

## Biden's new diplomatic offensive stalls

by New Worker correspondent

US President Joe Biden has launched a new diplomatic offensive in a renewed American effort to restore US prestige in the Global South and bolster the imperialist alliance to ensure that the Ukraine war goes on for another long year. But while a prisoner exchange with Iran has raised Western hopes of a thaw in relations with the Islamic Republic, Biden's attempt to get the House of Saud to normalise relations with Israel have, so far, come to nothing.

Meanwhile Vladimir Putin, back from his high-level talks in Siberia with Democratic Korean leader Kim Jong Un, is preparing for another summit, this time with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. The Kremlin says Vladimir Putin will meet Chinese president Xi Jinping in Beijing in October. Their talks will take place during the Belt & Road Forum in the Chinese capital next month.

Biden kicked off his new diplomatic campaign at the UN General Assembly's autumn session this week. At the world forum in New York, the American president called on world leaders to back Ukraine while preparing to meet his lackey, Vladimir Zelensky,



in Washington to help push a further \$24 billion Ukraine military aid package through Congress.

But the Democrat president is coming under increasing fire from some of his Republican rivals who want the USA to spend less money on Kiev's failing war effort, while his bitter foe, Donald Trump, says he'll seek a quick end to the war if returned to power next year.

Earlier in the month the American foreign minister, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, made a two-day surprise visit to Ukraine to announce more than \$1 billion in aid for Ukraine. Money buys people, as the imperialists well know, but it doesn't buy victory. In Ukraine the battles rage across the southern and eastern fronts but the front-lines remain almost unchanged. The Ukrainians are repeatedly trying to break through the Russian defences, directing their main assault efforts from one area to another. But they

are constantly being beaten back in a war of attrition that is decidedly turning out to be in Russia's favour.

Meanwhile in the Middle East, the news that US efforts to secure 'peace' between Saudi Arabia and Israel have stalled have overshadowed the US-Iranian prisoner swap deal and the unfreezing of some six billion dollars-worth of Iranian oil money that took place this week.

Saudi Arabia informed the Biden administration of its decision to halt all talks of normalising ties with Israel on Sunday. This follows reports in the Israeli media that the Netanyahu government had point-blank refused to meet Palestinian and Saudi demands for the transfer of most of the West Bank from Israeli to Palestinian control and the demolition of illegal outposts in the occupied territories.

The "autonomous" Palestinian Authority in the West Bank also called on the Americans to take "irreversible"

Jerusalem that historically served Palestinians, and the scrapping of Congressional legislation characterising the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a terror organisation.

The Americans wanted the Palestinians and the Saudis to back down and accept the meaningless platitudes that their other Arab clients have accepted in the past to cover their surrender peace treaties with Israel.

But the Saudis are now increasingly using their immense oil and financial power to pursue an independent foreign policy in the Middle East. Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Monday that there will be no solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict without an independent Palestinian state. "The two-state solution must return to the forefront," he said.

### • Defending the Donbas.

steps towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, including US backing for the recognition of Palestinian statehood at the United Nations, the USA reopening its consulate in

## FUND

**People are demanding change. Train crews on strike. Doctors on strike. Campaigners demanding justice for Assange and the Palestinians; for the people of the Donbas and the millions of Ukrainians struggling against the Nazi regime in Kiev. The bureaucrats and the left-wing posers strut about at TUC but at the end of the day what matters is what happens on the street.**

**There is an answer to the crisis and we need to make it. But we can only do it with your help. This week's banker's orders delivered another £450 to the fighting fund, pushing the running total to £1,350 for the month. But we need £3,500 by the end of September to keep our communist press going.**

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## INSIDE

MOROCCO ..P6

UKRAINE ..P10

PALESTINE ..P11

G77&CHINA ..P12



# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## A disgusting spectacle in Liverpool

This year's TUC annual conference summed up all that is rotten in the British labour movement. The bureaucrats, left-wing posers and the rest of the gravy-trainers were all there in Liverpool to pass the usual platitudes that pass for working class solidarity these days.

Sir Keir Starmer joined the assembled general secretaries for a back-slapping eve of conference dinner but left it to his deputy Angela Rayner to assure the union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie as a whole that they can sleep soundly in their beds when Starmer gets to Downing Street.

The most sickening episode was when delegates voted overwhelmingly for a motion backing the provision of "moral and material aid", including arms, to the puppet regime in Ukraine.

Moving the motion, Barbara Plant, the president of the GMB, said Ukraine was fighting for its survival in the face of a brutal Russian onslaught and claimed that denying the Ukrainians of the means of self-defence would be like the arms embargo that crippled the Spanish republic in the 1930s.

Seconding the motion, ASLEF Assistant General Secretary Simon Weller claimed Ukrainian unions were not subject to bans, and that Russia's recent declaration that the International Transport Federation was an "undesirable organisation" would put the rights of many workers, particularly seafarers, at risk. And needless to say, TUC general secretary Paul Nowak got up to tell conference that the General Council backed the motion.

Although a handful of unions, including the RMT, UCU and the NEU, abstained only the firefighters' and the small bakers' unions took the principled stand to oppose the motion. Jamie Newell of the Fire Brigades Union condemned the way debate on Ukraine has been shut down in Britain. "We do not think the escalation of war is in the interests of the Russian or Ukrainian working class," he said.

The "Solidarity with Ukraine" motion committed the TUC to supporting "Ukrainian unions' calls for financial and practical aid from the UK to Ukraine", and "the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from all Ukrainian territories occupied since 2014" – including Crimea and the eastern Donbas regions – exactly the same demands of Anglo-American imperialism and the rest of the NATO pack.

## Support the doctors!

**Junior doctors joined consultants in industrial action called by the British Medical Association (BMA) this week. For the first time in the history of the NHS, consultants and junior doctors stood together in joint strike action. As with previous strikes, the union made sure that patients are kept safe by ensuring that emergency services remain in place.**

Junior doctors account for nearly half NHS doctors – from medics fresh out of university to those sometimes with 10 years of experience. Their pay has been cut by more than 26 per cent in real-terms since 2008/09. This mean newly-qualified medics earn just £14.09 per hour. This is in comparison to baristas at Pret a Manger, who can earn up to £14.10 per hour after the coffee chain recently announced it has raised wages by 19 per cent this year. Consultants too have seen their real-term take-home pay fall by over a third over the last 14 years. This can't keep going.

Support the striking doctors! Defend the NHS!

# Cold War hysteria in parliament

**A 28-year-old man was arrested in March on suspicion of breaking the Official Secrets Act. He has been granted bail until early October. But as of now, no charges have been filed, suggesting a lack of concrete evidence. In the context of the generalisation of national security in the UK, this would typically be a minor case. In September, however, this case, along with another similar one, was publicised as "Chinese espionage activities", causing a significant stir in British politics and public opinion.**

Today Parliament is in turmoil over the 'Chinese spy' issue – the Prime Minister is being 'interrogated' there, Ministers are forced to make statements, and the person involved has to issue statements denying the allegations. None of this, however, can stop MPs from questioning the government as if they were on a mission, asking, "Is China really a threat?". Actually, it's not much of a 'question' because they already have a predetermined answer. Whoever provides this answer is considered an 'ally' but anyone who says something different may well find themselves accused of being a 'spy'.

The reason this young person has become the focus is mainly because he is said to be the director of the parliamentary China Research Group, holding a parliamentary pass, and had previously worked in China for a while. This young man, who is suspected of being a "Chinese spy" says he is "completely innocent". But it is evident that some people in the UK have already rushed to judgment, deeming him "guilty". Interestingly, in his efforts to prove his innocence, the young man mentioned that he has spent his career to

date "trying to educate others about the challenge and threats presented by the Chinese communist party". This has been confirmed by the British media, but some especially 'observant' people have found what they consider to be subtle pro-China tendencies in his remarks. This is often how 'charges' come about.

The events from March have, however, escalated in September at a time when the UK is seeking to repair its relationship with the Chinese government. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly visited China in late August, becoming the highest-ranking UK government official to visit China in years. In a way, this situation is somewhat reminiscent of the 'China-US balloon incident' that occurred in February this year.

In the USA and the UK, there are individuals or forces who specialise in sabotaging relations with China. They employ various tactics such as creating trouble out of nothing, blowing things out of proportion, distorting facts, and confusing the public. They launch political witch-hunts within their own countries, adopting an 'it's better to kill a thousand by mistake than let one go' approach, with a focus on targeting individuals who hold friendly or rational attitudes toward China. Under this oppressive atmosphere, individuals who persist in maintaining a friendly and pragmatic approach towards China have become as rare as giant pandas in British and American society. Unlike giant pandas however, they are not cherished and protected, but instead face relentless persecution from anti-China forces.

