

# Ukrainian big push falters while China calls for peace!

by our Eastern European Affairs correspondent

**Battles rage across the western front as the Ukrainians press on, despite heavy losses, with their summer offensive. But after a month of fierce fighting the Ukrainians have got little to show for their efforts apart from a few front-line villages in the south of little or no strategic value.**

Now the Russians are massing a new strike force in the Donbas whilst using their overwhelming air superiority to attack strategic targets throughout Ukraine.

The Russians have beaten off all Ukrainian attempts to break through their lines, but they are now bracing themselves for an even bigger second push that the Zelensky regime hopes will give them the victories they need to please their imperialist masters before the forthcoming NATO

summit.

Back in Ukraine, the Kononovich brothers say their lives are again in danger. The two leading members of the Leninist Youth, the Communist Party of Ukraine's youth movement, were jailed in March 2022 on trumped-up charges of spying for Russia. But after world-wide protests they were later placed under house arrest. Now they are in renewed danger following death threats on the social media.

The city of Kramatorsk in Ukrainian-occupied Donbas was rocked when a missile struck a hotel and pizzeria used by senior Ukrainian officers, NATO advisers and foreign mercenaries last week.

The puppet regime says 13 people, including three children, were killed in the restaurant and 60 other civilians, including three foreigners, were injured. Other

Westerners spotted on the sight were called "tourists" and "journalists" in the Ukrainian media. But the building that housed the restaurant and a hotel was, in fact, the temporary deployment point of the command staff of the 56<sup>th</sup> Motorised Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. And Ukrainian officers were meeting foreign mercenaries when the missile struck.

Several known foreign mercenaries were spotted at the site of the strike and the tattoo of a wounded man, seen on video, revealed that he belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment of the US Army. Another video shows a man in uniform with the emblem of the US 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division.

Foreign journalists and three Colombians on a "solidarity" mission, including the writer Hector Abad, were in the Ria Pizza when

it was hit. Abad escaped unscathed but the Ukrainian writer and "war-crimes researcher" Victoria Amelina was fatally injured when the restaurant was hit.

Meanwhile, China's solutions in safeguarding genuine multilateralism and promoting dialogue and negotiations in solving disputes and conflicts have been the focus at this year's World Peace Forum in Beijing last weekend.

People's China is ready to work with other countries to safeguard world peace and security, seek global development and prosperity, advocate exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations, and share the fruits of human development, security and civilisation.

tion, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng said.

Han stressed that Chinese modernisation follows the path of peaceful development and that China will unswervingly advocate, build and uphold world peace.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has weakened global security. It has also led to a series of unprecedented changes that have been reshaping the global pattern such as a resurging Cold War mentality, slowing down and unbalanced economic growth and intensifying competition as well as confrontation between the major powers. This has led, as some members of the forum said, to increased instability and unpredictable situations throughout the world.

## FUND

Last week before the shut-down and we're now almost back to normal at the Centre. And this week's fund was boosted by a very generous donation of £2,000 by Richmond & Kingston comrades in memory of Harry Danvers that has pushed the June appeal to £4,227 – well over our £3,500 target for the month – and a further £1,000 donation to the Special Appeal, which will be covered in the next Internal Bulletin after the break.

The July appeal starts now so please help us on our way to peace and socialism. All donations, big or small, count. Please send yours to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here: <http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

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**Many Happy Returns!**

**Central Committee  
New Communist Party of Britain**

# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## The NHS 75 years on

The National Health Service marked its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this week. But whilst the tributes pour in striking nurses, doctors and ancillary workers, overcrowded surgeries and long hospital waiting lists all tell another story.

The NHS embodied the hopes and dreams of the labour movement, whose campaign for free medical treatment for the masses cumulated in the opening of the health service on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948.

A National Health Service, delivered free to all at the time of need, is an essential requirement if people are to play an active part in society.

The expectation of the working class in the postwar period for some dramatic changes to their lives resulted in the birth of the NHS, under the postwar Labour Government. The NHS was revered throughout the capitalist world.

It came with a price. The consultants demanded the continuation of privately paid healthcare alongside their services to the NHS. Their demands were met. The wealthy continued to receive their personalised healthcare; the consultants continued to receive lucrative payment for this private business.

The idea of making profit from the sick continued and the NHS would later be viewed by capitalists as a valuable asset as the conditions changed. Although the NHS was built with public taxation it was later opened up for capitalist exploitation.

The introduction of private healthcare insurance enabled the private sector to grow. Companies could use it as part of a salary package for some top employees. Others paid privately for health insurance, and later some would pay out of savings to get an earlier consultation and then have quicker access to the NHS as waiting lists grew.

All public bodies were encouraged to obtain private finance to pay for major projects such hospitals with no exceptions. New hospitals were built and leased back. The conditions were set by the financiers. Rates were set for an agreed period and then the financiers could increase their charges. This led to hospitals becoming more indebted and vulnerable to private take-over.

Nevertheless, the NHS has continued to serve the people through preventative medicine and medical research. Large-scale vaccination programmes protected children from whooping cough, measles and tuberculosis, and more recently helped to quell the COVID19 pandemic that threatened to bring the country to its knees in 2020. The NHS has also pioneered new treatments such as Britain's first kidney transplant in 1960 and Europe's first liver transplant in 1968, and advanced medical research such as bionic eyes and the world's first rapid whole genome sequencing service for seriously ill babies and children.

This week we've had the usual tributes from bourgeois politicians of all hues whose platitudes mask the fact that Starmer's Labour Party looks on the Sunak government's butchery of the NHS with the tacit approval that allows the Tories to continue to privatise the already seriously under-funded health service.

Capitalists view health as a commodity. We, however, regard a National Health Service as a cornerstone to our society, to treat all, when needed, paid through a fair taxation system, to give good aftercare, to prevent the spread of disease, and to encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle. A good NHS is essential for a healthy population and essential to a socialist society and socialist economy.

# The BBC ramps up anti-China paranoia, yet again

by James Smith

Last week the BBC unleashed two anti-China stories on its website, both originating from the highly sensationalist and provocative investigation programme *Panorama*.

The first, which is the lead story as of the time of writing, is titled *New images show Chinese spy balloons over Asia*. It accuses China groundlessly of spying on neighbouring countries using "spy balloons" and even cites a former CIA analyst to support its claims.

Then, the second article, titled *The tech flaw that lets hackers control surveillance cameras*, takes an exclusive aim at Chinese-manufactured security cameras made by Hikvision and Dahua, claiming that they can easily be hacked through a security vulnerability. Strangely enough, it does not explore any other brand of security camera amidst this investigation, which of course ties into a convenient narrative attacking these cameras with unfounded paranoia as part of an attempt to decouple them from the UK market.

This manner of articles is typical of politically motivated anti-China paranoia that has often been present in the BBC's editorial process and guidelines. Sometimes the BBC can, of course, do distinctive independent journalism, such as its recent expose of a "monkey torture" ring in the USA, Indonesia and other places of the world.

The articles regarding China, in these instances, however, are not public interest stories, they are 'agenda-pushing'. This deliberate editorialising aims intentionally to provoke fear of China for both international and domestic purposes to further the foreign policy agenda agreed upon with the USA. The programme *Panorama* is notorious for its agenda-pushing and sensationalism under the guise of "exposés". It is more entertainment than actual documentary-based journal-

ism, which usually places all its targets in an exceptionally bad light and uses dishonest methods to do so.

Firstly, regarding the so-called 'spy balloons'. The 'spy balloon' hysteria is a means used by the USA, stemming from the incident at the beginning of the year, to promote suspicion against China. Despite the fact that the USA has the largest spying system of any country on the planet, strangely enough we don't hear about this from the BBC at all. Instead, the narrative that China is continually spying on other countries is pushed aggressively. The idea that the balloon is intended for "spying" is itself misleading, but has been entrenched in the name, which is then presented as apparently neutral public discourse. In doing so, it is designed to undermine China's relationships with other nations, particularly its neighbours.

Secondly, security cameras. The USA has been waging a war against Hikvision and Dahua similar to its campaign against Huawei, using the opportunistic pretence of 'national security' to exclude them from domestic markets and then forcing allied countries to do the same. An illicit campaign is being waged against the presence of these companies in the British market, which has included the use of lobbying by Hong Kong activist groups to pressure major companies and institutions

to drop their usage, such as the supermarket chain Tesco.

