

# RUSSIA CONDEMNNS UK'S DRIVE TO NUCLEAR WAR

by our Eastern European  
Affairs correspondent

Russia has condemned the UK's decision to send depleted uranium (DU) shells to Ukraine, saying the move marks an "all-out escalation" after the British Ministry of Defence confirmed the radioactive weapons were already in Kiev's hands. The Russians say they now control over 90 per cent of Bakhmut and the Wagner forces say that the numbers of Ukrainian deserters is on the up and up as the Russian mop up operation enters its final stage on the front-line city of the Donbas.

More and more Ukrainian soldiers are giving up the fight. According to the Wagner Group, they are dropping their arms and running away after being told to fight to the death in Bakhmut. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the founder of the Russian 'foreign legion' that offers convicts pardons in return for six months service in the Donbas, says "revolts have begun among the servicemen of the Ukrainian armed forces in Chasov Yar and Konstantinovka. They are dropping their arms, rising and leaving".

Meanwhile Brazilian president Lula da Silva has renewed his call for an end to the fighting during top-level talks with the Portuguese leadership in Lisbon last weekend.

Lula said that it was necessary to "choose a third way" to build peace for the conflict in Ukraine. "I don't want to please anyone. I want to build a way to bring the two (Russia and Ukraine) to the table," he said.

In a joint declaration, Lula and Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa stressed their commitment to international law, the UN Charter, and peaceful resolutions of conflicts. They said Portugal and Brazil support the full functioning of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations, and signed by Russia and Ukraine in July 2022 to establish a maritime humanitarian corridor for grain and fertiliser export from the two countries.

At the United Nations, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov wrapped up his month-long presidency of the Security Council with a call to move the world forum's headquarters from New York to a neutral city in the Global South following the refusal of the USA to issue visas to accredited Russian journalists to cover their country's presidency of the UN Security Council.

Last week the Sunak government confirmed that the UK has already started delivering DU ammunition for the Challenger 2 tanks Britain is shipping to Ukraine and that no attempt would be made to track where the weapons are used.

Depleted uranium is the main by-product of uranium enrichment and it is a chemically and radiologically toxic heavy metal. This dense metal is used in munitions for its penetrating ability and as a protective material in armoured vehicles. Air, soil, water and vegetation could potentially be contaminated and affected by its residues.

The Russians have



• Sergei Lavrov

denounced the UK for "absolute recklessness, irresponsibility and impunity" in supplying these DU shells to the Zelensky regime that, they say, are likely to "cause irreparable harm" to the health of Ukrainians and inflict "tremendous economic damage to the agro-industrial complex" in the region.

The Kremlin said that: "It has by now become self-evident that the West intends this country to become not only an anti-Russian military 'shooting range', but also a radioactive landfill – with all the ensuing grave consequences for the health of local residents and the environment in the region."

Russia's envoy to Britain, Ambassador Andrei Kelin, warned that DU munitions will be a "terrible thing... for the agriculture and for the people" of Ukraine, saying radioactive residue could contaminate the country's water and soil "for at least six generations".

## FUND

**This week's postbag brought in £651 for the fighting fund pushing the needle up to £1,961. We now need £1,535 to hit our target for April. Many thanks to the Guernsey supporter who gave us £50 – a donation matched by a regular supporter of our efforts in Essex. And many thanks to all who have increased their direct debits over the past week or so.**

The fund is the life-blood of our paper – still the only communist weekly in Britain. We need to keep our suppliers happy to keep our presses rolling. And 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. Another world is possible. We see it in the hopes and dreams of working people all around the world. We see it being built in People's China, Cuba, Democratic Korea, Laos and Vietnam. And we see it here in the wave of strikes and protests sweeping across the country. We are part of that struggle. We must keep up the fight.

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

Immigration..p2

Funerals..p3

China..p6

France..p12

# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Defend Diane Abbott!

**Rising prices and soaring inflation. Doctors, teachers and railway workers on strike for higher pay. Tens of thousands of young people marching through London to demand action on climate change. Yet for Sir Keir Starmer, top of the agenda is the suspension of Diane Abbott from the Parliamentary Labour Party for some ill-chosen words on racism that she subsequently retracted.**

The veteran black Labour MP perhaps unwisely sent a letter to the *Observer* that some claimed down-played the Holocaust or was even anti-Semitic. Starmer certainly thinks so.

In fact all that her letter in the *Observer* said was “Tomiwa Owolade claims that Irish, Jewish and Traveller people all suffer from ‘racism’ (‘Racism in Britain is not a black and white issue. It’s far more complicated’, Comment). They undoubtedly experience prejudice. This is similar to racism and the two words are often used as if they are interchangeable.

“It is true that many types of white people with points of difference, such as redheads, can experience this prejudice. But they are not all their lives subject to racism. In pre-civil rights America, Irish people, Jewish people and Travellers were not required to sit at the back of the bus. In apartheid South Africa, these groups were allowed to vote. And at the height of slavery, there were no white-seeming people manacled on the slave ships.”

There’s confusion between “prejudice” and “racism” and silly talk about “redheads” whilst any reference to the “prejudice” against Jewish people is incomplete without reference to the Holocaust.

Prejudice and racism are, of course, not quite the same. But one often leads to the other. Adolf Hitler hated Jews but he didn’t talk about extermination during the Nazi rise to power in Germany after the First World War. But there’s a certain inevitability once you establish the creed of the “master race” and state that Jews were “sub-human” enemies of the entire human race.

Yes, Diane Abbott’s letter is insensitive, crass and historically wrong. But it’s certainly not anti-Semitic.

The left social-democratic Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL) network points out: “No individual has suffered more from racism over her 40 years as an MP than Abbott and to even think of characterising her as racist is grotesque political chicanery.”

Or as Caribbean Labour Solidarity rightly says: “Whether you agree with the formulation of Diane’s letter...or not, we must be clear that this is not the real issue at stake here. She has been suspended from the Labour Party for being a socialist who opposes the class-collaborationist position of the Starmer leadership. We may wish to discuss with Diane the terms in which we discuss the nature of racism, we do not doubt her commitment to the struggle against racism in all its manifestations. We cannot say the same about Keir Starmer. She has apologised and withdrawn the statement. Let that be the end of the matter. We demand that she be reinstated forthwith.”

Starmer & Co now seems determined to purge Labour of all the remaining Corbynistas, including the tiny band of Labour MPs who still support the former Labour leader in the House of Commons. But Starmer should beware. Diane Abbott is a highly respected London MP. Kicking her out of the Labour Party will cost Starmer votes – not just in her north London constituency and not just amongst the Black ethnic minority communities either.

# Macron’s push for peace

by Ilya Tsukanov

**The French President Emmanuel Macron is pushing to ease tension over Taiwan and peace in. But is this a genuine attempt to escape US vassalage or just a PR stunt?**

The French president made a series of blunt statements relating to Paris’s relationship vis-à-vis Beijing and Washington in April, sparking a debate about whether his country is looking to leave the USA’s orbit in favour of a more independent foreign policy. But we shouldn’t hold our collective breath, says geopolitical analyst Jeff J Brown.

Macron is reportedly hoping to work with China on a ‘secret plan’ to bring the crisis in Ukraine to a halt and get Moscow and Kiev to sit down at the negotiating table by the summer. According to media reports, the plan is being worked on by senior Macron foreign policy advisor Emmanuel Bonne and Wang Yi, China’s top diplomat.

The details of Macron’s plan are murky, apart from a line about the need to provide Kiev with “long-term security guarantees”, including by China.

Beijing has been clear about its own vision for ending the Ukrainian conflict, issuing a 12-point peace plan in February centred around the need for the conflicting parties to abandon the “Cold War mentality” and recognise that “the security of a country should not be pursued at the expense of others”, including via the expansion of exclusive military alliances.

Macron’s role in this equation, and what alterations to the Chinese formula he may hope to bring, remains unclear.

The reported French push to secure China-backed peace talks does, however, seem to be in line with the French leader’s string of independence-minded statements following his 5–8<sup>th</sup> April visit to Beijing for talks with President Xi and other senior Chinese officials.

Macron has taken heavy flak from politicians in Washington and Paris’s allies in Europe after urging the EU not to allow itself to be sucked into the confrontation between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan, and asking what interest the EU would have in adapting the confrontation-minded “American rhythm” on the issue.

After the backlash, Macron doubled down, saying that “being an ally” to Washington “does not

mean being a vassal...does not mean that we don’t have the right to think for ourselves”. France, he said, “supports the One China policy and the search for a peaceful resolution” to Taiwan tensions and should not be “followers” of Washington’s “agenda”.