For example, the remarks made by Cleverly defending the need to engage with China sparked criticism in

London. Similarly, the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, who said "the UK needs to talk to China", is now said to be a 'spy' by some simply because he has a Chinese wife.

In the eyes of anti-China politicians, who exploit any opportunity, having any dealings with the Chinese people, being 'pro-China', and not making radical anti-China statements, is a sign of weakness. Only a complete and thorough anti-China and anti-communist stance is considered the only acceptable 'political correctness'.

The case this time clearly shows that the reality is completely different from what politicians and intelligence agencies have hyped up in their 'Chinese spies everywhere' hysteria. It is precisely because of the lack of evidence that they are desperate and making a big deal out of the case that cannot withstand legal scrutiny.

The Sunak government obviously sees the harm that extreme thinking towards China has brought to the UK and intends to re-calibrate the relationship between China and the UK. The distorted British political environment, however, has greatly limited the space and extent to which this re-calibration can be made.

This includes deep co-ordination with the American strategy, internal contradictions and wrangling within the UK, and intentional accommodation and utilisation of the already established anti-China atmosphere. It should be said that these factors have intertwined and become obstacles that cannot be ignored on the advancement path of China-UK relations, and they have made people see how frightening the distorted political atmosphere eroding rationality is.

Global Times

# Workers' Notes

## George Johannes remembered

by New Worker correspondent

**A celebration of the life of African National Congress (ANC) and communist activist, and former ambassador to the Holy See, George Johannes took place last week at the South African high Commission in London's Trafalgar Square.**

Chitra Karve, chair of Action for Southern Africa, paid tribute to George, saying that he had "contributed to the liberation of our beloved country with distinction and dignity".

Peter Hain, a former leading Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) activist and Labour government minister, said that George had been on the BOSS (apartheid South African intelligence service) list for kidnapping or murder, pointing out that several leading anti-apartheid members had been murdered and that he himself had received a deadly letter bomb in London.

Hain said that for years the British AAM "was in a minority, criticised, besieged, infiltrated and targeted", and recalled that in 1996 Margaret Thatcher called Nelson Mandela a terrorist. Years later, when she attended Mandela's speech to both houses of parliament, Hain described seeing her "scuttling to her seat".

Former ANC UK spokesperson and High Commission political attaché Nad Pillay said that George studied at the University of Cork and formally joined the ANC in 1976 after his return to Africa.

He underwent military training and worked on intelligence and security under the name Joseph Louw. He then worked in Angola and Zambia before moving to London.

"George travelled across the UK for the ANC and was known, if I remember correctly, as something of a 'Trot-basher', Nad recounted. "I look forward to raising a glass in memory of George Johannes, persistent in adversity, a comrade in the struggle."



• Peter Hain speaking.

A message from the Secretary General of the ANC said: "Comrade George's work for Radio Freedom, Umkhonto we Sizwe (the armed wing of the ANC), and at the ANC's Penton Street office in London, were landmarks in his life of struggle."

Another message from Cheryl Carolus, the first London High Commissioner after apartheid, described George as "a trusted colleague, a wise advisor and friend, and a respected member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party".

A group of singers led by vocalist Queen Patience sang a selection of beautiful and very moving songs in George's memory.

During his time working at the South African High Commission in London from 1998 to 2005, as Political Counsellor and then Deputy High Commissioner, George became a member of the New Communist Party. He is still remembered by many NCP members as an inspiring and energetic comrade and a very attractive and lively personality.

## The TUC at Liverpool

by New Worker correspondent

**The 155<sup>th</sup> AGM of the TUC was not what it was in its glory days. Once upon a time it received wall-to-wall TV coverage, and with hordes of labour correspondents filling the pages of newspapers with detailed reports of debates. Now things are very different. A Google search for "TUC Congress Liverpool" brought up a tenth of the hits for Saturday's "Fleetwood Town v Oxford United" lower league football match.**

Those who are very keen can

watch the entire proceedings on YouTube. On Sunday these had less than 350 views each. The speech from the new General Secretary, Paul Nowak, managed to attract a record 2,100 views.

It is significant that the right-wing press found little to denounce at Liverpool.

In its glory days the TUC was an important body. Whether or not Labour was in power, Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet ministers flocked to the TUC. This year it was very different. Even Labour's leader was absent (he put in an appearance last year) and sent his deputy, Angela Rayner, where she received more applause than she deserved. To make up for that disappointment of not having the entire Shadow Cabinet we were graced with the presence of a representative of the American trade union federation the AFL-CIO. The only other overseas speakers were from the Chilean and International TUCs, although there were fringe events on international topics.

There are presently 48 unions representing 5.5 million workers affiliated to the TUC. This is a sad comedown from its peak in 1980, when the TUC represented nearly 13 million workers. At present, union density is only 22.3 per cent generally and fell last year despite the strike wave. Although public sector density is 48.6 per cent, it is only 12 per cent in the private sector. There are another one million workers in non-TUC unions ranging from grand Royal College of Nursing RCN) to the small but active Industrial Workers of the World.

The largest union in Britain is Unison with 1,184,991 members, which has recently taken the crown from Unite with 1,130,045 members. The one with the most descriptive name is the 1,203-strong National Society

for Education in Art and Design, and the smallest is the pitiful but once mighty National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which now has just 82 members.

Apart from the formal business there were many fringe meetings. There delegates can discuss matters such as "The case for a National Climate Service", listen to the train drivers' union argue for "Investing in rail for a greener future" and War on Want on the fashion industry. One of the most popular fringe events is that organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, where delegates can show solidarity with the Cuban working class, particularly those working in the Havana Club distillery.

Cuba solidarity is seen by the Congress House bureaucrats as a fairly harmless activity, useful for keeping lefties occupied. This was made clear in August 2006. Then Owen Tudor, the TUC's international officer, had a chat about the forthcoming Congress with an American Embassy labour affairs official, later made public by WikiLeaks. Tudor lamented that delegates would condemn Israel's recent military actions but reassured his American visitor that support for Cuba was nothing to worry about as it was just a routine "warhorse issue".

This year there was a preview showing of *London Recruits*, a film celebrating the young British activists (mostly communists) who were sent to South Africa disguised as tourists. The TUC likes to boast about the heroic role it played in overthrowing apartheid. This is largely fiction as the TUC did next to nothing and faithfully followed the Cold War-influenced Foreign Office line and that from the white-based South African trade unions who were keen supporters of

apartheid. It took a lot of pressure from left-wing activists to stir the TUC into something approaching activity, long after anti-apartheid had become a respectable cause.

## More nonsense

But to return to Liverpool in 2023. This year's Congress kicked off with the launch of a brand new "trade union faith and belief network" that "will start an ongoing dialogue between unions, faith organisations and community groups, and will explore common ground on the dignity of labour and trade union rights, and in-work poverty". The TUC might regret setting up this network as sooner or later they will discover that not all religious groups are model *Guardian*-reading liberals.

Perhaps speaking with crossed fingers, Labour's token speaker Angela Rayner said that an employment rights Bill would be introduced within 100 days of a Labour Government taking office, but she was a vague on the details apart from introducing electronic balloting in trade union elections. Although she said Labour would repeal the 2016 Trade Union Act this implies all the other anti-union laws will remain in place. Needless to say, her pledges are not to be taken seriously. The pledge to end zero-hour contracts only lasted until Saturday lunchtime and no doubt others will go the same way.

In all there were 81 motions, including two emergency motions. Only one was rejected outright. This was a demand from the Prison Officers' Association for local trade union councils to have a greater say in the TUC's affairs, including being able to speak and vote on any motion before the TUC, and even a seat on the General Council. This was rejected on the grounds that workers are already represented at the TUC through their unions. Cynics might think the TUC rejected this motion because the Congress House bureaucrats do not like ordinary working class left-wing activists demanding real action.

From a trade union perspective there was little that was controversial. No-one will be surprised to know that the TUC-backed "Fair funding for public services" favours "Investment in public service" and wants more

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“Public service investment”, which is like being against sin. The same goes for motions supporting “Ending child poverty” and opposing “Violence against women and girls”, the latter of which would let Myra Hindley off the hook.

Other more specific pious nonsense got through. On example of this was the motion from the Musicians’ Union supported by the National Union of Journalists, wanting to retain the BBC licence fee model on the grounds that it employs lots of musicians. That is all very well, but it also sees the BBC as a bastion of “professional journalism and impartial reporting” despite its appalling record of biased anti-working class coverage since the 1926 General Strike.

By far the worst TUC policy was that which urged support for the Ukrainian Nazis. This was not unexpected as last year the TUC passed a motion demanding increased military spending, under the guise of improving industrial capacity.