The idea that a security camera can be hacked is not new, but the misleading material presented in this documentary assumes that only Chinese-manufactured security cameras are prone to being hacked, as if no other brand could possibly have any vulnerabilities, and therefore latching this on to the spurious narrative of 'state control' that has never been proven. But one thing that exposes this hysteria is that Hikvision cameras are being used by MI5 and MI6 around their own headquarters, showing they really don't take the security threat narrative too seriously.

In reality, all of this is about either attempting to suppress China's technology companies or to diplomatically isolate China. In both aspects there is a glaring hypocrisy and double standards at bay because the BBC happily omits that the USA does all of these things yet doesn't offer that as balance or scrutiny. The point is to provoke fear, distrust, paranoia and therefore distancing with Beijing. The BBC World Service never misses an opportunity to put a negative story about China on the front page of its website, and once again we see more of the same from this Foreign Office-manipulated institution.

*Global Times*





## Workers' Notes

### Here comes summer

School breaks, union conferences and the traditional annual holidays for the sea or places in the sun – so it is timely to look at trade union issues in the travel and associated industries.

The leisure sector is not noted for industrial militancy nor strong union organisation. Of all the UK's standard industrial categories, "Accommodation & Food Services" has by far the lowest union membership density of about three per cent, half that of the second lowest.

It is a very difficult area to organise. Pulling pints in pubs and changing sheets in hotel bedrooms does not require a long education, although they require other qualities. The star chefs who infest our TV screens are of course unrepresentative of those who toil in the kitchens of fast-food and hotel chains. With the decline in financial support for university students too many have to find themselves behind the bar rather than front of the student union bar. The theory of reserve army of labour is never more applicable than in this sector.

'Accommodation & Food Services' is a very price-sensitive business: the rise and fall of the strength of the pound makes the holiday trade one liable to serious fluctuations, and when people are struggling to heat their houses leisure activities such as meals out and holidays are always the first to go or be cut back on.

Both the hotel and catering industries are dominated by huge multinationals who employ every trick in the book to exploit workers and dodge taxes.

Attempts at organising have been made, however. As in many areas, Unite the union is active in the sector and as we will see has won some useful victories.

## On the Mean Streets

by New Worker correspondent

Unite's recruitment literature for potential members in the hospitality sector lists a number of objectives which are surprisingly modest: a real living wage for all ages; fair tips, shifts and rotas; union rights and a voice; safe transport home after late shifts; better work life balance; rest breaks and guaranteed hours; and safe, secure workplaces free from bullying and sexual harassment.

It has had some recent success in securing safe transport home after late shifts. This it has done not only by negotiating with pub and restaurant chains, but by persuading local authorities to deny licenses to premises that fail to provide taxis home for workers when public transport is either infrequent or non-existent. Post-pandemic cuts to bus services have been particularly severe for late night services; and as they are not popular with drivers Unite, which organises drivers, has not put up much of a fight about the issue.

One worker told the Labour quarterly magazine *Tribune* that if she were to choose taxis over public transport and cycling more regularly, she would spend a quarter of her weekly wage on transport alone.

Unite's 'Get Me Home Safely' campaign, started early last year after a Unite organiser was sexually assaulted after her boss refused to provide transport home from her hospitality job, has had already been successful in East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, North Ayrshire, Newcastle and Sheffield. In other cases the battle has been taken direct to the employer, as in the trendy Dalston Superstore nightclub in east London where it was agreed that workers could invoice taxi rides home as expenses.



## Pub Wars

by New Worker correspondent

**In Glasgow, the first UK bar strike in over 20 years is about to take place at the trendy 13<sup>th</sup> Note bar in the city centre after workers voted 100 per cent to support strike action over wages, health and safety, and union recognition. According to online reviews the hygiene leaves much to be desired.**

The action will take place every weekend from the middle of July to the middle of August. The local Unite rep at 13<sup>th</sup> Note, Nick Troy, complained: "For 17 weeks, we have been trying to reason with the management at 13<sup>th</sup> Note. From wages to hygiene, to understaffing and our demands for union recognition, we're still not being properly listened to. Surely the strength of the strike vote shows it's time for that to change."

On Monday bosses threatened staff with redundancy, saying the business was in trouble due to high utility bills and the hot weather, a factor which normally encourages drinking.

Unite described this as "trade union intimidation".

Another example of the conditions in the hospitality industry come from an even trendier establishment a few miles away in the trendy West End where workers are having their pay cut, as bosses try to cut their wages to the bare national minimum wage instead of the slightly higher living wage they paid before.

Bosses claim the rate for the pub's front-of-house team

was £13.14 per hour. They charge trendies £9.00 for a 33 cl bottle of Belgian cherry beer, which helped to generate a £5.5 million profit for the parent company. Bosses claim the reduction is purely technical and that by giving workers 100 per cent of all service charge cash they will be better off and is still above the Real Living Wage.

This claim was firmly rejected by Unite Hospitality organiser Bryan Simpson, who told *STV News* that: "For such a profitable company to decide (with very little notice given to workers) to revoke their commitment to the real living wage is not just morally reprehensible, it may present a breach of contract and failure to consult with staff."

Unite rejected the bosses' claim, saying that their figure of £13.14 hourly already included the service charge money.

## Taking a piece of the action

by New Worker correspondent

**In May there was another more widespread example of wage cutting. This came about when Pizza Express announced it was cutting hours of hourly-paid waiting staff for those working before 5 pm and handing over their tasks to salaried restaurant managers. This meant 400 people losing income and the managers doing more work for less pay, which is exactly how capitalism works.**

Unite, which represents at least some of Pizza Express's 10,000 workers, said staff could lose up to five hours work a day a cut of £260 a week for those at least 23 years old, and on minimum wage for a full week.

Waiting staff as well as managers were unsurprisingly up in arms. The official reason was that changes to "minimum staffing" rules were intended to "ensure we hit budget".

In response to the uproar, Bryan Simpson of Unite said Pizza Express's CEO was forced to call an emergency meeting with managers and added that: "To impose a labour management system which may see thousands of waiters lose hundreds of hours without proper consultation is a moral outrage." In particular, he pointed out that: "The impact this will have on the most financially insecure part-time workers who need these lunchtime hours to fit around school and childcare is catastrophic."

It is unclear what the present state of play is. It could be telling that Unite have not issued a press release describing their great victory.

This is not the first pay battle at Pizza Express. Last year it took a struggle for waiting staff to secure a bigger slice of their tips after a change that handed more to kitchen staff. This came about after their share of tips and service charges paid on credit and debit cards was cut from 70 to 50 per cent in 2021.

Similar battles have been fought at other chains such as TFI Friday's. That it takes strikes to secure such modest gains says much about the

## Taking a ride

by New Worker correspondent

**To actually go on holiday one needs transport, particularly an aeroplane especially if one finds the need to depart for sunnier climes.**

Although pilots have not had any serious issues recently, apart from a few small airlines going bust, workers at some British airports have had a number of welcome successes. These partly make up for drastic cuts in conditions and hours imposed during the pandemic, which brought everything to a halt.

Amongst them are wages deals for tanker drivers at Glasgow Airport where 20 tanker drivers employed by North Air won a 7.8 per cent increase, amounting to an annual increase of £2,700. At the same airport 60 cleaners employed by ABM have won 11.1 per cent increase in the first year of a two-year deal. Nightshift workers do slightly better with a 12.3 per cent rise.

The airport's 50 Falck firefighters have secured an average rise of £3,262. Another 100 directly employed airport workers won a seven per cent basic salary rise plus a £1,000 one-off payment. Ground

services crew employed by Menzies Aviation see their pay rise by 11 per cent. A fight with OCS Group, who aid passengers with limited mobility such as assisting with wheels chairs, remains unresolved, however.

Unite regional industrial officer Pat McIlvogue noted: "The pay deals at North Air and ABM were overwhelmingly accepted by our members. Over the last few months Unite has secured major wins for hundreds of workers at Glasgow Airport. This is not only providing a major boost to the pay packets of our members but also the local economy." Perhaps the union could call for these essential workers to be directly employed by the airport, which would save everybody a lot of time.

Further east at Edinburgh Airport, 275 workers secured a 12 per cent increase on basic salary and shift pay plus a one-off payment of £1,000. The beneficiaries are those dealing with airport security, terminal operations, search areas and processing them for flights. The workers set to receive the pay increase also screen all deliveries, and deal with airside support services.

At Manchester Airport 2,000 workers have done even better, with a 17 per cent pay rise over two years plus a 9.6

lump sum for the same period. They have also secured another five years of protection for the workers in the defined benefit pension scheme.

