

## West stokes the flames of War as Ukraine burns

by our Eastern European  
Affairs correspondent

**Russian air-defences downed Ukrainian drones over Moscow and the Crimea whilst fending off wave after wave of attacks along the front from the Donbas to the Black Sea. Russia continues its relentless missile attacks on Kiev and military targets throughout Ukraine whilst tightening its Black Sea blockade that is crippling the puppet regime's exports. And on the diplomatic front the so-called 'peace conference' in the Saudi port of Jeddah last weekend ended without conclusion, which is perhaps not surprising given that Russia wasn't invited.**

In the USA dissident voices say Biden doesn't have a coherent strategy in Ukraine or a Plan B for a face-saving exit. Robert F Kennedy Jr, a Democratic presidential candidate, says Biden and Boris Johnson derailed the peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022.

"Is it worth the cost al-

ready being paid – tens of thousands of dead youngsters and families?" Kennedy said. "Billions of American dollars drained from our food banks, our hospitals, our schools, and instead detonated in foreign skies to rip young flesh from bone? Higher gas [petrol] bills, higher grocery prices, higher utility bills, higher housing costs, and too little money in your bank account to pay for them? Tell me, President Biden, how is it worth all this to fight a war that could have ended a month after it began?"

Meanwhile, "Washington's attempts to put pressure on developing countries in order to 'convince' the Russian Federation to return to the 'grain deal' are part of an information campaign to distort the real situation," the Russian ambassador to the USA said last week.

The door for the resumption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative remains open, Anatoly Antonov told the media. "All that is needed from the United States and its allies is to eliminate distortions in the implementation of inter-related agricultural agreements not in word but in deed, as well as eliminate the piled up barriers that impede the access of Russian agricultural exports to world markets."

Whether that happens is another matter. And nothing is likely to happen in the near future if the Jeddah 'peace conference' is anything to go by. Although Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Turkey sent



• Free Ukraine's political prisoners. International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) protest in Whitehall last month.

delegations, the vast majority of the 40 participants came from the West. There were about 15 from the Global South and four or five others joined by video link. Zelensky proposed his usual 10-point peace plan that called for a complete Russian withdrawal from Crimea and the Donbas together with the establishment of a special tribunal to prosecute Russian war crimes – which made the whole exercise meaningless from the start.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "The Anglo-Saxons and their allies have stood up for the Nazis of Kiev, glossing over, if not justifying, their actions that violate human rights and the rights of national minorities."

"Instead of a serious conversation based on recognising the evolution of the real situation 'on the ground' over the past 10 years they convene staged forums with the sole pur-

pose of luring as many countries as possible into any semblance of a discussion of the 'Zelensky's formula', which demands nothing less than that Russia completely capitulate, agree to compromise its security and leave millions of Russians to the mercy of fate."

The Kremlin dismissed the Zelensky plan as a

"meaningless ultimatum" that can only prolong the conflict. Although Russia is open to any serious diplomatic initiative to end the fighting, "none of the 10 points of the above-mentioned formula aimed to find a negotiated and diplomatic solution to the crisis".

The Saudis were doubtless pleased at the brownie points they won through the smooth running of the international conference they hosted, but it's difficult to see what the USA hoped to gain by this futile exercise that was presented as a Ukrainian initiative to end the war. Certainly the Americans are projecting their hireling, Zelensky, as an international politician like they did with Ben Gurion in Israel and Syngman Rhee in south Korea in the 1950s. But in much of the Global South Zelensky is seen as just another American puppet and that's why most of them decided to give Jeddah a miss last week.

### FUND

The August fighting fund has kicked off with £670 in the bag thanks to all our supporters, including a regular contributor from Southall who sent in £200, a Scottish supporter who sent us £40 and an old friend in Essex who put £30 into the pot. We now need £2,830 to hit our target for the month.

On Hiroshima Day last weekend the call of peace was heard all around the planet. But not by the imperialists or their lackeys in the Western media who justify war and neo-colonialism that workers pay for in gold and blood. Now, not content with plundering the Middle East and Ukraine the greedy eye of the imperialists is focusing on Niger, whose new government has stopped all exports of uranium and gold to France.

We stand with all the forces for liberation. But we can only do it with your help. All donations, big or small, help keep our presses rolling. Please send your donation to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

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# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Of mice and men

Neo-con American hawk John Bolton is hitting the headlines again, railing against his old boss and saying that Donald Trump's behaviour is "erratic, irrational and unconstrained" and that Trump will likely take the USA out of NATO if he wins the presidential race in 2024. If only that were true...

Bolton is a career politician. Trump, on the other hand, is a property tycoon. Trump was quite happy to do the bidding of the US Establishment, whose views he generally went along with. He didn't realise that he was just a pawn of the reactionary circles who had propelled him to the White House in the first place.

When Trump branched out on his own – arguing for cuts in the global US military presence and working for a rapprochement with Democratic Korea – his plans were sabotaged by his own senior advisers.

When Trump sacked them – and that's something the president can still do – another stepped in to fill the gap. Men such as John Bolton, appointed Trump's National Security Advisor in 2018 and sacked in 2019. Bolton has long been a tool of the 'deep state' – the hidden hand of the most aggressive sections of the American ruling class that want war and "regime change" in countries that dare to stand up to US imperialism.

Bolton said that when Trump was in the Oval Office, he undermined Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky. He says Trump would betray Ukraine if again returned to the White House.

In the Republican camp some, like Bolton, are trying to derail Trump's comeback campaign. They don't particularly favour the others seeking nomination on the Republican ticket, but they clearly see Trump as a troublesome maverick, an unreliable element whose private life and dubious business ethics are an embarrassment even by American standards. They're working to ensure the re-election of the Democratic candidate. And Joe Biden is clearly a tool of the 'deep state'.

At the end of the day it makes no difference who wins the US presidential elections. Bourgeois elections are held so that the smallest number of people can manipulate the largest number of votes. There can only be one winner in that sort of race...

## For whom the bell tolls...

Last weekend millions in Japan and throughout the world paused to remember those who died in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the last days of the Second World War. On 6<sup>th</sup> August 1945 Hiroshima was destroyed by an American atom bomb. Nagasaki was hit three days later. Some 250,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed instantly in the atomic blasts. Many more would later perish from flash burns and radiation sickness.

The claim that the atom bombs forced Japan to surrender is an enduring myth of the Second World War. The Americans say they had to use the atom bomb to force Japan to surrender and bring the global conflict to an end. But the Japanese were begging for an armistice as their armies folded under the hammer blows of communist-led guerrillas and the Red Army.

But two Japanese cities were still wiped out to show the world, and the Soviet Union in particular, what US imperialism was capable of doing.

The fight for peace is inexorably linked to the struggle for justice. The campaign must inevitably challenge world imperialism, the greatest threat to peace, and present an alternative to the capitalism that is the root cause of all conflicts in the world today.

# An act of economic suicide

by James Smith

**The economy is in a bad situation. Hammered by stagnant growth, surging inflation and high interest rates, the UK arguably looks to be in a more pessimistic situation than any other country in G7. The problems are long-set and structural, but they are also a product of foolish foreign policy decisions the country has taken in recent years that have been exclusively guided by ideology and nostalgia for an imperial past. Whilst Brexit is one problem, the decision to reset its relationship with China and buy into the American agenda is another. Although the UK lauds its recent joining of the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) trade agreement as a success of its so-called "Indo-Pacific tilt" this is in practical terms, meaningless. That's because Britain has shunned the markets that matter to it the most, China and the EU.**

The Conservative-right linked *Telegraph* has become one of the leading advocates of anti-China paranoia in the UK, which is fed into by Sinophobic MPs on the political right of the party who are keen at all costs to disrupt the government from pursuing a more pragmatic relationship with Beijing. Liz Truss and Iain Duncan Smith are the most prominent. Now, dissenting voices are stirring up trouble again regarding the manufacturing and import of Chinese electric cars into the UK, claiming baselessly that these cars will be used to gather data and "spy" on British citizens. Such allegations of espionage have often been associated with strategic Chinese

technologies that the USA desires to have restricted or banned, such as Huawei. It is based on pure McCarthyite paranoia and cynical opportunism, rather than on any empirical evidence.