The domestic political context and the increasingly visible shifting of political and economic power away from Washington towards Asia may help explain Macron’s unusual bluntness. On the one hand, some observers suggest, the French leader may be seeking to shore up a reputation of an independence-minded, Charles de Gaulle-style statesman to soothe raging protests in France over his government’s deeply unpopular pension reform agenda.

On the other, Macron’s rogue remarks may hint at lingering resentment towards Washington and London over the surprise announcement by Australia, the UK and the USA in 2021 on the creation of the AUKUS security pact, which bamboozled Paris out of a \$66 billion contract to build submarines for Canberra and prompted barely contained fury from the French president.

Whatever Macron’s motivations, and whether he’s sincere or not, he’s not at liberty to pursue policies independent from Brussels, NATO and other Western political, military and financial institutions, says Brown, a veteran geopolitical analyst, journalist, lecturer and author of *The China Trilogy*.

“Macron got the royal treatment in Beijing when meeting with Xi Jinping. Their hours spent together privately, tête-à-tête, clearly rubbed off on

him. Thus, his comments about Taiwan, European interests and US vassalage reflect that,” says Brown, who is also the co-founder and curator of the Bioweapon Truth Commission.

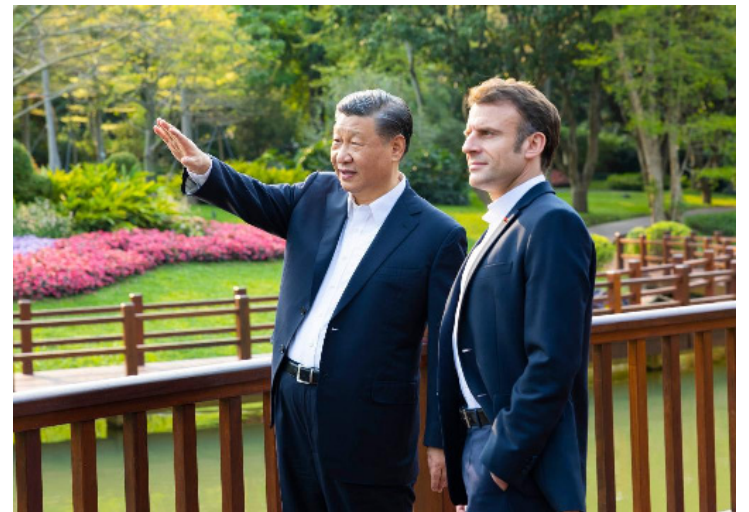
“However, to be honest, it does not really matter what Macron says,” Brown said, pointing out that under the terms of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, France and other EU members are made “subordinate to Brussels and its secretive Eurogroup, which meets monthly and decides internal and external policy for each EU country”.

“Nothing will change” as a result of Macron’s comments, he argues, because: “The neo-liberal Eurogroup works hand-in-hand with the City of London/Bank of England, Wall Street/US Federal Reserve and NATO. Europe will continue to be a weak Washington vassal. No new policy, just America’s dictates as usual.”

For proof, Brown added, all one has to do is look at the delegation of French MPs that was “hurriedly sent to Taiwan” this week to assure Taipei and Washington that France’s policy remains immutable.

“Macron had his moment to play anti-Anglo-Saxon, anti-NATO Charles de Gaulle for a news cycle. He will continue to get his marching orders from Brussels and he will obey them. We are witnessing an unprecedented shift in global power, but the initiative is not coming from the G7. It is being driven by the Global Majority, starting with BRICS, SCO, CELAC and other non-imperial groups,” Brown summed up.

*Sputnik*



• Macron with Xi Jinping

## Workers' Notes

# Scottish TUC

by New Worker correspondent

**The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) recently held its 126<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at the Caird Hall in Dundee, on the banks of the beautiful silvery Tay. This event largely passed without notice in the Scottish print and broadcast media except for reports on the speeches from the Scottish Labour leader and the new First Minister, who was doubtless relieved to have a temporary distraction from his many other problems. The only exception to media indifference was the *Morning Star*, whose evening reception is for many delegates the highlight of the conference.**

I am sadly unable to inform readers about the complete results of the Congress. This is entirely the fault of the STUC who (unlike previous years) failed to provide the news about how motions fared on their website. This does not really matter very much because what is decided at the STUC does not really matter very much these days. The SNP Government will only listen to what they want to hear and ignore what they don't like, whilst the Westminster Government will not be greatly disturbed by rousing speeches deploring their actions and inactions.

As with the TUC and Labour Party, the STUC leadership make sure that any critical motions are composited to the point of meaninglessness. This is important because the STUC depends heavily on Government funding for STUC Training Limited, whose accounts are remarkably vague about where exactly most of it come from. Additionally, the SNP Government is a valued source of patronage for STUC staff past and present who sit on various quangos.

Masterly inaction is another STUC tradition, so delegates know it is best to avoid inserting any specific demands for action into their motions. This year the Tories' latest anti-union laws were deplored, as might be expected, but there will be no action organised by the STUC to back up the resolutions.

Last year the STUC cancelled a debate in favour of nuclear power as part of a "balanced energy policy" and another on the future of North Sea oil and

gas industries because taking a stand in favour or against would cause too many grumbles on the losing sides.

The STUC (which is separate from the TUC) has a total affiliated membership 548,419 precisely, from 42 trade unions, which is a small increase from last year's figure of 545,840. This suggests that the present strike wave has not boosted membership very much; but it will be best to see what next year's figures are to measure the impact of recent events. There are also 20 local trades union councils affiliated to the STUC, of which 14 made it to Dundee. The latter are largely small and kept going by retired activists rather than the powerful organisations that formed the STUC in 1897.

There were about 300 delegates at Dundee. They range from the single delegate representing the last 25 surviving members of the National Union of Mineworkers, to 37 delegates from Unite the Union representing 130,500 members, which just puts them ahead of the 129,508 Unison members. Curiously, there are only 347 Scottish members of the Bakers union BFAWU, but 981 members of the British Dietetic Association. A recent planning application for new branch of McDonalds in this correspondent's home town claimed it would bring 150 jobs, so it suggests that there is some room for increasing union density.

There are some exotica at the STUC. It was surprising to discover the existence of the Society of Scottish Playwrights (which did not make it to Dundee to capture the drama of the

occasion), whose 163 members will be anxious for their proper share of Creative Scotland grants in competition against the 2,589 members of actors' union Equity.

Keeping the Scottish workforce on its feet are the 1,243 members of the Royal College of Podiatry. The Royal College of Midwives has 3,992 Scottish members, and the Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association 160 members.

It is nice to know that anyone arrested on the picket line could be later looked after by some of the 3,517 members of the Prison Officers Association.

Less vital roles are played by the 324 members of the National Association of Racing Staff and the 1,440 strong Professional Footballers Association.

There is no separate union for funeral workers.

A century of mergers means that only four STUC affiliates are exclusively Scottish, only two of which are serious players, both in the education sector: the Educational Institute of Scotland and its rival the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association.

As in the rest of the UK, unions are stronger in the public sector than the private sector.

### Speeches and Big Decisions

General Secretary Roz Foyer boasted that STUC unions had won £2.1 billion as a result of recent strike action in local government, the NHS and schools, and described striking workers as superheroes.

First Minister Humza Yousaf said he would not implement the Tories Minimum Service Levels

Bill – but this might be because his tenure in office might not be all that long. In any case, his writ does not apply to private sector employers.

Whilst this earned him a round of applause, delegates were less impressed with the SNP's flagship plans to introduce a National Care Service, which the new SNP leader vaguely indicated he would drastically amend. The STUC made the same point last year, but the message has yet to sink in with the SNP. Unions still suspect it will remove control of social services from councils to a new body that will do nothing but manage external contracts.

Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar won his brownie points by saying he would support striking workers, even making the bold claim that: "I expect my shadow cabinet, my MSPs and many MPs to join the front line, to join picket lines." Let's hope Sir Keir Starmer doesn't notice.

The STUC General Council's policy on Ukraine was one of continuing to supply arms to the puppet regime and was accepted by delegates (Unite and GMB in particular) despite a counter-motion. On another military related matter, it voted to oppose the anti-China AUKUS agreement over building nuclear submarines, perhaps because none are actually built in Scotland. This came about despite opposition from Unite and GMB, who normally get their way on such matters, but it is unlikely the Minister of Defence will take any notice of the STUC's opposition.

## USDAW in Conference

by New Worker correspondent

**The annual conference of the shop-workers' union USDAW kicked off in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool this week. USDAW is the third largest union in Britain behind Unite and Unison, with over 350,000 members. That sounds impressive until one remembers that it organises in a sector with some three million workers in over 300,000 businesses. A third of its members work for Tesco, where they secured an exclusive recognition agreement in 2016. But even there it has a density of about half the workforce and there are grumbles that it has become something of a yellow company union.**

USDAW has made other "partnership" agreements with other supermarket chains such as Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and the Co-op (who can hardly refuse).

