

## Ukraine offensive stalls as Russians pound Black Sea ports

by our Eastern European  
Affairs correspondent

The Russian Black Sea blockade in back into full swing following the collapse of the grain deal that the Zelensky regime and the imperialists never honoured. Russian missiles are pounding the Odessa docks and the Ukrainian ports on the Danube whilst their troops push the Ukrainians back in the northern Donbas whilst holding the line along the rest of the front.

The Ukrainian “summer offensive” seems to have run out of steam, with little to show for it apart from a few small villages taken at great cost over the last six weeks. But his may only be a tactical lull as the Ukrainians mobilise for another big push in the south.

Meanwhile the Ukrainians are stepping up their drone attacks. Last week they hit the Crimean Bridge with Ukrainian drones and this week they struck Moscow again, hitting two non-residential buildings in the Russian capital.

The 12-mile-long Crimean Bridge is Europe’s longest and it is a key supply route for Russian forces on the



• Anti-war protest in Washington

southern front. This is the second time the Ukrainians have targeted this key artery. American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh says the Biden administration of played a significant role in both attacks.

“Of course it was our technology,” a US official told Hersh. “The drone was remotely guided and half submerged – like a torpedo.”

When Hersh asked if there was any thought about the possibility of Russia’s retaliation the unnamed source said: “What will Putin do? We don’t think that far. Our national strategy is that Zelensky can do whatever he wants to do. There’s no adult supervision.”

The USA has “no real idea of what Zelensky and his crowd are thinking” the official added, asserting that the Ukrainian leader “has no plan, except to hang on”. He also speculated that US support for Kiev is due to “Zelensky’s knowledge

of Biden, and not just because he was taking care of Biden’s son Hunter”.

Back in Moscow, Russian Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov repeated the CPRF demands for social justice to unite the country in the struggle to defend the Donbas.

Zyuganov told the Duma, the Russian parliament, that: “Before the treacherous collapse of the USSR, the population of Russia was almost three per cent of the world’s population. Now this figure has halved, and we continue to decline at an accelerated pace. The causes of extinction are social injustice, lack of perspective, and the thieves who have fabulously enriched themselves by exploiting our resources, but do not want to help their poor fellow citizens. We believe that this is absolutely unnatural. The oligarchs must be forced to pay normal taxes, especially in conditions of war!”

“This war was un-

leashed against the entire Russian world and acquired an openly threatening character. When drones reach the Kremlin and nuclear power plants, when the Nazi-Bandera regime in Kiev turns terrorism into state policy, no one can feel safe.

“In this regard, the

question inevitably arises: where is success for us and where is victory?

“We have been fighting for more than 500 days – a third of the time it took to win the Great Patriotic War. And in the current situation, we can only be satisfied with victory. Our faction, the left-wing patriotic forces, have been actively working on this task all this time.

“The Duma as a whole showed character. We have adopted almost 200 laws that help conduct a special military operation and pull the country out of the crisis. Twenty-four ‘government hours’ took place. It should be noted that the current government reports to the Duma more professionally than the previous one. But this alone is not enough. To win, we vitally need a new course!”

### FUND

The July fighting fund has ticked over during the shut-down, but we still raised £1,740 and we’ve still got a week to go before the appeal ends to try to hit our £3,500 target.

Running a communist weekly is never easy at the best of times. We need a constant and generous flow of money to guarantee our survival. And if you think the New Worker is worth it – and you must do if you’re reading this column – please support the fighting fund.

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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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# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Free all political prisoners in Ukraine!

Western politicians are the first to proclaim their support for civil liberties and religious and political freedom. Some civil rights campaigners are elevated like icons by the Western 'human rights' campaigners. The chosen few even get awards from the European Parliament and the United Nations. But only those who serve the interests of imperialism.

Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks campaigner, languishes in Belmarsh jail ignored by those who loudly proclaim their support for free speech in the bourgeois media.

We see the bourgeois 'human rights' gang brand freedom-fighters as "terrorists" whilst passing off the brutish gunmen who served imperialism in Syria as the "moderate opposition". We see the imperialists and their lackeys holding "Summits for Democracy" to provide a platform for a new propaganda offensive against People's China, Russia and the rest of the world that refuses to submit to Western economic and political control. We see some of the worst human rights abusers in the world, such as Israel, Ukraine and, of course, the USA itself, hailed as bastions of freedom and democracy.

In Ukraine all opposition parties have been banned. Thousands of Ukrainians, journalists, politicians, elected representatives, activists, priests, sportspeople, and even Ukrainian negotiators and military officers, have been jailed on trumped-up charges of "treason" or support for Russia. Some have been tortured or murdered by the police or the fascist militias that prop up the Zelensky regime.

Since the Russian intervention most of our media has claimed that the fascist groups in Ukraine have changed their spots and are no longer fascists but "patriotic defenders of Ukraine". We refuse to believe this ridiculous claim that is completely at odds with the evidence.

We think it is essential to speak out about the actions of a government whom the British government seems to have unlimited resources to support, at a time when millions here in Britain are facing a grim and uncertain future and our basic public services are chronically underfunded and understaffed.

We stand side-by-side with the victims of fascist oppression in Ukraine. We demand their immediate and unconditional release and the restoration of full civil and political rights in Ukraine.

## Something for everyone

They say it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good and that was certainly true of last week's by-election results. Labour and the Liberal Democrats both took Conservative seats, and the Tories managed to hold their other former bastion in suburban London.

Although there was indeed something for everyone in the results, the biggest winners were the Lib-Dems, once again on the come-back trail. The Tories actually held onto Boris Johnson's old seat, albeit by the skin of their teeth. And although the Starmer crowd were disappointed in failing to take all three seats, the overall swing in their favour puts them on course to victory at the next general election.

That, however, is not a foregone conclusion. With little to choose from between Labour and the Conservatives there's going to be little incentive to even bother to vote next year. This can only work in favour of the Scottish nationalists and the Liberal Democrats who share a firm commitment to take Britain back into the European Union and would almost certainly ally with the Remain faction in Labour and the Tory party to create favourable conditions for a 'Rejoinder' second referendum in the not-too-distant future.

We had a golden opportunity to open the doors to free trade across the world when we left the EU – Boris Johnson wasted it crawling to the Americans. But returning to the EU is not the answer. You only have to look at what's happening on the streets of France to see that the EU is hardly a pillar of social justice. The only way out of the capitalist crisis is socialism and that can only come by ourselves alone, not the EU or the USA.

# Demonising China to cover AI use for military ends

by Yang Sheng

**US politicians on a House Armed Services sub-committee and the head of the British secret service have recently gone on another round of hyping up the "Chinese threat" and demonising China in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. These acts aim to use ideology to politicise the issue of AI, and to legitimise the acts of Washington and London in containing or cutting off normal co-operation and exchanges between Western companies, science technology institutions and their Chinese counterparts.**

More dangerously, British and American politicians and relevant officials are trying to beautify or cover their selfish and irresponsible moves promoting usage of AI in the field of military and espionage, which have been met with strong opposition and concern from the international community including China, analysts said, warning that China needs to be prepared for a "dangerous arms race" in the field of AI initiated by the USA and its allies.

Sir Richard Moore, head of the UK's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), better known as MI6, told the US media outlet *Politico* last week that the agency is in "a race to use artificial intelligence to outsmart adversaries and stop them from abusing the technology".

"There's absolutely no doubt that some of our adversaries will be prepared to develop AI in ways which are reckless and dangerous... that worries us," Moore said.

These remarks are truly ridiculous because it was countries such as the USA and the UK that first pushed the use of AI in the field of military and espionage to threaten and

harm other countries' national security, and their irresponsible acts are the real challenge to world peace in the first place, said a Beijing-based expert on cybersecurity who asked for anonymity.

Based on public information and media reports, the USA has already used AI technology in military drones, and the USA and its allies have already started projects on unmanned battlefield systems, and now they are using AI to conduct online espionage acts for intelligence gathering purposes, said the expert.

