

Rage on the Arab street at new Israeli war-crime!

by our Arab affairs correspondent

Anger is sweeping the Arab world following the news that over 500 people have been killed as a result of an Israeli missile strike on al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza on Tuesday evening. Although the Zionists claim that the explosion was down to a mis-fired Palestinian resistance rocket few believe them – least of all on the Arab street where angry crowds held marches and rallies demanding Arab action to stop the slaughter of Palestinian civilians.

At the United Nations the 22-member Arab Group expressed “outrage” at the hospital deaths and called for an immediate cease-fire to avoid further Palestinian casualties, the opening of a corridor to safely deliver aid to millions in Gaza, and the prevention of any forced evacuation of people from the territory. And Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said that while the Zionists were committing genocide in Palestine the Americans were ultimately to blame.

While emphasising that the Zionist regime must certainly be prosecuted for these crimes, Ayatollah Khamenei held the US government re-



• The shattered remains of the Al-Ahli Arab hospital.

sponsible for the policies of the Israeli regime, saying: “Based on various [sources of] information, the Americans are the policymakers and regulators of the current policies of the Zionist regime. The United States is responsible in this matter and must accept its responsibility.”

Underlining that the bombing of the Gaza Strip should be stopped immediately, the Leader said the protest rallies in the Islamic countries and the rest of the world were a sign of the fury of the nations at the crimes of the Zionist regime.

He warned that: “If these crimes continue, Muslims and the Resistance forces will lose their patience and no-one will be able to stop them. They should know this and they should not expect others to stop certain groups from doing certain things.”

Meanwhile Joe Biden, the leader of US imperialism, landed in Israel on Wednesday to okay another massive tranche of US weapons for the Israeli war-machine. But he was forced to cancel a sum-

mit meeting with three Arab leaders in Amman, the capital of Jordan, after the Jordanians called it off in solidarity with the victims in Gaza.

Jordan cancelled a summit between President Biden, King Abdullah of Jordan, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas following the deadly missile strike on the hospital in Gaza.

“We decided not to hold the four-way summit in Amman because Washington will not be able to make a decision to stop the war” said Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi. He explained that the move was made in consultation with the Americans, the Palestinian Authority and the Egyptians. “The bombing of the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital is a heinous war crime that cannot be tolerated,” Safadi said.

In Beirut, the powerful Shia Muslim Hezbollah movement that runs southern Lebanon called for “a day of unprecedented anger” as protesters massed in front of the US embassy in the Lebanese

capital. Some hurled rocks at the security fence and attempted to scale it but were forced back by the police who fired tear-gas and water cannon to push back the crowds.

In Gaza, the Ministry of Health spokesman Ashraf Al-Qudrah said that some of the

people injured in the missile strike on al-Ahli Arab hospital have been evacuated to other hospitals in the besieged Palestinian enclave. He said: “Most of the victims were children and women; they gathered in large families, which makes it easier to survive rocket attacks together. No-one expected one of the largest hospitals in Gaza to be hit.”

With the destruction of Al-Ahli hospital, the Strip’s health service is now on the brink of a complete collapse. There are far more wounded in Gaza than the hospitals that can treat them. “We really have nowhere to leave those in need of medical care. Our surgeons are often forced to operate on the bare floor or in the corridors, usually without anaesthesia. Because we have no more drugs,” Al Qudrah said.

FUND

We received donations totalling £602 for the fighting fund this week, pushing the October appeal up to £1,037. But we’ve still got to raise over two grand to hit our £3,500 target for the month. Many thanks to all the comrades who chipped in to help us on the way, including the Southall comrade who sent in £200, another from south London who gave us £20 and another Londoner who lives in the heart of the capital gave us a tenner.

The winds of war are blowing once again across the Middle East and we all know who is behind them – Joe Biden, the front-man for the most aggressive and venal sections of the American ruling class. He’s in Tel Aviv this week spreading death and destruction in his wake. And he can count on the likes of Rishi Sunak and Kier Starmer to back him all the way to Armageddon.

We fight for peace and socialism as the guns blaze in the Middle East and the people of the Donbas fend off the fascist militias in Ukraine. The slaughter must be stopped.

You can help by contributing to the fighting fund to 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’.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here:

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Justice for the Palestinians!

Rage on the Arab street. Protests throughout the Global South and huge demonstrations in Britain and the rest of the Western world. The world has reacted with horror, shock and anger at Israel's relentless bombardment of the Palestinian Arabs in the beleaguered Gaza Strip.

Tower blocks razed to the ground. Whole streets smashed to bits. Even hospitals are, as we have seen, not immune from the onslaught.