It has made repeated and unsuccessful efforts to get recognised at Marks & Spencer, where it gets politely brushed off.

It is telling that the present dispute at the more brutal Amazon warehouse in Coventry is being carried out by the GMB union.

Recently Sharon Graham, General Secretary of Unite deplored that fact that Tesco,

*continued on page 4...*



...continued from page 3

which has a 27 per cent market share, made a profit of £2 billion and paid out over £700 million in dividends, saying: "Tesco's profits are another example of excessive profiteering fired up by astonishing corporate greed. It's this rampant profiteering which is driving inflation, and cranking up the cost-of-living crisis for workers and their families.

"How can it be that at a time when millions are struggling to feed their families Britain's biggest supermarket is profiteering as never before. What sort of country have we become? Frankly, the latest results are obscene."

That is not the sort of language that you get from USDAW. Even rival chains such as Iceland take a tougher line. Their former boss told the *Grocery Gazette* that: "There is enough to suggest some profiteering is going on and who is paying the price for that? The customer."

USDAW is one of the unions supporting the *Morning Star*. They have a seat on the Management committee and gave out free copies to conference delegates. It displays little interest, however, in left-wing politics. Perhaps it supports the *Morning Star* as an outlet for its HQ press releases and to ensure that the Editor does not print any unflattering comments. One unsurprising outcome of the conference was that it endorsed Sir Keir Starmer's ban on Jeremy Corbyn from standing as a Labour candidate.

Whilst it is the main union for actual shop-workers it also has rivals in the form of Unite and GMB who organise drivers and warehouse workers who are either directly employed by the

huge supermarket chains or work for contractors. This means that USDAW does not have a great deal of clout with supermarkets as a whole and there is often a lack of solidarity between shop-workers and those in warehouses. Recent court cases launched by USDAW that have argued for equal pay for largely female shop workers compared with largely male warehouse workers have not resulted in mass demonstrations of support on the warehouse floor.

Although lorry drivers' wages increased due to the upsurge in home deliveries during the pandemic and beyond, this has not filtered down to the shop floor. In some highly profitable chains the basic hourly rates are just above the official minimum. Demands for higher minimum wages (USDAW's present demand is for £12 per hour as a step towards £15) and an end to zero-hour contracts have been a constant theme of many annual conferences, and this year was no exception.

This year there was a rather undignified display of forelock tugging when delegates passed a motion to demand a new Bank Holiday. That is all very well, but they wanted one on the 8<sup>th</sup> September to commemorate the death of the late Queen who long reigned over us.

Whilst the demand for more holidays is a perfectly legitimate union issue, choosing such a date says much about USDAW.

If they want a holiday in September it should be the 3<sup>rd</sup>, which commemorates the passing of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of the Republic of England, in 1658. Instead, General Secretary Paddy Lillis argued for the 8<sup>th</sup> by saying:

capitalist greed are riding high.

He warned: "Now is not the time for a quiet life", and: "It is time to hold firm to the path of radical reform."

Blair claimed he was holding to the values that underpinned the state welfare of the 1945 Labour government.

But he criticised the centralised "top-down, one-size-fits-all, command and control" approach in favour of one that gives "empowerment" and "choice" to "consumers".

This implies that sick patients and schoolchildren somehow have the option of browsing around like customers to pick and choose their treatment or education.

Blair has said that "old Labour die-hards" must move on from a "hopeless defence" of the "post-1945 big state".

Left Labour MP Alan Simpson pointed out: "This is not the spirit that will save the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – it is closer to the spirit of Margaret Thatcher."

One of the key elements of

"It would be appropriate if one of these additional days [the TUC has a long-standing policy for four extra bank holidays] was set aside to remember the anniversary of the Queen's death. Bank holidays are not only about rest and relaxation. They are also an opportunity to celebrate our culture and traditions. Many bank holidays have historical and cultural significance. This holiday would be a recognition of the unique place the Queen holds in our history." His MBE should be in the post. A slight problem is that shopping is one of the main activities associated with bank holidays, which means that shop workers will still find themselves at work. One would have thought that securing improved holiday time would be a better option.

For many shop-workers the problem is of irregular hours. After official Sunday opening came into being in the late 1990s shift payments speedily became a thing of the past. Longer opening hours and out-of-town retail parks mean that workers have become dependent on late night and early morning public transport, which is often unreliable. In this matter USDAW should take a leaf out of Unite's book, who have secured in some places an obligation for pubs to provide late-night taxis.

#### disagreeable customers

A major problem facing USDAW members is the customers who sometimes do not always behave as correctly as one might expect. Schoolkids demanding with menaces six-packs of super strong lager or 'customers' making a speedy departure without visiting the checkout are a common fact of life. Verbal abuse and physical violence from such types are all

too common, as can be seen in the union's annual {Freedom from Fear} survey.

The latest one surveyed 7,755 workers face-to-face throughout 2022. This reveals that since the last pre-pandemic year of 2019 things have worsened. More than 70 per cent of respondents reported verbal abuse; 49 per cent receiving threats of violence, with eight per cent actually being assaulted. Women received the worst of verbal abuse but men were more likely to be assaulted.

Whereas arguments about queues and face masks were a feature of pandemic years, the latest survey shows a return to traditional patterns of disputes over age-related sales, with arguments over self-service check-outs causing grief. The introduction of the latter is another source of grief as it has allowed bosses to reduce staff numbers, thus putting more of a burden on those remaining.

The cost-of-living crisis has led to a depressing number of customers blaming shop-workers for price rises. A side effect of high inflation has been an increasing in shoplifting-related incidents. The survey saw workers call for more security staff instead of leaving it to retail workers. They complain that managers too often cave in to annoying customers, which only encourages them.

The union has demanded that a change in the law about abuse is essential. This has been done in Scotland, which makes abuse of shop workers a specific offence, but that is a comparatively small

legal technicality as it has always been an offence to swear or assault people whether it takes place in the street, hospital, church or shop.

USDAW is also demanding that customers making age-related purchases should be responsible for supplying their own ID and not leaving it for staff to decide in doubtful cases, which in theory leaves them open to prosecution if they get it wrong.

A reminder of just how insecure the sector can be came in the middle of the conference from the announcement that online grocery company firm Ocado were planning to close their oldest automated warehouse at the Hatfield site in Hertfordshire and transfer its function to Luton. The response of USDAW was, to say the least, typically pragmatic: "Our priorities are to save as many jobs as possible, seek redeployment opportunities if the closure goes ahead and get the best deal available for staff affected." One should not expect any critiques of capitalism from USDAW.

Although it is easy for to make a left-wing critique of USDAW, we should not forget that that retail is a very difficult sector to organise. More than most unions, it has a sudden influx of members when stores are closing. Shelf-stacking does not take long to master, which means discontented workers are easy to replace.



by New Worker correspondent

Teachers marched for higher pay in Chichester last week. Members of the National Education Union (NEU) have voted in overwhelming numbers to take strike action for a fully funded, above-inflation pay rise.

The ballot of teacher, support staff and leader members in 23,400 schools throughout England and Wales was the largest vote for strike action achieved by any union ever in the UK. Of teachers in England,

90.44 per cent of members taking part in the ballot voted YES to taking industrial action on a turnout of 53.27 per cent.

Teachers in Wales voted by 92 per cent for strike action on a turnout of 58.07 per cent. Support staff in Wales voted 88 per cent for strike action on a turnout of 51.30 per cent. In England, a ballot result of support staff saw 84 per cent of members vote YES on a turnout of 46.46 per cent. This result, despite being hugely in favour of action, just missed the Government's restrictive thresholds.

## 20 years ago this week in the New Worker

New Worker 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

**PRIME Minister Tony Blair last week threw down the gauntlet to the trade union movement and his own party with a declaration that he intends to press on as fast as possible with his "reforms" (gradual privatisation) of public services.**

He is currently enjoying a period of favour with most of the press after the brutal invasion and conquest of Iraq.

He is very pleased with himself over the result and intends to capitalise at home on the fact that, in the international arena, imperialism and

# Saving Lives: A Doctor in the Donbas

by Ekaterina Blinova

Russian trauma surgeon Boris Gurkin took a two-week break from work to save lives in the Donbas conflict zone in early August 2022. In March 2023, he returned to the embattled region.

"I have combat experience and I work in an emergency hospital and I know what problems arise with a large number of wounded people," says Gurkin.

"I understand that they are in constant need of manpower – specialists and assistants. I am a traumatologist and I decided that I should definitely participate and help in any way I can. And if possible to involve other doctors too. That is, to show by example that it is really necessary, that it is useful, and so on."