"But now, Moore is trying to say that his infamous spy agency is like an innocent and clean charity organisation, and this is truly laughable," he added.

Ambassador Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, said at the UN Security Council Briefing on Artificial Intelligence that: "The potential impacts of AI may exceed human cognitive boundaries. To ensure that this technology always benefits humanity, it is necessary to take people-oriented and AI for good as the basic principles to regulate the development of AI and to prevent this technology from turning into a runaway wild horse."

Zhang added that: "AI in the military field may lead to major changes in the methods of warfare and the format of war. All countries should uphold a responsible defence policy, oppose the use of AI to seek military hegemony or to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries, and avoid the abuse, unintentional misuse or even intentional misuse of AI weapons systems."

Ignoring China's firm stance on the AI issue, Moore specifically mentioned China during his interview, saying:

"China has added to its immense datasets at home by hoovering up others abroad, and the Chinese authorities are not hugely troubled by questions of personal privacy or individual data security," and "they're focused on controlling information and preventing inconvenient truths from being revealed."

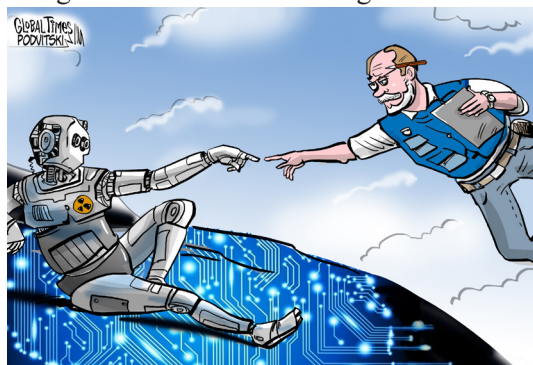
Last week US Congress members of the Cyber, Information Technologies & Innovation sub-committee heard US experts explain how the US Department of Defense can utilise artificial intelligence to improve its capabilities and what hurdles need to be overcome to maintain its position as a world leader. Some lawmakers warned of troubling potential consequences "if China were to win the competition", CBS reported.

Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert and TV commentator, says that it's very clear that Moore and US lawmakers are trying to play the trick of hyping the "China threat" to legitimise the UK's and USA's act of interrupting or banning normal AI co-operation in civilian sectors, such as science technology companies, between the West and China.

"The US and the UK's political elites always treat cutting edge technologies as weapons, so they believe AI technology is a key field for major power competition, and they want to dominate the technology and create an overwhelming advantage against others, so that they can do whatever they want and bully others from a position of strength," Song noted.

In the future, a war between a country that has mastered AI technology for military use and a country that has no AI technology at all will become an absolutely one-sided massacre, as the weak side's troops will be slaughtered by unmanned war machines in the battlefield, said Song. "The terrible and dangerous arms race in the field of AI has already been launched by the USA and its allies, and that would be deadly if other countries just sit and wait and do nothing. China will be fully prepared to deal with this dangerous trend," he concluded.

*Global Times*





## Workers' Notes

### State of the Unions

by New Worker correspondent

**The percentage of UK employees belonging to trade unions fell to 22.3 per cent in 2022 – down from 23.1 per cent in 2021. This meant 200,000 fewer workers are in unions, with only 6,250,000 trade unionists out of a workforce of 28,300,000, the lowest rate since 1995. Of these, about five and a half million are in TUC-affiliated unions. The 2022 fall was most notable in the private sector, but public sector membership fell as well.**

Another set of official figures was released in early July. These are in the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations Annual Report, which covers the year up to 1st April 2022 and are compiled from returns from unions and employers' associations. The earlier figures were from the Labour Force Survey, which are based on sample surveys of workers. The figures are slightly different but not wildly so (with one important exception discussed below), but the latest Certification Officer figures are six months behind the Labour Force Survey. Whilst one might think the figures based on returns from the unions are more accurate, many union branches still use obsolete membership lists.

In the last year no less than eight unions have passed into history. The National Association of NFU Group Secretaries is no more, which will give farmers an easier time, as is the National Union of Mineworkers Cokemen's Area, which was well past its sell-by date. The Institute of Journalists continues as a professional body but no longer pretends to be a trade union.

The only major departure recorded is the demise of "Workers Uniting", founded in 2008 by Unite in collaboration with the US-based United Steelworkers, which was to "build global union activism, recognising that uniting as workers across international boundaries is the only way to challenge the injustices of globalisation". In reality it only provided a few photo opportunities for general secretaries.

A few other unions that have not had sufficient energy to fill in their annual returns have also departed the scene.

There is one new union, although five other organisations are seeking certification: The "Solid" trade union which hopes to represent workers in the "private sector specifically within manufacturing, primarily in the North West of England". But it does not seem to have done anything except set up a website and has not even been denounced by any other union.

The Certification Officer's figures show that the total funds belonging to trade unions fell 2.2 per cent to £1.61 billion in 2022. More dramatically, political funds fell 42 per cent from £52 to £30 million. Membership of Britain's 116 registered unions fell a massive 19 per cent from 6.7 to 5,353,382 according to the Certification Officer – however this is due largely to the absence of Unite from this year's figures. Unite's last official figures were 1,246,429. Even so, adding Unite's membership to the latest total gives us a 6.6 million total, only about 35,000 above the Labour Force Survey figure. So there is plenty of room for improvement.

It beggars belief that a major trade union could not get its act together to fill in a form on time, something that the mighty Leek United Building Society Staff Association managed, but there we have it. We will have to wait another year to see what effect the recent

### Save Penzance booking office

by New Worker correspondent

#### Demonstrators rallied outside Penzance railway station in July in support



strike wave has on the figures. There should be some positive bounce, but probably not as some optimistic reports from some unions.

The salaries of General Secretaries recorded in the Certification Officer's report do not generally feature in union press releases. They range from the £9,098 earned by the leader of "Solidarity: the Union for British Workers", which is run by a former National Front leader (there are some strange bodies that manage to get approval) to the £557,000 paid to the General Secretary of the Professional Footballers Association – but at least he could claim only to be taking what many of his members expect and more.

That is not the case for the railway workers in RMT, whose leader gets £193,973, nor the £251,158 pocketed by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) General Secretary. In the other two rail unions, the General Secretary of the higher-paid drivers' union ASLEF gets £108,610 and that of TSSA £93,994. The General Secretary of the Musicians' Union will whistle a happy tune on her £135,051. About a third of the general secretaries get six figure salaries, and that is before expenses and ben-

**efits. Who says trade unions don't boost wages. Despite its popularity, the ticket office is under threat of closure like so many around the country.**

Local and regional media were in attendance, and in

addition to RMT members and local supporters the Mayor of Penzance and the Labour and Liberal candidates at the last general election also offered their support. No sign of the sitting Tory MP...

Even excluding the massive Unite, it is clear from the Certification Officer's statistics that more than two-thirds of Britain's trade unionists are in the 11 unions with more than 100,000 members. In descending order by membership, these are: Unison with 1,394,892 members, GMB, RCN, National Education Union, USDAW, National Association of Schoolmasters and Women Teachers, Communication Workers Union, PCS, British Medical Association (BMA), Prospect, and finally down to the University College Union with 122,104 members.

These are largely public service unions, many with a majority of university-educated members. Once upon a time the largest union was the National Union of Mineworkers, which had over a million members. It now has less than 200 and exists mainly to deal with welfare issues.

At the other end of the scale there are six unions with a total of 277 members, but there are almost a million members in the 105 unions with less than 100,000 members.

At a time of general decline there has been a mod-

est growth in the smaller unions with a membership of less than 10,000, which now amounts to 167,538 or three per cent of the total membership, which could possibly be evidence of discontent with the larger unions.