GMB President Barbara Plant demonstrated her total ignorance of the situation by saying that the openly Nazi Ukrainians were as deserving of military support as was the Republican government in Spain after Franco’s coup. Even this absurdity was too

much for some supporters of this deplorable but successful motion.

Only the Fire Brigades Union opposed this stain on the trade union movement, vainly pointing out that the conference had deplored the rise of the far-right in Europe. The only other international issue to have a specific motion was opposition to moves to ban local authorities from boycotting unsavoury companies with dodgy investments.

Some of the motions seemed like time-fillers. While there is a legitimate case by the Professional Footballers’ Association to demand for equal pay and conditions for female footballers, surely there are other places where the College of Podiatry can demand better designed boots for woman footballers.

Alongside traditional trade union issues familiar in 1868, there were some very modern forms of exploitation. The Writers Guild of Great Britain has taken on the might of Netflix and Amazon Prime amongst others, to secure decent returns for their scribbles. These multinationals force writers to sign ‘buy-out’ agreements forcing them to give away all intellectual property and copyrights. This means that if they produce a hit they do not benefit from any repeat fees and are not allowed to adapt their own work for books or theatrical shows. These terms are much

worse than those demanded by traditional media companies.

The dangers of Artificial Intelligence taking over jobs and making workplace surveillance even worse was the subject of a motion by the Communication Workers Union supported by the fear of the Musicians’ Union that it will make its members redundant.

Some people might find contradictions between the TUC’s support for the High Speed Railway, which will involve chopping down forests, with a demand for more urgency on climate change.

Congress also deplored the Westminster government vetoing the SNP Government’s Gender Recognition Reform Bill, which is one of the main causes of the SNP’s decline in popularity. One wonders if many delegates are aware that the TUC is now committed to a policy sending certain male sexual offenders to female prisons in the name of equality for transgender people.

No-one will disagree with the demand for “an end to unpaid overtime for midwives and maternity support workers”, improving the “Standing of education in the UK”, expressing “Solidarity with transport workers and renewed campaign for better public transport” and “Tackling flags of convenience and growing domestic shipping”, but one should not wait for the TUC to do anything

effect about any of these issues. The TUC policy of repealing of all anti-trade laws is not something Congress House bureaucrats really want as it would give them extra work to do.

One demand that might be acted on is that for a “Royal Commission into the criminal justice system” as Royal Commissions sit for ages looking at subjects to no great effect.

## Off the rails

by New Worker correspondent

At present the major issue is the planned closure of railway station ticket offices. This has been the subject of a nationwide campaign including 680,000 responses to a public consultation conducted by watchdogs Transport Focus and London TravelWatch, and an emergency motion passed at the TUC. The former means that the consultation has been extended until the end of October.

The largest transport union, RMT, is demanding an urgent meeting with the passenger watchdogs, a lobby of parliament, organising legal challenges against the closures, and an urgent meeting with the Government demanding not just withdrawal of closures plans and other threats to rail workers that have caused the disputes with the rail unions.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said ticket offices were “a vital service on our railways, making them accessible to the vulnerable, elderly and disabled. We are going into the next phase of our campaign to get the government to stop rail operators forcing through 1000 ticket office closures and thousands of job losses leading to the de-staffing of our railway stations.”

The same union held another two day strike last Friday and Saturday on the TransPennine Express, where catering workers employed by Rail Gourmet are employed on worse terms than directly employed workers. The highly profitable company is refusing to pay workers £15 per hour. Mick Lynch complained that: “Rail Gourmet bosses are dragging their feet in this dispute. They are a profitable company who could easily pay the modest rise our members expect and deliver on sick pay and pensions.”

Drivers’ union ASLEF is also continuing the long-running pay dispute with more protest walk-outs and a week-long national overtime ban in October.

ASLEF says the strikes will force the train operating companies to cancel all services in the UK and that the ban on overtime will seriously disrupt the network as the privatised train companies have always failed to employ enough drivers to provide a proper service.

The main issue is pay. Drivers have not had a rise for four years. General Secretary Mick Whelan complained that his last meeting with the Rail Minister was in January and the last meeting with the train companies was in April.

The Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, is also hard to find. ASLEF complains that the last pay offer was so poor that it seemed designed for rejection. The rail companies are also to blame because their offer was dependent on ASLEF giving up hard-won conditions. But deals have been done with 14 other companies, including freight companies, Eurostar, and in Scotland and Wales.

The dispute is a long-running one. Balloting started in June of last year Twelve one-day strikes have taken place since July 2022. There has also been the withdrawal of rest-day working, which has also caused serious disruption.

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

## 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003

**SIX MILLION workers in Britain have seen the value of their personal pensions fall to less than the total amount paid in over the last 10 years according to an important study published last week by Moneyfacts, an independent research group.**

*The type of pensions studied were unit-linked – which currently account for 60 per cent of all personal pensions, with more than 6.3 million in operation throughout Britain.*

*Those affected are the workers who heeded Government pressure to take out personal*

*pensions to help fund their retirement.*

*Moneyfacts based its study on gross contributions, including charges, of £100 per month – equivalent to £12,000 over 10 years. The average unit-linked pension taken out in 1993 is now worth just £11,950.*

*Meanwhile British employees of the US-based technology group EMC Corporation are likely to lose 90 per cent of their pension entitlement after the company closed its final salary scheme.*

*Those affected are some 700 employees of EMC’s British subsidiary, formerly known as Data General, which was taken over by the American group four years ago.*

*EMC admitted closing the scheme but says it has not abandoned the workers – they have been joined to another, inferior pension scheme.*

*The EMC Corporation is said, at present to be “swimming in money”.*

*The Government recently announced*

*measures to discourage profitable firms from choosing to wind-up their under-funded pension schemes.*

*Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith recently said he wanted to end the scandal of workers being denied the pensions they have built up over many years.*

*But currently there is no law to stop pension schemes being wound up providing they meet a minimum funding requirement – although even this does not guarantee the pensions of those who are yet to retire.*

*One employee who paid into EMC Corporation’s fund for more than 20 years said: “Current valuations are indicating I will only receive a pension between five and 15 per cent of what I would have expected if it had been on target.*

*“This will amount to a pension of between £1,000 and £3,000 a year. Anybody working for a subsidiary of a foreign company in the UK could find themselves in the same situation.”*

# The Pinochet coup: Viviana Corvalan speaks out

by Maxim Grishenkin

Fifty years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1973, a military coup took place in Chile. Socialist President Salvador Allende was deposed and a junta led by General Augusto Pinochet came to power, imposing a brutal dictatorship over the country. To mark this date, Viviana Corvalan, the daughter of iconic Chilean communist Luis Corvalan, talks about the events of half a century ago, her family's life in forced exile in the Soviet Union, and current concerns in international politics.

After Pinochet took power, Viviana Corvalan's family, like many other dictatorship victims, experienced a living hell. Viviana's father, Luis Corvalan, then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, was arrested and tortured. The same happened to his son, who later died in exile at the age of only 28 because of the damage done to his health.

"It was like any other Chilean family victimised by the dictatorship: my father in jail, my sister-in-law in jail, my brother in jail, I was also detained on the outside," Viviana Corvalan recalled. Among other things, she was forbidden to "study or even appear" at any university.

Viviana said that the dictatorship "broke their lives completely in all areas". This applied to studies, political activism and even friendships. "In those years of dictatorship, who could communicate with you? We were a family that was constantly under surveillance. In other words, whoever approached us was immediately considered a communist."

The evil inflicted on her family was so great that she admitted she continues to feel a "terrible rage" and refuses to forgive those involved in the

crimes of the dictatorship.

"Honestly, when I am told about forgiveness and that pardoning will heal me, I say I don't want reconciliation or excuse: I want justice," Viviana said, outraged in particular that those who tortured her brother went unpunished for his death.

In 1976, as a result of an agreement between the Soviet and Chilean authorities, mediated by the USA, Luis Corvalan was exchanged for Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky and granted political asylum in the USSR.

Viviana, who was 21 at the time, also travelled to Moscow with her younger sister. She said she fell in love with the country at first sight, already familiar from the gifts her father brought from the USSR before the coup in Chile. For example, she learnt to ride on a "Russian bicycle".

Emphasising the "grandeur" and "elegance" of the Russian capital and its people, Viviana described Soviet society and its social conquests as "fantastic" and "wonderful" and things that are still unattainable for many countries.

"There was a right to housing, even if it was in a communal apartment. It's

unimaginable how many tents we have on the streets here in Chile, how many people live on the streets in winter and summer. In the Soviet Union, anyway, even if the bathroom and the kitchen were shared, there was somewhere to sleep, somewhere to live. And you always saw thousands of construction cranes in Moscow, as there was always something being built there."