Dr Gurkin is a trauma surgeon and the chief physician of the emergency hospital in Novochoerkassk in Russia's Rostov region. His patients are those injured in car accidents and falls, or who suffer from serious household injuries. He is also a major in the army medical service reserve, who has performed hundreds of surgical operations in different hotspots.

Having arrived in Donbas in August 2022, he worked in hospitals on the territory of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) not far from the front line. In 14 days, he performed

a whopping 117 operations, 8–9 per day on average, saving over 100 lives. In March 2023, Dr Gurkin decided to go to Lugansk again.

"I have made this trip as part of the *We are together* project," he said. "We had prepared and acquired certain humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, external fixation devices for operations, dressings, crutches, sleeping bags, surgical gloves. I took all these. Also a few people who wished to participate in helping went with me. And so we all did the same together. Local Cossacks escorted us so that we arrived without problems to medical institutions."

Dr Gurkin revealed that they worked in civilian medical institutions but treated both military and civilian patients. He and his colleagues worked and lived there on the territory of hospitals. They performed surgeries, receiving from 7–20 patients per day and conducting the same number of surgeries.

He noted that his experience as an army doctor came in handy: "I know the peculiarities of the treatment of gunshot wounds. Surgeons do not often see such injuries in ordinary life. I've seen all of this. I served in a special detachment in the first and second Chechen Wars in the district military hospital."

He saw many patients at that time. "We often provided



• Gurkin team -- saving lives in the Donbas

first aid near combat zones, so I know how and where to evacuate [patients], where to start, how to treat gunshot wounds. Naturally, I am familiar with the specifics of providing medical care in combat conditions and the specifics of evacuation.

"There are many nuances of difference compared with the work of a conventional medical institution. There would often be shelling when I was conducting an operation. This happened all the time. So you need to be

ready to evacuate to a safe place, evacuate both yourself and the wounded, and continue the work in proper conditions."

Injuries treated by Dr Gurkin were mostly caused by mines, bullets and artillery shells. "But, of course, most of all [they were caused] by explosives."

"No one moaned, or whined, even though sometimes we faced hopeless cases," he added.

"Our brigade conducted 117 surgeries on the first trip. We didn't do a tally on the second trip. There were several of us. We worked in different teams, but I think that we also made more than 100 in total. But these were just the serious operations. We also carried out minor surgical operations. We didn't count them."

Dr Gurkin said that the people of the Donbas were highly motivated and some hastened to return to the front line even having sustained serious injuries.

"We had a patient who was about 60 years old. He is a resident of the Lugansk People's Republic. And he was hit by a mine explosion. He lost part of his leg, there were other multiple wounds. His children also participated in the conflict, both a daughter and a son. And he waited until he recovered and was ready to go there almost immediately to be with them."

There are injuries that would never let one return to the front, however. "These are severe injuries to the joints, when their functions are not restored, or a limb has to be amputated."

He pointed out that regardless of suffering an eight-year-long war that the Kiev regime waged

against the people of Lugansk, they remained strong, courageous and kind-hearted.

"I have never met such sincere, kind and compassionate people," he said. "I communicate with many people from there and keep in touch with them. I have maintained warm relations with doctors from Donbas, we exchange experiences. Before going there, I asked them what they needed, where they needed help, what to bring. And I have met a number of doctors from other parts of Russia there. These were doctors from Moscow, from St Petersburg, from Siberia, from Krasnodar.

"I see everyone, I communicate with everyone, and I really like what unites us. I hope that I will see them periodically at some of our common events, conferences, and maybe even in some kind of combat conditions if necessary."

Last year Dr Gurkin won a contest within the framework of Russia's humanitarian mission *We are together with Russia*. The special nomination was awarded for actions and initiatives of special significance in helping the people of the Donbas and other new regions of Russia. The award was given to the physician by the people he saved.

"It was unexpected for me: to get to the final and, moreover, to win," the surgeon admitted. "To be honest, my colleagues and I included my act in the nomination in order, in general, to draw attention to this issue, to this problem, which we considered to be really important at the moment. And then, when I suddenly received a letter that I



• Dr Gurkin at work

very surprising, especially as a winner against the backdrop of very serious rivals.

“Of course, this is unexpected and very honourable. I wanted to draw attention to volunteering. Manpower is always in need there. This helps save the lives of citizens, first; secondly, this helps save lives of military personnel. And the solution to this problem depends on how quickly they will return to work or to duty, respectively.

“This is a global problem, I think, and a very important one. And we all should participate, not only those wear uniforms.”

Boris Gurkin’s initiative has prompted new volunteers to follow suit.

Medical specialists from various regions of Russia called him asking what they can to help the people of the Donbas and the Russian troops fighting in the special military operation to demilitarise and de-Nazify Ukraine.

He wishes the Russian soldiers protecting our country in new Russian regions both spiritual strength and health.

“What more could a doctor ask for?” Dr Gurkin said. “They can see that we support them and, if possible, we will do everything in our power to save them in case of injury or illness. We are ready to admit them, ready to provide all the necessary assistance and support to them.”

*Sputnik*

# The Dalai Lama: More than just a tongue-sucking scandal

**The Dalai Lama has found himself involved in yet another scandal. A widely circulated video on the internet shows the Dalai Lama asking a young boy to suck his tongue in a disgusting manner during an event. The young boy requested a hug, and after hugging and touching foreheads, the Dalai Lama did not let go of the boy but continued to hold him, clearly saying to the boy: “Suck my tongue.” He then extended his tongue and moved his head forward. The boy initially seemed hesitant but did it anyway.**

According to media reports, the video was taken on 28<sup>th</sup> February in a suburb of Dharamshala city in northern India. After the video went viral on social media and sparked outrage, the Dalai Lama’s office in Dharamshala was forced to issue an official apology. The apology did not mention the vulgar language used by the Dalai Lama, however, and even defended his behaviour, stating that “his holiness often teases people he meets in an innocent and playful way, even in public and before cameras”.

It’s time to see through the Dalai Lama’s illusive moral icon image. How can people tolerate the obscene behaviour of an old man asking a young boy to “suck my tongue” in front of the world?

But it seems the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama is likely to get away with his most recent scandal under the



protection of numerous Western media sources, which have hurriedly whitewashed the monk’s obvious impropriety toward an innocent child, an action that has led many to question the sanitised image of this so-called spiritual leader. But this line of questioning goes far beyond the monk’s public impropriety.

For a long time, the Western world and the Dalai himself have rebranded and glorified the man behind the mythical title of “spiritual leader”. Many overseas Tibetans and ordinary people in the West have been blinded, believing whatever the Dalai Lama says to represent justice, said Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative

Conference.

The Western media machine, whilst promoting Dalai Lama to the status of an icon, have been purposefully ignoring the truth that old Tibetan society was one riddled with oppression. The Dalai Lama is a separatist leader and has used his influence to instigate terrorist events in China, breaking real peace and stability in China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, according to Zhu.

## Clumsy cover-ups

The recent video showing the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama kissing a child on the lips and then asking the boy to suck his tongue at an event in India unsurprisingly shocked the world due to its disturbing and disgusting nature. In the video, the 87-year-old invites the boy onto the

stage, after which he pulled the boy’s chin, kissing him on the lips, and says “And suck my tongue”, before sticking out his tongue. The Dalai Lama then apologised after the video clip went viral.

Certain major Western media outlets have chosen to sweep the monk’s behaviour under the carpet, however. A BBC article even hinted that the Dalai Lama’s actions were linked to Tibetan culture.

“Sticking one’s tongue out can be a form of greeting in Tibet,” read the article. It explained the disturbing display as being part of ancient Tibetan traditions dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> Century.

Many other Western media outlets joined the BBC to justify his disturbing deed. An article from the *Independent* newspaper said that “sticking

out your tongue is traditionally a sign of respect or agreement and has also been used as a greeting in Tibetan culture, according to the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley”.

But these rushed cover-ups are easily disproved.

“The so-called tongue greeting in Tibetan culture is to express awe from an inferior to his superior,” says Xiao Jie, deputy director at the Institute of Contemporary Studies of the China Tibetology Research Centre.

“From the perspective of any culture in the world, the Dalai Lama’s behaviour is improper,” Xiao noted. “It is not his personal [sense of] humour either. No man would do this to a kid at a formal occasion, especially when his identity is a Buddhist monk delivering lessons. It is very frivolous.”

In response to the whitewashing campaigns to defend the Dalai Lama, some Western journalists also pointed out the absurdity of these justifications.

Talk TV presenter Julia Hartley-Brewer said in a Twitter post, “Er... since when was it funny when a powerful old man tells a young boy to ‘suck my tongue’? Why are all the men laughing? This is so creepy.”

Under a post from the *Herald Post*, a Twitter user commented: “Why share the video? The words would have been enough. You know that it is not only that it is disturbing, but...