As with Huawei, which crippled the UK's 5G roll-out and significantly raised the costs, an attack on Chinese electric cars will be devastating to Britain's goals to be carbon neutral.

Firstly, China is the largest manufacturer and exporter of electric vehicles in the world. In 2022, China exported over 1.3 million electric vehicles, and the number continues to surge.

Secondly, as a consequence of this, Chinese electric vehicles are also cheaper and in greater supply than any other brands. As noted in an S&P study, the price of a Chinese-manufactured electric car is around £10,000 cheaper than a one made by German automobile giant Volkswagen. In a country with surging inflation and costs of living, this matters.

In addition to this, the British government has for the last few decades pursued a series of economic policies whereby it has left the automobile market open and unregulated, which has resulted in the gutting of its own domestic vehicle manufacturing industry (bar several luxury brands) leaving the government with no control or co-ordination over its own market to implement its own brands as strategy. Even the most iconic British car brand of all, the Mini, is now owned by a German company.

As a consequence, forcing Chinese-made electric vehicles out of the country would significantly narrow the electric vehicle market, which would place demand far above supply, subsequently leading the prices of competing brands to surge as there is not enough

local manufacturing to supplement it. As it is, because of Britain's misguided decisions pertaining to the EU and the war with Russia, inflation of every-day commodities, including food, has been astronomical. Despite this, the country has committed itself to very tight climate-related goals and has vowed to ban new conventional petrol and diesel cars from sale by the end of 2030. This means that the market is playing catch-up. Why, therefore, would you even consider banning your largest source of electric vehicles?

This is, of course, where Britain is at today. The UK needs China as a critical partner in many areas, but the proliferation of Cold War mindsets, being created and encouraged by the USA and pushed by MPs and the press, is undermining the country's national interests.

The motto of Brexit was supposed to be 'Global Britain', the idea of the UK finding new and alternative markets in order to offset a perceived violation of sovereignty on behalf of the European project. But that has not happened. Instead, the UK has become more beholden to Washington than ever and pursued a project of ideological and military imperialism.

In conclusion, whipping up hysteria and imposing restrictions on Chinese electric vehicles would be an act of economic suicide on behalf of the British government. It would also only benefit the USA at the British public's expense. Downing Street must exert more control over its foreign policy to ensure the country's own strategic autonomy in the pursuit of its national interests, rather than allowing ideological fantasists to run riot with rampant paranoia.

*Global Times*



## Workers' Notes

### Let's go fly a plane...

by New Worker correspondent

**Or not if you work for Richard Branson these days. The 835 pilots employed by Virgin Atlantic are planning strike action. They have voted by an overwhelming 96 per cent for action over pilot fatigue.**

The British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) is challenging Virgin's present scheduling and rostering arrangements, introduced during the pandemic and not due for review until the end of the year. This saw flying hours increase by 20 per cent.

Virgin claims its pilots are rostered in for 750 hours on an average year. The maximum flying time for a commercial pilot allowed for by the Civil Aviation Authority set at 900 hours per year. Virgin claims to "honour all agreements and have offered to enter formal pay and lifestyle negotiations with BALPA's pilot union representatives".

According to LBC radio, a BALPA survey of Virgin pilots shows that three-quarters of them have seen a colleague "clearly not fit to do so due to fatigue or tiredness", and nearly ninety per cent had experienced or witnessed a colleague make a mistake in the flight deck. Almost all pilots say the claimed short-term measure is now having long-term consequences, with more pilots reporting unfit due to fatigue.

Miranda Rackley, BALPA's interim general secretary, warned: "There are serious concerns relating to pilot fatigue and well-being around scheduling and rostering arrangements."

One pilot told the broadcasting station that pilots were "constantly" calling in fatigued like "the crew of the

Titanic telling Captain Smith that there's an iceberg of fatigue ahead, but he's sailing on thinking about the glory".

He also said that despite the CEO of Virgin Atlantic earning over £3.5 million last year: "We are not asking for more money, we are asking for a roster which allows us to be safe. No passenger would want to fly with a pilot who is suffering with fatigue."

Strangely enough, two of the protesting pilots employed have a sister-in-law and a sister in the Cabinet to sort things out.

Virgin Atlantic was almost brought to a total standstill during the pandemic and claims that its present arrangements are essential to keeping it profitable. BALPA says the present allegedly temporary measures are a cause of dangerous fatigue levels among pilots. "In recent years we've supported each other and negotiated sensible solutions to the biggest crisis in global aviation – COVID19," but "we've stayed true to what matters to us... flight safety, protecting the piloting profession and supporting each other."

Some 4,000 Virgin Atlantic employees were laid off during the pandemic, but the wider Virgin Group was not short of \$250 million to bail it out.

BALPA says: "We remain ready to commence negotiations to find an acceptable way forward and urge Virgin

Atlantic to listen to its staff and put forward an acceptable offer that our members could support," but BALPA "prefers to address the concerns through negotiation and industrial compromise and will only countenance industrial action as a last resort." That will put the fear of God into the hearts of Virgin's management...

### ... Meanwhile on the ground

... disputes are rumbling away at various airports.

At Birmingham Airport re-fueller drivers employed by logistics company Menzies have firmly rejected a nine per cent pay offer. Last year, the workers received a six per cent pay rise, which due to inflation was also a significant real-terms pay cut. At the same time, Menzies most recent annual report shows it with revenues of over £1 billion in 2021 and operating profits of £60.4 million.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham noted: "Menzies can afford to pay and it should pay. The company cannot expect these workers to agree to two years of real-terms pay cuts during a cost-of-living crisis when it is bringing in such massive profits." The union's regional officer Sulinder Singh added that: "Holiday makers will not be pleased that their summer

getaways could be ruined because Menzies' greed has resulted in their planes sitting on the tarmac. This dispute can be avoided but Menzies needs to return with an offer our members can accept."

If management do not make concessions an all-out indefinite strike action will begin next Tuesday. The airlines affected include TUI, easyJet, Wizz Air, Ryanair, Lufthansa and Emirates.

Further south, at London's second airport, Gatwick, a strike scheduled for the start of month was called off. Workers employed by Gatwick Ground Services, a subsidiary of British Airways, have voted to accept an improved pay offer worth 10.3 per cent. At the same time they will receive a significant market-rate adjustment in their shift pay, which makes it even better. Parallel strike action by handlers at DHL Ground Handling, ASC and Menzies had already been called off following dramatically improved pay offers.

It is not a happy ship, however. Unite regional officer Dominic Rothwell warns that: "The threat of strike action continues to loom over Gatwick. Further strikes will be called in the near future, which will cause substantial disruption across the airport, unless the companies concerned make vastly improved offers which meet our members' expectations."

Those involved include ground handlers serving Norwegian, Norse Atlantic Airlines, and Delta, Wilson James who supply assistance to less mobile passengers, and DHL Gatwick Direct all voted in favour of industrial action in other disputes over pay.

Across the country 24,000 British Airways staff (excluding pilots and management) have had 13.1 per cent pay rises over an 18-month period before a £1,000 one-off payment, and a promise of more to come if inflation is high.

In order to reverse the brutal fire-and-rehire imposed at the start of pandemic, Unite has secured an agreement to the effect that no staff member will have the rise applied at a lower rate of pay than they were receiving in 2020.

Sharon Graham says: "The fact that Unite has reversed the fire-and-rehire cuts while also securing a large increase in pay, underlines how the union's relentless focus on the jobs, pay and conditions of members, is delivering for workers financially."

National co-ordinating officer Oliver Richardson added: "The British Airways deal is the latest evidence of how Unite is securing significant pay increases for workers throughout the aviation sector, and as the sector recovers, we are also securing improvements for our members' terms and conditions." Let's hope so...

## Outdoor Relief for Capitalism

by New Worker correspondent

**The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDR) was established in 2017 by the UK Government and funded by its major propaganda arm, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).**

Its stated purpose is "to provide impartial coverage of the regular business and workings of local authorities in the UK, and other relevant democratic institutions such as mayoralities, combined authority areas, P&CCs, quangos, etc".

This was what local newspapers used to do. Routine reporting of council meetings including decisions of the drainage sub-committee and the results of the local horticultural society annual flower show were staples of local journalism. The court reports kept people informed about the doings of the local hooligans, louts, petty criminals and drunks.