### Outsourcing Wars

by New Worker correspondent

**The campaign against the firing-and-rehiring of security guards at University College London (UCL) unfortunately has to continue. In coming weeks outsourcer Bidvest is planning to force over 250 workers, almost entirely Black and Asian, to reapply for their own jobs on lower salaries or face the sack. Forty redundancies are planned, and those whose jobs are secured lose over £10,000 per year.**

This is in revenge for the strike organised by a small street union, the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB), at UCL for higher pay in February.

In addition to the re-hiring issue the workers are demanding an end to outsourcing and for union recognition. IWGB point out that with a £90 million surplus, UCL can well af-

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ford to do so. A 2019 strike secured commitments from UCL, which have not been met.

The workers have adopted a novel means of raising awareness. On Friday they drove a double decker bus around London, stopping off at the offices of various members of UCL's governing council.

The bus stopped off at the Bank of England, Lincoln's Inn Chambers, management consultant McKinsey and Japanese bank Nomura.

Protests are planned to continue throughout this and next week, with a rally outside Parliament on Thursday.

One of the guards, Zayad Farouk, said: "UCL are uprooting my entire life just to cut costs. They're forcing us to reapply to our jobs with worse conditions, making the campus that we care so much about less safe for everyone. We're losing vital income during a cost-of-living crisis which we desperately need to support our families, and the university won't even hear our concerns."

Henry Chango Lopez, IWGB's General Secretary, added: "UCL's racist outsourcing practices, which see black and brown workers deprived of the rights and pay that full employees

enjoy, has hit a new low. UCL needs to stop the fire-and-rehire and bring security guards back in house, and we will continue to take action and use our voices until they do."

## Parking Problems

by New Worker correspondent

**Some of Britain's least loved workers are taking industrial action. In the north London borough of Camden parking wardens have just started an indefinite strike whilst in Glasgow action begins next week.**

In Camden the target is NSL, which is an outsourcing company founded in 2007 when that other NCP, National Car Parks, demerged its activities. It was notorious for the poor quality of its patient transport services in Kent and for wardens in Westminster blocking cars so that they could extract parking fines.

The traffic wardens voted solidly in favour of industrial action to secure a much-needed pay rise. Liz Wheatley, Branch Secretary of the borough's branch of Unison, said the parking wardens, or "civil enforcement officers" to give them their Sunday name, have to put up with racist abuse and threats of violence on their

long daily rounds.

They are presently paid £12.70 per hour and are seeking £15.90. The NSL's most recent offer is a 4.5 per cent rise of 57 pence to £13.27 hourly. On a 73 per cent turnout 100 per cent voted for strike action.

Wheatley added that as 2023 had been designated as "Year of the Black Worker in Unison" it was appropriate that Unison was campaigning against low pay that disproportionately affects black workers.

Five years ago a similar action took place in Camden, when scores of parking wardens held a 33-day strike against the same contractor when they were paid £10 per hour. In addition, staff then also complained of invasive monitoring by the company.

As with many councils, parking fines are big business. Camden Council makes about £40,000 a day. This is supposed to be invested back into running the parking service, but the fines tend to go into general council funds.

It looks as though the workers will have a fight on their hands. NSL told the local *Camden New Journal* that: "The staff are currently on a salary well above London Living Wage and, whilst we agree they should receive an uplift, the union's position of a minimum that

will be considered is a 25 per cent increase and therefore not affordable." The Council expressed the pious hope that motorists would stick to the presently unenforceable rules.

In Glasgow, another union, Unite, is leading the charge for about 70 traffic wardens employed by Glasgow Life and City Parking (both council-run arms-length companies). This is not just an isolated action but could be the first of many actions in response to an inadequate pay offer from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA). Unite support workers in schools are in the closing stages of a ballot for action.

The action, which was almost unanimous, starts next Friday and will coincide with the start of the UCI Cycling World Championship in Glasgow,

an occasion which requires lots of wardens to close and reopen roads and at the stadium where the event finishes.

The union's Scottish Industrial Officer, Graham McNab, said: "This is a clear warning to COSLA. Their five per cent offer fails on so many fronts, but worst of all is it fails those who are the lowest paid in Local Authorities. We hoped the lessons of last year would have been learned, but they are being repeated."

General Secretary, Sharon Graham, added: "The five per cent on the table is nowhere near our members' needs or expectations. They have voted previously to reject this offer by 84 per cent, yet these warnings were ignored by COSLA who refused to engage in further talks."

## Free the Elbit Six!

by New Worker correspondent

**Palestinian solidarity activists gathered outside the High Court in London on Saturday to call for the freedom of Palestine Action prisoners, jailed for taking part in direct action protests against British-Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit Systems. People have taken action in the UK, Canada and France over the jailings. It came after high-profile campaigners, including Roger Waters of Pink Floyd fame, issued a joint statement condemning the British state's persecution of the six people**

**over their activism against the state of Israel.**

Since Palestine Action launched in July 2020, their actions have caused severe disruption to Elbit's business, causing the closure of a factory in Oldham and the Central London HQ.

The State has increasingly become more heavy-handed, six Palestine Action activists are currently in prison, and over 100 more may face it. The judiciary is also cracking down, refusing bail in some cases, or to accept long-established legal precepts such a defence of necessity, the argument that a small offence is justified to prevent a greater harm from happening.

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

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

**THE DEATH of Dr David Kelly – the Government weapons expert at the centre of storm over the "sexed up" Iraq dossier – has sparked off demands for a genuine independent public inquiry into the circumstances which led up to his death.**

*Certain facts are incontrovertible.*

*Dr Kelly was a senior Ministry of Defence (MoD) scientist who served as a UNSCOM weapons inspector in Iraq after the first Gulf War in 1991.*

*Prior to that he had been the*

*head of the biological warfare research centre at Porton Down.*

*Last week he was accused of being the chief source behind the BBC's allegation that the Government had doctored intelligence reports on Iraq's weapons capability to justify their support of US imperialism in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq.*

*He got a grilling from the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee when he conceded that he had spoken to the BBC. The committee, however, concluded that Dr Kelly was not the main source of the story.*

*Last Thursday afternoon he left his home in Southmoor, Abingdon, Oxfordshire for a walk in the countryside, something he often did. The next morning his body was found at a beauty spot some five miles away with a slashed wrist and a bottle of pain killers by his side*

*We have to insist that the inquiry the Government has agreed*

*to is allowed to carry out its work in public and without hindrance. Lord Hutton, the judge appointed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Dr Kelly, says he himself will decide the scope of the investigation.*

*The Hutton inquiry may be able to shed some light on the information Dr Kelly had about the intelligence dossiers. We may well discover whether Dr Kelly took his own life, whether he had been stitched-up by his MoD employers, and whether he was the major source cited by the BBC.*

*But Lord Hutton hasn't got the scope nor the powers to deal with the broader and deeper questions that remain unanswered. These revolve around the allegation that the Prime Minister misled Parliament by insisting that Iraq was in breach of the UN's disarmament regime by claiming that it still possessed weapons of mass destruction.*





# Israeli apartheid fuels war

by Fouad Baker

**In September 2017, the right-wing Israeli magazine *Hashiloach*, which is funded by a Jewish-American capitalist that supports the racist Israeli right-wing government and its colonial projects in the occupied Palestinian territories, published Bezael Smotrich's plan and his vision for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, under the title *The Decisive Plan*.**

Today, Bezael Smotrich plays a dangerous political role for the Palestinian people as the leader of the settler movement, which is the most extreme and racist movement that combines right-wing extremism with religious extremism. He currently occupies an official position in the current fascist Israeli government, where he is a second minister in the Israeli Ministry of Defence, in addition to the Israeli Ministry of Finance, and this is what makes his plan applicable and to blackmail the Palestinian people with it.

Smotrich believes that the borders of Israel should coincide with the borders of the biblical land of "Israel", and not as stipulated in Resolution 181 of the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 that granted 56 per cent of the land of historical Palestine to extremist Zionist organisations, through the construction of Illegal Israeli colonialism settlements,

and the annexation of the occupied Palestinian lands in 1967. In addition, he incites the killing of Palestinians to intimidate them and uproot them from their land.