WRONG. The system is rigged for predators. Is your media system full of predators too? Why spread CHILD abuse online?"

The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, an independent, peer network of survivors of institutional sexual abuse and their supporters, said in a statement: "We are as horrified as any viewer by the actions of the Dalai Lama. Our primary concern is with the innocent boy who was the subject of this disgusting request by a revered spiritual figure," according to a *Daily Mail* article published on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

"Additionally, it is just as disturbing to read the minimising statement released on behalf of Buddhist enlightenment," the statement continued in the article.

**Ignoring facts**

"This has been more than the Dalai Lama's personal ugly behaviour, but the fact is that he has been mentally oppressing, destroying and deceiving overseas Tibetans and believers for a long time, turning them into a part of his political power in his activities," Zhu said. "He is very good at – by using religion as a cover – maintaining his image of 'morality, holiness, and purity'."

The bygone Tibet that the Dalai Lama used to rule however, was a backward and cruel serfdom society.

Before the democratic reform in 1959, there were 197 hereditary aristocratic families, and the few top families each possessed dozens of manors and thousands of hectares of land. The family of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama owned 27 manors, 30 pastures and over 6,000 serfs. The Dalai Lama alone owned 160,000 taels (one tael is equal to 30 grams) of gold, 95 million taels of silver, over 20,000 pieces of jewellery and jade-ware, and more than 10,000 pieces of silk clothing and rare furs.

In 1959, there

were 197 hereditary aristocratic families in Tibet, with each family owning from several hundred to tens of thousands of acres of land. These aristocrats enjoyed a life of ease and luxury, ordering groups of serfs around, whilst common serfs lived in squalor and had to resort to eating rancid peas and gruel for sustenance.

In March 1959, the central government led the people in Tibet to launch the democratic reform, abolishing Tibet's feudal serfdom under a theocracy. In 2009, the regional legislature announced 28<sup>th</sup> March as a day to commemorate the emancipation of about a million serfs.

During the dark history of old Tibet, human bones and skulls were used as ornaments in Tibetan Buddhism and the lives of serfs were easily abused.

A letter from the Tibet local government department to the head of a Rabden (a theocratic and administrative organisation at a lower level) in the early 1950s contains instructions in relation to the celebration of the 14th Dalai Lama's birthday, which said that all the staff of Lower Tantric College would chant the sutra on the occasion, and that: "During the service, food will be offered to the hungry ghosts, for which a corpus of fresh intestines, two skulls, some mixed blood, and a whole human skin are urgently needed. Have these delivered without delay."

The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, who plays with politics under the guise of religion, waywardly fanned the flames of instability in the Tibet region and sought to impede the order of Tibetan Buddhism.

In 2008, for instance, he used his influence to instigate violence and secessionist activities in the region. The tragedy that occurred in Lhasa on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008 saw a dozen innocent locals either immolated, beheaded or asphyxiated, and police on patrol were assaulted. On the very



After the revolution: A new life for Tibetans

day of the riot, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama himself said he held in esteem the desires of Tibetans in what they did and would not like to let them stop.

Globally, the Dalai Lama doesn't have the purest of records. His most recent scandal is far from the first controversy the polarising figure has courted. For instance, in 2019, he was mired in a sexism scandal when he told the BBC that his future successor can be a woman but must be "very attractive". Otherwise, she would not be of much use, he said. He also made the sexist insinuation that people would prefer not to see her if she were unattractive.

According to a report of the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, in the 1960s, about 200 Tibetan infants were taken from their parents and sent to Switzerland for adoption through a Swiss businessman in collusion with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, claiming that these children were orphans. His actions violated common ethics and morality, trampled on the children's rights, and is deplorable to every person with a sense of justice.

It was also reported in the *Daily Mail* that in 2019, the Dalai Lama

received \$1 million to endorse a controversial 'sex cult' which brainwashes and brands women.

**Real nature of Dalai clique**

Regarding this scandal, Western society, especially some Western media, has shown consistent double standards. And there is a reason for that.

Xiao said that in 1980s and 1990s, Western society crafted an image around the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama as "a wise man" to fulfil people's prejudiced and ignorant observation with the "mysterious oriental world" and as a bid to heal social problems in the Western societies.

"With growing changes in the international society and strained China-US relations, the Dalai Lama's role as a political tool to contain China has become increasingly important," Xiao noted. "However, the golden period of using him to contain China has already passed, and Western society now focuses more on covering negative news about him."

Li Decheng, director of the Tibetology Research Centre, says

that it is well known that the Dalai group headed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama is a separatist political clique that represents the remnants of the feudal serf owners' class under the theocracy of old Tibet and that this secessionist clique is used by hostile international forces to undermine the development and stability of Tibetan communities in China and seeks so-called Tibetan independence.

The fundamental purpose of all the activities undertaken by the Dalai clique is to seek

to split the motherland, rather than what it has claimed to be for the "well-being of the Tibetan people", Li said.

Although the Dalai Lama and his clique often change their tactics, their real political intention has never changed. In essence, the Dalai clique is nothing more than a separatist political group that has long been engaged in secessionist and destructive activities, harming China and the interests of Chinese people, he stressed.

*Global Times*

**THE NEW WORKER**  
Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**  
4 weeks: £6; 3 months: £20;  
6 months: £30; annual: £50

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
Post code.....  
Cheque/P.O.s, made out to  
New Worker, to: NW Subs, PO Box 73,  
London SW11 2PQ.

## LETTERS

### Dear Friends

**The United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) condemns the indictment of Omali Yeshitela, chairman of the African People's Socialist Party (APSP), and other members for expressing their views on Ukraine. The indictment charges them with "conspiring to covertly sow discord in US society, spread Russian propaganda and interfere illegally in US elections". This indictment attempts to criminalise freedom of speech and discourage all who oppose US foreign policy from expressing their views.**

This attack on the APSP and on freedom of speech should also be seen in the light of other cases that the government has used to silence critics, such as that of Julian Assange, who is being prosecuted for telling the truth about US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that of Daniel Hale, who was sentenced to four years in prison for letting people know that the US drone programme in Afghanistan mainly killed innocent civilians.

These attacks are growing and indicate that we are entering a period like McCarthyism of the 1950s or the Palmer Raids of an earlier period, during which anti-war activity was outlawed.

It must also be noted that while many groups and individuals oppose US policy in Ukraine, this attack is against a Black organisation. It is racist. Perhaps the government believes that

**The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday. You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@NCP.clara.net**

Black people will get less support in the USA and they can therefore use this indictment to set a precedent for attacking all those who express dissident views.

We must join together and demand that the indictments be dropped and that freedom of speech be supported and expanded in the United States.

**The Administrative Committee  
United National Antiwar Coalition  
USA**

### Dear Comrades

On 25<sup>th</sup> April, I send this to remember the great day when the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA) took power in Portugal. What this goes to show is that an army in power is not always necessarily a mark of dictatorship. And that a civilian administration is not always a sign of democracy!

**Marie Lynam  
North London**

### Dear Comrades

**The danger of world war hangs over the continent like a threatening storm. For the stock portfolios of billionaire monopoly bosses in the Deutsche Bank and the Société Générale, the peoples of Europe shall go through the meat-grinder of war.**

The emerging war economy intensifies the robbery and destruction of oppressed peoples and nature. With even greater speed, the planet is on the brink of collapse. The next valuable raw material deposits are torn from the earth to be senselessly devoured by the war machine. The few bright spots of industrial progress and scientific breakthroughs are destroyed or turned into brutal machines of destruction. Ammunition, tanks,

artillery – the arsenals of the military are emptied and shipped east. The profit machine is humming, the share prices of the arms industry are shooting through the roof, once again the great war is to save the billionaires from their never-ending crisis. So that Møller-Mærsk retains control of the maritime trade. So that the German monopolists can grab the wheat, the black earth and the titanium deposits of the Ukraine, so that the French and German generals and managers can continue to plunder the peoples of Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe from their fortress in Brussels.

Every day that this world remains in the clutches of the exploiting class is a lost day for humanity. In our countries, this rule of the bourgeoisie means de-industrialisation, de-skilling, destruction and war against other peoples and the threat of fascism. What serves the exploiters, the German, French and also Danish, destroys the future and the life of the youth.

But Fortress Europe is built on sand. The port and steel workers of Italy, the British railway workers and the French refinery workers are already making the fortress tremble. The general strike in Greece and the struggle of the entire French people against Macron's emergency regime shows that the working class is strong. We are in the prime of our history, we can overcome defeats and gather our strength again. Imperialism is weak, the rule of the tiny clique of financial speculators and billionaires becomes more unstable the more the struggling workers in Europe move from their economic demands to their political struggles.