That is a lost world. The internet took away the property, car and job adverts that kept the papers profitable. In a classic demonstration of the concentration of industry, local newspapers (which were often also the local printer)



were merged and sold-off to ever bigger regional and national companies whose directors were only interested in maximising profits for distant owners.

Many local papers do not have any local reporters or even editors. Instead, they are produced by teams of writers cutting and pasting press releases at regional offices, by people with no knowledge of the areas where the papers are published, sometimes with amusing results when stories appear in the wrong papers. Although centralised production can cut costs the end-product is increasingly uninteresting, a fact reflected in collapsing circulations.

As might be expected, LDRs are a form of outdoor relief for capitalism. The major beneficiaries are major companies such as DC Thomson, of Beano fame, Mirror and Express publisher Reach plc, and Newsquest, the huge daily and weekly publisher whose low pay battles and job cuts have often featured in these pages. There are some exceptions such as Social Spider in north London, which produces three community newspapers.

The nationwide scheme presently employs about 165 LDR reporters. A feature of the work of LDRs is that it can be pooled and can be freely

used by over a thousand news organisations, including the BBC. Some LDR reporters have got up the noses of some local authorities, which is to be welcomed.

One case was the Mayor of Bristol, who banned a local LDR reporter from council premises after he had the impertinence to ask the Mayor about a 9,200 mile flight to Vancouver to talk about climate change. This resulted in all other journalists boycotting His Worship until he learned the error of his ways.

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) recently accused Newsquest of failing to provide many LDR Reporters with a liveable wage and using the money for general "business costs".

Last April, Newsquest imposed a 1.5 per cent pay increase to its LDRs, using only the annual uplift in funding provided to it by the BBC and refused to passing on any more of surplus money tied to each role. The online trade paper the Press Gazette points out that LDRs provide core local politics and council coverage for Newsquest's newspapers and websites. It cites the case of the Swindon Advertiser, where the LDR writes around two important stories per day on everything from major planning applications to education, some of

which are syndicated to Yahoo, providing extra revenue for Newsquest but nothing extra for the writer.

The union complains that at the highly profitable company (£45.2 million at the last count), senior qualified regional LDRs are on the bare minimum of £24,000 whilst double-digit inflation has undermined their living standards. There is a gap of £10,000 between the funding the company receives from the BBC for each LDR role, and the cost incurred by the host employing company from wages and employer National Insurance and pension contributions.

At present the BBC stipulates that a full-time senior LDR outside London should be paid a minimum salary of £23,700. It was set at this level to ensure "there is no scope or incentive for the supplier to retain unused funding through paying lower salaries".

Although there are other costs such as laptops and phones, the BBC clearly states that "where a supplier's annual LDR employment costs are less than the agreed funding, the difference is retained by the Supplier".

The salary minimums, and overall funding increase annually by 1.5 per cent or in line with the retail price index (RPI), but whichever is

less, which is of course today a much worse deal than when it started.

In Newsquest's case, this is a nice little earner with most large part of the £10,000+ "headroom" between normal employment costs and the funding provided being kept.

Last November Newsquest's LDR NUJ chapel submitted a claim for a £26,000 minimum salary, or six per cent increase, whichever was the greater. Predictably this was rejected and the 1.5 per cent imposed, which was from the £558 passed on from the BBC, or license payer to be precise. Talks at ACAS in late June failed to move Newsquest into giving a better offer.

Some of Newsquest's 29 LDRs are on more than the minimum but this is only because they benefited from TUPE terms when transferred into the business taken over by Newsquest. Some of those on the minimum have to take second job, according to the NUJ.

The NUJ's Northern & Midlands senior organiser, Chris Morley, said that when Newsquest had claimed that the extra £10,000+ was taken up by other internal business costs – even when the LDRs were working fully remotely from home. He also complained that other newsroom

colleagues in the same region as themselves were being offered four per cent or more.

He added that: "We accept that the current period of high inflation has shown the funding mechanism and minimum salary set by the BBC has been found wanting, but there can be no excuse for a profitable publisher like Newsquest ignoring the plight of its own employees and squirreling away money that rightfully should be used to bring about a liveable wage."

The Newsquest NUJ LDR chapel pointed out: "Our information shows that the BBC is paying publishers more than £37,000 a year per Local Democracy Reporter. Yet in most cases our members are earning £10,000 less than that, meaning the publishers are seemingly keeping a significant chunk of licence fee payers' cash for themselves.

"At a time when the BBC is restructuring local radio to save money, this news will be a kick in the teeth to many across the organisation and beyond. Our members are providing a vital public service, by providing coverage of local councils that would be virtually non-existent otherwise."

Naturally Newsquest "entirely rejects" these claims, which it says do not take into account additional employment costs above base salaries, for example employers' national insurance would add approximately £2,000 in costs to a £24,000 salary, but it is clear the NUJ have taken these factors into account and done their sums properly.

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

**New Worker 15<sup>th</sup> August 2003**

**THE COMMUNICATIONS Workers Union (CWU) last week accused Allan Leighton, chairperson of the Royal Mail, of acting as "a spanner in the works" and impeding pay negotiations.**

*The union is calling for an eight per cent "no strings" pay deal and a reduction in the 30,000 job cuts planned.*

*The Royal Mail claims it has offered 14.5 per cent over 18 months but the CWU say this offer has "more strings than the Philharmonic Orchestra", and pointed out the only definite money in it was the three per cent from October and a further 1.5 per cent next April.*

*Union leaders and management agreed to meet last Monday for pay talks hosted*

*by the conciliation service ACAS.*

*CWU deputy general secretary David Ward accused the Royal Mail chairperson of misleading postal workers in the run-up to the talks. Last Friday employees received a letter signed by Leighton saying the current pay offer had been improved.*

*Ward said: "Royal Mail's negotiating team contacted us in good faith with an invitation to informal talks at ACAS, which we accepted. But Allan Leighton appears to be trying to derail this purpose with his purple prose.*

*"What Mr Leighton proposes in his letter is an attack on national pay bargaining – that's a direct snub to his negotiating team.*

*We will now be contacting the Government, who appointed Mt Leighton, to ask them who they think is running the company. At the moment the chairman is simply a spanner in the works."*

*The meeting went ahead on Monday*

*but adjourned after a long, hot day of negotiations. Talks are due to resume next week.*

*Meanwhile the union is gearing up for strike action, with 160,000 ballot papers going out.*

**MORE than 600 workers at the Rhodia chemical plant in Widnes, Cheshire last week vowed to continue striking in a dispute over pensions.**

*Industrial action began after the company closed its final salary-based pension to new entrants.*

*After talks at ACAS broke down, general unions Amicus and GMB announced further strikes.*

*The French-owned company claims it cannot afford to take on any more open-ended pension commitments. But angry workers pointed out that Rhodia enjoyed a partial pensions holiday, having dropped its contributions from 18 to 14 per cent since 2000.*

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# The Korean War and its Relevance Today

*A Friends of Korea committee seminar was held at the NCP Centre in London to commemorate the victory of the Korean people over US imperialism and its lackeys. Chaired by Andy Brooks the symposium heard papers from Michael Chant and Dermot Hudson, and video link contributions from Jong Gi Kim from the DPR Korea embassy in London. This is the contribution from Michael Chant, secretary of the Friends of Korea Committee.*

On July 27, 1953, the heroic forces of the Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteer Army achieved victory in the Korean War by forcing the US imperialists and their allies to come north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to sign the Armistice Agreement that ended the fighting in the Korean War. This was a victory not only for the Korean people, but for peace-loving humanity. The signing of the Armistice Agreement also signalled the first military defeat of the USA following the Second World War—a humiliation which has haunted the US imperialists ever since, and for which it has yet to forgive the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and the Korean people. From Britain, there were 81,084 men and women who served in the conflict, including 1,108 British servicemen who were killed in action. This is also a crime for which Britain must be held responsible.

As we said in the invitation to participate in this seminar, on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1950 the US imperialists, under the aegis of the United Nations, had launched a brutal illegal war of aggression against the Korean nation. Since 27<sup>th</sup> July 1953, the USA has



• Kim Il Sung leads the Korean people to victory

done everything possible to maintain its military presence on the Korean Peninsula and keep the Korean War going. But the resistance of the DPRK continues, as the Korean people proudly demonstrate their mettle and build their own future.