She also emphasised the "indisputable right" to free healthcare and the achievements the Soviet Union had made in this area. "I also can't help mentioning the right to education," said Viviana, who studied choreographic art direction at the Russian Institute of Theatre Art (GITIS).

"I had the opportunity to study what I liked without economic problems; I had a place to live, access to healthcare, love, colleagues and friends with whom we still keep in touch to this day," Viviana said, emphasising that the quality of her life in the Soviet Union contrasted sharply with the anxiety she felt when she returned to Chile.

She explained that "this anxiety stems from wondering whether your pay will be enough for a month's rent,

and to eat, and to pay for your daughter's school fees".

In addition, in Chile, Viviana experienced fear at night that someone would "break into the house to steal".

"I never experienced any of this in the Soviet Union," she said. "I was happier in the Soviet Union than anywhere else. And I miss not only the Soviet Union, but also Russia."

Viviana says the present campaign of Russophobia emerging around the world is "madness". In this regard,

she regretted the position of Chile's present president, Gabriel Borich, who sided with Kiev over the Ukrainian conflict.

"I am ashamed of the current Chilean government, where the Communist Party is part of the ruling coalition. I am ashamed that they do not understand the point and are unable to see that this is a war by the United States, which is obviously using Ukraine with a puppet like Zelensky against Russia. I don't understand how they don't realise this," Viviana remarked, adding that the Chilean media clearly distort information about the conflict.

She also stressed that the anti-Russian campaign waged in the West reminded her a lot of Pinochet's attacks on communists, which, she said, are still not a thing of the past.

"To this day I feel and sense this anti-communism. It is the same with Russophobia," Viviana argued.

She pointed out however, that she is ready to confront such attacks and lies. "I am the daughter of a father who was a very brave and very consistent man and who taught us not to be afraid to speak the truth."

Sputnik



• The Corvalan daughters in exile. Viviana (left) and Mariya-Victoriya (right) at a news conference in Moscow.

## New Worker Supporters' Groups...

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# Morocco: China sends a helping hand

by Huang Lanlan  
and Cui Fandi

**A 6.8 magnitude quake struck southern parts of Morocco at midnight local time, on 9<sup>th</sup> September, killing over 2,800 and injuring thousands more. Chinese President Xi Jinping extended condolences to Moroccan King Mohammed VI for the tragic loss of life and expressed sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured on behalf of the Chinese government and people. For many Chinese people, Morocco is a faraway but not alien country. There are thousands of Chinese residents living in Morocco, with an increasing number of Chinese tourists visiting the country in recent years. After the initial shock many Chinese nationals volunteered to help the earthquake victims and their families, offering medical aid, financial donations, and the transportation of supplies. These are some of their stories...**

At 1:28am, obstetrician Zhang Qian finally heard the loud cry of a baby. It was a healthy baby girl.

Zhang breathed a sigh of relief after performing a nerve-racking hour-long C-section on a Moroccan patient. While in surgery at a Moroccan hospital, Zhang felt aftershock tremors from the earthquake that had rocked the North African country just two hours prior. A powerful quake struck Morocco Friday night, with the toll expected to rise as rescuers struggle to reach hard-hit remote areas.

Zhang and obstetrics nurse Liu Yan, from the Shanghai No 8 People's Hospital, are members of

the Chinese medical team in Morocco. The hospitals they serve are in Ben Guerir, a town 70 km away from the western city of Marrakech which was hard-hit by the earthquake.

Zhang was on route from the hospital to her apartment in Ben Guerir when the earthquake struck. "I felt the whole apartment building shake when I entered," she recalled. "I froze for a second before quickly running out."

Then Zhang received a call from the hospital asking her to return to work. She rushed to the hospital, where the square in front of the hospital was filled with anxious doctors and patients. The tremor made the hospital unsafe.

Not long after, an ambulance transporting a haemorrhaging pregnant patient roared up the driveway. Worse still, after conducting a quick medical examination, Zhang found the patient to be hypertensive and presenting signs of abruptio placentae. "She was in critical condition and needed a C-section as soon as possible."

Only an hour had passed since the earthquake and having to conduct an hour-long surgery in the hospital building brought with it glaring risks. "But both the expectant mother and her baby would have died without timely intervention," Zhang said. "We decided to ignore the risk to help them."

When nurse Liu rushed to the hospital's operating room and saw the distressed expectant mother, she echoed Zhang's sentiments. "She had suffered 200 ml of blood loss probably from the placenta, almost equal to total blood loss from the baby in-utero," said Liu, who has

nearly 30 years of working experience.

The emergency C-section started amid aftershocks. Zhang and Liu headed the surgery, supported by four local medical staffers including two nurse anaesthetists, an itinerant nurse and a midwife. It was the only surgery performed at the hospital that night. Fortunately, a 3.9 kg baby girl was smoothly born in the end, and her mother was also in stable condition.

Zhang and Liu don't remember how many "Shukran" – the Arabic word for 'Thank you' – they've received from their Moroccans counterparts in the days since the earthquake. The new mother and her husband, as well as other patients and staffers at the hospital, all expressed their gratitude and admiration for the caring and dedicated Chinese medical personnel.

Hu said she was later told that there were several waves of dangerous aftershocks while they were in the operating room in the hospital. "But I was far too focused on the surgery to feel any of them or be afraid," she told the *Global Times*.

"The only thing I was afraid of at that time was an unexpected complication with the woman and her baby."

## More helping hands

The work at the hospital becomes normal now for Zhang and Liu, who both belong to the medical team that China has been assigning to Morocco since 1975, serving local patients at public hospitals across the country. The earthquake won't change their original schedule of them remain-



• Zhang Qian and Liu Yan prepare to operate during the earthquake

ing in Morocco.

Moreover, China's rescue efforts continue to reach the areas hardest hit by the earthquake, including the Al Haouz region, 50 km south of Marrakech.

The Red Cross Society of China has announced that it will provide the Moroccan Red Crescent with financial emergency humanitarian assistance worth \$200,000. The China International Development Co-operation Agency also said that it stands ready to provide emergency humanitarian assistance based on the needs of those most affected by the disaster, according to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"China stands ready to continue to provide help to Morocco in light of its needs, to the best of our capability," says Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning.

At the grass-roots level, Chinese nationals residing in Morocco have also actively reached out to help. In a video she shared online, Xiaoshuang, a sea cucumber dealer, stands in front of a lorry fitted with

a big container, surrounded by many buckets of drinking water. She says to the camera that she will fill the container with the drinking water and send it to Al Haouz. "I'm on my way to the disaster area," she said.

Chinese vlogger and photographer Jiang Cheng lives in the famous port of Casablanca in north-western Morocco. Early in the morning after the earthquake, he boarded a Chinese friend's car and went to Al Haouz. At first Jiang just wanted to shoot some videos and photos there, but he soon felt he needed to step up and help.

"I'm contacting my Chinese friends to collectively transport foodstuffs to the hardest hit areas," Jiang said. "My heart broke when witnessing the dire situation there."

Jiang added that as far as he knows, many Chinese communities and individuals in Morocco are discussing the collection and transportation of supplies to earthquake victims and their families.

Chinese enterprises were also seen at the earthquake's hard hit areas.

On social media, some users shared photos of a Chinese-invested heavy equipment and manufacturing enterprise sending excavators and loaders to the rescue scenes.

## Fears, tears and relief

For many Chinese nationals residing in Morocco, experiencing the sudden earthquake was full of fears, tears, relief and the desire to help others.

Line, for instance, was on a camping trip in the mountains just tens of kilometres from the earthquake's epicentre. The tremor was very strong, but no tourists were hurt, she said.

"When we drove out of the mountains in the early morning, it was like we were on the run," she said. "There were falling rocks everywhere, and some of the road barriers had collapsed. I felt like we might fall off the mountain at any moment."

Tang, another Chinese tourist visiting Morocco, was at a surf club on the beach, about 100 km from the epicentre. At the time, she was engaged in her post-shower beauty routine when she first felt the tremor, which alarmed and then terrified her.

When the shaking continued, however, she quickly put on her clothes and ran outside. "No-one even turned on the lights when we ran downstairs, and some people didn't even have their shoes on," she said. "My companion even banged her head on the way down."

All the surfers made it to the main street and later to an open space on higher ground. "Even our dog was scared and came to find us," she said. "Ev-



everyone slept outside and the club provided blankets and drinking water.”

Ma Jun, who has been living in Morocco for years, was hundreds of kilometres from the epicentre, but also felt the tremor so strongly that when the earthquake struck, he rushed outside with his shirt inside-out.

“We all ran out and stayed outside immediately,” he recalled. “The street was full of locals spending

the night outside and in their cars.”