The current Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu practices a policy of liquidation and field executions against the Palestinian people and launches terrorist incursions into Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank, such as Jenin, Nablus and Balata, to provoke the Palestinian people and impose control of the Israeli occupation forces on East Jerusalem.

The Israeli government recently held a special session in the tunnels of Al-Buraq Square in the occupied Old City of Jerusalem, with the aim of building more settlements and changing the historical and demographic landmarks in Jerusalem. In this governmental session, it was agreed

to form an Israeli ministerial committee called the "Greater Jerusalem Committee" aimed at strengthening the Israeli occupation institutions, imposing control over educational curricula to Judaise them, allocating a budget for the establishment of illegal colonial settlements in occupied Jerusalem, and continuing archaeological excavations to search for antiquities to be confiscated even though they belong to the Palestinian people.

The government session held in the tunnels of Al-Buraq Square in occupied Jerusalem reflects the decline of the Israeli forces facing the Palestinian resistance and the abject failure of Netanyahu on both the domestic and foreign policy fronts.

The Palestinian resistance's "Revenge of the Free" battle shattered Netanyahu's prestige after he assassinated three Palestinian leaders martyred in their homes along with

their families in Israeli missile attack on the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian resistance set up a joint military operations room in which all Palestinian parties participated. When the Israelis moved to disperse the joint military operations room between the Palestinian parties, they were sent a clear message back with a barrage of missiles fired from southern Lebanon.

After Netanyahu signed the "Abraham Accords" with the Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan amidst hopes of normalisation with Saudi Arabia, the Israeli leader tried hard to convince the Arabs that Iran is the real danger, not Israel.

But Saudi Arabia and Iran signed an agreement in Beijing to normalise relations and resolve all differences between their two countries. This marked the complete failure of the goals of Netanyahu's current government.

It totally undermined all the plans he had drawn up since 2009 to carry out a military strike against Tehran. For years Netanyahu had called on the Arabs to join him in an attack war on Iran to disrupt Iranian aid to Syria and stop their nuclear programme.

But this plan failed. Syria has returned to the Arab League of Arab States after its membership was frozen for 10 years. The Syrians and Saudis have normalised relations and the train of Arab solidarity with the Palestinians has resumed with a Chinese initiative that bypasses American blackmail and pressure.

The repercussions of the Russian military operation in Ukraine and Washington's confrontation with China in Asia put Israel in a diplomatic dilemma it cannot easily resolve. Israel is now suffering from an internal crisis related to judicial amendments, a number of internal Israeli disputes, the existence of multiple war fronts and a decline in relations between Tel Aviv and Washington as a result of the global economic crisis.

The racism and extremism of the Israeli government is leading to a wider conflict in the region, however. The illegal settlement projects, the ethnic cleansing and the killing of Palestinians could ignite the Middle East with a war with unimaginable consequences.



• Steadfastness in Gaza



# What we defend Wall Street wants to destroy

by Sara Flounders

**What is the material basis of the growing hostility on every level of the American ruling class toward People's China?**

No great struggle is based on the personalities or aspirations of individuals. At the root is a very concrete, material basis that drives the conflict. Otherwise, meetings, discussions and diplomacy would succeed. These techniques can paper over differences – but not fundamentally resolve them.

US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen's talk on 7<sup>th</sup> June to a group of US businesspeople at the American Chamber of Commerce in China exposed how well these US corporate heads understand the basic, irreconcilable difference. They are deeply frustrated about their inability to maintain their dominant global position as well as by China's non-compliance with their self-proclaimed 'rules-based order'.

Yellen is a top capitalist economist. She is a former Chair of the Federal Reserve and headed the White

House Council of Economic Advisors. Yellen has taught economics at Harvard, Yale and the London School of Economics (LSE). Her words carry weight and reflect the thinking of imperialist thinktanks, strategists, politicians and businesspeople.

Yellen's talk in China was similar to a longer presentation she gave at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on 20<sup>th</sup> April, published in preparation for her announced trip to China. It sharply defined the Biden administration's demands on China.

The magazine *Foreign Policy* summarised Yellen's presentation in a major article on 24<sup>th</sup> April titled *America Has Dictated Its Economic Peace Terms to China: By refusing negotiation over China's rise, the United States might be making conflict inevitable*.

This voice of the Washington establishment explained: "For Yellen, it is obvious that America is entitled to define its national security at a planetary level."



• Beijing – city of the future

## Shift to capitalism and open the gates

Whilst in China, Yellen brazenly called on China to "shift to a market-oriented system". This wording was repeated in all the major media. Yellen's talk was broadly summarised as "Change your economic system – or there will be consequences".

This is a shockingly arrogant way to open a state visit. It confirms the depth of the US ruling class's hostility and how threatened it feels by China's rise.

Yellen called on China to lift its "coercive actions against

American firms", claiming that ending "barriers to market access for foreign firms ... would be better for the Chinese economy". She did not come with any announcement that the hundreds of US trade barriers and sanctions on China would then be lifted. That would seem to be required as the first step in any genuine negotiation.

## Demand China join in sanctioning Russia

Instead, there were only demands. Yellen said it was "essential that Chinese firms avoid providing Russia with material support or assistance with sanctions evasion".

Enforcing US-declared sanctions against Russia, its neighbour with whom it shares its longest border and extensive trade, or any other country, is hardly in China's interests.

The most explicitly worded demand made on China was that it should participate, with the USA and the G7 countries, in the criminal strangulation of Russia. This is what is really meant by the demand that China

accepts the Washington-led 'rules-based order'.

Strategists for the US and NATO ruling classes hoped that Russia's rapid collapse under the weight of combined sanctions would be a launching pad for spreading American military bases across Central Asia and encircling, isolating and containing China. President Joe Biden predicted the Russian rouble would quickly become rubble. That plan has failed.

Yellen claimed that the hundreds of sanctions, or coercive economic measures, the US government is enforcing against China are merely "diversifying critical supply chains" or taking "targeted national security actions".

The sanctions against China include import-export bans as well as investment bans against Chinese companies, products, government agencies and officials.

The blockade of goods and materials includes systems, equipment and services from Huawei, a Chinese telecommunications giant, and all

cotton products. China is the world's largest cotton exporter.

The US sanctions extend to all investments or purchases in any company connected to Chinese military companies, along with electronics companies that could provide satellite imagery. Any technology that China could conceivably provide to Russia or Iran is included. New semiconductors were also targeted to slow down China's tech sector.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July China imposed export restrictions on the rare earth minerals gallium and germanium. These critical minerals are used in technologies such as semiconductors. Washington responded with outrage at this "unfair trade restriction".

## Washington demands full-scale capitalist restoration

If China does not concede to this demand of the US capitalist class – that it unravels its socialist-based economy and join the USA in enforcing sanctions on other countries – then it faces the consequences of intensifying economic warfare. US politicians are calling their efforts to sabotage China's developing economy through a widening net of sanctions "national security measures".

Yellen said that the USA was eager to work with China on this project of "shifting to a market-oriented system".

Essentially, Yellen's thinly veiled threats, and the demand that China change its econom-



• China – the workshop of the world



ic system to favour US corporate profits, highlighted once again how acutely aware the imperialists are that China is engaged in building a developed socialist economy.

The corporate media can spread reams of lies and spin from thin air charges against China. But at the root, the fundamental basis of their hostility is China's centralised planning and state ownership of vital industries, all land and natural resources. They see this as a threat!

Although foreign as well as Chinese capitalists are allowed to lease land, and industries can be built and partially owned whilst profits are extracted for a period of years, there are explicit conditions and tight controls. The conditions are that ultimately, the Chinese state will own the equipment, machinery and blueprints and Chinese technicians will be trained in their use. Capitalists can't just pull their factories out of China in order to operate where labour is cheaper. The USA labels this Chinese policy "intellectual property theft".