Victory Day is not simply a celebration day for commemorating and looking back to a chapter of resistance in a previous era. The day also serves as a reminder that the US imperialists and their appeasers are stepping-up war preparations in the Asia Pacific, and that the terrible tragedies visited upon the Korean people during the Korean War must never again be permitted. The significance of that war is taking on new meaning today as the US imperialists beat the drums of war to attempt to justify a nuclear catastrophe that threatens the very survival of the Korean people and the peoples of the world. But it further serves as a reminder that it is the people who are the makers of history and that they themselves must prevail against war.

This year, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 27<sup>th</sup> July

1953, the people of the DPRK held activities to celebrate the victory, together with a delegation from the People's Republic of China which took part in the events and a military delegation from the Russian Federation which also paid a congratulatory visit to the DPRK on the occasion.

On 25<sup>th</sup> July, leader Kim Jong Un had visited the Fatherland Liberation War Martyrs Cemetery, paying high tribute to the martyrs who defended the sovereignty and security of the country and people at great cost. Kim Jong Un said that they provided the precious ideological and moral heritage and tradition of victory as a steadfast cornerstone for the DPRK. He made the important point that the victory of 27<sup>th</sup> July 1953 is of significance to all humanity. This is the case not just because it inflicted such a disgraceful defeat on US imperialism, but also because it played its part in preventing a new world war at that time.

On visiting the martyrs' cemetery of the Chinese People's Volunteers, Kim Jong Un further elaborated on the significance of the DPRK's victory in the war,

saying that it was a hard fought just war not only to defend the dignity, honour and sovereignty of Korea and its people, but was also essential to defend world peace and security. It was, he said, an acute political and military confrontation with the imperialist forces that was waged on behalf of the peace-loving forces and progressive humankind. That great victory continues to show its vitality today.

The USA had intervened in Korea based on the reactionary Cold War policy of the "containment of communism". From the Japanese colonial era through the Second World War, the outstanding resistance and guerrilla warfare carried out in Korea under the leadership of Kim Il Sung and other communists brought great prestige to communism throughout Korea for its ability to mobilise and organise the people to defend themselves.

Even before the surrender of Japan, the USA divided Korea by force at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel with the aim of imposing their rule over the victorious Korean people who had contributed, second to none,

to the Allied victory in the Second World War. The aim was to keep the Korean people divided and to turn the south of Korea into a US military beachhead in order to wage war against China and the Soviet Union.

Following the Japanese surrender, the USA brutally suppressed and outlawed the Korean People's Republic that had been proclaimed by the representatives of the whole Korean people on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1945, in Seoul. The USA installed the US Military Government of Korea in the south, which carried out a campaign of terror against the Korean people's resistance to US dictate and occupation. A virulent anti-communist, Syngman Rhee, who had spent most of his life in the USA, was installed as the first President of the so-called Republic of Korea (ROK) in July 1948. The pro-US Rhee government continued to suppress the Korean people's widespread resistance to US military occupation through extrajudicial killings, civilian massacres, mass incarcerations and other crimes, carried out with impunity.

Meanwhile in the north, the Korean people, under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, were able to establish the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and found the DPRK in 1948. They took control of their future and began to build a modern socialist society on the basis of self-reliance. President Kim Il Sung and the WPK also provided political and practical leadership to the Korean people's aspiration for a reunified Korea. It was following the ROK elections of 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1950, when the Syngman Rhee government suffered a major electoral setback and the forces for reunification were gaining momentum, that the US launched the Korean War

*continued on page 6...*

on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1950, to block the independent reunification of Korea.

In the Korean War, the people of the DPRK, led by Kim Il Sung, were organised by the WPK and mobilised to support the Korean People's Army. The newly established People's Republic of China sent troops in the form of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army to support the Korean people after US forces approached China's eastern border with the DPRK. They ardently defended the Korean people in this war of aggression carried out by the US imperialists and 15 allied countries, including Britain, under the fig leaf of the UN flag.

The armistice talks began on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1951. The USA refused to agree to a ceasefire as a condition of talks, however, and also refused to abide by the Geneva Convention regarding

the repatriation of prisoners. During the two-year period of negotiations, the USA and its allies employed all sorts of delaying tactics in the hope of achieving an outright military victory. They massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians in the north and south of Korea, with many buried alive, dismembered, burned to death or drowned. They carried out such war crimes as germ and chemical warfare, the bombing of infrastructure including dams and irrigation canals to flood the grain fields and starve the people, the carpet bombing of civilian targets, and the massive use of napalm – all to terrorise the Korean people into submission. An estimated 4.6 million Koreans, mostly civilians, perished during the war.

A US victory was not to be, however. The Korean people,

led by Kim Il Sung and the Korean People's Army, with the help of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, defeated the troops of the USA and the other aggressor nations. The USA was forced to come to the north to sign the Armistice Agreement in Panmunjom. It was a bitter pill to swallow – being defeated for the first time in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and by a small Asian nation at that.

In the spirit of revenge-seeking and stubbornly following its own geopolitical interests, the USA has refused ever since to sign a peace treaty to end the Korean War, as stipulated by the terms of the Armistice Agreement, despite the repeated invitations by the DPRK to do so.

Item 60, Article IV of the Armistice Agreement states: "In order to insure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, the military Commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three (3) months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc."

### Ongoing imperialist aggression

Since 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1953, the USA has done everything possible to maintain its military presence in Korea and keep the Korean War going. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1953, it concluded the US-



• Syngman Rhee with his master, US General McArthur

South Korea Mutual Defence Treaty, which has since become the basis of the continued US military presence in south Korea that is opposed by the vast majority of the Korean people. It is also the basis by which the US/south Korean forces carry out their Key Resolve/Foal Eagle and many other joint military exercises, which now include Britain, as well as Japan, Australia and others, and are aimed at invading the DPRK and imposing regime change.

The USA continues to rebuff all attempts at normalising DPRK-USA relations, including diplomatic resolutions to such issues as the DPRK's use of nuclear energy and the development of its nuclear deterrent capability, whilst at the same time it maintains and expands its own nuclear weapons in the south. The USA has also increased economic and political sanctions against the DPRK, another form of warfare, as it is doing against other countries that affirm their right to be and refuse to submit to US dictate. The Biden administration continues the disinformation about "human rights violations" in the DPRK in a feeble

attempt to divert from its own human rights abuses at home and abroad.

The British government for its part maintains its hostility to the DPRK, following the lead of the USA. On the anniversary of the Armistice Agreement, it shamelessly referred to the US and British aggression as a "war for freedom". Today the government also follows the USA in promoting the so-called "rules-based international order", in which it is not international law that prevails but 'rules' that are made by and serve the interests of US imperialism. Britain also follows the USA in terming its marauding in the Indo-Pacific region as "enhancing security", which the government defines as "shifting greater resource to the region and developing nations' ability to police and protect their waters".

The British government further shamelessly states: "Two Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessels are deployed to the Indo-Pacific on a permanent basis, and in their first year of operation succeeded in enforcing UN sanctions against North Korea, [...]. The UK's Carrier Strike

Group will return to the Indo-Pacific in 2025, representing our commitment to exercise the best capabilities our Armed Forces have to offer alongside partners in the region."

As time goes on, however, the US imperialists and their allies are increasingly isolated in terms of relations with the DPRK. The DPRK's principled stand in defence of its sovereignty and right to self-determination, and its consistent defence of the Korean nation's honour, continue to win the support of all humanity who can clearly see who is the aggressor on the Korean Peninsula.

The aim of the USA remains the same today as it was at the end of the Second World War – to occupy the entire Korean Peninsula as a launching pad for its takeover of Asia and then the world. And the US justification for doing so remains as bankrupt as ever. All the attempts of the USA to realise its domination of the region – its occupation of the Korean Peninsula with almost 30,000 troops and its military bases, the ongoing attempts to sabotage the Korean people's movement for national reunification,



• Korean People's Army liberates Seoul

and its engineering of puppet regimes in the south – have failed to silence the resolve of the 70 million Koreans who are united in their aspiration for the peaceful, independent reunification of their homeland, free of US imperialist interference.