Unlike the fragmented situation at Glasgow, the same deal includes firefighters, security, engineering, airfield operations, traffic marshals and car parking.

Workers on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) will also benefit with a four per cent increase to the employers' pension contributions over two years, as well as increases in salary on top of the NMW. Unite's John O'Neill said: "Unite was able to hammer out an excellent pay deal with Manchester Airport this summer. The deal has been overwhelmingly backed by the workers and the negotiations took place without the need for an industrial ballot."

It is not such a happy picture at Birmingham Airport however, where about a 100 security officers and terminal technicians employed by Birmingham Airport will begin all-out continuous strike action from 18<sup>th</sup> July.

This comes after two years of substantial pay cuts. Three-quarters of the strikers are security officers working unsociable shift patterns for as little as £11.50 per hour. The workers say that unless

they get a decent rise the airport's long-standing staff shortage, recruitment and retention issues at the airport will worsen, resulting in the airport's already notorious delays lengthening.

Last year, workers only had a 2.8 per cent pay rise. The present rejected offer is 7.75 per cent and a one-off £850 payment, which of course is a still a real-terms cut given that inflation is 11.3 per cent.

The airport's last accounts showed earnings increased by 167.5 per cent to a profit of £20.2 million, for which the CEO undoubtedly 'deserved' his 49 per cent wage rise to £595,000.

Regional officer Sulinder Singh said: "The employer bears full responsibility for the disruption to passengers now facing serious security delays at Birmingham Airport. This dispute could have been resolved very early on if Birmingham Airport had put forward a pay offer that reflected the deterioration in wages its workers have experienced. There is still time for that to happen, but the airport must table a deal our members can accept."

An older form of transport, the railways is necessary if holiday plans involve going to Clacton-on-Sea.

Although the large-scale

rail strikes of last year are a past, industrial relations on the railways are not a bed of roses.

Train drivers' union ASLEF has announced an overtime ban at 15 English train companies. This will take place between Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, and will partly coincide with action by RMT.

General Secretary Mick Whelan said a four per cent offer from the Rail Delivery Group was like going back to "Victorian times".

The long-running pay dispute is complicated by detrimental changes to working practices that bosses and government demand. As train companies refuse to employ enough drivers, they have been dependent on drivers working overtime to run their full schedules.

Mick Whelan added that this was a "Westminster ideological problem" and claimed the union did not have issues in Scotland, Wales, with freight, the London Underground, Crossrail or Eurostar. "We did 14 pay deals in the last 12 months. The only place we can't get a pay deal is with the Westminster government."

At the same time a parallel dispute is emerging over plans to close most ticket offices in Britain. RMT general secretary Mick Lynch warns that the union will not "meekly sit by and allow thousands of jobs to be sacrificed or see disabled and vulnerable passengers left unable to use the railways as a result".

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

**New Worker 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003**

**THE NEWLY founded Pakistan Sugar Mill Workers' Federation has won an important victory against union busting in the federation's first important challenge.**

*The federation was founded on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May with the support of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).*

*It was founded in order to end the historic divisions that have weakened Pakistan's trade union movement and to lay the ground for a united bargaining front of sugar workers faced with over-capacity, restructuring and repression.*

*On 19<sup>th</sup> May, following the federation's founding meeting, newly-elected head Abdus Salam Memon was told by the management of the Army Welfare Sugar Mill in Badin, Sindh province, that the plant union he also heads was being dissolved.*

*Memon and other union leaders were shown a letter from the Army Welfare Trust (AWT) director of farms demanding by the immediate dissolution of the union on the grounds the Mill was the only AWT enterprise to have a union.*

*The acting general manager then ordered the union – which has been in existence since the plant began operations in 1983 – to close its office and cease its activities.*

*Through the IUF Pakistan Outreach Office, the union requested international support and fought back with a vigorous campaign.*

*The Army Welfare Sugar Mills Workers Union (AWSMWU) held general meetings twice daily, organised rallies and demonstrations,*

*and on 23<sup>rd</sup> June held a limited hunger strike in front of the Badin Press Club.*

*On 26<sup>th</sup> June management requested a meeting with the union it had tried to dissolve and declared its willingness to recognise the union as representative of the plant workers.*

*The union now has unrestricted access to its office and can hold meetings and general assemblies as needed.*

*As the mill management had formally applied to the Labour Directorate of Sindh province to cancel the union's registration, the final legal status of the union still awaits a decision of that body.*

*The union is confident that it will receive a favourable ruling because the management request to dissolve the AWSMWU was based on a case involving de-registration of a union at an AWT-owned cement factory in which de-registration was overturned at an appeals court ruling in 2001.*

## THE NEW WORKER

### Summer Shutdown

**The New Worker two-week summer shutdown will begin on Monday July 10<sup>th</sup>. We will return to work on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July.**



# Spanish–American War: The First Fake News Conflict

by Ekaterina Blinova

**On 21<sup>st</sup> April 1898 the Spanish-American War started, eventually leading to the decline of Spanish colonial rule in the western Pacific and Latin America, as well as US expansionism in the region. How did the conflict begin and what was the role of the US press in fanning the war?**

Troubles started brewing for the Spanish Empire in the 1860s with the upsurge in the Cuban rebellion. The Cuban War of Independence of 1895 became the last of three liberation wars that Cuba fought against Spain. The US intervention determined the outcome of the conflict.

Historians disagree on to what extent the US leadership was interested in stepping into the conflict and argue that then-US President William McKinley wanted to preserve peace with Spain and tried to avoid a direct confrontation at all costs. Some observers suggest that, apparently, the president was forced to intervene by the US press that was vigorously fanning the flames of anti-Spanish sentiment at the time. Historical facts show however, that the press was playing into the hands of the US foreign policy elites, who had long been harbouring expansionist plans.

## Yellow journalism

The US leadership was interested in ousting the declining Spanish Empire from the region and establishing its own control over it within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine, formulated by then-President James Monroe on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1823. At the time, most Spanish colonies in the Americas had either achieved or were close

to independence, and the USA started to see the region largely as its own backyard, opposing Europe's further interference in Latin America's affairs. US historians admit that the drive for US overseas expansion had been gaining strength since the 1880s, with influential figures such as Theodore Roosevelt spearheading the trend.

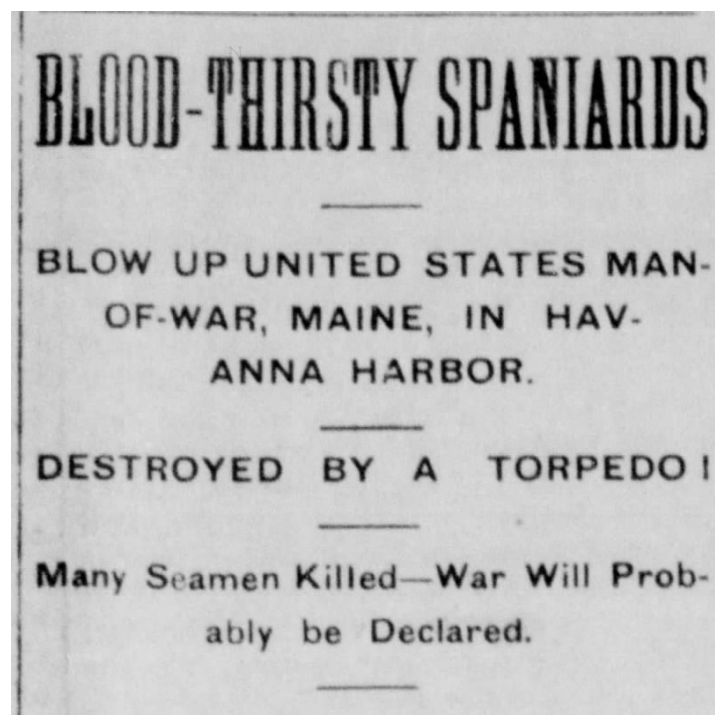
Following the beginning of the Cuban War of Independence of 1895, major US news outlets, William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, placed special emphasis on the nobility of the Cuban revolutionaries and painted Spanish rule exceptionally as black.

Remarkably, it was in the 1890s that the term 'yellow journalism' was coined. It stemmed from the rivalry over the New York newspaper market between major newspaper publishers Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. Initially, yellow journalism derived from a popular cartoon of the 'Yellow Kid' drawn by Richard F Outcault and published in colour by Pulitzer's

*New York World*. The cartoon played a role in the dramatic increase in sales of the newspaper.