Ma said he returned to his room to rest after a long period outside, but slept in his jacket and shoes for fear of aftershocks.

It was the first time that Jiang had experienced an earthquake. He recalled that he didn’t realise it was an earthquake, until the quake lasted some two minutes. “Then I put on my clothes and rushed down-



• Rescue workers taking supplies to the victims

stairs with my valuables. My house’s rolling gate heavily clanged due to the shakes.”

Jiang praised the Chinese Embassy in Morocco for its quick response. “It published useful information online that night soon after the earthquake happened, such as the contact numbers for help and some rescue resources.”

Jiang said he has barely slept in the last three days.

Images of collapsed buildings, dead bodies and distraught people in Al Haouz continue to haunt him.

“I’ve been living in Morocco since 2016 and it has become my second home,” Jiang said. “I hope everything will be better soon. And I will continue to contribute to [rescue and reconstruction efforts] together with many other Chinese compatriots here.”

*Global Times*

# G20 and Vietnam: US hegemony looks ever more perilous

by Amiad Horowitz

**US President Joe Biden just finished a major trip to Asia for the G20 Summit in India, with an important stopover in Hanoi, Vietnam. The trip saw a mix of successes and setbacks for the Biden administration.**

This year’s G20 Summit took place from 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> September in the Indian capital of New Delhi. It was the first G20 meeting since last month’s major expansion of BRICS and was seen by many watchers as a forum for the USA and its allies to maintain their current waning dominance over the global economy. Another goal of the meeting, of course, was to reaffirm the pro-NATO narrative that Russia is economically and politically isolated.

Some of the highlights of the gathering included the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the economic group and a push for greener economic initiatives, such as the Global Biofuel Alliance.

Biden also used the summit to announce an international infrastructure development programme that seeks to compete

with China’s very successful Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), called the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Biden repeated the often-debunked claim that BRI programme uses economic coercion to get countries to sign on.

Meanwhile, his government claims that despite decades of American-led predatory international trade and investment programmes through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, that this new programme would be better.

One cannot help but notice the irony that the Biden administration is so eager to invest in infrastructure abroad to counter China whilst repeatedly failing to invest in the crumbling US infrastructure at home. This is opposed to China, whose government has completed countless major infrastructure programmes both at home and abroad.

One major setback for Biden’s agenda at the G20 was the summit’s final statement. The USA failed to get the other participants to accept language condemning Putin and the war in Ukraine. After hundreds of hours of negotiations and many drafts, the final statement made no mention

of Russia and simply called for all countries to settle their differences through negotiations. The final language is being seen as a Biden defeat and a victory for Indian President Narendra Modi, whose government maintains friendly relations with Russia.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, Biden ally and French President Emmanuel Macron claimed that the G20 Summit somehow proves that the American-led attempt to isolate Russia has succeeded.

After the summit concluded, Biden moved on to Hanoi. Vietnam has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and is a major leader in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The country also shares a border with China, and the USA has repeatedly sought to use Vietnam to further ‘encircle and contain’ China.

Leading up to this trip, many so-called experts claimed that the goal of this trip was to up the pressure on Vietnam to join the US anti-China coalition. If that was Biden’s goal, he failed.

In the days leading up to his arrival, high-level Vietnamese officials met with their Chinese counterparts and both sides assured each other about their continued friendship. China remains Vietnam’s biggest economic partner and both countries co-operate in all fields – from defence, to culture, to their shared goals of building so-

cialism in their respective countries.

The highlight of Biden’s side trip was the signing of an agreement between the USA and Vietnam to raise the bilateral diplomatic relationship from a “comprehensive partnership” to that of a “comprehensive strategic partnership”. This upgrade in diplomatic ties offers a lot of potential economic and trade benefits for both countries and is generally seen as a win-win for both Washington and Hanoi.

Biden’s speech in Vietnam featured a number of errors of fact, however.

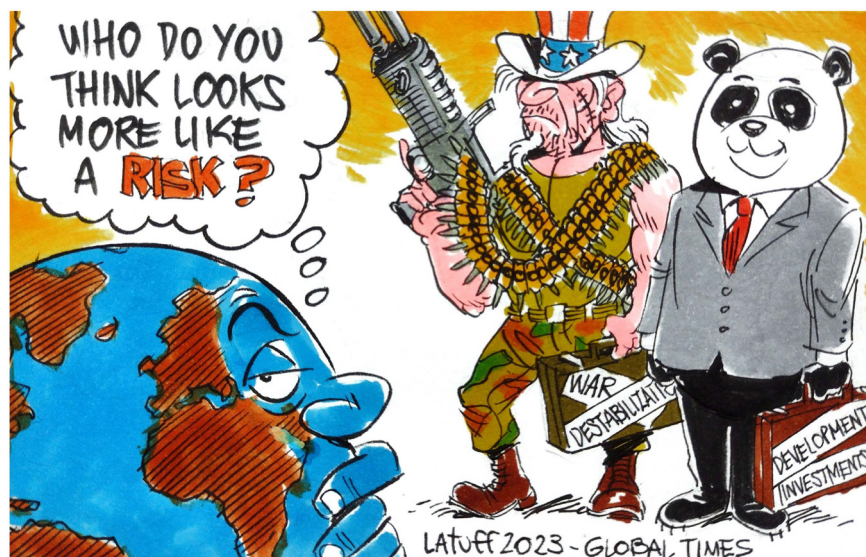
First, Biden incorrectly claimed that a “comprehensive strategic partnership” was the highest level of bilateral relations in Viet-

nam’s foreign policy. In actuality, “special strategic partnership” is the highest level. Vietnam’s relationships with China, Cuba, Laos, Cambodia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are rated at this level.

Later in his remarks to the media, Biden began to drift away from the pre-press conference plan and had to be abruptly interrupted by White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. Even after she called an end to the press conference, however, the president continued to inaudibly answer another question that was shouted from the press pool.

After this trip, it is becoming increasingly apparent that America’s international influence is continuing to decline as the world speeds further toward a new multipolar reality. India was able to prevent the USA from forcing its anti-Russia language into the G20 summit’s final statement, and Vietnam was able to upgrade its bilateral relationship with the USA whilst avoiding having to join the US-led anti-China coalition, and in fact maintaining its close friendship and relationship with Beijing.

*People’s World (USA)*



LATUFF 2023 - GLOBAL TIMES



## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

World domination by US imperialism and its dependant gang of second-rate imperialist powers is starting to collapse. As it declines in political influence and suffers increasing economic challenges the USA remains, however, a very powerful and dangerous military force. The consequences of selling their souls to the devil has brought economic chaos, recession and inflation to Germany and other western former colonial powers. The rot has set in. Increasingly the irreconcilable contradictions of capitalism compounded by blatant US economic abuse have taken their toll.

Germany, along with its crisis-ridden EU partners, is reeling under the impact of US polices. The green fantasy is turning into an environmental nightmare as it severs its trade with its cheap energy supplier. Matters now risk becoming even worse as calls grow for trade restrictions and confrontation with China. It is under increasing pressure from the USA, now very eager to abandon ruined Ukraine and move on to their next big war; this time against China. The Americans must be laughing at the dumb European leaders who are prepared to pay four times as much for US gas while maintaining an unbelievable silence over the NATO-inspired terrorism against the Nord Stream pipelines.

Japan remains one of the most willing servants of US imperialism. Its impressive growth in the 1960s and '70s, when reliable cars and the most advanced electronic equipment became available to challenge American dominance, was cut short by the USA. During the 1980s a wide range of trade restrictions, including a massive tariff rate imposed on its cars and limits to cheaper imports of high quality

steel, enabled the USA to inflict serious damage on the Japanese economy. Despite the economic warfare imposed upon it the Japanese leadership remains one of the most masochistic of its allies. It does receive the occasional reward. It has been granted approval to dump radioactive waste into the Pacific Ocean – a reckless, selfish, stupid and dangerous action that will pollute the sea with cancer-causing isotopes.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which recently celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation with a magnificent paramilitary display in Pyongyang, grows stronger with each passing day. New economic co-operation with Russia is, despite US-inspired sanctions, expected to bring great benefits to both parties and assist in the development of the Russian far east and the DPRK.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation in South Korea, ruled by a USA-subordinate puppet government. A falling export market has been hit further by the American sanctions on the supply of microchips to China. The bizarre spectacle of south Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol singing *American Pie* to Biden says much.

The focus of world attention now moves on to a new world order free from US hegemony. Embraced by BRICS, enabled by Belt and Road and sustained by a consensus of progressive world leaders, the movement for change is unstoppable. For a permanent change of direction the overthrow of the class system and capitalist relations will be essential. Let it be.