## The anti-war movement

The criminal role of the US imperialists in Korea, from 1945 to the present, has been exposed for the whole world to see, and the resolute struggle of the Korean people for peace and justice, independence and reunification stands as an example for all the peoples of the world aspiring for peace. It is the task that Friends of Korea and all friendship organisations have taken up to tell the truth about the situation on the Korean Peninsula,

and patiently explain the contribution that the DPRK is making to peace and stability to the region and its wider implications.

The first demand of the Korean people and all peace- and justice-loving people around the world is that the USA signs a peace treaty with the DPRK to replace the Armistice Agreement and end the Korean War. This would be a major step to stabilise the political situation on the Korean Peninsula and ease tensions. To-date the USA has violated all the terms of the Armistice Agreement since the time it was signed and has constantly rebuffed efforts by the DPRK to normalise relations between the two countries. The DPRK knows first-hand the perfidy and subterfuge of the US imperialists and refuses to participate in “empty talks” that do not

advance peace on the Korean Peninsula.

For the people in Britain, it is crucial that the demand be made that Britain make amends for its role in the crimes perpetrated against the Korean people during the Korean War. Furthermore, Britain must immediately end its participation in the illegal naval embargo against the DPRK, which is part of the US-led sanctions regime and an act of war and a crime against the peace, the most serious war crime under international law. Friends of Korea will itself do its work to hold the USA responsible for its crimes on the Korean Peninsula before, during and since the Korean War, and demand that it sign a peace treaty with the DPRK to end the Korean War. For the people, this is a matter of contributing to making sure that



• Kim Il Sung led the Korean people to victory

another Korean War does not break out and providing every support to the Korean people's drive to reunify their divided country. It is also a contribution to ensuring peace around the world.

One of the crucial issues about which confusion is spread is that of the danger of nuclear war. Using the nuclear threat as an instrument of negotiations – agree with our terms or else – was a practice introduced by the USA at the time of the criminal bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August 1945. This practice was first heroically rejected by the Korean people in the 1950–1953 Korean War. Subsequently the heroic Vietnamese people did the same in the context of their War of National Liberation.

The USA, together with Britain, are intent on raising hysteria on the nuclear issue to a fever pitch in order to prevent humankind from thinking, from actually assessing the conditions and what these conditions reveal, and so prevent people uniting in favour of peace. The hysteria and disinformation is an attempt to block

discussion on what can be done to turn things around in favour of the peoples. To open a path to progress and end the retrogression that the imperialists are pushing onto the peoples of the world, it is crucial to broaden discussions amongst ourselves so as to not permit the campaign of disinformation to be effective.

The conditions given rise to after the Second World War ended with the collapse of the former Soviet Union. That ended the domination of two superpowers and an equilibrium between them based on nuclear deterrence. The so-called unipolar world that they tried to bring into being, with the USA as self-declared indispensable nation, also no longer exists.

The Korean War is an example of seeing where justice prevails. Furthermore, it can be seen that the present defensive measures being taken by the DPRK, far from being the threat to peace that is being claimed by the USA, Britain and others, is a defence against the danger of war, a danger which comes from the criminal striving of the USA for world

domination.

The world that the people aspire to is in the grasp of the people's forces working to make it happen. It can be said that fighting for an anti-war government at home will also be a contribution to ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula and vice versa. Friends of Korea will certainly continue its work in favour of support and friendship with the DPRK. This is not a narrow aim, but is a component part of bringing into being a world where peace prevails and countries can follow their path of independence, security and sovereignty, without the interference of US imperialism together with Britain and other big powers.

**US Troops Out of Korea!**

**USA Sign a Peace Treaty with the DPRK Now!**

**No to the War-mongering of Britain!**

**Unite in Favour of Peace and Independence!**



• British communists protest against the war

## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

Someone wants to kill you, to rob you, and you will be next!

You are being addressed by Derzhava, a Ukrainian Political Party banned by the neo-Nazi government of Zelensky. Most of the media lies and hides from you the fact that your government openly supports Zelensky's fascists, openly helps neo-Nazis and actually preaches fascism itself, directing efforts to exterminate as many people as possible.

The political scientist Lawrence W Britt outlined 14 signs of fascism:

1. A strong manifestation of nationalism
2. Contempt for human rights
3. Search for scape-goats
4. The supremacy of the military
5. Rampant sexism
6. Controlled mass media
7. Obsession with national security
8. Religion and the ruling elite tied together
9. Protection of corporate power
10. Suppression of workers' associations
11. Disdain for intellectuals and art
12. Obsession with crime and punishment
13. Rampant cronyism and corruption
14. Fraudulent elections.

From this list, the Ukrainian neo-Nazi government put all 14 positions into its service. Those who do not agree with this, face assassination on the street or death in prison dungeons. Prisons in Ukraine are overflowing with political prisoners persecuted for dissent.

The Ukrainian neo-Nazi government operates under the leadership of world imperialism led by the USA and NATO. US imperialism, in its deepest economic crisis, organised Ukrainian fascism in order to maintain and expand its hegemony by war. Unfortunately, many people live in countries whose governments, acting in the selfish interests of the ruling elites, support NATO. By paying taxes to such a government, people, unfortunately, are forced to support fascism. You can't keep silent about it. You can't turn a blind eye to it.

The price of silence and support for NATO fascism is high: worsening living conditions and cut-back medical services leading to impoverishment and sickness, and the inevitable shortening of the lifespan of people in the NATO countries.

A small bunch of traitors in the governments of different countries support NATO with the aim of furthering the unhindered robbery of their own people. Every day they brazenly take away the surplus value and value added from each working hour of a working person (labourer, worker, employee, policeman, doctor, lawyer, teacher, military person), take one part of the stolen money to enrich themselves and give the rest to NATO to continue the plunder and murder.

US imperialism, which supports the puppet Ukrainian neo-Nazis, continues to pump them full of weapons to prolong the bloodshed and the mass resettlement and extermination of the people in Ukraine.

But this is not enough for traitors and US imperialists. They are steadily leading people like a herd to slaughter, having already launched weapons of mass destruction in the form of

cluster munitions and nuclear shells with depleted uranium. They've been helping Ukraine create a dirty bomb. They even want to blow up nuclear power plants and bring the war in Ukraine into a nuclear phase.

Everyone will pay for this – those who actively helped the neo-Nazis for their 30 pieces of silver and those who stood aside and did nothing, turning a blind eye to the ongoing hell.

In order to save ourselves from this madness we offer a simple and understandable solution – to unite and, together with the International Ukrainian Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS), to follow the path for a safe and peaceful life.

Together we win!

**John Colter**  
**International Department of the Derzhava Party**

### Dear Comrades

Driven by a belated concern for the environment, the fossil fuelled internal combustion engine, king of the road for over a century, is starting to be replaced.

In Britain electric cars are expected to play an important role in the country's ambitious plan to cut carbon emissions by 78 per cent before 2035. Success in meeting this goal will require a massive infrastructure investment. Given the fact that our existing roads are overcrowded and generally in a state of poor repair, public transport is becoming non-existent in rural areas and that the railways are expensive and unreliable, this may be a challenge too far for our capitalist society.

As they operate, quiet, clean electric vehicles produce no CO<sub>2</sub>. The hydrogen-powered engine only produces water as it provides motive power. This, however, is only half the story. Currently 39 per cent of our electricity is generated by the combustion of coal and gas. Commercial hydrogen production is still mainly based upon use of fossil fuels. Electricity provided by nuclear, wind, tidal, hydroelectric and solar power are the only energy sources with a Green footprint. Change requires a commitment to huge investment but where is the money to come from? Given Tory and Labour consensus on the need to please the USA by wasting vast sums on so-called defence and the government's hostility to investment and co-operation with China, the future is both uncertain and dangerous.

Electric cars currently have a shorter range than those with conventional engines. Already a new capitalist illness, range anxiety, has emerged with longer journeys becoming a nightmare attempt to find a working charge-point. If you live in a flat or high-density development you may be forced to charge the vehicle away from home. Home Insurance companies may impose strict siting regulations to avoid any risks during charging. It is also feared that electric vehicles, which are more expensive to buy, could have a higher rate of depreciation. The Chinese MG brand has achieved a dramatic increase in sales of its electric cars in Britain but already some Western media outlets are starting to make the absurd claim that this would 'enable them' to spy on us.