Most frustrating to the imperialists is that the socialist development of the economy is guided by the 90-million member, popularly supported Communist Party of China. There is a party cell in every workplace, school and neighbourhood. This is what American politicians and corporate

investors consider a 'dictatorship', restricting their freedom. On the other hand, unelected billionaires making all decisions are proof of 'democracy'.

US capitalists, and other major capitalists in the G7 countries, want unrestrained access not only to their own countries, but to China's resources and the labour power of its hundreds of millions of workers for the personal enrichment of a handful of billionaires.

### What state control means in China

Because the Chinese state has had control of a significant amount of the profits taken in by foreign capitalists who have invested in China, it has been able to rapidly build the infrastructure – a web of high-speed rail, highways, ports and commercial hubs – and economically integrate and subsidise those industries that enhance growth and spur further development.

Government control over essential industries – banking, petroleum and other key resources – allows the state to ignore the short-term profitability of various projects, provided they lay the groundwork for a stronger and more expansive economy in the years ahead.

China's state-owned industries are shielded from foreign competition and receive government subsidies. This has angered foreign corpo-



• on the streets of New York

rations. They claim it gives China an unfair advantage. Yellen has raised this as a major complaint.

Of course, every capitalist economy, including that of the USA, subsidises key industries – especially military industries. In times of capitalist crises, they also subsidise banks with trillions of dollars in loans to rescue them from default.

### How was poverty ended?

The most presumptuous statement from Yellen was to credit capitalism with ending poverty in China: "A market-based approach helped spur rapid growth in China and helped lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. This is a remarkable economic success story."

It was not the ruthless capitalist market that accomplished this historic feat however, it was state planning, in the hands of the working class. The conscious development of small industries, local markets, skill training and infrastructure in rural, underdeveloped areas helped to raise the standard of living for millions.

China was able to accomplish something that no capitalist economy in history has accomplished. It was able to end poverty and hunger through a

web of social and economic development programmes. More than 800 million people quickly benefited, as will billions more in generations to come.

It was the largest and most rapid improvement in material conditions in modern history. China had been one of the poorest countries on Earth. Now it is an economic powerhouse.

### Belt and Road Initiative

China is now sharing the same development model with developing countries around the world. Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is changing the Global South. It is the largest infrastructure and investment project in history, covering more than 140 countries and numerous international organisations. It already includes 65 per cent of the world's population and 40 per cent of global gross domestic product.

The BRI has made dramatic improvements to road, rail, sea routes, electrification, education and health care. Over \$1 trillion has already been invested since it was initiated in 2013. It will vastly increase connectivity, lower shipping costs, boost productivity and enhance widespread prosperity.

The BRI has also undercut the power of the International Mon-

etary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the biggest commercial banks, formerly the only sources of funding, whose onerous loan conditions and high interest rates have left many countries buried in unpayable debt, with very little development to show for it.

### A multi-polar world

A multi-polar world is coming into being, one which does not abide by US dictates. New forms of currency exchange are a challenge to the almighty dollar. This development challenges the American ruling class's ability to enforce sanctions, not only on Russia and China but on a total of 40 countries.

The BRICS, a powerful grouping of the world's leading emerging market economies – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – is challenging US economic dominance. China's strong economy is an anchor in this emerging alliance.

The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, now involving 25 countries, reflects new trade and co-operation as the best form of security.

China presently controls its own future, independent of the 'rules-based order'. The strength of its economy is a lifeline to many emerging countries. This makes it a threat to US dom-

inance.

The danger is that US imperialism is determined to halt this challenge to its global domination. It is willing to stir up coups, wars and regime-change operations in countries developing favourable trade agreements with China.

China, which suffered more than 100 years of colonial subjugation, imperialist looting, unequal treaties and an imposed opium trade, understands very well why it cannot concede to American demands.

Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen's visit to China is a sharp warning and should be a wake-up call to anti-imperialist forces here. Her visit, and that of Secretary of State Anthony Blinken the previous month in June, confirm that the US ruling class and its functionaries, politicians, thinktanks, strategists and media hacks well understand what they oppose in China.

The socialist, state-planned economy and its people-oriented decisions, controlled by the 90-million-strong Communist Party, are a threat to the future of the capitalist private-profit system.

China's further development into a strong socialist economy has enormous liberating potential for the workers of the whole world, including workers in the USA. The working class in China, 600 million strong, is larger than the working class of the USA and G7 countries combined and is organised with communist leadership.

It is in the interests of workers here to defend China and condemn the onerous demands of US imperialism. The first step for anti-imperialist forces is to understand what is at stake.

*Workers World (USA)*



• street life in Chicago



## LETTERS

## Dear Comrades

In a display of illogical thinking and double standards, the Greens in England and Wales, except Scotland, have changed their policy into one of supporting NATO.

How can an organisation, whose stated aim is to save the planet, oppose peaceful nuclear power on the one hand whilst advocating a build-up of nuclear weapons in Britain on the other?

They clearly do not understand the real aims and purpose of the aggressive pro-war NATO alliance – an imperialist organisation which provokes conflict and tension, starts and supports wars, blows up pipelines and serves the interested of US hegemony.

Germany's coalition government, which includes the Greens with Robert Harbeck as energy minister and Annalena Baerbock as foreign minister, has adopted policies that have resulted in serious economic, political and energy problems. Their actions have made Germany dependent upon very expensive US dry natural gas from shale rock formations. This of course fits into the US strategy of maintaining domination over a weakened Europe. A cowardly acceptance of the sabotage by US-supported terrorists of Nord Stream, the imposition of failed sanctions against Russia and the abandonment of nuclear power without any viable alternative have resulted in a debacle. Living standards are falling and industry is fleeing abroad to the USA and China. Some people are starting to ask: "Is it now time to bring back the German Democratic Republic?"

In the face of rapid

climate change, widespread pollution and real threats to biodiversity, support for a Green alternative must be applauded. A serious lack of political understanding holds the movement back, however, and reduces its effectiveness. Politically naïve members appear to accept, without question or thought, the lies, distortions and misinformation that are the essence of Imperialist propaganda.

The supply of depleted uranium shells to Ukraine has only produced a muted response from the Greens. Their use releases alpha and beta particles into the environment plus high energy gamma radiation. Where are the mass protests and calls for peace talks by the Greens on an issue that threatens us all?

I would urge our Green colleagues to overcome any induced prejudices caused by long-term exposure to bourgeois propaganda and examine the causes of today's problems, including the Ukraine tragedy, with an open mind. Without peace we cannot achieve a Green world.

The vital campaign for a peaceful, balanced, natural green world may be considered as an important extension to the class struggle. In the final analysis, it is Imperialism with its greed for profits and contempt for others that is the real enemy.

**John Maryon  
Suffolk**

## Dear Comrades

United Nations experts have called for the release of six imprisoned Bahraini students who had been held arbitrarily after "confessing" to crimes under torture and undergoing unfair trials. The students were arrested separately, in unrelated cases, between 2013 and 2020. At the time of their arrests, three were minors. While in custody, a rights group said four the students were subjected to enforced disappearance, including one for 40 days, and five were tortured into confessions.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in a document released on 14<sup>th</sup> July, said it found the group's claims of ill-treatment credible. "These cases follow the pattern of numerous other cases brought before the Working Group in recent years concerning the arbitrary deprivation of liberty in Bahrain," the group said.

No sooner had the UK's annual report praised Bahrain for "its long tradition of respecting and enabling FoRB" (Freedom of Religious Belief) than the regime waged massive attacks against the majority Shia Muslim population. The Interior Minister targeted the commemoration of Ashura, the most important event for the Shia community. He said "Bahrain is not a destination for religious tourism" regarding gatherings for Ashura/Muharram attended by Shia Muslims from overseas, mainly from neighbouring Gulf states. He added: "We do not need preachers and reciters coming from abroad," claiming that Bahrain has enough preachers of its own.