**John Maryon**  
Suffolk

### Dear Comrades

At the end of the Trade Union Congress in Liver-

pool, which has tragically resulted in the majority of the TUC-affiliated unions supporting the objectively nazi Kiev regime after the 99 per cent in-favour vote of "Composite 21" motion (for moral and practical support of Ukraine and the workers of Ukraine), the attempts by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign to deny that the miner's union flag is a Nazi black sun is not working and they are hiding the links between the Ukrainian miners' union (NPGU) with the Azov Battalion and USAID et al is not working.

The Ukro-nazi flag-waving campaign group 'Ukraine Solidarity Campaign' (USC) is seriously pro the nazi Kiev regime. They are part of 'Another Europe is Possible', which is a pro-Remain (in the EU) group within the Labour Party but who don't seem to be active these days.

The USC resort to the usual Russophobia and blatant lies and disinformation surrounding the background and context to the Russian special military operation in February last year.

They predictably referred to the "tankies" leafleting outside the Congress conference hall in Liverpool [it was some comrades from the New Communist Party (NCP) and others – thank goodness for their presence!!] and they are desperate to smear ANY anti-fascist dissent around the Ukraine issue. They even accused the "tankies" of setting off the fire alarm (ha-ha, I wish) that resulted in a pro Ukraine workshop session being held outside the building, with John McDonnell, a grandee in the parliamentary Labour Party, holding forth.

**Eleanor Lake**  
West London

### Dear Friends

Next Saturday protests will

take place outside Barclays branches across Britain, demanding the bank end its role in facilitating apartheid Israel's violent attacks on Palestinians. Will you join an action near you?

Israel is only able to maintain its regime of colonisation, military occupation and apartheid because of the complicity of corporations and financial institutions. Our research has found that Barclays invests over £1 billion in companies supplying weapons and military technology to Israel, used in its assaults on Palestinians.

Equipment produced by companies in which Barclays is invested, like Caterpillar and Elbit Systems, is being used by Israeli forces across Palestine.

In Masafer Yatta, where Palestinians continue to face down Israel's attempts to ethnically cleanse them from their land, Israel has used Caterpillar-produced bulldozers to destroy Palestinian homes and structures.

In its military invasions across the occupied Palestine, Israel has used drones and munitions to attack Palestinian residents, likely produced by Israeli arms company Elbit Systems.

This year alone, Israel has killed over 200 Palestinians across occupied Palestine, in raids, assassinations and bombing campaigns. With Barclays facilitating Israel's attacks, it's vital we take action. Join the day of action.

Over the summer Barclays sponsored a variety of sporting and music events, in an attempt to improve its reputation after coming under fire for financing companies that are arming Israeli apartheid and destroying the planet.

But we made sure that the sponsorships backfired for the bank. At Wimbledon, we let tennis fans know the truth about Barclays unethical financial

## 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 30 OCT

*The Mistake*. Anti-nuclear touring play by Michael Mears. See michaelmears.org for 28 venues.

### UNTIL 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. See CND website for many nationwide events.

### SAT 23 SEPT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Barclays: Don't Bank on Apartheid. Day of Action with protests outside banks against Barclay's involvement in Israel's arms trade. See PSC website for nationwide events.

### SAT 23 SEPT

Strike Map: Conference on key issues facing unions: 14:00, Bishopsgate Institute, 230 Bishopsgate London EC2. Registration £11.55/£6.13. Register on Strike Map website.

### SAT 23 SEPT

Marches to end food poverty: Assemble 12:00 at Tottenham Hotspur stadium, High Road, London N17 to Tottenham Green. Liverpool: 12:00 St George's Hall, Liverpool for rally at The Casa.

### 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.

### SUN 1 OCT

People's Assembly: Demonstration at Conservative Party Conference: Assemble 12:00 Oxford Road, Manchester.

### SUN 1 OCT

ties, both by leafleting them in-person and through a social media storm.

Then the Barclays-sponsored Latitude festival saw artists withdraw over the bank's sponsorship of the festival, citing Barclays complicity in Israel's oppression of Palestinians.

Scottish Morning Star Autumn Conference: Scotland's Youth: Seizing Our Future. 12:00–16:00, Scottish TUC, 8 Landressy Street, Bridge-ton, Glasgow G40 1BP.

### THUR 5 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: The 1973 Shrewsbury Trial Conspiracy: state power, big business and trade union freedom. 19:00 hybrid panel discussion MML.

### SAT 7 OCT

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Day School. 10:00, Sheffield Quaker Meeting House, 10 St James Street, Sheffield S1 2EW.

### SAT 7 OCT

International Brigade Memorial Trust: AGM weekend, Georgian Theatre, Green Dragon Yard, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1AT.

### SAT 7 OCT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Defend the Right to Boycott! See PSC website for details of nationwide events.

### WED 11 OCT

Marx Memorial Library Michael Roberts: The Current Stage of the Capitalist Crisis. 19:00 hybrid lecture.

### SAT 14 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Book Sale 11:00, MML.

### SAT 28 OCT

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Solidarity Day – Resurgence of the Left! 10:00–16:00, Unison Regional Office, 24 Livery St, Birmingham B3 2PA.

### SAT 4 NOV

Newport Chartist Convention. 9:30–16:00 St Woolos Cathedral, Newport, Gwent. Tickets from Newport Rising website.

### SAT 4 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Acknowledging Israel's Apartheid. Conference. 9:30–15:30, Temple of Peace, Edward VII Ave, Cardiff CF10 3AP.

### SAT 4 NOV

Join Scottish CND: Festival for Survival, Renfield Centre & Adelaide Baptist Church, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JP.

Now, let's keep up the pressure on Barclays through a national day of protest on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Join the day of action.

**Lewis Backon**  
Campaigns Officer  
Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
London



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# Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Scottish politics are presently in a something of a state of suspended animation. All eyes are on the forthcoming Rutherglen & Hamilton West by-election. By-elections vary greatly in importance. Early in her premiership Margaret Thatcher airily dismissed a Liberal triumph in a hitherto safe Tory seat as being merely a sign of Spring akin to the first cuckoo. Others, such as the 1938 Oxford by-election, were important for delivering a verdict on major issues, such as appeasement in that case.

The Rutherglen poll definitely leans towards the latter case. If Labour cannot recapture the seat (lost in 2015, regained in

2017, lost 2019) after the removal of the SNP incumbent under embarrassing circumstances, it will be a clear sign that Starmer's chances of beating Sunak at the next General Election are lower than his poll lead implies. In contrast, defeat for the SNP will spark of another round of panicky infighting at the forthcoming conference and well beyond.

No less than 14 candidates including "Prince Ankit Love, Emperor of India" are standing, which makes up for the absence of Alex Salmond's Alba Party, which has decided to give it a miss. It is unclear whether Alba is abstaining due to suddenly discovering merit in Yousaf's leadership or it is fearful of a poor showing.

The two main candidates have come under fire for their shortage of canvassers. Labour was mocked for attempting to overcome this by offering accommodation to full-time officials from all over Britain and transport to the party conference in Liverpool. The SNP have had to resort to hiring paid help to deliver their leaflets, employed on the same zero-hour contracts the SNP candidate deplored as "draconian".

The *Scottish Sun* even claims that one of those doing the deliveries told a resident: "I don't support the SNP – I'm just getting paid to hand this shite out. It's a zero-hours contract as well."

According to the latest opinion polls the SNP is on course to remain the dominant party in Scotland with an 11-point lead over Labour. The nationalists now stand at 38 per cent while Labour's support dropped five points to 27. This may not be enough to hold Rutherglen & West Hamilton, but it would mean that the SNP would hold 39 of the 44 seats it currently holds in the Westminster parliament whereas Labour would only win 11 – although that's still

10 more than they've got at the moment.

## SNP Blues

The SNP have plenty to keep them occupied these days. The SNP Government is presently fighting a court case against the Sunak Government. That ought to sound like a vote winner but as the issue in question is the Gender Recognition Reform Act (GRR) it is anything but.

This matter split the SNP with a minister resigning from the Cabinet to vote against it, contributed to the resignation of the former First Minister, and the recent dip in membership numbers.

It takes considerable political skill to make the Tories popular in Scotland – but on this issue the SNP have achieved that remarkable feat. More than half the Scottish voters agree with the Tory veto on GRR, which was used on the grounds that it conflicted with UK human rights legislation.

The outcome of the Court of Session case does not really matter because the bad blood has been spilt. Even SNP MPs and MSPs think the legal battle is a damaging, but most are too frightened to say so for fear of suffering the same fate as Fergus Ewing and Angus McNeil. The Tory Government's Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, has been careful to use his powers selectively and pick the fights he knows will be popular. He also forced a U-turn on the Green's chaotic and unpopular bottle recycling scheme, but wisely did not oppose the SNP's safe consumption rooms for drug addicts because it is a comparatively uncontroversial policy for which the SNP can be blamed if it does not work.