On a global scale, China's BYD company has grown to become the world's largest manufacturer of electric vehicles. The new mode of transport in China will form part of an integrated transport system that is backed by huge infrastructure investment. Its rapidly expanding rail network and mega road projects are complemented by an expansion of air travel. The traveller will have a wide choice of safe, affordable and enjoyable transport as the country continues to develop rapidly.

What a contrast to Britain, where the pot-holes grow bigger every day and people are forced to wait in despair for hours as motorways grind to a halt. It is also becoming more impossible for elderly persons and persons with disabilities to book a rail ticket as essential and helpful ticket offices, which have provided information and assurance to passengers, start to be closed down.

The only way things can improve in Britain is when the workers rise up and demand socialism. Until then we can only dream of what could be.

**John Maryon**  
**Suffolk**

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

## 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 19 AUG**  
Oldham Trades Council: Peterloo march for democracy. Assemble 12:00 St Peter's Square, Manchester M2.

**SAT 2 SEPT**  
Korean Friendship Association: 75th Anniversary of the foundation DPRK. Hybrid meeting 14:00–16:30. Venue details from uk@korea-pr.com or juche007@gmail.com.

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

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

**SAT 9 SEPT**  
Wigan Diggers Festival: 11:30–9:30, Open-air free festival, The Wiend, Wigan WN1.

**SAT 9 SEPT**  
Korean Friendship

Association: 75th anniversary of the foundation of the DPRK. Online Seminar 15:00–17:00. Link on from uk@korea-dpr.com or juche007@gmail.com.

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

**TUES 12 SEPT–7 NOV**  
Marx Memorial Library: Marxist Economics for Beginners. Online course. Book on MML website.

**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.

## New Worker Supporters' Groups...

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Things are not looking too good for the Scottish Greens. As the junior party in the formal co-alition formed after the last Holyrood elections, they have wielded a degree of power over the SNP – but their most notable achievement seems to be passing the blame for their impractical failures on to the SNP. Plans to ban fishing in large stretches of the West Coast, gender recognition reforms and the botched recycling measures have all damaged the SNP more than their actual authors.

Last week two founder members of the Scottish Green Party stormed out of the Frankenstein monster they had helped to create. Robin Harper, the first ever Scottish Green MSP and former co-leader, tore up his card announcing he was going to vote Labour. The Greens, he said, had “lost the plot” on major issues such as independence and gender issues.

Harper is now involved with ‘Our Scottish Future’, a Gordon Brown think-tank that campaigns for a “better Scotland in a renewed Britain” and says he will “fight any attempt to needlessly destroy the United Kingdom”.

Another founder member, Tim Flinn, who was formerly the Scottish representative on the UK Green Party council, made the same point in a more colourful way, saying the party had been infiltrated by “the lunatic fringe and sundry carpetbaggers” and adding that had the wider membership been allowed to vote most of the Scottish Greens’ current plans and practices “would not have become policies: Scottish taxpayers would have been saved the £84 million fiasco of a clearly ill-thought-through glass recycling scheme, for example”.

Even before the last Holyrood election the Greens lost one of their MSPs, Andy Wightman. He open accused Harvie of presiding over a “censorious, bullying and intimidatory culture”. Elected in 2016, Wightman resigned to sit as an independent in

2020. Wightman, almost uniquely in Green circles, is an expert on forestry and landownership (the latter almost entirely neglected by the Greens and SNP). He opposed Donald Trump’s Aberdeenshire golf course when Alex Salmond was brown-nosing Trump and over-ruled council objections. He finally left the Greens over its “alienating and provocative” stance on trans rights.

Now Fergus Ewing and former Health Secretary Alex Neil are demanding that SNP members should be given a vote on their damaging pact with the Greens as it is “losing the SNP thousands of votes”.

Ewing added that: “The relationship that we had with the Green Party was supported, yes, by an overwhelming majority of our members in 2021, but that was before it was put into practice and before anyone realised the full enormity of dealing with these extremists.

“Perhaps now is the time to re-ballot SNP members.

“I suspect the result would be very different.”

Culture Wars

For many people, when the words ‘Culture’ and ‘Glasgow’ come together they think of TV series such as Taggart and Rab C Nesbitt. There is more to Glasgow culture than that, however. Apart from being the HQ of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and the Royal Scottish National Opera, which is three in the eye for Edinburgh, the city has a number of impressive municipal museums.

These are now under threat. Glasgow Life, the arms-length management organisation (ALMO) set to run them, is planning drastic cuts. Glasgow Life intends to cut 37 posts out of a total of 128 to save £1.5 million, which is about a fraction of what one of its paintings is worth.

ALMOs are companies wholly owned by councils where the council still owns the assets but is not involved in the day-to-day running. The main advantage to councillors is that they get salaries for sitting on their boards rather than making do with measly expenses. For a while Glasgow Life’s head just happened to be the wife of a Labour First Minister.

The city’s museums are the best in Britain for those under municipal control. Victorian philanthropists

built the City’s main Museum and Art Galleries in leafy Kelvingrove. A similar sourced general art museum founded by the eccentric ship-owner Sir William Burrell is situated in a south side park and has recently undergone an extensive renovation. The transport museum, although relocated to a new building more fancy than functional, is better than anything else in Scotland, and to find anything better you have to travel to the National Railway Museum in York or the Science Museum in London. Amongst other museums is the People’s Palace in the east end, a fascinating social history museum which has been the scene of many battles.

Decades ago one of those involved was a curator whose supporters loudly accused the council of corruption and nepotism in running the museum service, at the same time as she employed her own boyfriend without an interview.

These museums are all free, but in recent years special imported exhibitions have levied hefty admission charges. A major problem for the city is that they are supported only by the city’s own resources. Keeping the hair on stuffed lions and keeping the paint from flaking off the Dali is not a normal local government responsibility, especially when there are bins to be emptied, pot-holes to be filled and drug rehabilitation centres with long queues. The same has been said about the city’s libraries, particularly the main Mitchell Library and the city’s parks, the best of which are on the outskirts and used by those in posher surrounding towns.

Of the 37 posts under threat Glasgow Life claim that half of them are already vacant. That in itself is deplorable as the inside information is that many exhibits and items in store are in urgent need of treatment, to say nothing of stock checking, which has been somewhat lax.

Brian Smith, Secretary of the city’s Unison branch, says the job cuts are unnecessary. He demanded that: “Glasgow Life, Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government need to get creative about protecting these amazing cultural assets to Glasgow. There needs to be much greater National Funding to Glasgow for its Museum Services and the City generally. We hope local people will write to their councillors and MSPs and demand change.”

At a protest on Saturday outside the city centre Museum of Modern Art, a textile conservator Helen Hughes warned “of a thirty per cent cut to professional and specialist skilled staff” that will mean “less care, less research and less public access to Glasgow’s internationally important civic collections and over all a lessened public offer by the museums”.

Local Labour MSP Paul Sweeny has also taken up the cudgels, saying there is a need for a review of how Museums and Glasgow’s cultural assets are funded. He makes the argument that many of Glasgow’s assets are “National Assets but without National Funding or a fairer contribution from affluent communities surrounding Glasgow”. That is not the first time that complaint has been made and it will not be the last.

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# Vietnamese Rice – coming to Britain

Vietnam now has a great opportunity to expand its rice market share in the UK after India, the biggest supplier of the grain to this market, banned exports, says Trade Counsellor Nguyễn Cảnh Cường at the Vietnam Trade Office in London.

The UK, home to a community of over 5.5 million Asian-origin people, has high rice demand whilst it doesn't produce rice. In 2022, its rice import volume increased 4.1 per cent year-on-year to over 678,000 tonnes whilst the value rose seven per cent to more than £473 million.

Last year, Vietnam's rice exports to Britain grew strongly to approximately 3,400 tonnes – worth over £2.91 million, up 24.5 per cent in volume and 34 per cent in value from 2021. The country accounts for just

0.6 per cent of the UK's rice import at present, however, ranking 14<sup>th</sup> amongst importers there.

Cường said the export ban by India, which makes up nearly 27 per cent of the UK's rice import volume, will trigger a shortage of about 75,000 tonnes of rice in this market in the second half of 2023.