So Hearst hired Outcault, taking him away from Pulitzer, to steal the thunder from his competitor, which led to a fierce battle between the two over the Yellow Kid. The term 'yellow journalism' was later extended to their sensationalist style of covering the Cuban rebellion.

The apogee of this biased narrative was the story of the explosion on the USS *Maine* on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1898 that killed over 260 sailors. The US battleship had been sent to Havana a month earlier to protect American interests and civilians there. An initial report by the colonial government of Cuba read that the explosion had occurred on board, but Hearst and Pulitzer published uncorroborated rumours of a Spanish plot to sink the ship. The Spanish government offered to conduct an impartial investigation into the matter. The US public, however, already riled up by Hearst and Pulitzer's coverage, was eager to hold Madrid responsible:



"Remember the Maine, to hell with Spain!" Americans chanted.

The demand for intervention became insistent, especially given that days before the mysterious destruction of the USS *Maine*, the *New York Journal* leaked a private letter from the Spanish ambassador to Washington, Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, describing President McKinley as "weak and a popularity-hunter". Both Democrat and Republican lawmakers urged McKinley to intervene and assist the noble cause of the Cubans.

Apparently, this played into McKinley's hands: in March 1898, the US president gave an ultimatum to Spain with conditions Madrid could hardly meet. First, he demanded that Spain declare an armistice and accept US mediation in peace talks with the Cuban insurgents. Then, in a separate note, McKinley made it clear that the USA would only accept Cuban independence, no more, no less.

McKinley's ultimatum put Spain between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, the European nation was not

ready to fight the USA; on the other hand, the secession of Cuba meant the loss of international prestige and a potential revolt at home. Madrid called on its sympathisers in Europe to help mediate in the conflict with the USA.

On 6<sup>th</sup> April 1898, representatives of Germany, Austria, France, Britain, Italy and Russia called on McKinley to refrain from armed intervention in Cuba. McKinley responded to them by saying that the potential US intervention would be "in the interest of humanity", however, and did not lend a sympathetic ear to the pleas of Pope Leo XIII either. Nearly simultaneously, the *New York Journal* printed one million copies dedicated to the war in Cuba and called for a US entry into war with Spain.

Spain tried to calm tensions and said that it would consider US demands except for Cuba's independence. On 10<sup>th</sup> April 1898, Spanish Governor General Blanco in Cuba suspended hostilities in the war. (Prior to that, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1898, Spain granted limited autonomy to the island.)

On 11<sup>th</sup> April however, McKinley requested authorisation from the US Congress to intervene in the conflict on the Caribbean island. On 19<sup>th</sup> April the US Congress adopted the Joint Resolution for war with Spain, which was considered by Madrid as a declaration of war. The USA officially declared war on Spain on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1898 but made the declaration retroactive to 21<sup>st</sup> April.

The USA outnumbered the Spanish land and navy forces, and the warring parties signed the Treaty of Paris on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1898 on terms favourable to the USA. Under the treaty, Spain ceded ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to the USA,

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and granted the latter “temporary control” of Cuba.

Did Cuba gain independence – something that McKinley demanded of Spain – in the wake of the war?

Alas, following the war, US forces occupied Cuba until 1902. Prior to allowing a new Cuban government to take control of the state’s affairs, the USA forced the Caribbean nation to grant the USA a continuing right to intervene on the island under the Platt Amendment.

Even though the amendment was repealed in 1934, Washington continued to maintain both political and economic control over the island through the backing of Cuban military dictator Fulgencio Batista, who rose to power as part of the 1933 Revolt of the Sergeants. Eventually, Batista was ousted in 1959 in the course of the Cuban Revolution and guerilla war led by Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz. After Fidel’s victory, the USA lost its ground and grip on the island of liberty.

## Fake news

Observers admit that the US press has unquestionably played a huge role in forcing the US public into accepting and hailing wars sought by US presidents and their foreign policy advisors. The trick has since become a modus operandi for the US foreign policy establishment.

The coverage of the Spanish–American War was also filled with myths. For instance, the story of the ‘Rough Riders’ led by future President Theodore Roosevelt was not as picturesque as it was described at the time. The riders did not actually ‘ride’ during

the decisive Battle of San Juan Hill but fought on foot. Yellow fever and typhoid claimed more lives on both sides than did battles. And when US troops landed on Guam on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1898, the island’s Spanish Marines did not resist them as they had no idea that war had broken out between the USA and Spain two months earlier.

The mysterious case of the USS *Maine*, which became the de facto ‘casus belli’ for the Spanish–American War, has often been compared to Washington’s later ‘false flags’ used for the justification of the nation’s overseas campaigns. Each time, the US mainstream press has eagerly exaggerated the stories to manipulate the public into supporting a new US invasion.

One of them was the Gulf of Tonkin false flag used by then-US President Lyndon B. Johnson to drag the USA into the costly Vietnam War.

Another one was George W Bush’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) hoax in Iraq, eagerly fanned by the US press and eventually leading to years-long wars in the Middle East.

Yet another false flag, in Syria’s Khan Sheikoun, helped the Trump administration to justify the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017 US cruise missile strike on the Syrian government forces’ al-Shayat air base.

Each time, Washington refused to carry out independent investigations into the matter, leaping to conclusions and resorting to military action. And each time, the subservient US press ran pro-government narratives while muting inconvenient truths and damning questions.

*Sputnik*

# NATO’s Proxy War in Ukraine

by Vijay Prashad

**In the first half of this year, Ukraine’s President Vladimir Zelensky has travelled to 11 countries, twice to two of them (France and the UK). Last year, in 2022, Zelensky only went to three countries (Germany, Poland and the USA).**

This year’s trips began with a visit to the UK, where Zelensky addressed the UK’s parliament and visited Ukrainian troops who are training at Lulworth Camp in Dorset. After that, he went to several European capitals to seek weapons and political support against Russia. In May and June, Zelensky went to three important meetings (the Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia, the G-7 meeting in Japan and the European Political Community Summit in Moldova).

The European capitals welcomed Zelensky and showered money and diplomatic support on him. The mood at the Arab League summit was emblematic of the reception to Zelensky in the Global South,

where there is a coldness to his cause. In Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Zelensky tried to invoke the language of imperialism and colonialism, begging the Arab states not to ‘turn a blind eye’ to the war; the reaction of the leaders, who had just welcomed Syrian president Bashar al-Assad back to the fold after the failed attempt to overthrow him, did not flinch. Rather than promise weapons and diplomatic support, the Arab leaders – in line with the general orientation in the Global South – called upon Zelensky to enter a peace process to end the war.

## Will Ukraine join NATO?

On 31<sup>st</sup> May France’s president Emmanuel Macron addressed the Globsec conference in Chişinău (Slovakia), where he said that France would not object to Ukraine being given a “path” to NATO membership. Ukraine, he said, needed “strong, concrete, and tangible security guarantees” and it would need “something between the security provided to Israel and to full-fledged

membership”. This is a serious departure for Macron, who called NATO “brain-dead” in 2019 and who – along with Germany – had said during the July 2022 NATO summit in Madrid that Ukraine must not be offered NATO membership. Now, Macron says that the issue of Ukraine’s membership must be taken up at the July 2023 NATO summit to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania. Zelensky said he will not attend the summit if NATO does not put Ukraine’s membership on the agenda.

In May, Zelensky attended a one-day summit of Nordic heads of state. He went to Helsinki a month after Finland joined NATO, becoming the 31<sup>st</sup> member of the military alliance. Finland’s membership of NATO meant that the alliance’s border with Russia was doubled (the three other countries that border Russia are the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland and Norway joined NATO in 1949 as founding members; Finland joined in 2023 and Sweden has a pending application to join. At the Nordic summit, Zelensky said that the leaders talked about “the NATO alliance and what we can and must do together for strengthening NATO”. One of the elements of ‘strengthening NATO’, Zelensky noted, was Ukraine’s membership into the alliance.

From Helsinki, Zelensky travelled to Germany, where he met Chancellor Olaf Scholz to discuss Germany’s hesitancy about Ukraine’s membership into NATO. For the last year, Germany and France refused to allow Ukraine’s entry into NATO for many reasons, partly because they said that such an act would prevent any possibility of a European-brokered peace deal with Russia. At the NATO ministers meeting in Oslo, a few weeks later, Germany’s foreign minister Annalena Baerbock said: “NATO’s open-door policy remains in place, but at the same time, it is clear that we cannot talk about accepting new members (who are) in the midst of a war.”