The peoples have no interest in paying for the predatory wars of the monopolists with their

labour or the lives of their children. The wars of the exploiters are wars against the proletariat and the liberation of the people. How long the infirmity of this last exploiting society will continue, how many more wars they can instigate, is solely a question of the working class, the peoples, the fighting youth of all countries. A question of how quickly we build our bastions, our organisations, our power to liberate humanity and build socialism.

It is we, the working youth, who will either end this war by being at the forefront of the uprising against the exploiters, or our generation will go into the horrors of the people's slaughter. Building and operating the high-tech machines, the Eurofighters, Eurohawks, Leclerc and Leopards, the logistics, the dirty work in the trenches, for all this the militarists need the workers' youth. Capitalism still has nothing to offer us but this murderer's craft. The bitter experience of our Ukrainian and Russian brothers and sisters dictates to us, as to them: Revolt against the war!

Our most important task is to find the fastest and most effective way to lead the proletarian revolution to victory and on this way to banish the danger of a third imperialist world war, which could possibly wipe out humanity.

For this, the common practical act is necessary. So that our slogan "Revolutions end wars – Peace is red" is one that the youth of our and other countries make their own!

Peoples of Europe – rise up!

**Danish Communist Youth (DKU)  
Free German Youth (FDJ)**

## *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 29 APRIL

Norwich Transformed: Radical festival, Chapel Field Road Methodist Church, Norwich NR2. Book on NR Facebook page.

### SUN 30 APRIL

Manchester Trades Union Council: May Day march and festival. Assemble 12:00, St Peter's Square, M2, for a march to Sackville Gardens for festival.

### MON 1 MAY

May Day: London: Assemble 12:00, Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. From 10:30 there is an Open Day at the Marx Memorial Library.

### MON 2 MAY - JUN

Marx Memorial Library: Trade Unions Class & Power: Eight week online course. See MML website for details

### WED 3 MAY

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Protest at Barclay's Bank. 10:00-12:00, outside the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, Broad Sanctuary, London SW1P 3EE.

### THUR 4 MAY

Ella Baker School of Organising: From Sylhet to Spitalfields: The Bengali squatters movement and organising today. 19:00-21:00. Zoom. Book on EBSO website.

### SAT 6 MAY

Republic: Protest at the return Coronation Procession from 06:00, Trafalgar Square, London

### T HURS 11 MAY

Marx Memorial Library: What Kind of Federalism? Panel Discussion lead by Pauline Bryan. 19:00, Online and onsite, Book on MML website.

### 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.

## CONTACT US...

**Post: NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.  
Phone: 07497 393263.  
New Worker National –  
www.newworker.org  
email– party@ncp.clara.net  
London District NCP –  
http://londoncommunists.blogspot.com/**

## JOIN US! For peace! justice! socialism!

I would like to join the New Communist Party....  
I would like more info about the NCP....

Name.....

Address.....

postcode.....

phone.....

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



## BOOST OUR FUND

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

COMPLETE THE BANKER'S ORDER FORM BELOW:  
The Manager.....

bank. Banks address.....

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

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

on.....

Signature.....

RETURN THIS FORM TO:

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

## Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

**“A daily horror story” was how former SNP Deputy Leader Jim Sillars described the state of his former party, but one could just as easily say that about Scottish politics as a whole in recent weeks. And it is telling although somewhat predictable that Alex Bell, one of Alex Salmond’s former speech-writers, says that Humza Yousaf, the new First Minister, needs to go “for the good of the nation”.**

We have a constant round of formerly senior SNP figures energetically denying they knew the first thing about the internal finances of the SNP. Colin Beattie, who resigned as Treasurer after his recent arrest (and release), first denied knowing anything about what is now the most famous campervan in Scotland before “clarifying” that he discovered it in the 2021 accounts.

As two of the three signatories to the disputed SNP accounts have been arrested, the final figure must be feeling a bit anxious about getting an early morning knock on the door, especially as the police have already been round her house.

Despite having had income of £58 million since 2007, the SNP could be facing bankruptcy. The infamous £107,000 loan made by the ex-CEO has not been fully repaid. Yousaf has said he will not be refunding donations to the £600,000 fund. Not having auditors means it will not be able to claim the “Short Money” that keeps Westminster politicians in research assistants.

The new Westminster leader, Stephen Flynn, has accused his predecessor Ian Blackford of misleading him about the party not having any auditors, a suggestion Blackford denies. The then Deputy Leader has also claimed he was kept in the dark.

All in all it is a right old mess. Even if the accused people are innocent of any wrong doing, it only highlights just how dozy they are and it hardly inspires confidence amongst undecided voters about their ability to run the country.

When its leader is reduced to saying “I don’t believe the SNP is operat-

ing criminally” it doesn’t really matter whether it is strictly true or not to anyone but the most fanatical SNP member. For instance, it was revealed that the former Westminster SNP leader Angus Robertson received a secret extra £33,000 top-up to his salary that may or may not be a criminal offence, but it does not look good.

On his first meeting with the Rishi Sunak, Yousaf repeated the same call made countless times by his predecessor to demand another independence referendum. This was just for show. The answer a predictable, firm “No”.

Only a few days before this encounter, however, the SNP Government’s Directorate for the Constitution officially but discreetly ruled out another referendum this year. This came in the form of a letter from the Directorate dated 20<sup>th</sup> April to an enquirer on the matter. This was helpfully posted on the Bath-based *Wings Over Scotland* website on 25<sup>th</sup> April for all to read. Here it was formally announced that “the Scottish Government is not planning for a Referendum in October of this year”. As if anyone was in any doubt.

### Legal Notes

Yousaf has dusted off plans made by his predecessor to “reform” the Scottish justice system as he needs something to distract SNP members when they get angry after noticing his referendum non-plans. The main purpose of these reforms, which will bring it into line with that of England, might not go down well with the same nationalist constituency.

A Holyrood Bill is to be introduced to reduce the number of jurors in criminal trials from the Scottish 15 to the English 12. Yousaf also plans to run a pilot project with the intention of abolishing jury trials in cases of rape and attempted rape. During the pandemic the SNP sought to introduce judge-only or juryless trials but the legal profession objected successfully.

The former unsuccessful Justice Secretary now also wants to abolish the “Scotch Verdict” of “Not Proven”. This is sometimes said to be a shorthand way of saying “Go away and don’t do it again, we know you did it, but can’t prove it”, but it is basically a variation of the “Not Guilty” verdict.

The Law Society of Scotland argues it is an important bulwark against miscarriages of justice. The latter point is partly conceded by advocates

of reform who think conviction rates are too low, particularly in rape cases.

Lefties who welcome any legal reform that intends to increase conviction rates in one class of offences should always bear in mind that the same logic also applies to those arrested on the picket line and demonstrations.

### Holyrood Will Be Sadly Diminished

We conclude with a sad farewell to one of our favourite Holyrood parliamentarians who has made a valuable contribution to Scottish politics. John Mason, presently Deputy Convenor of the Holyrood’s Finance Committee and an SNP MSP for the east Glasgow constituency of Shettleston, has announced that it is 90–95 per cent certain that he will stand down at the 2026 election. A product of the same Hutchesons’ Grammar School that produced the First Minister and the Labour leader, it is fair he say he is not the best advertisement for private education.

His greatest claim to fame was the occasion in January 2015 when he supported teaching school-children the ‘Creation Theory’ that the Earth was conjured up by God in six days – or longer – on the grounds that it cannot be disproved by science. This said, Professor Paul Braterman, a scientific adviser to the Scottish Secular Society, only showed that there was a “real live dinosaur sitting in the Scottish Parliament”.

Despite being an accountant, Mason publicly asked: “How is national debt different from national deficit?” He also stated it didn’t matter if surgeons cannot spell. When a wheelchair user complained about the lack of accessibility at Celtic Park, he was told by Mason to go and support

another team. Despite this and many more such, he got re-elected with an increased majority.

Being a member of the Baptist Church he naturally opposed same-sex marriage and has been seen on anti-abortion picket lines, actions which infuriated his fellow parliamentarians more than his more amusing quotes.

### bean counting

In passing, it is worth recording that the handling of the delayed and botched census has finally claimed a victim. Paul Lowe, CEO of the National Records of Scotland (NRS), has resigned after being criticised heavily by Audit Scotland, which has effectively said the Census was rubbish in its annual audit of the NRS. While the 2021 Census took place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with a 97 per cent overall response despite Covid, the SNP, just to be different, postponed it until 2022.

After a month of the largely online exercise the original return rate was only 79 per cent. In panic a month-long extension was ordered at a cost of another £6 million. This resulted in a final turnout of 89 per cent, which was still below the very low target of 90 per cent (it was 94 per cent in 2011). Except in Scotland, no other UK authority area had a less than an 88 per cent turnout.