The SNP are also in turmoil over the latest SNP wheeze to reverse their 2014 Referendum defeat. A motion from First Minister Humza Yousaf and West-

minster leader Stephen Flynn going to the SNP conference reads: "If the SNP subsequently wins the most seats at the general election in Scotland, the Scottish government is empowered to begin immediate negotiations with the UK government to give democratic effect to Scotland becoming an independent country."

It has not taken long for some SNP members to point out the flaw in this. This means that if they lose 18 of their present 48 seats then they would still see this as a mandate to start independence talks. Clearly nobody at Westminster is going to take it seriously. Indeed, the precise wording of Humza's motion does not even seek a majority of seats, "the most seats" could possibly refer to the SNP with, say 25, with Labour, Tories and Liberals sharing out the other 34.

This is a downgrading of the same message issued by the former First Minister, who after the Supreme Court made the point that the legislation setting up the Scottish Parliament did not include powers to organise a referendum. Then she said that winning a majority of votes at a General Election would be sufficient.

Former First Minister Alex Salmond, now a bitter enemy of the SNP, asked that simple question: "Given that Westminster has been allowed over repeated elections to dismiss a majority of SNP seats as a mandate for a mere referendum, why on earth would they concede it as a mandate for negotiating independence itself."

Labour Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves more or less agreed, saying: "No, we wouldn't consider that a mandate in any way to have another referendum," adding that "the SNP are now just doubling down on a core vote strategy, not interested in changing the lives of people in Scotland, but focusing narrowly on

constitutional issues".

## Climatic Matters

Humza Yousaf has, however, found a temporary respite from his troubles. On Sunday he flew more than 3,000 miles to New York to deliver a speech at Climate Week. Critics deplored the fact that about 627 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions had been generated to take him there. A recent Oxford study has shown that transport generates more than a quarter of Scotland's carbon emissions.

Net Zero secretary Mairi McAllan defended the trip, saying it was vital that the First Minister show "international leadership" – but the main purpose of the trip was to avoid a potentially embarrassing vote at Holyrood over how to discipline rebel MSP Fergus Ewing.

Ewing faces a variety of punishments from temporary suspension to being expelled from the party for being critical of some SNP policies. Some other MSPs particularly close to the leadership want his blood but others are not so sure, particularly as his rebellions have been on issues that would adversely affect his constituents. He has opposed restrictions on fishing and sought to widen the main road to the Highlands, all of which brought him into conflict with the Greens. Even worse in the eyes of his critics, he has appeared on Alex Salmond's YouTube programme.

Being the son of Winnie Ewing, the illustrious Scottish nationalist who won the first post-war Westminster seat for the SNP back in 1967, gives him some protection. But letting him off the hook will encourage other rebels – but punishing him for standing up for his constituents' interests, which is what parliamentarians are supposed to do, does not look good.

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# Warmonger Britain – Stop Arming Zelensky!

by New Worker  
correspondent

London comrades were back in Whitehall last weekend demanding an end to British military aid to Ukraine. The protest picket, called by the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign (IUAFS), was covered by the Arab and Russian media. The Lebanese satellite TV news channel Al Mayadeen broadcast interviews with NCP leader Andy Brooks and Theo Russell, the national organiser of the IUAFS, and Theo was later interviewed by Russia Today (RT).

In the last 20 years Britain has joined wars,

regime changes and covert interventions that have brought death, destruction and chaos around the world, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Hong Kong, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Belarus. Today the British ruling class is virtually at war with Russia in Ukraine, while desperately trying to organise subversion in Russia and Belarus.

Britain has worked with reactionary Islamic terrorists around the world, and with resurgent fascists in Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic States to further its imperialist aims.

British weapons are being used by the openly Nazi Azov regiment, while on the eve of Ukraine's major offensive against the Donbas republics on



17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 the UK military were training Ukraine's National Guard, which includes a thousand-strong neo-Nazi unit.

Boris Johnson himself led the way to sabotage the Istanbul peace agreement in April 2022, which we now know was very close

to completion. Now Britain is coming under attack even in Kiev for sabotaging the talks, considering the enormous losses Ukrainians have suffered for effectively fighting on NATO's behalf.

According to Tony Brenton, the former UK

ambassador to Moscow, Britain is the most aggressive of all the NATO members in Ukraine. He told BBC Radio 4 in May: "We have more special forces in Ukraine than any other NATO country. We are seen as an absolute hawk up there with the Poles and

the Baltic states."

Vladimir Zelensky's Jewish heritage has not prevented him from allying with the fascist Banderite gangs in Ukraine. On 14<sup>th</sup> August he posted a video on his Telegram channel showing him meeting Ukraine's top neo-Nazi Andriy Biletsky, founder of the Azov Battalion and the Hitler-worshipping Right Sector. Biletsky famously declared in 2010 that the Ukrainian nation's mission was to "lead the white races of the world in a final crusade ... against Semite-led Untermenschen [subhumans]". Now he claims not to be a fascist and that this quote was fabricated – conveniently for Kiev's NATO backers!

## Ukraine Anti-Fascists at the TUC

by Peter Hendy

Anti-fascist protesters from No2Nato, Stop The War and the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign (IUAFS) gathered outside a pro-Zelensky TUC fringe meeting in Liverpool last week, some

having travelled from London.

The 'Why we should side with the Ukraine' meeting organised by the so-called 'Ukraine Solidarity Campaign' (USC) was held at the Quakers Meeting House in Liverpool. The USC is supported

by the dubious Alliance of Workers Liberty (AWL), which is notorious for supporting pro-NATO and imperialist positions.

Trade Union stooges on the bill included Gary Smith GMB General Secretary, John Maloney PCS Assistant General Secretary, Simon Weller

ASLEF General Secretary and Chris Kitchen NUM General Secretary.

Earlier they had orchestrated a disgraceful reactionary and pro-imperialist motion passed at TUC Conference demanding further military support for Zelensky's illegitimate fascist regime. They emphasised the TUC's political degeneracy when they should be demanding an end to this US-led proxy war and the £4.6 billion in military support and weaponry being syphoned off to the Ukraine. During the recent surge in strike action the TUC's silence was absolutely deafening!

Olesia Briazgunova International Secretary of the US-backed and puppet "Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine" provided a dreary and monotone online speech from Ukraine with countless references to "democracy" and "freedom" from a country where neither

exist.

Journalist Steve Sweeney has recently revealed the organisation's funding streams from the American 'National Endowment for Democracy' that orchestrated the 2014 coup in Ukraine. No reference was made to the 2014 Odessa massacre or horrific war crimes and human rights violations being carried out by Nazis in Ukraine. No reference to the Ukrainian trade unionists and political opposition who have disappeared, imprisoned, tortured and murdered by the police and the fascist militias.

A fire alarm brought proceedings to a grinding halt. "It's a Stalinist tactic!" exclaimed one of the organisers to those assembled in front of the building believing the alarms were set off to sabotage the meeting!

Renegade socialist John McDonnell MP provided a lack lustre speech

choosing to ignore or not to confront imperialism before quickly disappearing.

Afterwards a few remained to deliver poisonous diatribes against Russia and even the DPR Korea and China before people just ebbed away.

We must continue to politically campaign against this left posturing and to condemn pro-imperialist positions especially in the trade union movement that achieve nothing but sow confusion and disinformation. To fight against those who unashamedly support Zelensky's fascist regime. To demand an end to the billions spent in military and financial support while the working class in Britain suffers. To support proposals for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine that restores democracy to all the people of Ukraine and recognises the rights of the Crimean and Donbas republics to join the Russian Federation.



• The motley crew outside Friends House after the fire alarm went off.



# Palestine: absent justice...

by Fouad Baker

Although 41 years have passed, we can still smell the stench of death and hear the voices of the martyred men, women and children when we pass through the streets of the Shatila camp and the Sabra neighbourhoods in West Beirut.

The massacre, carried out by the Israeli army and their Lebanese militia allies, lasted for three continuous days during the Israeli occupation of the Lebanese capital in 1982. Some 3,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians were killed. Their mothers and children are still waiting for international accountability and justice for the victims.

When a Palestinian refugee visits the Sabra and Shatila camp, the scenes of the massacre still come to mind. They have become engraved in the conscience of every Palestinian. The images of the victims being butchered while militiamen stopped ambulances entering the camp and refused to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide relief supplies for the refugees makes the Palestinians even more determined to return to their land.

The Israeli goal was to eliminate the Palestinian refugees who fled after

the pogroms organised by Zionist extremists drove them from their lands in 1948. Their plan continues to this day but the features have changed as the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon no longer have the right to live in dignity. They are deprived of their rights to education and health services, work, or own property... especially with the decline in international financial support for the United Nations relief agency, UNRWA.