The UK's misleading statement on religious freedom in Bahrain has no basis in reality and further encourages the Bahraini regime to continue to attack the religious rights of its Shia population. Moreover, the commemorations were specifically targeted in several towns. Flags and banners were removed from the streets of several towns including Al Markh, Aali, Hamad town and Al-Ghurafa.

In Aali several young men protested the removal of the Ashura banners and were detained by the police. The regime forces could not arrest the young protesters fearing a serious flare up of the situation. They told their families: "Give us your children and we will give back the banners."

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July Hilary Benn MP commented on the case of human rights activist Salma al-Shehab, who had been given a 34-years sentence

by the Saudi regime. He said it is shocking that Salma al-Shehab and Noura al-Qahtani are still detained by the Saudi authorities for what they said on Twitter. The UN has now spoken out about the treatment of both these women. They should be freed immediately. Her crime is following and retweeting human rights activists in Saudi Arabia on Twitter.

The diplomatic editor at the *Guardian*, Patrick Wintour, has commented on the invitation of Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud (MbS), the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, to visit London. He tweeted: "UK inviting MbS to London. Doubtless business to be done. But Riyadh's legal system is an unsportsmanlike horror show."

**John Hughes  
Bahrain Freedom  
Movement  
London**

## Dear Comrades

The musician Roger Waters is widely accused of anti-Semitism. The first person I have seen give reasons for this accusation is Hadley Freeman writing in the *Sunday Times*. She gives three examples of what she considers to be Roger Waters' anti-Semitism. He has claimed that the Israeli government "deposed Jeremy Corbyn", that Keir Starmer is "an Israeli government puppet" and that Israel wants to "destroy the Labour movement in the United Kingdom".

None of these claims are directed against Jewish people. They are directed at the Israeli government.

Hadley Freeman recognises this and goes on to say that anti-Semitism includes a belief that there is some great global conspiracy in which Israel (which she refers to as "the Jewish state") controls the world. Israel is Jewish therefore this belief is anti-Semitic therefore Roger Waters is anti-Semitic. This is false logic. It is not necessarily anti-Semitic to say that Israel controls the world. Someone who says that Israel is a beacon of democracy is not anti-Semitic if they go

## Diary

**EVERY SATURDAY**  
Committee to Defend Julian Assange: Protests: 12:00–14:00, HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, London SE28 and 16:00–18:00 at 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.

**UNTIL 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.

**SUN 30 JULY**  
Friends of Korea: International Significance of the Korean War and its Relevance Today. 14:00 Hybrid meeting, NCP Party Centre, London SW11 and Zoom. Register at: friendskorea@yahoo.co.uk

**TUE 1 AUG**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: *Oppenheimer* film showing and discussion. 19:00–23:00. Castle Cinema, 64–66 Brooksby's Walk, Hackney, London E9 6DA. Book on CND website.

**SUN 6 AUG**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Hiroshima Day commemorations. See CND website for many local events including Nagasaki Day on Wed 9 August.

**SUN 3 SEPT**  
Burstons Strike School rally: Church Green,

Burstons, near Diss, Norfolk.

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

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

**THUR 14 SEPT**  
Marx Memorial Library: 50 years Since the Fascist Coup in Chile. Panel Discussion 19:00. Hybrid meeting. MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU and online.

**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.

**14 SEPT–14 DEC**  
Townsend Theatre Productions: *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*. Neil Gore's one person adaptation. Nationwide tour, see TTP website for venues.

**SAT 23 SEPT**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop US Nukes Coming to Britain. Day of Action. Details TBA.

**THUR 28 SEPT**  
Marx Memorial Library: Book Launch: *The Selected Poems of Clive Branson* with Editor Andy Croft. 19:00 Hybrid meeting. MML and online.

on to say that it controls the world, whatever their motives might be. Also, all powerful states seek global influence and there is nothing intrinsically wrong with that, nor is it wrong to say that Israel is particularly successful in this regard. A well-received book has been written on this issue: *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*.

That is what Roger Waters was referring to,

the power of the Israel Lobby, Israel's global influence. His words were not directed against Jewish people nor Judaism. Unfortunately, he went beyond hyperbole and made rather wild statements that are not true, but they are not anti-Semitic.

If it has any honour, the *Sunday Times* will offer him right of reply.

**Brendan O'Brien  
North London**

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



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# Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Putting up with the Trident nuclear subs at Faslane was bad enough but now it seems the warmongers want an even greater NATO presence in Scotland. The Westminster parliament's Scottish Affairs Committee said in a report last week that Scotland could require more military presence as melting Arctic ice is likely to open-up new shipping routes that Russia and China are keen to exploit.

According to the Committee, the strategic position of Scotland is crucial for UK and NATO defence and security in the North Atlantic and the "High North", meaning that "should the situation in the region change, Scotland could become home to a larger defence presence", the report read.

The committee, which scrutinises the policies of London's Scotland Office, said that whilst the overriding priority should be to minimise the effects of climate change, the UK government should also prepare for the likelihood that navigation via Arctic routes will gradually become more possible, leading to increased military tensions in the region.

"It is highly likely that increasing maritime activity in the High North will create new responsibilities for the Royal Navy, and Scotland's geography means it would be likely to play a role in fulfilling those duties," the statement read.

**Round & About**

In early July there was a by-election in the South Lanarkshire Council ward of East Kilbride West caused by a SNP councillor resigning due to the pressure of his day job. Labour won the contest as

might be expected, due to the state of the SNP. Less expected was that Labour's victory came only on the sixth count and that the SNP lost a quarter of their vote and came third behind the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party.

In these circumstances it is little wonder that no less than eight SNP Westminster MPs have already announced they will not be standing in the next General Election. Some, such as 72-year-old Falkirk MP John McNally, are getting on a bit. But one who is definitely not is Mhairi Black, the recently appointed deputy Westminster leader, who when elected in 2015 still had to sit her final undergraduate exams. She had the brass neck to say that Westminster "is one of the most-unhealthy workplaces that you could ever be in. It's a toxic environment." It is in fact a very cushy number, the main health problems coming from the easily availability of cheap alcohol in the many bars. The "toxic environment" she complains about could, however, be a coded reference to SNP in-fighting. Cynics think she is departing now so that she will qualify for a Holyrood seat from which to pursue her leadership ambitions without the embarrassment of defeat on her CV.

Another heavyweight figure who is departing to spend more time with his money is deposed former Westminster leader Ian Blackford, the former banker whose announcement provoked widespread concern about how the Westminster authorities will heat the Palace without his hot air.

Two of the other departures are senior figures: Stewart Hosie, Dundee East MP who was deputy leader for two years after the Referendum, and Douglas Chapman, the former SNP Treasurer (the only one to be elected rather than appointed) who resigned in 2021 because, of all things, he was not allowed to see the accounts.

Philippa Whitford of Central Ayrshire announced her departure in a huff, saying that SNP MPs at Westminster are treated with "aggression and contempt". Two other MPs only came to public notice when their impending departures were announced: Angela Crawley from Lanark and Hamilton East, and Peter Grant from Glenrothes.

The multiple departures suggest that not many SNP leading lights are convinced by their leader's claims made last Saturday at Dundee that: "The SNP has had a really challenging few weeks and months, there is no getting away from that, but even with those challenges, support for independence is absolutely rock solid."

Two Tory MPs are also standing down: Alister Jack from Dumfries & Galloway, who will likely be going to the House of Lords, and Douglas Ross MSP, who is resigning so that he can concentrate on his other jobs of being a football referee and leading the Scottish Tories at Holyrood. The sole Labour MP in the Westminster plans to continue and we've heard nothing from the four Liberal Democrats.

At the same time, two other SNP parliamentarians have a difficult relationship with their party. MP Angus MacNeil was suspended after a bust-up with the Westminster Chief Whip (over a £7,000 trip to Qatar). His folly was compounded by openly stating that the present leadership of the SNP was "utterly clueless" about how to get independence, adding that they had "no clear understanding that it has to use elections to negotiate independence

from Westminster". He twisted in the bayonet by saying the Sturgeon era amounted to "eight years of missed opportunities". After being suspended he announced he would not be resuming the SNP Whip after his period of suspension concluded.