The sudden decline in rice supply from India will create advantages for other exporters, including Vietnam, the Trade Counsellor noted, saying it's now a good chance for Vietnamese rice to increase its market share in the UK, especially with favourable tariffs generated by the UK-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (UKVFTA).

Nguyễn Hải Nam, Chair of EUTEK Group, which exclusively distributes ST25 Ông Cua rice in Britain, said that the UK is a great potential market for Vietnamese rice, one of the items



• Hồ Quang Cua with his fragrant rice

exempted from tax under UKVFTA, especially Vietnam's long-grain rice.

Nguyễn Thị Minh Phương, product development manager at the Longdan Group – one of the largest importers of Vietnamese goods in the UK, said that the demand for importing and consuming rice in the UK has increased sharply since the beginning of the year. She said that Longdan's imports of Vietnamese rice have so far this year increased by 40 per cent over the same period last year.

Cường said that with no rice supply from India, British importers will switch to buying Vietnamese and Thai rice. If Vietnamese exporters conduct professional marketing in the British market, such as advertising in English on local media, they can gain a bigger market share, including the restaurants serving Asian tourists, who make up a substantial number amongst the tens of millions of visitors to the UK each year.

Although Vietnam is a major rice exporter, its

rice products exported to the UK as well as many other countries have often been sold on the domestic market under the brand name of distributors. Branding, therefore, is a long-term solution for Vietnamese rice to maintain market share.

Vietnamese exports also need the State's management to ensure the product quality of their brands. For example, ST25 fragrant rice was developed by Labour Hero Hồ Quang Cua and is recognised as the world's best. ST25 rice is exported to many European countries, but it has uneven quality because Vietnam's businesses buy the seed of ST25 rice but grow it under different processes.

A unified production process for this kind of rice labelled a national brand is needed to retain

its brand integrity. To meet the requirements on product quality and agricultural production of the UK as well as Europe, Vietnam's producers need to apply Global Good Agricultural Practices standards (GAP).

The State, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and rice-growing localities need to support farmers in technology and funds to expand the application of Global GAP. That will make importers and distributors in the UK and Europe interested in increasing rice imports from Vietnam. To take advantage of this new export opportunity, the State should provide credit to the businesses to purchase rice exports. Meanwhile, Vietnamese rice exporters need to participate in trade fairs in the UK because these events will bring a great opportunity to find customers.

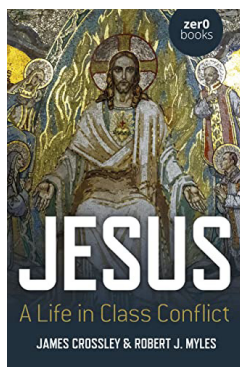
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## REVIEW

by Ben Soton

***Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict* by James Crossley & Robert J Myles. Zer0 Books, 2023. Paperback: 304pp, rrp: £19.99.**

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? Was he the actual son of God? An anti-Roman rebel claiming to be the King of the Jews? Or even a mythical construct whose narrative



was created from several mystical figures who may have existed at around the same time. This is the subject of *Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict* by James Crossley & Robert J Myles. Both authors have a strong academic grounding in the period; with Crossley being an expert in Millenarian Movements whilst Myles lectures on the New Testament.

According to Crossley and Myles, Jesus was the leader of a movement of which he and his 12 disciples acted as some form of leadership committee. The movement was a reaction against the rise of regional potentates such as Herod Antipas and his attempts of gentrify

Galilee, most notably through the building of the city of Tiberias. Jesus and his followers, described by the authors as the "Jesus Movement", were on a mission to the rich; an attempt to either persuade or force them to give up their wealth. Like many movements in pre-industrial times, they harked back to an earlier, largely imaginary perfect and more social just kingdom and are seen as a product of Millenarianism, the idea that some kind of cataclysmic change is coming. The authors refute conservative interpretations of Jesus, which claim that he was some kind of proto-capitalist entrepreneur.

The book is thor-

oughly researched using mostly Biblical texts. Crossley and Myles use their extensive Biblical knowledge to interpret and analyse the New Testament Gospels, picking out possible inaccuracies or misinterpretations. For example, why did Jesus need to be baptised by John the Baptist? Surely if he was the Son of God and born without sin he would not need to undergo baptism, which is meant to represent the washing away of sin. Meanwhile, the story of the Good Samaritan arose over a legal issue of whose responsibility it was to assist injured travellers, not the morality tale as often presented by modern Christians. On the other hand, the

authors do not doubt that the disciples genuinely believed in the resurrection of Jesus, the basis of the Christian religion.

Crossley and Myles conclude by reminding us of the reactionary role Christianity has played over the last two thousand years. After a period of persecution, it was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire and later played an integral role within European Feudalism. Modernised forms of Christianity were later adopted by the emerging capitalist class, most notably in the form of Protestantism. Christianity also played a role in the imperialist carve-up of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as well as playing a

reactionary role in the Cold War against the socialist camp. This does not however mean that it was the intention of the movement's original advocates, including Jesus himself.

Numerous Christians have stood on the side of the oppressed, however. Examples include John Ball during the Peasants' Revolt and the Levellers in the English Civil War. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the likes of Canon Hewlett Johnson, the Red Dean of Canterbury, a defender of the Soviet Union and Stalin. Christians also took part in anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles, such as Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus and Oscar Romero in El Salvador. It might be worth asking – who would Jesus side with today?

# No US/French-backed invasion of Niger!

**“When Africa becomes economically free and politically united, the monopolists will come face to face with their own working class in their own countries, and a new struggle will arise within which the liquidation and collapse of imperialism will be complete.”**

**Kwame Nkrumah**

August 6<sup>th</sup> was the deadline issued by the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) for the current government of Niger, headed by Abdourahamane Tchiani, to abdicate power or face a possible military intervention by ECOWAS forces. Tchiani came to power through a military coup, which has been condemned by imperialist powers such as the USA and France, who have a vested interest in maintaining a foothold in Niger.

Demonstrations in Niger support the new government, along with targeting the French embassy, a symbol of brutal French colonialism and exploitation of Nigerien people.

Niger is a target of imperialism for many reasons. Its natural resources include uranium, which supplies up to one-third of France's entire electrical grid. Yet Niger remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with the majority of its over 27 million people lacking access to



• Street support for the army and the Russians in Niger.

their own electricity. Niger also holds strategic importance to the US military as a hub for its drone operations in Central Africa, used to maintain American influence in the region as well as assist in French military interventions.

In addition to 1,500 French troops, there are over 1,000 US troops stationed in Niger, which the US government now refuses to withdraw, despite the security agreements between the USA and Niger being suspended and multiple European countries evacuating their citizens. The US military machine is digging in, hoping to restore the pro-imperialist government by whatever means necessary.

Sanctions against Niger have already been implemented, but a military option remains on the table, through which the USA and France will be able to use ECOWAS security

forces as a proxy. France has given its full support for an ECOWAS intervention, although many African countries have been hesitant to participate. Algeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali – all former French colonies – are amongst the countries that have come out in support of Niger against imperialist threats.

The governments of Burkina Faso and Mali issued a joint statement, asserting that any attempt at military intervention to remove Tchiani would be taken as a declaration of war against both their countries: “The transitional governments of Burkina Faso and Mali, One: have expressed their fraternal solidarity of the people of Mali and Burkina Faso with their brothers in Niger who have decided of their own accord to take their destiny in hand and to assume their sovereignty. Two:

Denounce the persistence of the regional organisations to apply sanctions that aggravate the suffering of the population and imperil the spirit of Pan-Africanism. Three: Refuse to apply these illegal, illegitimate and inhumane sanctions against the Nigerien people and authorities. Four: Any military intervention against Niger would be tantamount to a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali.”

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, who is also the current ECOWAS chair, has authorised the deployment of Nigerian soldiers against Niger; they would make up the bulk of ECOWAS forces. The Nigerian Senate however, voted not to approve this deployment.

The refusal of other neighbouring countries to participate in the US- and French-backed ECOWAS invasion,

as well as the hesitancy of the people within the countries whose leaders advocated for invasion to actually carry it out, shows major fractures in the imperialist grip over West Africa after hundreds of years of colonialism.