The Sabra and Shatila massacre is not the only massacre committed by Zionist and Israeli gangs against the Palestinian people. We have not forgotten the Qana massacre nor the massacres in Deir Yassin, Haifa, Balad al-Sheikh, Jerusalem, Abbasiya and Jaffa... and with the absence of justice and ac-

countability of the Israeli occupation government, these pogroms continue every day against the Palestinian people.

These massacres show that Israel wants to eliminate the Palestinian people in order to prove to the world the false narrative of the Zionist movement that Palestine is 'a land without a people for a people without a land', which is refuted by all historical and scientific evidence.

What Israel is doing is a real holocaust to annihilate the Palestinian people wherever they are, whether inside or outside Palestine. But when the Palestinians want to hold the Zionists accountable, they are accused of anti-Semitism – even though the Palestinian people are Semites themselves.

We saw how the Bel-

gian government amended its laws, when charges were made against General Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defence Minister, over Sabra and Shatila, to prevent him from being tried for war-crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. We saw this repeated at the International Criminal Court when the Trump administration imposed sanctions on Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda when she announced the opening of an investigation into Israeli war crimes committed in the Gaza Strip in 2014. When Attorney-General Karim Khan took over, the investigation was frozen in 2020 and it remains like that today.

Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir (1969–1974) said when she was asked about peace in Palestine that the old die and the young forget; but how can the young forget their martyred fathers, their wounded brothers and their prisoners' mothers? How can they forget how the Israeli occupiers demolished their homes and displaced them from their homes?

They are still refugees to this day. They do not have the right to self-determination and to establish their independent state. We are talking about peace while justice is absent, the land is still usurped, and thousands of settlers live

in the homes of Palestinians, stealing Palestinian land and falsely ascribing Palestinian food, heritage culture to themselves!

Despite all these crimes and massacres committed by the Zionist and Israeli gangs against the Palestinian people, the major powers are still trying to force the Palestinian people to give up their legitimate rights that are recognised by international law.

Some Arab regimes have now normalised relations with Israel as if nothing had happened while the Israelis impose a siege on Gaza Strip, depriving Palestinians of benefiting from the natural resources the Israelis have stolen.

But when the Palestinian people resist the occupation, some countries accuse them of violence and terrorism. They ignore the Palestinians' non-violent struggles, such as the boycott of Israeli goods movement, which they criminalise. They ignore the prisoners' hunger strikes. There are 5,000 Palestinians jailed in Israel without charge or fair trial, including women, children and the elderly. They are living martyrs sentenced to life imprisonment because they struggle against injustice and the occupation.

The countries that support Israel refuse to hold Israel accountable. Rath-

er, they support it with weapons and money to kill the Palestinian people and commit more massacres and crimes against them. Not only did the countries that financially and militarily support Israel fight the Palestinians, but they also take control of the media to spread the false Israeli narrative over the true Palestinian narrative and restrict content supporting the Palestinian question on social media.

Our hope lies with the freedom fighters and the free people of the world who reject injustice wherever it exists. As Che Guevara said, "wherever there is injustice, this is my homeland", and we call on them to put pressure on their governments with the aim of boycotting Israel, imposing sanctions on it, withdrawing investments from it, and stopping its support financially, militarily and politically... and holding it accountable for its crimes committed against the Palestinians, and supporting the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, establishing their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the return of refugees to their homes.

*The author is a member of the international criminal court bar association and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)*



• The horror of Sabra and Shatila.



• Palestinians in Gaza protest against US President Joe Biden's visit to Israel last year.

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## G77 and China: an historic summit in Cuba

by Maylín Vidal

**From Cuba and to the world, the Group of 77 & China (G77+China) staged an historic summit, in which they launched a message of unity to those who want to continue imposing imperialist rules.**

“It is time for the South to change the rules of the game”, was one of the phrases coined by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, who hosted 100 heads of state and government for two days in Havana last week.

At the meeting, the G77+China, a coalition of 134 countries from the Global South, agreed on the urgent need to build an inclusive financial structure.

Looking towards the UN General Assembly, which got underway on Tuesday, many views, cultures and voices from Asia, Africa, Latin Amer-

ica and the Caribbean acknowledged that the Global South has many challenges ahead, but that together they can co-operate on key issues such as the one that moved this meeting: the development of science, technology and innovation.

A final document outlined the lines of work to be carried forward until the next Summit of the South, to be held next year in Kampala, Uganda, in which the members of this bloc of 134 nations ratified their willingness to strengthen their role in the current international context.

As the capital of the voices of the South, in Havana the G77+China reinforced the need to create co-ordination strategies to fight against imperialist forms of domination. They made clear their rejection of the imposition of laws and regulations with extra-territorial impact and coercive economic measures,



• Li Xi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, speaks at the G77 Summit.

calling for their immediate elimination.

In the final adoption of the 47-point document, they considered that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and international law, but that they constitute a serious obstacle to the advancement of science, technology and innovation and the full

achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

From the Caribbean, many of its members called for greater collaboration and financing to enable progress to be made in their countries, which have been hit by natural disasters. Meanwhile, those from Africa called for real reform to accommodate

opportunities for the benefit of the Global South in the face of the historical disparity in access to scientific and technological knowledge.

Asian voices were also heard, including that of China, which advocated placing development at the centre of the international agenda and giving greater representation to

the countries of the South.

Cuba, as the host of the meeting, received a great accolade. Several nations expressed their unanimous condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the USA on the island for more than 60 years, and praised its example in scientific development, despite this unilateral siege.

UN Secretary General António Guterres, present at the meeting, also praised the role of the island as host and agreed on the importance of access to science, technology and innovation for the promotion of the countries of the Global South.

The Havana Summit left a trail of important moments. The gigantic official photo, with the representation of 100 delegations, endorsed a moment of unity from a single voice: that of the Global South.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## Historic auto strike hits Big Three at once

by Martha Grevatt

**For the first time in its 88-year history, the United Auto Workers (UAW) is striking at Ford, General Motors (GM) and Stellantis (which includes Chrysler) simultaneously. When the 2019–23 contracts between the union and the corporations expired at midnight on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> September, the selective strike targeting one assembly plant at each company was launched. Workers at GM’s Wentzville, Missouri, plant; Ford’s Wayne, Michigan, plant; and the Toledo, Ohio, Jeep plant are maintaining militant picket lines**

**around the clock.**

It was a noisy scene in Toledo with nonstop honking from supportive drivers, including working truck drivers. Only a small minority were quiet. Donations of food and beverages began to pile up on the first day of the strike. A recent poll showed that three out of four people in the USA were sympathetic to an auto-industry strike.

Messages of support are flowing from around the USA and across the globe. The AFL-CIO union federation and many of its member unions put out statements in solidarity with the UAW strike. UAW-represented graduate students at Harvard and

UMass Boston held signs on campus backing the strike.

The Teamsters union stated that its members will not make pick-ups or deliveries at striking plants, and Teamster car haulers will not transport vehicles during the strike. Teamsters President Sean O’Brien reminded the auto companies that “Teamsters don’t cross picket lines”.

The 13,000 workers now striking represent almost 10 per cent of UAW members at the Detroit Three companies. UAW President Shawn Fain says workers at more plants will walk out if the companies don’t deliver an acceptable contract proposal that

addresses union demands that include higher wages, an end to tiered pay and benefits, a raise in retirement pensions, job security and a shorter work-week with no cut in pay.

Ending tiers – where workers’ pay and benefits vary based on their date of hire – was one of the key issues of concern that Toledo Jeep workers shared with this writer. In the current contract, workers hired after October 2007 do not get a pension or health insurance when they retire. Temporary or “supplemental” workers are paid even less, have fewer benefits, and have far less protection from discipline and firings.

On the shop floor and

on social media, rank-and-file auto-workers are expressing a range of views on the strategy of only striking at a few plants. Some have the position that “if one goes out, we should all go out”. Others see the need to target plants that make components such as engines or body parts because of the impact a strike there would have on the overall corporate supply chain. Assembly plants only build certain products.

Workers at the targeted plants build some of the three companies’ most profitable vehicles, however. The decision to strike at three assembly

plants created chaos at Ford and GM after the bosses had products moved out of some engine plants on the assumption that those essential plants would be hit – but weren’t. Some autoworkers describe as “brilliant” the strategy that “keeps the companies guessing and builds economic leverage against the Big Three over time if they refuse to negotiate a contract we deserve”.

The option of an all-out strike at all the factories of the three companies has not been ruled out. In the meantime, Toledo workers are loud and proud when they chant: “No contract, no Jeeps!”

*Workers World (USA)*