The month-long extension cost an extra £9.8 million, which resulted in the flawed exercise costing £144.6 million.

Despite this, it is the worse census in the UK since 1801 and a great deal of work is needed to remedy its defects. Needless to say, the minister responsible at the time Angus Robertson remains a minister with special responsibility for jetting off to exotic places.

## FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Stalin & the BRS** £2 plus 50p P&P.

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

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

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

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

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

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.  
(cheques to New Worker)

## New Worker Supporters’ Groups...

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

postcode.....

# XR's "Big One" rocks London

by *New Worker* correspondent

Tens of thousands of protesters descended on Parliament on Saturday as part of a four-day action, billed "The Big One", designed to "highlight the environmental failures" of government.

Environmental group Extinction Rebellion (XR) kicked off the event on Friday, promising less disruption and more inclusion than the sit-downs and transport disruption that are its usual trademark. This

time the climate change campaigners focused on street theatre, open-air debates and forums, and protest pickets outside government departments in London "to highlight the environmental and social failures across them all".

Saturday's protest, which coincided with Earth Day, focused on nature and biodiversity. It started from Westminster Abbey, with protesters and their children wearing animal costumes and masks. Many had made banners for the occasion, with one reading "We defend the climate

but police arrest us" and another "Extinction is forever". Others warned that a third of UK birds were "at risk of extinction".

Some XR supporters took part in the London Marathon in Sunday whilst others organised "people's pickets and forums" throughout the heart of the capital.

They were joined by household names such as top film actor Juliet Stevenson, *White Teeth* author Zadie Smith, legendary producer and composer Brian Eno, human rights advocate



Bianca Jagger, and indie band *She Drew The Gun*. The long weekend of

climate change action was also supported by PCS, the main civil service union,

and a number of leading environmental and social justice movements.

# Stop the War in Ukraine!

by *New Worker* correspondent

Comrades joined other campaigners in London for a Stop the War rally at Hamilton House last weekend that brought together a number of British and international speakers under the banner of 'Stop The War In Ukraine'.

Stop the War (StW) has been on a journey over the last year where their position on the Russian intervention in Ukraine has gradually changed, partly under pressure from members, from a position that wasn't very different to the Government and the mainstream media, to now, where the only call at Saturday's meeting was to end the war.

Having attended many StW events in that time, Saturday was also notable for the absence of any assertions that Russia is an imperialist state.

Kate Hudson from CND spoke on the increasing militarisation of the region, where states are dramatically increasing their military budgets, and the increased danger this causes. Also the depleted uranium shells, which the UK proposes to send to Ukraine, will escalate the conflict, cause long-term



damage to the people of Ukraine, and increase the risk of further British involvement in the war. CND has arranged a protest at RAF Lakenheath on 20<sup>th</sup> May against US nuclear weapons being stationed in Britain and asks all who can to attend.

Next up was the rapper and activist Lowkey, who always presents lots of complex information in very accessible form. He touched on the same themes as Kate, on the birth defects still happening in Fallujah due to the use of

depleted uranium 20 years ago during the American occupation of Iraq.

His other theme was how for some companies, war is good for business. He spoke of the four main US defence contractors who have doubled their profits in the last year, and of the endemic corruption, giving the example of defence secretary Ben Wallace who was previously director of weapons company QinetiQ.

QinetiQ has received hundreds of millions of pounds in contracts since

the start of the conflict and is so entwined with power that a QinetiQ director, Gordon Messenger, was appointed to head a review into the NHS. Surely a conflict of interest as the company has expressed interest in gaining NHS contracts.

Lowkey finished by warning about the media. "The same people who lied to us about WMDs in Iraq are the same people lying to us about the war in Ukraine. They are the very same people in the media and in the government."

Sevim Dağdelen, a German MP from Die Linke (The Left party), spoke of her experience of opposing the war inside the German parliament, and how the anti-war campaigners are routinely smeared as puppets of Putin or connected to the far-right – both untrue. She spoke strongly on how NATO and the USA are the main danger to world peace, and our duty to oppose them.

"While people are dying in Ukraine, arms companies are making billions increasing their profits by 11.5 per cent. It is our responsibility to stand up to the warmongers in our governments and end this escalating spiral of war," she said.

Irish MEP Clare Daly has become one of the voices and faces of opposition to escalation and war-mongering, and she had a great reception. She spoke from her perspective of the changes since February 2022, where only a few MEPs spoke against NATO and EU escalation, to now where more are openly opposing the war. She said any opposition to the drive to war is delegitimised, in a conflict that has seen what she described as "unprecedented censorship" where the only view we have on the conflict is through government press releases.

She spoke of the numbers of people who contact her every day, saying they agree with everything she and fellow MEP Mick Wallace say, but they are scared to say it themselves. "War can never be stopped by war. It can only be stopped by peace. We are in a majority but we are silenced by the establishment because they fear the power of this movement against war."

This was a good meeting and StW are to be commended for organising it. But there was no Q&A session after the speakers and some people wondered who the organisers were more worried about, the members from the floor or the platform speakers?

**The NCP badge**



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

# Socialism and patriarchy, women's liberation and LGBT liberation

by J Sykes

The historic task of the working class in the socialist revolution is to eliminate all oppression. This includes the liberation of women and LGBT people from the shackles of patriarchy.

In her 1949 article *We Seek Full Equality for Women*, Claudia Jones states: "Marxism-Leninism exposes the core of the woman question and shows that the position of women in society is not always and everywhere the same, but derives from woman's relation to the mode of production."

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Frederick Engels gives us an historical materialist analysis of patriarchy's foundation and explains how gender oppression is related to reinforcing the mode of production. Basically, Engels explains that patriarchal family relations and the gendered division of labour have their origin in the very beginning of class society and private property.

Engels writes: "The pairing family... is founded on male supremacy for the pronounced purpose of breeding children of indisputable paternal lineage. The latter is required because these children shall later on inherit the fortune of their father. The monogamous family is distinguished from the pairing family by the far greater durability of wedlock, which can no longer be dissolved at the pleasure of either party. As a rule, it is only the man who can still dissolve it and cast off his wife."

Thus the traditional patriarchal family has the original purpose of ensuring the inheritance of male property. Under capitalism, the family also serves the purpose of regulating reproductive labour by enforcing a gendered division of labour. Reproductive labour is the domestic labour required to reproduce labour-power – that is, the labour required for the workers' survival, such as cooking, cleaning,



childcare and other housework traditionally assigned to women whilst the men work outside the home.

Even today in the USA, where many women work outside the home, women earn 80 cents for every dollar earned by men, and also continue to carry the majority of the burden of domestic labour. Furthermore, this gendered division of labour means not only women taking up most domestic tasks at home, but also being disproportionately driven into generally lower-paying jobs, such as in the service sector or clerical work.

## ruling class benefits

The ruling class benefits from this gendered division of labour by using women and LGBT people as a reserve source of labour, driving down wages overall, and as a source of super-profits resulting from these lower pay rates. This is even more true for oppressed nationalities. In her 1949 article *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women* Claudia Jones was correct to observe that "Negro women – as workers, as Negroes, and as women – are the

most oppressed stratum of the whole population."

It is this gendered division of labour that serves as the foundation for women's and LGBT oppression and serves as the material basis for misogyny and male chauvinism. This is also the basis for attacks on LGBT rights. Today we see an ongoing, reactionary pushback against rights previously won through struggle, from reactionary "don't say gay" bills to the overturning of *Roe v Wade* that had guaranteed the right to abortion.

## gender oppression

Thus the goal of gender oppression is to maintain the gendered division of labour and the patriarchal family, primarily for the sake of ensuring the inheritance of property, gender-based super-profits, and the regulation of domestic, reproductive labour. For this reason, it works to suppress anything that would challenge that system, including both women's liberation and LGBT liberation. LGBT equality presents a direct challenge to this oppressive system and so LGBT people are also subject to severe repression,

including discrimination in employment, housing, education and healthcare, and denial of the right to marriage equality.

The working class as a whole must set itself the task of abolishing these oppressive, gendered social relations. The Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai put it well in *The Social Basis of the Woman Question*, an article she wrote in 1909.

"While for the feminists the achievement of equal rights with men in the framework of the contemporary capitalist world represents a sufficiently concrete end in itself, equal rights at the present time are, for the proletarian women, only a means of advancing the struggle against the economic slavery of the working class. The feminists see men as the main enemy, for men have unjustly seized all rights and privileges for themselves, leaving women only chains and duties. For them a victory is won when a prerogative previously enjoyed exclusively by the male sex is conceded to the 'fair sex'.