Niger was one of the last remaining governments friendly to the US empire in the Sahel region. Put into power by a series of earlier coups, the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso cut ties with French colonialism and expelled French troops. Since then, ECOWAS has established its own military presence to attempt to prevent anti-colonial coups from taking place within ECOWAS member states, without US or French troops intervening directly.

Some of the new African governments are working with Russian Wagner Group merce-

nary forces in the fight against local Islamic State-affiliated groups. These ISIS-like armed groups have been a security concern for countries in the region since NATO aggression destroyed Libya in 2011 and destabilised the region. US and French imperialism have used these groups' existence as a pretext for military intervention.

We affirm the right of Niger's people to take the fate of their country into their own hands. We oppose any US- or French-backed military invasions, sanctions or meddling in African politics. We support the expulsion of all US and French troops and the dismantling of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM).

We support the right of African nations to make economic and security relationships on their own terms with other countries, including with Russia and China, rather than being forced into a position of subjugation as a neo-colony of imperialist powers such as the USA or France.

We oppose any US, French or NATO plans to launch yet another major proxy war. Such a war would spread havoc in the region in its attempt to maintain economic dominance over and perpetual super-exploitation of the African people.

**Workers World  
(USA)**

## France refuses to withdraw forces from Niger

by Ed Newman

**The French government has refused to pull its troops out of coup-hit Niger, saying it backs regional countries' push to reinstate the ousted pro-West president, Mo-hammad Bazoum.**

Bazoum was taken into custody at the presidential palace in the capital Niamey by Niger's Presidential Guard on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Two days later the head of the Guard, General Abdourahamane Tiani, declared himself the new leader of the former French colony.

The French government says it does not recognise the junta as the legitimate rulers of the Sahel country located in a strategic region bordering

seven other African states, including Libya, Chad and Nigeria.

"France recalls that the legal framework for its co-operation with Niger in the area of defence is based on agreements that have been concluded with the legitimate Niger authorities," read a statement from the French foreign ministry. "These are the only ones that France, and the entire international community, recognise."

France was the coloniser of the West African country until the nation's independence in 1960. Since independence, France has maintained its military presence and it has 1,500 soldiers currently deployed in Niger. The USA also has troops stationed in Niger.



• Support for the coup on the streets of Niger.

The French government statement followed a declaration from the junta calling on the Western military forces to evacuate the country.

The growing crisis in Niger seems to be turning the tables on the West. Amadou Abdramane, the spokesperson for the mil-

itary coup leaders, said the junta was scrapping the military agreements with its former colonial rulers.

The French foreign ministry, however, says that France will support any move by member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reinstate

Bazoum in power. On Friday, ECOWAS said its military chiefs had agreed on a plan for a possible intervention in Niger.

"All the elements that will go into any eventual intervention have been worked out ... including the how and when we are going to deploy the force," ECOWAS commissioner Abdel-Fatau Musah warned, adding: "We want diplomacy to work, and we want this message clearly transmitted to them [the junta] that we are giving them every opportunity to reverse what they have done."

The Kremlin said interference of non-regional powers, such as the USA, was unlikely to help improve the situation. Niger's new leaders,

however, remained defiant, saying they would respond to force with force.

In neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso, where similar juntas have taken power since 2020, the rulers said any attack on Niger would be seen as a "declaration of war" against them. In addition, Russia said foreign intervention would not resolve the crisis.

Meanwhile, the West has imposed sweeping sanctions against the coup-hit country in an effort to mount international pressure to reinstate Bazoum.

The ousted president himself has appealed to the international community, the USA in particular, to intervene militarily and restore his presidency.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## Crimes of US imperialism

by Roberto Morejón

**Nearly half a century after one of the most abominable crimes in Latin America, the coup d'état against Chilean President Salvador Allende, Chileans are still delving into the truth of the facts.**

Through its ambassador to Washington, Juan Gabriel Valdés, Chile is urging the USA to declassify more documents indicative of the growing role of

the Northern power in the 11<sup>th</sup> September 1973 coup.

Valdés formally requested the Biden administration to release 1973 and 1974 files on what was said at the White House by former President Richard Nixon and his collaborators about the uprising against the socialist government in Chile.

Let us remember that Washington's crude interference put an end to Allende's life and gave way

to a ferocious dictatorship, the founder of the State terrorism in which Augusto Pinochet and his henchmen plunged Chile for 17 years.

On the general's orders, Allende's former minister, Orlando Letelier, was assassinated in Washington on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1976.

Neither that crime nor the long night of the coup have been condemned by the Chilean right wing, as if it were not true that Pinochet and the military

junta unleashed a hunt for political opponents through the most repulsive methods of torture.

They ordered dismissals, imprisonment, exile, as well as extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' that took the lives of more than 40,000 Chileans.

The USA has refused to come clean on its role in the coup. But from partially declassified documents, books and press articles we know of the hostility of Nixon

and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger towards Allende, even before taking office.

The CIA supported and financed groups to destabilise the government and in general the tenants of the White House fed the resistance, supported the right wing, and financed strikes and sabotage, as Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés emphasised in an interview with the Spanish media.

The USA, the self-styled champion of human rights in the world, collaborated decisively in the crushing of all human rights in Chile, and many citizens in that country and abroad want to know the details of the plot.

It is no coincidence that Kissinger went so far as to say, in the aftermath of the coup: "In Eisenhower's time we would have been treated as heroes."

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## America is the enemy of everyone

**Robbers are often portrayed in books wearing masks. The rationale behind donning a mask during acts of plunder signifies that even the most ruthless and malicious thief still maintains a basic reverence for social norms and shows some sense of shame in the face of indignity and disgrace.**

When describing Washington's acts of oil and resource plundering in countries such as Syria, however, the traditional image of a masked robber fails to match up with America's behaviour.

Robberies committed by the USA, in essence, differ little from those of conventional bandits: it

deceives, steals and robs. The only distinction is that the USA seldom bothers to operate with stealth. It eschews wearing masks, and even dons uniforms to take spoils and raises its flag to assert dominance.

Were you to find a suitable illustration of Washington's deplorable behaviour, a striking one would be that of a robber unmasked.

US forces have stolen and illegally transported a substantial amount of wheat bran and oil from Syria's northeast province of Hasakah to its bases in Iraq. They continue to use truck convoys to pilfer oil and other resources in Syria.

According to official

data released by Syria, over 80 per cent of the country's oil production in the first half of 2022 was plundered by the US military and its supported armed forces.

The looting serves two purposes. Firstly, to reap colossal profits through the appropriation of valuable resources. According to Syria's official data released in 2022, direct losses resulting from assaults committed by US forces, militias, and affiliated terrorist entities on Syrian territory totalled \$25.9 billion. Of these, a staggering \$19.8 billion can be attributed to the looting of oil, gas and mineral resources, and an additional \$3.3 billion resulted from vandalising and ransacking

facilities.

The second is to deprive defiant governments of vital resources and derail their efforts to upgrade infrastructure, improve the lives of their citizens and pursue national development. This deliberate resource plundering bolsters Washington's unjustified attacks against these targeted governments, as it typically portrays them as incapable of effective governance due to insufficient resources.

American exploitation of other countries for their own gain comes as no surprise to the rest of the world. Recently, the USA has reportedly authorised the sale of shares belonging to a subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company,

despite opposition from the Venezuelan government.

Fleeing impoverished Afghanistan, the USA has frozen its overseas assets since 2021 and is scheming to redirect these resources for their own purposes. It has also been seizing Iranian oil tankers on international trade routes, surreptitiously bringing Iranian oil back to the USA for sale and attempting to legitimise this act of robbery as "imports".

As always it is the local populace that bears the brunt. Throughout the protracted Syrian crisis, the loss of life has been horrendous, with at least 350,000 casualties record-

ed and a significant portion of adults enduring poverty below the headline. Two-thirds of the population rely on humanitarian aid as a lifeline and over half lack reliable access to food, leaving them vulnerable to hunger and insecurity.

Standing in front of a mirror, Washington might still balk at fathoming the outline of its vision as a despicable plunderer under the global gaze. As Ali Asta, a Syrian resident, lamented: "America is Syria's greatest enemy. They came to Syria under the pretext of anti-terrorism, but in reality, they plundered our wheat and oil ... America is the enemy of everyone."

*Xinhua*