Fergus Ewing MSP, who was in trouble for voting against a Green Minister in a Holyrood confidence vote, has announced he will be resigning from the party if the leadership does not upgrade the A9, the main north-south road, again something the Greens oppose. He seems to have avoided losing the SNP whip. But that is largely because of his surname, and the fact that it would look bad given that his mother, Winnie, the founder of the Ewing dynasty which spawned three SNP parliamentarians, recently died and has been much eulogised.

Ewing is the only MSP to openly complain about the stranglehold the Greens appear to have over SNP policy, although many more grumble about them anonymously to journalists. Blackford himself has launched an attack on the Greens by making the blindingly obvious point that Scotland needs economic growth.

It is therefore a comparatively small matter that Elena Whitman, the Drug and Alcohol Policy Minister, was caught-out making unflattering comments about her party colleagues on media and complaining about the Westminster MPs supporting one of their number after series complaints about his sexually harassing a staff member were confirmed.

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# Remembering the Korean people's victory

by New Worker correspondent

**London comrades returned to the Chadswell centre in central London last weekend to mark the outbreak of the Korean war. The war began with an American attack on the people's government in north Korea on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1950. It ended with the Americans signing a humiliating armistice on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1953.**

Chaired by Dermot Hudson, speakers, including Theo Russell from the NCP, spoke about the Korean people's heroic fight against the US imperialists and their lackeys during the war and their efforts to reconstruct their shattered country after the guns fell silent.

Although the American terror

bombers had left north Korea in ruins, the masses rallied round the call of Kim Il Sung and the Workers' Party of Korea to rebuild their shattered country and lead the drive for a modern, independent socialist republic in the free part of the Korean peninsula.

Song Gi Kim, a representative from the Democratic Korean (DPRK) embassy in London, pointed out that: "In 1950 the Korean war, the fiercest war since the Second World War, broke out. At that time no-one ever thought that the DPRK, founded two years before, would defeat the United States, which had been boasting of being the 'strongest' in the world with a history of victory in 110 wars since its founding.



• Dermot Hudson and Song Gi Kim

"As the world media described, the war was a confrontation between the rifle and the atomic bomb. But the result of the war turned out to be the opposite. The DPRK, a small country in the East, created a mira-

cle by defeating the multi-national forces, which pounced upon a country in the name of the United Nations for the first time in the world."

Dermot Hudson, in his speech, said that the great Korean communist leader,

Kim Il Sung, "not only humbled the pride of the arrogant US imperialists but smashed the reactionary bourgeois military theory that advocates the omnipotence of weapons over humans.

"The US im-

perialists not only lost huge amounts of manpower and materials, but also suffered irretrievable political and moral defeats. It was a great victory for the Korean people and opened-up a new era of anti-US, anti-imperialist struggle. Indeed, Korea was the war before Vietnam!"

And Theo Russell pointed out that the USA "cannot admit responsibility for aggression against the DPRK in 1950 because the USA still dreams of occupying the north... thus entire might of US and Western systems of thought manipulation is mobilised to maintain the lie. And this includes an apparatus of news, well-financed think-tanks, universities, mass media and intelligence agencies.

# Remembering Michael Collins in London

by New Worker correspondent

**Over 100 people turned up to see a new plaque commemorating Michael Collins, the Irish revolutionary, soldier and politician, being unveiled in Islington, north London, last month, to mark the spot where Michael Collins joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in 1909.**

There was a huge turnout out in north London, including former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, as well as the Mayor of the County of Cork Frank O'Flynn, and the deputy Lord

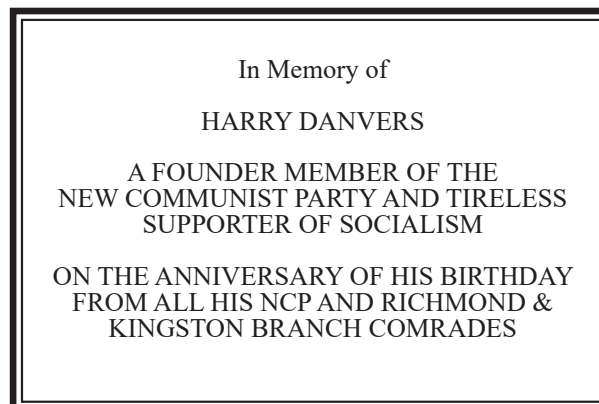
Mayor of Cork City Colette Finn.

Collins spent a third of his life in London, and it was at 2 Barnsbury Road Islington, a minute away from Islington Town Hall and then the site of Barnsbury Hall, that he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1909.

Pictured here after the unveiling are Aengus Connolly O'Malley, a descendant of Collins, Mayor of Islington Gary Heather, and Kaya Comer-Schwartz, leader of Islington Council. The plaque installation was organised jointly by the Terence MacSwiney Committee and Is-

lington Council.

Following the unveiling there was a buffet at Islington Town Hall, and a celebration of Collins' life at the London Irish Centre in Camden, with Irish dancing, music, talks and slide shows.



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# Historic strike hits Hollywood

by Mark Gruenberg

**After more than four weeks of fruitless talks between the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and film, television, Netflix, and streaming video producers forced the union to strike, starting on 13<sup>th</sup> July.**

SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher said this strike marks the first time in 63 years that unions of both those crafts and writers for movies and theatre are simultaneously pressing their demands on the picket lines.

The issues facing both SAG-AFTRA and the Writers Guild of America are almost identical: pay that lost much of its value to inflation during the last several years, disappearing residuals, declining work time for each show – which also cuts pay – and the looming threat of artificial intelligence (AI).

AI would let the moguls substitute computer-generated scripts and images for real people.

“The Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers’ (AMPTP) responses to the union’s most important proposals have been insulting and disrespectful of our massive contributions to this industry,” Drescher and chief union negotiator Duncan Crabtree-Ireland said.

“The companies have refused to meaningfully engage on some topics and on others completely stonewalled us. Until they do negotiate in good faith, we cannot begin to reach a deal.”

The studios’ scheme may actually be to smash the workers into submission, one anonymous executive told *Deadline*, an industry insider publication.

“The endgame is to drag things on until union members start losing their apartments and start losing their houses,” the executive said. The prediction is that would occur by October. Another insider called the tactic “a cruel but necessary evil”.

The union originally planned to strike on 1<sup>st</sup> June but postponed the walkout because the



two leaders said there was “progress” in bargaining, with AMPTP, whose members include Amazon, Apple, Disney, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Paramount, Sony and Warner Bros-Discovery. But movement then disappeared.

“Over the past decade, your compensation has been severely eroded by the rise of the streaming ecosystem. Furthermore, artificial intelligence poses an existential threat to creative professions, and all actors and performers deserve contract language that protects them from having their

identity and talent exploited without consent and pay,” the two union leaders said.

“The AMPTP has refused to acknowledge enormous shifts in the industry and economy has” on the workers, they added. “The AMPTP’s responses to our proposals have not been adequate.”

The forced strike drew immediate support from other unions whose members are involved in the performing arts, including the Writers Guild’s two sectors – East for theatrical actors and West for Hollywood actors.

Theatrical and Stage Employees President Matthew Loeb drafted their joint statement of solidarity, noting that it covers the Hollywood Basic Crafts coalition. That coalition includes locals from the Teamsters, Electrical Workers (IBEW), the Plumbers and Pipefitters, and the Plasterers and Cement Masons.

“Hollywood must be a place where every worker, on-screen and off, is treated according to the value their skills and talents command,” the joint statement said.

“While the studios have a collective worth

of trillions of dollars, billions of viewers globally, and sky-high profits, this fight is not about actors against the studios, but rather about workers across all crafts and departments in the industry standing together to prevent mega-corporations from eroding the conditions we fought decades to achieve.”