## proletarian women

"Proletarian women have

a different attitude. They do not see men as the enemy and the oppressor; on the contrary, they think of men as their comrades, who share with them the drudgery of the daily round and fight with them for a better future. The woman and her male comrade are enslaved by the same social conditions; the same hated chains of capitalism oppress their will and deprive them of the joys and charms of life. It is true that several specific aspects of the contemporary system lie with double weight upon women, as it is also true that the conditions of hired labour sometimes turn working women into competitors and rivals to men. But in these unfavourable situations, the working class knows who is guilty."

Kollontai and the Bolsheviks laid the primary blame for gender oppression at the feet of the capitalist ruling class, and the socialist revolution in the Soviet Union aimed to accomplish much more than simply winning additional privileges for women. It set about uprooting the material basis for gender oppression.

The first step in doing this was by establishing legal gender equality.

Women were immediately granted the right to vote and hold public office. But it also backed up that legal equality by granting women economic independence from men by dismantling the gendered division of labour. The number of women in the workforce more than doubled between 1917 and 1930. Likewise, the 1918 Family Code was truly revolutionary. Marriage was separated from the Church. Couples were allowed to choose their own surname and were guaranteed the equal right to divorce.

## legalise abortion

In 1920 the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to legalise abortion. Women were granted eight-weeks paid maternity leave and the same wage standards as men. Importantly, public cafeterias and child-care facilities were created to remove the burden of domestic labour from the shoulders of women.

We can look at the socialist countries today for further practical lessons. For example, socialist Cuba has guaranteed free gender-affirming surgery since 2008. Furthermore, Cuba deepened its commitment to gender equality in September 2022, when it passed a revolutionary Family Code, legalising equal marriage and adoption rights regardless of sexual orientation and recognising the rights of surrogate mothers.

It should not be assumed that women's and LGBT liberation are tasks left solely for after the revolution. It is an immediate task of all revolutionaries and progressive people to uproot gender-based oppression. We must take seriously, today and tomorrow, the task of completely destroying, root and branch, patriarchy and all systems of male supremacy in order to build a just, socialist society.

**Fight Back! News  
(USA)**

## Harry Belafonte dies

Harry Belafonte, the singer, songwriter and ground-breaking actor who started his entertainment career belting out “Day-O” in his 1950s calypso hit *The Banana Boat Song* before turning to political activism, has died at the age of 96. The cause of Belafonte’s death was congestive heart failure, his long-time spokesperson Ken Sunshine told the *New York Times* on Tuesday.

As a Black leading man who explored racial themes in 1950s films, Belafonte would later move on to working with his friend Martin Luther King during the US civil rights movement in the early 1960s. He became the driving force behind the celebrity-studded, famine-fighting hit song *We Are the World* in the 1980s.

### rebellion

Belafonte once said he was in a constant state of rebellion that was driven by anger. “I’ve got to be a part of whatever the rebellion is that tries to change all this,” he told the *New York Times* in 2001. “The anger is a necessary fuel. Rebellion is healthy.”

### King of Calypso

Harry Belafonte was born



Fidel and Harry

in New York’s borough of Manhattan but spent his early childhood in his family’s native Jamaica. Handsome and suave, he came to be known as the “King of Calypso” early in his career.

He was the first Black person allowed to perform in many plush nightspots and also had racial breakthroughs in films at a time when segregation prevailed in much of the USA.

In the 1960s he campaigned with Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, and in the 1980s he worked to end apartheid in South Africa and co-ordinated Nelson Mandela’s first visit to the USA.

### goodwill ambassador

Harry Belafonte travelled the world as a goodwill am-

bassador for UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund, in 1987 and later started an AIDS foundation. In 2014, he received an Academy Award for his humanitarian work.

Belafonte provided the impetus for *We Are the World*, the 1985 all-star musical collaboration that raised money for famine relief in Ethiopia. After seeing a grim news report on the famine, he wanted to do something similar to the fund-raising song *Do They Know It’s Christmas?* by *Band Aid* a year earlier.

*We Are the World* featured superstars such as Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles and Diana Ross, and raised millions of dollars.

“A lot of people say to me ‘When as an artist

did you decide to become an activist?’” Belafonte said in a National Public Radio interview in 2011. “I say to them ‘I was long an activist before I became an artist.’”

Even in his late 80s, Belafonte was still speaking out on race and income equality and urging President Barack Obama to do more to help the poor. He was a co-chair of the Women’s March on Washington held the day after Donald Trump was inaugurated as president in January 2017.

Belafonte’s politics made headlines in January 2006 during a trip to Venezuela when he called President George W Bush “the greatest terrorist in the world”. That same month, he compared the US Homeland Security Department with the Gestapo of Nazi Germany.

### anthology of his music

An anthology of his music was released to mark Belafonte’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. A few weeks before the launch, Belafonte told *Rolling Stone* magazine that singing was a way for him to express injustices in the world. “It gave me a chance to make political commentary, to make social statements, to talk about things that I found that were unpleasant – and things that I found that were inspiring,” he said.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## Seeking habitable planets

**People’s China is planning on a quest beyond the solar system to find habitable planets, and the first search will be carried out in 2030 upon the completion of a basic type of telescope array, Chinese researchers revealed at this year’s China Space Day event.**

The plan, called the Miyin programme, aims to detect “another Earth” amongst near neighbours of the solar system through the launching of a telescope array. It will also carry out high-resolution imaging and spectroscopic observations of various types of objects to map the water composition of the solar system, opening a new era of high-resolution astronomical observation, says Zhang Xuhui, executive vice president of the China Academy of Aerospace Science and Technology Innovation.

The Miyin programme is ambitious and significant, but it is still in the technology development phase. In the future, we will advance its maturity through a series of flight tests while making scientific discoveries along the way,” Zhang said.

An experimental satellite will be launched to carry out in-orbit tests in 2024, so as to solidify

the technology foundation for core technology experimental satellites.

By 2025, optical interference technology experiments will be carried out onboard the China Space Station.

The following year will see the launch of a core technology experimental satellite, which is expected to realise spatially distributed optical interference detection for the first time, thus demonstrating and verifying the core technology of the Miyin programme.

By 2030, the basic type of the telescope array will be completed, and optical interference imaging will be achieved. Then the search for habitable exoplanets will begin, Zhang noted.

The Miyin programme will complement deep-space exploration and carry out precise measurements of solar system objects, revealing the characteristics of the solar system and planetary systems.

It will also map the morphology and physical properties of solar system objects, map the distribution of solar system molecular components, especially water, and reveal the origin and dynamics of the system and the evolution of chemical composition. It will also explore the formation process of habitable conditions of the Earth and the origin of life.

*Global Times*

# America’s toxic relations

**A decade after former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden blew the whistle on US spying on the email and mobile phone communications of as many as 35 world leaders, newly leaked Pentagon documents have once again reminded the world that Washington’s surveillance network targets not only foes but also friendly nations, including Ukraine, south Korea and Israel.**

The latest leaks were quite embarrassing for the USA and created unease amongst its allies. Be it concerning the economy, politics or national security,

the super-power never hesitates to maximise its own interests, often at the cost of others.

In the not-too-distant past, the USA sabotaged France’s \$66 billion submarine deal with Australia, scooped up urgently needed medical supplies from Canada and other countries at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, and posed trade threats to Europe through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

No wonder former European Council President Donald Tusk once said: “With friends like that, who needs enemies?”

More recently, the

USA continues to fuel the Ukraine crisis, dragging European countries into the fray and putting enormous pressure on the security of Europe.

In the Middle East, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud has recently suggested that he is prepared to pursue Saudi interests without the help of the USA, including restoring ties with US adversaries such as Iran.

Regarding the recent wave of rapprochement in the Middle East, the *Japan Times* said Americans are finding themselves on the side-lines during a moment of significant change.

Why are America’s

allies distancing themselves? Why are its allies increasingly at odds with America?

Obviously, this is because of the hegemonic practices and zero-sum game mentality of the USA, which have created confrontation and division in the international community and seriously damaged the development interests of its allies and other countries.

In essence, the so-called alliance system established by the USA is to rule the world and reap its interests globally. But many of its allies have realised that they will lose out if they blindly follow in the footsteps of the USA.

The USA demands that

its allies follow suit in containing China but mostly receives only hesitation as a response. According to the US-based Politico news service, any move Europe does make could fall far short of what the Biden administration wants in terms of isolating China economically.

“The leaders of Europe’s largest economies are openly saying they are not interested in decoupling and by extension, meaningful sanctions on China in the event of conflict,” Politico quoted a US official who requested anonymity as saying.

In a rapidly changing international landscape, the USA faces numerous challenges regarding its economy and people’s livelihoods. Its hegemonic aspirations are starting to weaken, and its so-called ‘commitments’ to allies ring hollow.

Those who unite for profit will scatter when profits are exhausted. The current American alliance system has been plagued by frequent leaks and flaws, and although the facade remains intact, its internal structure has begun to crack.

*Xinhua*