-exporting region and a growing willingness amongst allies to forge their own political path.

The Arabs have become more aware of the USA's strategic intentions behind its sowing of discord and creating chaos in the Islamic world. They've come to realise that the USA does not truly want to see unity but only divides to better serve its own interests. They have also become rivals in areas such as energy.

These factors, along with the USA's irresponsible behaviour in events such as the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan and provoking confrontation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have led to the decline of US influence.

Global Times

The pandemic is over

by María Josefina Arce

The world is no longer in a health emergency due to COVID19. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has decided to lift the measure because, although COVID19 is still present, there has been a downwards trend in the number of infections and deaths over the last year. The WHO says that it will continue to monitor the behaviour and development of COVID19, whilst calling for continued vigilance.

For three long years the coronavirus affected 765 million people worldwide. The death toll officially stands at seven million but according to the WHO it could actually be at least 20 million.

The disease paralysed the world, affecting production, trade and tourism, a source of important income for

many nations. The complex economic situation generated by its heavy impact led to an increase in poverty, hunger, precariousness in the labour market and growing inequalities.

cracks in healthcare

The pandemic exposed the cracks in healthcare systems, which in many countries collapsed in the face of the avalanche of cases and the lack of supplies such as oxygen to care for the sick.

But it also showed a selfish world, where the richest have hoarded medicines and vaccines, to the detriment of the poorest nations, a fact that is not exclusive to immunisations against COVID19.

The less-developed states are constantly struggling to gain access to immunogens against certain vaccine-preventable diseases.

In this unequal distribution, Africa was once again the great forgotten country. In 2021, barely 10 per cent of the population had been vaccinated.

The COVAX mechanism, created by the WHO for equitable distribution, did not meet expectations. Its action was limited by the most developed countries, which bought from the pharmaceutical companies sufficient doses to immunise their populations several times over.

The pandemic showed once again the need to act together, to join forces in solidarity to face common challenges that put humanity at risk.

Against this backdrop, the WHO called for much-needed changes in the global vaccine market to save lives, prevent diseases and prepare for future crises.

In the midst of this situation, the solidarity and co-operation developed by regional blocs such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America- People's Treaty and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which joined forces and supported each other with supplies, health personnel and vaccines, stands out.

Radio Havana Cuba

Israeli terror on West Bank

by Ed Newman

An Israeli settler has fatally shot a young Palestinian execution-style in the northern part of the occupied territories, only hours after the regime's forces shot and killed two Palestinian youths in the occupied West Bank. Local sources said late on Saturday that the incident took place near the village of Sandala, south of the city of Nazareth.

The Palestinian youth was 20-year-old Diyar Omari from the village of Sandala, which is located in the northern part of the occupied territories.

Online footage of the

killing shows an Israeli settler engaging in a fight with Omari. As the Palestinian youth returned to his car, the Israeli settler pulled out his pistol and fired live shots directly at the young man whilst he was inside his own car, killing him on the spot.

Following the killing, dozens of Palestinians staged a protest rally, chanting slogans in condemnation of the execution of the Palestinian youth whilst the Gaza Strip-based Hamas resistance movement warned that "our heroic people will not let the crimes of the occupation and its settlers go unpunished".

Hamas said Israel's crimes will only make Palestinian people "intensify their resistance... and avenge the blood of martyr Omari, adding: "The blood of our people

is not cheap, and the enemy will pay the price."

Earlier on Saturday, Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians during a raid on a refugee camp in the northern part of the West Bank. The new fatality has increased the total number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and settlers since the beginning of this year to over 110.

The martyrs were both 22 years of age and died of bullet wounds to their chest, neck and abdomen, the Palestinian Health Ministry reported.

The situation is tense across the occupied territories as well as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank following the recent death in Israeli custody of Khader Adnan, a senior leader of the Islamic Jihad movement, which is based in the Gaza Strip.

Thousands of Palestinians have been holding demonstrations in condemnation of the Israeli regime's ill-treatment of Adnan, who died of deteriorating health conditions whilst staging a drawn-out hunger strike in protest at his detention.

Radio Havana Cuba