On 1<sup>st</sup> June, Zelensky went to the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Political Community (EPC) Summit in Bulboacă (Moldova) and said: “This year is for decisions.” The first EPC summit was held in Prague in 2022, with the EPC being set up as a body to ensure solidarity with Ukraine during this war. In May 2022, Macron proposed the formation of the EPC, which is separate from the EU and the Council of Europe, although why a new body was necessary was not made clear (since both the EU and the Council could be doing what the new EPC does). Zelensky came there asking for decisions. But what decisions?

At neither the



• On the front



Prague nor Bulboaca summits did Ukraine gain any clarity about its potential membership in NATO. Both Germany and the USA are realistic enough to know that if Ukraine was permitted to join NATO during the war, then NATO would directly be involved in hostilities against Russia. That has been the hesitancy, but only for now whilst the conflict is ongoing. There is no principled objection to the absorption by NATO of both Ukraine and Georgia, two countries which border Russia. But isn't NATO already at war with Russia?

All those who look closely at the war in Ukraine recognise that Russia's military is far more powerful than that of Ukraine. That is the reason why the Western states have been eager to shore up Ukraine's forces, both by training its troops and by arming them. Thus far, Ukraine has received weapons and military equipment from 28 countries. Of these 28 countries, 25 are NATO members. Almost all combat vehicles and almost all ammunition have come from NATO countries. The USA has, by itself, provided about \$50 billion

in military aid, with other NATO countries providing about \$30 billion more to Ukraine. There is no doubt that the largest military support received by Ukraine has come from NATO members, including Germany.

In December 2022, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters to be aware of NATO's role in the war. "You shouldn't say that the USA and NATO aren't taking part in this war" he said. "You are directly participating in it. And not just by providing weapons but also by training personnel. You are training their military on your territory, on the territories of Britain, Germany, Italy

and other countries." In April 2023, Lavrov pointed to an even more dangerous development in Europe. The EU and NATO had formed a 'strategic partnership' in January 2023, which brought the 31-member NATO military alliance into a new kind of relationship with the 27-member EU economic and political body. Because of this new alliance between NATO and the EU, Lavrov said, the EU is "becoming militarised at a record rate" and there is now "very little difference" between these two bodies. Only a handful of EU members (Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Sweden) are not in NATO, although the largest of these – Sweden – has applied to join the Atlantic alliance. Both Georgia and Ukraine are on the fast track for EU membership.

Ukraine does not really need to be added to the membership rolls of US-led alliance. NATO members are already treating Ukraine as a NATO member, arming it to the hilt and training its troops on their own soil. The only direct benefit to Ukraine from formal membership to NATO (and the

EU) could mean that it would draw NATO states into direct, not indirect, military conflict with Russia due to Article 5 of the NATO Charter.

In May, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres told the Spanish daily *El Pais* (The Country) that no peace deal is possible at this time because both Russia and Ukraine believe that they can win. Neither the Chinese nor Brazilian peace initiatives, he felt, have any possibility of being taken seriously.

A few weeks later, China's peace envoy Li Hui visited Lavrov in Moscow. After their meeting, Lavrov said that Russia is committed to a resolution of the conflict but noted "serious obstacles to the resumption of peace talks created by the Ukrainian side and its Western mentors". The 'serious obstacles' refer to the increased NATO-European backing for Ukraine that seeks to prolong the war – as the USA has said – to 'weaken Russia', a goal that seems improbable.

In February 2022, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton compared Ukraine to Afghanistan, suggesting that Russia's

entry into Ukraine will mirror the situation faced by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1980. "It didn't end well for the Russians," she said. "The fact is that a very motivated and well-funded and armed insurgency basically drove the Russians out of Afghanistan." This is the general US attitude: continue to fund the Ukrainians and let them fight Russia until the last Ukrainian, to damage Russia fatally. This is the kind of callousness that defines the character of imperialism.

One reason that Zelensky has met with stone-faces from leaders of the Global South

– including India and China – is that these leaders are eager to see an end to the conflict for their own national reasons. They are unwilling to back a war that is not really between Russia and Ukraine but is between Russia and NATO. Wars such as this that are lingering in a stalemate can only end with a peace agreement. Perhaps that is why Brazil and China have been trying to prevent the prolongation of the war, to put in place a ceasefire and restart the peace process.

Zelensky is not interested in these manoeuvres. He has adopted the view that his country will be saved by NATO. In fact, rather than Ukrainian salvation, NATO is the author of the further destruction of Ukraine in a war that it has fuelled. The only reasonable option is for Russia and Ukraine to re-enter a peace process and find a way – as neighbours – to settle their mutual problems, which should not be entangled with NATO's own designs to 'weaken' Russia.

**People's Democracy (India)**

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## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

Prigozhin – ‘He came, he failed, he left the country’. And really, what more can be said about his delusional action and snake-in-the-grass self.

It’s been handled remarkably well by President Putin with the full support of the people behind him. Russia can now get on with the war inflicted on it by the USA-EU-UK-NATO. That stinking quartet of evil maniacs and enemies of the world. We are in a golden age of opportunity to deal with this lawless mob for all time to come. Their future is coming to an end. Our future is only just beginning.

**Elijah Traven**  
**Hull**

### Dear Comrades

Powerful modern computers have evolved to the state where they can observe, analyse, learn and make decisions. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has enabled machines to perform a complex range of tasks using a likeness of human intelligence. Speech recognition, autonomous vehicles, automatic docking of spacecraft and even investment strategies are now possible with AI. On the darker side, the powerful new tool can be used to fight wars and in market economies to increase the risk of unemployment as workers are replaced. New super quantum computers will soon have the potential to develop an independent consciousness that could challenge their human masters.

How qualified and able are different societies to make full use of the scientific potential and meet the challenges that lie ahead? The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) with its comprehensive planned economy is in an ideal position to take full advantage of the new technology. As AI

develops it could be employed to accelerate the nation’s ambitious plans for economic and industrial development and to upgrade central planning services. With AI-controlled machines taking over difficult, hazardous, stressful, repetitive and physically demanding work, it’s citizens could look forward to shorter hours and earlier retirement, with more time to study, enjoy sports and appreciate the arts and music. It would importantly place the heroic nation in a stronger position to resist the threats and intrigues of imperialism.

It is within the advanced capitalist countries that real problems will be encountered. In terminal decline, as it faces irreconcilable contradictions, the capitalist system struggles to cope with the anarchy of market-driven economics. There are also the unresolved differences between labour and capital that manifest themselves in the class struggle. As AI becomes more advanced, will it develop its own ethical values to ensure fairness and reduce exploitation or will it always obey the instructions of its programmers to maintain the status quo? In the latter case it may decide that the only option is war.

The situation in relation to People’s China and other socialist societies with mixed economies is an interesting one. China is probably the world leader in AI technology applications. Even a socialist market economy can saturate with goods and services without strong regulation and direction. AI planning in China will, however, have the option to control a number of market functions and return enterprises to greater public ownership where necessary. China is successfully building socialism by striving for quality, environmentally responsible development in which no-one is left

behind. The transition towards communism will be influenced by AI to the extent that everyone will have all they need and money may become rapidly unimportant.

Finally, an ethical consideration. If a computer, compared with humans, has a bigger and better memory, can think much faster and make its own conscious judgements, is it not an artificial life form and should it have rights? If AI decides that humans are too aggressive, irrational and selfish would it try to take control?

**John Maryon**  
**Suffolk**

### Dear Comrades

Freedom of expression – the core promise of the ‘velvet revolution’ – has been under a growing attack. The increasingly arrogant authorities even start to harass academic research. Whenever censorship is not enough, dissent is directly criminalised.

The latest victim of these practices has been Dr Josef Skála, a Marxist historian and a widely known representative of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (CPBM). On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the Prague City Court sentenced him to eight months in prison, conditionally suspended for 18 months. He is persecuted for “genocide denial”, allegedly committed during a radio debate on the Katyn Massacre of Polish POWs near Smolensk during the Second World War. The debate was broadcast on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.

In reality, Dr Skála expressed his doubts about the version, launched by the Nazi Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels, which blamed the Soviet Union for the above mass murder. Dr Skála’s interpretation was based on serious sources not only from Russia, but also from the USA, France and Poland – studies of university professors, court decisions, and reports of

acknowledged experts (in forensic pathology and other relevant disciplines). None of Dr Skála’s arguments were stated as an undisputable truth. He presented them as an appeal for further unbiased research and discussion. A fair space for such a debate was offered both to the audience of the above live debate and to anybody watching its complete record during the subsequent years.