Israel has cut-off basic supplies such as electricity, water, food and fuel. Over 3,000 Palestinians have been killed in under nine days, over a thousand of them children. That's one child in every 15 minutes of Israel's assault. Gaza is experiencing massacre after massacre.

The Palestinians are calling on the world to stand by them to halt the slaughter and end the brutal Zionist occupation and colonisation of the West Bank. They are calling on the world to uphold the promises made to the Palestinian Arabs in 1948. They want the Great Powers to honour the resolutions upholding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people – the end to the occupation, the right to return and the right to self-determination that are repeatedly passed by the world forum to end the fighting but routinely ignored by Israel and its imperialist masters when the price of Arab oil falls on the world market.

Zionism is based on four myths. The first is that all Jews are descendants in one way or another of the ancient Israelite tribes. The second is that therefore all Jews have a "divine" right to Palestine based on a legendary covenant that the Israelite tribes made with their god during the Bronze Age. The third is that Jews need a state of their own as a safe-haven from pogroms and persecution. And the final one is that Israel is an independent country whose policies are determined by their elected leaders.

While the meaning of the Covenant is best left to religious scholars it is certainly not a divine title deed to land that was inhabited by others long before Abraham and Isaac and long after most of the Jewish population was dispersed by the Romans following an abortive revolt against Roman rule in 70 AD.

We can also see that the modern state of Israel is far from being a sanctuary for Jews. It is, in fact, one of the most dangerous places for Jews to live and this is entirely because Israel's Zionist leaders consistently refuse to recognise the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. And they themselves are just pawns of imperialism.

Israel supported a futile Anglo-French move to overthrow the Egyptian government and regain control of the Suez Canal in 1956. They then turned to the Americans when US imperialism became the dominant force in the Middle East.

Israel is an American protectorate in all but name. It would not and could not survive in the Arab world without the billions of dollars that keep its war-machine going and its economy afloat. And ultimately it relies on US military know-how and US military might to keep the Arabs at bay. That's why American aircraft carriers, backed by the Royal Navy and other NATO warships, are now patrolling the Israeli coastline.

The imperialists think rockets and drones can crush the Palestinians. But that's what they thought in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan too...

Is The UK Heading for Recession?

by Chimauchem Nwoso

The UK's rising unemployment rate signals an approaching recession, as it has already surpassed its Eurozone counterparts. As the Bank of England faces challenges in managing interest rates due to wage inflation concerns, industrial actions in various sectors underscore the widespread impact of economic uncertainty.

The UK unemployment rate of 4.3 per cent signposts an impending recession, with a climb anticipated in 2024, potentially reaching or surpassing five per cent.

Once a bustling job market, the UK is suffering setbacks occasioned by its economic woes, which orchestrated the departure of prime minister Liz Truss and are now threatening her successor, Rishi Sunak.

Moreover, the increased rate of unemployment corroborates the "Sahm rule", sparking unease about recession in the City.

This rule, espoused by economist Claudia Sahm, helps spot the start of a recession. It examines whether the average unemployment rate rises by 0.5 per cent over three months compared with the lowest point in the past year. The Sahm rule has been on point at forecasting the US recession during the 1960s and the UK since the mid-1970s. It was slow during the pandemic because of the furlough programme and registered two mistakes before the Eurozone debt crisis and the financial downturn.

The Nomura analysis, using the Sahm rule, revealed that a spike in the UK's unemployment rate corresponding to the preceding year exceeded that of major Eurozone economies. In sharp contrast, the unemployment rate has only edged up by 0.1 percentage points in both the USA and Germany. France, on the other hand, has witnessed a slightly more pronounced increase of 0.2 percentage points. Notably, Spain and Italy have registered a decline in unemployment.

The problems of the job market present the possibility of an economic downturn just before the 2024 general elec-

tion. Sunak has underscored the importance of economic growth as one of his main commitments, especially with the Tories currently trailing behind Labour in polls.

"The labour market combined with a lot of other factors, including higher interest rates, a weaker housing market, and high inflation, which is still dampening real wage growth, are all negatives for GDP," said George Buckley, chief UK economist at Nomura.

Rising joblessness is viewed favourably by the Bank of England because it is worried about inflation resulting from steeply rising salaries, despite a series of interest rate hikes, which could potentially lead to wage-price inflation.