Wikipedia reports the last time the writers and actors went on strike at the same time was in 1960, “when Ronald Reagan was president of the Screen Actors Guild, and residuals for films shown on television was the fight du jour”.

As for the moguls themselves, Disney CEO Bob Iger, who signed a two-year \$27-million-per-year contract extension the day before the board’s vote, told CNBC: “This is the worst time in the world” for a strike. He also lumped SAG-AFTRA and the Writer’s Guild together in his criticism. “There’s a level of expectation that” the two unions “have that is just not realistic,” he said.

*People’s World (USA)*

## On the front line

by María Josefina Arce

**With the satisfaction of being on the front line in the defence of the country and the achievements of the revolution, with the pen and the word as weapons in favour of the truth, UPEC, the Union of Journalists of Cuba, celebrates its 60 years of existence.**

It was born four years after the revolutionary triumph of January 1959, but according to its founders it was a time of necessary learn-

ing, which traced the path and the strategy to follow in a different country.

It was a period, they pointed out in their memoirs, in which revolutionary journalists, loyal to their people, were actors and chroniclers of important events such as the victory over the mercenary invasion of Playa Giron and the Literacy Campaign.

The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, accurately defined the role of jour-

nalists when he pointed out: “He saw in the press a force of enormous importance, decisive; it is truly decisive in this struggle we are waging...”

Throughout these six decades the members of UPEC have waged a battle against the disinformation campaigns of the mainstream media that have tried to hide or distort Cuba’s achievements in various spheres and its spirit of solidarity.

Without neglecting

the necessary and constant renewal, because life is transformation, and the challenge posed by new technologies, the union that brings together this important sector of society has always had as its essence to keep the population informed of what is happening nationally and internationally.

An important role was played during the COVID19 pandemic. In co-ordination with the health institutions, the public was kept in-

formed at all times, and the measures to be adopted to avoid contagion and the spread of the coronavirus were made known in a timely manner.

It has also had the premise of instilling values and making tools available to everyone to broaden their knowledge, a real challenge in a country where education is free and universal.

UPEC brings together, guides, seeks a better preparation of its members, is concerned about

their needs and concerns and to be every day at the height of the transformations taking place in the country.

There is still much to be done to improve the work, to exercise effective criticism, to confront the bad work, which does so much damage to the advancement of the country, which, moreover, has not ceased to be in the sights of imperialism.

That is why UPEC not only guides and orients, but day by day wages a battle against those who seek to attack the people and the constitutional order of the country.

*Radio Havana Cuba*



# Africa thanks Russia for support

Leaders of African nations are grateful to Russian President Vladimir Putin for his support in promoting the continent's interests on international platforms says Azali Assoumani, the Chair of African Union (AU) and President of Comoros. Speaking at the Africa-Russia summit in St Petersburg this week the AU leader said: "We are grateful to President Putin because he supports us in the G20 and also supports us so that we have a permanent seat at the level of the [United Nations] Security Council," adding that Africa needs to "have its voice" on international platforms in the multipolar era.

Russia has managed to effectively resist Western sanctions that were imposed due to Moscow's special military operation in Ukraine he added. "Russia and its President Putin showed us that it was able to resist [sanctions] effectively over time," Assou-

mani said, stressing that it seems that the West does not have resources to impose more sanctions.

The creators of the African peace initiative on the conflict in Ukraine did not receive any evidence that Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky is interested in the peace plan, the Chair of the AU said: "This position – that he [Zelensky] demands to meet certain

conditions before starting negotiations – seems to be well known all over the world. But we still have not received any compelling evidence that he is interested [in the peace plan]." He added that the initiators of the African peace plan previously discussed the situation with Zelensky in detail.

"We recommended that he sits down [at the ne-

gotiating table] and talks, while he wants to set his conditions before starting any discussion. This is understandable, but maybe not justified, because we are initiating a discussion to find a solution. But if we have solutions before negotiations, what is the point of discussing at all? Well, nevertheless, we saw that he still took note very sincerely. He took note that it is impossi-

ble to achieve results with weapons. This remains to be discussed," Assoumani stressed.

The creators of the African peace initiative on Ukraine expect to meet Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg and hope to reach concrete results in the discussion on how to solve the Ukraine crisis, the AU leader added.

"From what we have

seen in the past couple of days is that the situation is getting worse. However, we are not going to give up. We have an opportunity to meet with president Putin to discuss and see how we can find a way of getting concrete results."

African countries want to raise the issue of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its possible resumption at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg.

"Consequences [of the deal's expiration] affect the entire world and especially Africa in social and economic aspects. So yes, we should make resolution to this issue a priority. In reality, everything is priority, there will not be a problem if guns are put down there. Unless this happens, I think the issue of grain and fertilisers affect everyone. We will talk about it in St Petersburg, we will discuss it [the grain deal] with Putin to see how we could restart this agreement," Assoumani said.

*Sputnik*



• Vladimir Putin with African leaders at the conference

# Human rights: Words versus deeds

by Yi Xin

**The 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council that has just concluded in Geneva was a tale of two contrasting stories.**

Unsurprisingly, one featured Western preaching of human rights with emphasis on civil and political rights while side-lining the right to life and development, and economic, social and cultural rights.

Encouragingly, the other was comprised of experiences and lessons in working to enhance the well-being of one's nationals, with the goal of learning from each other to better deliver benefits for the people.

At the Palais des Nations, some Western countries adopted the familiar playbook of abusing human rights for thinly veiled political agendas.

The USA, Canada and France insisted on using the disrespectful term "regime" to address Iran, an internationally recognised sovereign state, despite the Iranian president's appeal to use proper language and the opposition of multiple countries. Such conduct threatened to relegate a platform for dialogue and action into a venue for attacking those who refuse to bow to one's own will.

Human rights should not be a convenient excuse for launching sanctions and wars on other countries, especially whilst ignoring the human rights problems at home. The killing of the African-American man, George Floyd, in the USA should have been a strong enough example to remind certain countries to put their people's lives before geopolitical games.

For too long, by flexing their economic and military muscles, some Western countries have tried to style themselves as role models and thrust so-called 'universal values' upon others. Contrary to the claimed effect, the result has only been more suffering around the world, such as in Afghanistan and Syria. If the West really wants to do something to protect human rights, they could start by stopping the sale of weapons to Ukraine and fulfilling their pledged assistance to small island developing countries on climate response.

At side events during the session, developing countries did not hesitate to expose Western hypocrisy and compare notes on improving the rights of their people.

Venezuela spoke up

about how the USA had arbitrarily detained one of its diplomats in a third country and refused him urgent medical treatment, laying bare a double standard and a selective approach to promoting human rights. Nepal talked about how it graduated from the ranks of least developed countries by focusing on the right to development and the necessity to improve health care and education. Qatar shared its work in helping underdeveloped countries build capacity for independent growth, and drew attention to outstanding deficits in climate finance, technology assistance and foreign direct investment.

Melik Ozden, director of the Centre Europe-Tiers Monde, a non-governmental organisation, underlined the fundamental role of self-determination and non-discrimination in all other hu-

man rights. It is ironic that some Western countries have violated both, by waving their yardstick at countries trying to make their own decisions and showing little respect for others' national realities.

The protection of human rights should be based on a country's conditions and the needs of its people. In China's case, it has lifted 800 million people out of extreme poverty, completing the poverty reduction goal of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule. Life expectancy has risen from 35 years when New China was founded to more than 78 years now. Work to "defend the blue sky and lucid water" has yielded notable outcomes. The Women's Rights and Interests Protection Law

has recently been amended. Whole-process people's democracy has empowered every Chinese person with extensive democratic rights. As a result of this concrete work, more than 93 per cent of the Chinese people are satisfied with their government, as shown by a Harvard Kennedy School survey over 13 years.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council has made a vivid case of who is talking the talk and who is walking the walk. Human rights are about humans, not politics. The Human Rights Council should be a place where all parties come together to improve the situation of humans, not where a handful of countries play politics.

*Xinhua*