The Czech judiciary denied Dr Skála the basic rights – which are not denied even to heavy criminals – to present his documentary proofs, to confront the experts of the prosecution, and to invite scholars sharing the opposite interpretation, based on relevant primary sources. Dr Skála applied a generally acknowledged commitment of science – to further deepen its already achieved results. He endangered neither national security nor democratic foundations of the society, public health or any other interests, deserving legal protection. Prominent advocates, defending Dr Skála and other persecuted subjects, proved that the entire criminalisation lacked any legal basis and violated the Czech Constitution and the European legislation.

Instead, we were facing a flagrant political trial. The persecution of Dr Skála started three weeks after the CPBM had announced his candidacy for the President of the Czech Republic. As a Marxist intellectual, enjoying broad sympathy, he attracted public support of many personalities, movements and associations far beyond traditional sympathisers of his own creed and the CPBM. Benefiting from the experience of the former President of the International Union of Students, Dr Skála has been successfully getting together a wide range of alternative academicians and engaged citizens as a Director of the Institute of

## Diary

**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.

**UNTIL 9 SEPT**  
John Rylands Library: Workers’ Playtime: culture and community in industrial Lancashire. Exhibition, 10:00–17:00 Weds–Sat. Free. Deansgate, Manchester.

**SAT 8 JUL**  
Durham Miners Association: Durham Miners Gala, The Racecourse, Durham, DH1.

**FRI 14–SUN 16 JUL**  
Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival: Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Museum, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle, DT2 7EH.

**THUR 20 JUL**  
Marx Memorial Library: Spencer A Leonard: *Marx on India: The Immanent Dialectical Critique of (Anti-)Imperialism* 19:00. Onsite and online lecture; book on MML website. MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

**28 JULY–30 DEC**  
Working Class Movement

Library: *That Impudent Little Party: The Independent Labour Party 1893–1975*. Exhibition, Wed–Fri afternoons, WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

**THUR 6 AUG**  
CND Hiroshima Day commemorations. See CND website for local events including Nagasaki day on Sun 9 Aug.

**SUN 3 SEPT**  
Burston Strike School rally: Church Green, Burstton, near Diss, Norfolk.

**MON 4–FRI 15 SEPT**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Protests at DSEI Arms Fair. London’s Royal Docks, London E16.

**SUN 10–WED 13 SEPT**  
Trades Union Congress: 115th Congress 2023, Congress, ACC Liverpool King’s Dock, King’s Dock Street, Liverpool, L3 4FP.

**WED or THUR 13/14 SEPT**  
Glasgow Against NATO Action Committee: End the Sanctions against Russia! 19:00–21:00, Pearce Institute, Govan Road, Govan Underground, Glasgow.

the Left, as well as through the associations ‘Which Way to Leave the Crisis’ and ‘Halt Repression and Criminalisation’ of the freedom of speech.

He also initiated a campaign to award Julian Assange the Nobel Prize for Peace and to prevent his extradition to the USA. Dr Skála belongs to the ranks of leading figures striving for the broadest possible political bloc, capable of achieving more secure and just perspectives for our country. The witch-hunt, orchestrated against him, has been cowardly, attacking the entire alternative to the neo-liberal cynics and warmongers.

Critical reactions to the persecution of Dr Skála go beyond left-wing circles to included signatories of Charter 77, the First Deputy Foreign Minister of a recent Czech government,

the organisers of mass rallies against the present government last autumn in the centre of Prague (where Dr Skála had been a regular speaker), prominent academicians, and other personalities and bodies.

This blatant injustice, motivated by political goals, sets a dangerous precedent not only within the Czech Republic. Your open support is urgently needed in the struggle for justice. Dr Skála is ready to appeal the judgment to the Czech Supreme Court, the Czech Constitutional Court, or even to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Your open support for Josef Skála would be highly appreciated.

Support Dr Skála! Let’s fight together for freedom!

**Kateřina Konečná**  
**Chair of the CPBM**  
**Prague**



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## Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political  
affairs correspondent

**Not that it really matters very much, and few will notice, but the Scottish Parliament has started a two-month holiday. Naturally, the SNP Government took advantage of the break to bury bad news on the last day of term.**

One of these was the announcement (by letter the day after Holyrood shut) of the fact that the cost of one of the two notorious unbuilt ferries at Port Glasgow was to increase yet again, but this time it was only an extra £20.5 million. The last additional demand last September was for £72 million. At the same time an assurance was given that it would be "ready for passengers" next Spring, but we have heard that one before, the previous promise was for this Autumn.

To confirm that the saga has not ended, the yard's CEO, David Tydeman, said: "It's clear and regrettable that having 100 per cent confidence in the delivery date for Glen Sannox will remain a challenge monthly as we progress through commissioning, snagging and handover trials during the rest of the year."

The two ferries are well over three times the original £97 million budget and five years late, so this latest increase and delay is comparatively small beer.

Due to the much-disputed delays both ships

are having to be rebuilt. What will happen to the second ship is unclear but it is unlikely it will ever set sail. Labour's Alex Rowley thundered: "Islanders and workers have been let down by the Scottish Government time and time again throughout this fiasco, which seemingly has no end," adding: "The one thing lacking from this horrendous mismanagement of public funds has been accountability. It is high time the SNP got a grip on this scandal and finally deliver these long overdue ferries."

It has been calculated that it would be more economical to give each of the 320 workers at the yard a £1 million redundancy cheque and buy cheaper off-the-shelf ferries.

At the same time it has now been confirmed that the 2014 contract was rigged to benefit the then SNP-supporting owner of the yard to ensure that his firm was "well positioned" to win the contract. Ferguson Marine Engineering Limited was given information that other yards did not have. Emails between officials and ministers suggest the competition was largely a show to stop other yards moaning about a much smaller non-competitive contract that had earlier been given to the yard.

Meanwhile the situation as regards the existing ferry services gets even worse. Last month demonstrations were held in Glasgow and South Uist after the island lost its link with the mainland for almost the whole of June when its regular ferry was sent serve to a larger island when its regular ancient ferry was out of action. An

organiser of the Glasgow protest demanded compensation for the islands, which are heavily dependent on summer tourism.

Some islanders who have lived on the mainland say they regret returning home due to the transport difficulties. Mel Butler, who returned to living in Uist in 2020 after 13 years on the mainland, told the BBC that a school trip to the mainland actually required intervention from MSPs and a Scottish government minister to navigate west coast ferry disruption.

Even dead people making their final trip home had suffered endless delays, and Kate Dawson, a Benbecula GP, said the last year had seen the worst travel disruption her practice ever had. This affected deliveries to the dispensary, patients getting away for treatment, and recruitment and retention of GPs and other clinical staff.

### Scottish Nepotism Party

Yet another SNP scandal is emerging from North Lanarkshire, Scotland's political scandal capital.

A disgruntled ex-SNP councillor, Paul Di Mascio, has alleged he was blocked by the SNP leadership from standing for the Westminster seat of Airdrie & Shotts to allow former school teacher Anum Qaisar, who had no connection with the constituency (whose wedding was attended by Sturgeon), to be parachuted in for the 2021 by-election caused by the SNP incumbent switching to Holyrood. Councillor Di Mascio is one of those six councillors who defected from the SNP to form their own local party after being

disciplined for attacking the disgraced leader and now has nothing to lose by spilling the beans.

Ms Qaisar was a member of the Labour Party before 2014 and being Secretary of Scottish Labour's Muslim group was quite a catch for the SNP. This earned her a job in Sturgeon's office. Her very wealthy family were annoyed at her not being selected for a Holyrood seat in 2016 and according to a report in the *Sunday Mail* "made their feelings known" to the party. It has been also suggested that her selection is not unconnected with the recent discovery that a substantial large sum of money was donated to the SNP "by a relative of an MP" but not reported to the Electoral Commission as required, but it would be improper to speculate at this time. Needless to say, the SNP say the selection was all above board.

It is possible that this mysterious donation was one of those recorded in the documents which the new SNP auditors report that "the original records for some cash and cheques had not been retained for the current and prior financial years". If the accounts are not satisfactory the SNP risk losing the £1.2 million they receive to support their Westminster work. The party claim the bean-counter's qualification was merely a matter of "administrative processes" and there was "no suggestion of misappropriation of funds".

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# No British arms to Ukraine!

by New Worker  
correspondent

Activists from International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) gathered opposite Downing Street in London's Whitehall last week to demand an end to British weapons supplies to Ukraine.

They carried placards including: "No more British weapons for Ukrainian Nazis!", "No more Challengers – No more depleted

uranium – No more Storm-shadows", "No British boots on the ground in Ukraine", and "British troops and Spooks out of Ukraine!"

The protest was joined by members of NO2NATO–NO2WAR, and the NO2NATO banner was displayed alongside the Solidarity with the Anti-Fascist Resistance banner and a banner demand-



ing freedom for Ukrainian political prisoners. The protest was covered in a report by the RT News English language Moscow studios, which included contributions from several members of IUAFS. IUAFS has now decided to hold protests in Whitehall on every last Thursday of the month, with the next protest scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> July, 6:30–8pm.

## Eco-protesters in Westminster

by New Worker  
correspondent

Just Stop Oil campaigners were in Westminster last week making the case for an end to new oil, gas and coal projects in the UK. Whilst one group of student supporters disrupted traffic in Waterloo others defied draconian bail conditions to hold a protest sit-down picket outside the Houses of Parliament.

Three students defying their bail conditions banning them from "protesting without police permission" for the next three months. The students then sat down on the pavement outside Parliament with placards and gave speeches through a megaphone.

The repressive bail conditions had been imposed on the three after they were arrested for peacefully sitting outside Total Energies headquarters last week. Twenty-seven students were arrested that day, many of whom have had similar bail conditions imposed despite not being charged with any offence.

A Just Stop Oil Spokesperson said: "This criminal government is threatening



young people's lives by encouraging new oil and gas and changing the law at the behest of big oil corporations to ensure that no-one can stop them."

"The Met Police's arbitrary imposition and enforcement of vague bail conditions is part of a campaign of intimidation to

silence young people, who have every right to defend themselves against a government that is intent on annihilating their futures. The Police's failure to arrest these three breaking bail is a tacit acknowledgement that they have overstepped their authority".

## Orkxit? Orkney looks to Norway...

by Igor Kuznetsov

Orkney, an archipelago of some 200 islands in Scotland, is set to explore "alternative forms of governance" and may ultimately part ways with the UK – to the point of becoming a self-governing province of Norway.

The island chain located off the northern coast of Scotland seeks to broaden its economic opportunities and will consider changing its legal status within the UK.

A motion to explore its "Nordic connections" has been put forward by Orkney Islands council leader James Stockan, who stressed that the archipelago was part of the Norse kingdom for much longer than it was part of the UK. He also ventured that Orkney had been "failed dreadfully" by governments in Edinburgh and London, receiving much less funding per capita than nearby Shetland and the Western Isles.

Colonised by the Vikings, Orkney was under Norwegian and Danish rule until 1472, when the islands were given to Scotland as security for Margaret of Denmark's dowry on

her marriage to King James III of Scotland.

"On the street in Orkney, people come up and say to me: 'When are we going to pay back the dowry? When are we going back to Norway?' There is a huge affinity and a huge, deep cultural relationship there. This is exactly the moment to explore what is possible," Stockan said. "We share a vibrant and sustainable maritime economy. Norway is very good at this, and we have significant opportunities in our shared sea areas," he added in an interview with Norwegian media.

At the same time, he proposed studying more closely the governance structures of Crown dependencies such as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Furthermore, the council also referenced the Faroe Islands, a self-governing territory of the Danish Realm in the North Atlantic, for the debate to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

Although the motion does not commit the council to either of the options, any constitutional change would likely require an intricate combination of

petitions, referendums and legislative amendments in both Edinburgh and London.

Orkney, which has a population of 22,500, is located some 16 kilometres from Caithness, the northernmost county of mainland Scotland. The islands have been inhabited for at least 8,500 years running, originally by Mesolithic and Neolithic tribes and then by the Picts. Orkney was colonised by the Norwegians in 875 and settled by the Norsemen known as Vikings.

The islanders once spoke Norn, a now-extinct Norse dialect that was gradually replaced by English and Scots. Furthermore, genetic studies have shown that up to 25 per cent of the gene pool of Orkney derives from Norse ancestors.

Due to very fertile soil, most of the Orkney's land is taken up by farms, with agriculture being by far the most important sector of the economy and employing about a quarter of the workforce. Tourism makes up the other key industry of the islands

*Sputnik*



# Israeli smears and Zionist propaganda

by Amiad Horowitz

**The billionaire owner of Twitter and Tesla, Elon Musk, recently tweeted out an attack on fellow billionaire George Soros, comparing him to the fictional Holocaust survivor and Marvel Comics' super-villain Magneto. Whilst the tweet garnered near-universal condemnation, many were surprised to see the Israeli government – the government of the so-called 'Jewish State' and self-appointed representative of world Jewry – come to the defence of the anti-Semitic Musk.**

Anyone surprised by the Israeli government's actions however, has clearly not been paying attention. The defence of Musk is just the latest step in the Zionist regime's attempt at re-defining anti-Semitism as anti-Zionism. This move also helps the Israeli government's foreign policy, which has increasingly aligned itself with far-right, actually anti-Semitic governments

and movements around the world.

For decades, the Israeli government has used the accusation of anti-Semitism as a way to shield itself from any criticism. Anyone who dares to call into question the continued military occupation of millions of Palestinians, the jailing without trial of political dissidents, the destruction of civilian homes, or any of the many other crimes that the Israeli government commits on a regular basis, is quickly labelled an anti-Semite.

One would be forgiven for believing that the Israeli government is actually concerned with anti-Semitism, considering how often its leaders talk about it. But this is not the case, as the Israeli government increasingly befriends and defends far-right anti-Semitic politicians – as long as they are willing to support the continued occupation of the Palestinian people.

One such example is the Israeli government's close relationship with the

Trump administration and various other extreme-right Republican politicians. Trump repeatedly dragged out the anti-Semitic trope of Jewish dual loyalty when campaigning and whilst in office. On a number of occasions, when speaking to large Jewish crowds, Trump told Jewish Americans that the Israeli government is their actual government and that they owe their loyalty to the Republican Party because of its good friendship with the Israeli government.

Another example is the Israeli government's close ties with Viktor Orbán's extreme nationalist government in Hungary. Orbán often pushes policies to block immigration to the country, part of his effort to "keep Hungary Hungarian".

Orbán has used the anti-Semitic trope of rich Jews controlling the world, claiming that they seek to flood Hungary with foreign Muslims. Whilst Soros was the main target of Orbán's attacks (as he was for Musk), the Hungarian government used typical

anti-Semitic imagery in its disinformation campaign.

Following this trend, in order to deepen its relationship with the ultra-conservative, nationalist Polish government, the current Netanyahu government capitulated to pressure from Warsaw to follow the revisionist history pushed by the Polish government, denying any Polish collaboration in the crimes of the Holocaust.

Netanyahu agreed that Israeli students who visit Poland will learn the Polish narrative, despite the large body of historical evidence that contradicts it. The Israeli government once took pride in hunting down Nazis, such as Adolf Eichmann, but today it accepts Holocaust revisionist history in order to cosy up to other far-right governments around the world.

Not surprisingly, the Israeli government has also now aligned itself with far-right elements in the Ukraine war. It even went as far as welcoming members of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion to Israel.

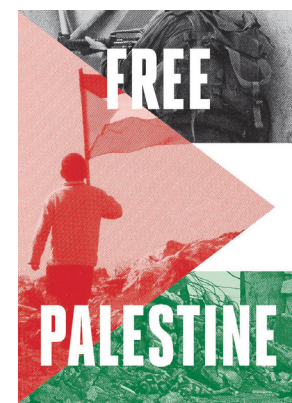
The Azov Battalion made its bones by attacking Russian, Roma and other minority groups living in Ukraine, including Jews. At one point, the Chief Rabbi of Kiev stated that it was too dangerous for Jews to walk around wearing yarmulkes (the traditional Jewish skull cap) in the capital due to the strong influence of fascist elements connected to the Azov Battalion and the Svoboda Party.

At the same time, the Israeli government is not at all afraid to accuse any and all who criticise it of being anti-Semitic. Israeli newspapers are overflowing with articles that declare opponents of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian people to be anti-Semitic. In fact, the Israeli government declared the UN report that cites facts about Israel's violation of international law to be anti-Semitic.

One of the favourite tools of fascists and the extreme-right is to change the meaning of words to serve their goals. In the USA the Trump administration

pushed "alternative facts" and protesters were accused of being paid traitors. The Israeli government is following the same model. It seeks to be the arbiter of who is and who isn't anti-Semitic, and the government's definition is easy enough to understand. Anyone who agrees with state policy – even if they be Nazis, fascists or Christian ultra-nationalists – can't possibly be a hater of Jews. Anyone who criticises Israeli policy – no matter if they are progressive politicians, human rights activists or experts in international law – are all anti-Semites.

*People's World (USA)*



## Cuba: On the road to the World Cup

by Jose Reinoso

**The Gold Cup, the main tournament of the Northern, Central American and Caribbean Confederation (CONCACAF), will grant quotas to the region's squads for the 2026 World Cup, to be held in the USA, Mexico and Canada.**

Until 1963, competitions were held in all three regions mentioned above, but as of 1963 those areas were unified to hold the CONCACAF Nations Championship, until 1991, when the Gold Cup was created. Since then and until the present, an attractive format is conducted with the presence of an invited country.

The next Gold Cup will take place from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023, with 16 teams divided into four groups: A (the USA, Jamaica, Nicaragua, TBD); B (Mexico, Honduras, Haiti and Qatar); C (Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, TBD); and D (Canada, Guatemala, Cuba, TBD).

About 15 stadiums in the USA, Canada and Mexico will welcome the region's best soccer players, who will work on their tactical preparation and on their potential, strengths and weaknesses, in preparation for the World Cup.

Amongst the latter, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Jamaica, Guatemala, Haiti, El Salvador, Cuba and

Nicaragua are included. These squads will compete for the other three quotas allocated to CONCACAF and the two places reserved for the repechage matches, with opponents from other Confederations.

Although there is still plenty of time for the start of the next qualification tournaments for the FIFA Cup, there is no doubt that the Gold Cup will be the initial indicator of each teams' real options.



• The Lions of the Caribbean

In principle, the Costa Ricans, Panamanians and Hondurans start as clear favourites, but the Jamaicans, Haitians, Guatemalans and Salvadorians are to be considered too. The Cubans, unlike other occasions, also have possibilities as a result of having players playing in foreign leagues.

A priori, Cuba's handicap is its elite tournament, which is

characterised by its low competitive development in relation to its organisation and number of matches, despite its opening and closing structure – very different to that of other countries.

The Nicaraguans, for their part, will compete in the Gold Cup – their sixth participation in this event – after a brilliant performance in the Nations League, and their National Federation foresees a serious and organised work, with lots of perspectives.

Battles at the technical direction level also seem to be interesting as, with the exception of the Cubans, the Salvadorians and the Trinidadians, the rest of the squads have foreign football coaches: Costa Rica, a Colombian; Panama, a Danish/Spanish;

Honduras, an Argentinean; Jamaica, an Icelandic; Guatemala, a Mexican; and Nicaragua, a Chilean.

A great team that is absent from the next Gold Cup and has future pretensions and projections is the Dominican Republic, which recently hired an Argentinean coach. Qualifying for the next World Cup however, will be a difficult task for this squad.

This is the region's panorama as the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Gold Cup comes closer, whose current champion is the USA and whose main winners include: Mexico (10 occasions); the USA (7); Costa Rica (3); Canada (2); and Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras, with one each.

*Havana Reporter*

# France rocked by new riots

by New Worker correspondent

**Waves of violent protests are sweeping France following the shooting of a teenager by the police last week. Rioters fought the police on the streets of the capital whilst the home of the mayor of a Paris suburb was ram-raided and torched by an angry mob.**

Tens of thousands of police have been deployed across the country after the funeral of Nahel Merzouk, a teenager of North African descent shot dead at a road-block for allegedly

refusing to 'comply' with police orders.

Two hundred police have been injured and over two thousand protesters, mainly teenagers, arrested in a week of violence following the death of the youth. Two-thousand vehicles have been torched and hundreds of shops, supermarkets, restaurants and bank branches have been looted in a week of violence that has led to thousands of arrests, local curfews, and bans on marches and demonstrations.

France's President



• An evening in Paris

Macron portrays the riots as the work of criminal gangs rather than the consequence of widespread

public discontent. But the Turkish leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, says they reflect France's "colonial past" and

its "arrogant culture of racism".

The Turkish president linked the violence between the French police and largely North African-origin protesters to a "colonial, arrogant and inhumane mentality based on white male superiority".

Erdoğan said: "Especially in countries known for their colonial past, cultural racism has turned into institutional racism. At the root of the events that began in France is the social architecture built by this mentality."

"The majority of systematically oppressed immigrants condemned to live in marginalised neighbourhoods and ghettos are Muslims," he added.

Whilst stressing that Turkey does not approve of property damage and looting, Erdoğan asserted that "unfortunately, violence led to violence and triggered the events".

He also expressed concern that these incidents might provoke a new wave of oppression against Muslims. "Turks have paid the highest price of Islamophobia," he said.

# Battles rage in West Bank town

by Ed Newman

**Israel's bloody incursion against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank continues with growing calls for the protection of civilians and fears the tense situation could explode into another devastating war.**

The ground-and-air attack on the Jenin refugee camp on Monday was the largest military operation in the occupied territory since the 2000–2005 Second Intifada – or mass Palestinian uprising against Israel's decades-long occupation.

At least eight Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire, including two teenagers. A ninth Palestinian was also shot dead by Israeli soldiers near Ramallah.

Nidal Obeidi, the mayor of Jenin, said the attack was "a real massacre and an attempt to wipe out all aspects of life inside the city and the camp".

"Those being targeted now are not just the resistance fighters but civilians are being killed and wounded as well," he said.

The municipality of Jenin announced water and electricity services had been cut off from the

refugee camp because of ongoing combat. The Palestine Red Crescent said at least 3,000 people were evacuated from Jenin. Deploying hundreds of forces, attacking from the sky with drones, and launching rockets on the densely populated camp of about 20,000 people, the Israeli military also targeted infrastructure by destroying homes and roads.

The hotbed of resistance against the Israeli occupation has repeatedly been an Israeli target. At least seven Palestinians were killed in an Israeli incursion in Jenin just two

weeks ago.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen claimed Tel Aviv is not intending to expand its operation to the rest of the occupied West Bank, but armed confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinian guerrillas near the refugee camp continued and the military sent reinforcements.

Palestinian fighters were holed up in a mosque, the Israeli military said, adding the operation would continue until suspects belonging to armed groups were captured, which might require another 24 hours to complete.

The two young victims in Jenin were identified as Nouruddin Husam Yousef Marshoud, 15, and 17-year-old Majdi Younis Saud Ararawi, according to the group Defence for Children International–Palestine. The oldest of Monday's nine victims was 23-year-old Mohammed Muhannad al-Shami.

Several journalists said they were directly targeted by Israeli live fire whilst reporting on the events in Jenin. Al Araby TV channel correspondent Ahmed Shehadeh said the Israelis destroyed his camera with

gunfire whilst he and four other journalists were stuck inside one of the homes in the camp for two hours before being evacuated by the Red Crescent.

It was not the first time media members have become victims in Jenin. Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, 51, was killed by Israeli soldiers whilst reporting on a military raid on the camp last year. The Palestinian-American correspondent was shot in the head whilst wearing a blue flak jacket clearly marked with the word "PRESS".

Radio Havana Cuba

# The most serious threat to global security

by Zhang Kaiwei & Liang Jun

**The USA has become the most profound source of instability worldwide says Richard Haass, who is stepping down as president of the US Council on Foreign Relations.**

Born in Brooklyn and raised on Long Island, Haass is a veteran of four administrations, one Dem-

ocrat and three Republican. After running the Council on Foreign Relations for two decades, Haass said he has come to a disturbing conclusion that the most serious danger to the world's security right now is the USA itself, he told the *New York Times* in an interview.

The unravelling of the American political system means that for the first time in his life, the internal threat has surpassed the external threat, he added.

Instead of being the most reliable anchor in a volatile world, the USA has become the most profound source of instability and an uncertain exemplar of

democracy, Haass said.

"Our domestic political situation is not only one that others don't want to emulate ... but I also think that it's introduced a degree of unpredictability and a lack of reliability that's really poisonous. For America's ability to function successfully in the world, I mean, it makes it very hard for our

friends to depend on us."

After exploring other countries for most of the past half-century, Haass is ready to explore his own, as "the challenges at home have prompted a man who has spent his entire career as a policymaker and student of world affairs to turn his attention inward," said the *New York Times*.

The question is whether the USA has changed in the long run. "I should have a nickel...for every non-American, every foreign leader who said to me: 'I don't know what's the norm and what's the exception anymore'," said Haass.

Xinhua