The Bank has raised interest rates 14 times in a row. This is starting to affect the job market, with surveys showing that wages are not increasing as much. Some experts think the current interest rate of 5.25 per cent might be as high as it will go. Deputy Governor Ben Broadbent sees signs of this affecting the economy, especially jobs. Another expert, Swati Dhingra, says there is an equal chance of a recession happening and she warns that the full impact of the previous rate hikes has not happened yet.

Chief European economist at T Rowe Price, Tomasz Wieladek, suggests that central bankers are leaning towards relying more on survey data than official earnings, which have not yet shown an evident slowdown. He describes the labour market as historically toggling between tight and loose phases.

This year trade unions have mobilised workers from various professions in industrial action including transport union RMT, which called off the scheduled Tube strikes following Transport for London's (TfL's) agreement to retain approximately 200 station jobs, ending the dispute over staff downsizing.

The British Medical Association (BMA) seeks a 35 per cent pay increase for junior doctors, citing 15 years of below-inflation raises. The Government deems this request unreasonable due to economic

constraints. Doctors are set to receive a six per cent pay bump this year, with junior doctors gaining an extra £1,250 on average, totalling nearly nine per cent.

In October, junior doctors and consultants staged co-ordinated strikes on 2nd, 3rd and 4th October, with emergency care still provided. Junior doctors voted to extend the strike and the BMA's industrial action mandate was renewed. Despite an announced six per cent pay increase for consultants in July, the BMA argues their take-home pay has fallen by over a third in 14 years.

Members of Unite, employed by ground-handling firm Red Handling, initiated a four-day strike beginning on 18th August, followed by another four-day strike from 25th August, impacting the August bank holiday weekend. Additional strikes are anticipated at the end of October, aligning with the half-term break. Baggage workers under Unite are slated for another walkout at the end of the month. Red Handling provides ground-handling services for Delta, Norwegian, Norse Atlantic, Saudia and TAP Air Portugal.

University and College Union (UCU) members from 42 universities struck in late September over pay deductions. Some university staff joined the strike last month for similar pay concerns. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and National Education Union (NEU) unions dropped plans for industrial action after accepting a well-funded pay offer announced mid-July. This included a 6.5 per cent rise, as recommended by the School Teachers' Review Body.

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) instructed members to strictly follow their working hours from 18th September. Although the dispute was settled in Scotland, teachers in Northern Ireland have engaged in non-strike actions since October 2022, along with National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) members in Wales since February.

Sputnik

Workers' Notes

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets throughout the country last weekend to stand by the Palestinian people resisting Zionist aggression and fighting to end Israel's system of apartheid.



Free Palestine echoes across London!

by Dermot Hudson

On Saturday at least 150,000 people marched through the heart of London in support of the rights of Palestinian people and for an end to Israel's war on the people of Gaza. The demo was massive, it was the biggest march seen in the capital since the US-led invasion of Iraq and took over two hours for the march to travel the short distance from Portland Place to Whitehall for a rally addressed by a number of speakers including former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

When you consider that the march was called at comparatively short notice the turnout seems even more impressive and shows that people are not fooled by the 24/7 Zionist propaganda of the mainstream media.

There was a sea of red, black, green and white Palestine flags. Also to be seen were some Turkish and Pakistani flags. Regrettably one "Free Syria" flag and one ISIS banner were also to be seen. Of course Korean solidarity campaigners carried a DPR Korea flag and a Cuban flag was also spotted. It was good that there were no Ukraine flags to be seen!

The marchers, who chanted "Free Palestine" and "From the rivers to the sea Palestine shall be

free" along the way, were subjected to massive police surveillance with police helicopters whirling noisily overhead and police camera teams photographing and videoing people. We noticed a police horse transporter and units of the police Territorial Support Group (a successor to the discredited 'Special Patrol Group') on standby – however there was none of the violence or rioting that the right-wing twitterati and some in the mainstream media predicted.

Manchester stands by Palestine!

by Peter Hendy

Over 20,000 protestors marched in Manchester on Saturday 14th October to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people. The march followed a rally in Platt Fields Park south Manchester that was organised by Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign in response to Israeli air strikes killing over 2,200 Palestinians in Gaza.

At the rally in Rusholme the sun shone brightly on a cool autumnal day as protestors gathered. Johara made an impassioned speech recounting how the Palestinian people had suffered dispossession, oppression and displacement. A people whom the Zionists had tried to silence and erase off the map. A people denied fundamental human

rights, dignity and freedoms. The misery of living in Gaza. A strip of land blockaded by sea, land and air where four out of five suffer depression, fear and grief. She implored those who choose to stay silent and neutral about the injustices toward the Palestinian people. The demolition of graves, mosques and churches. The bombings of schools and hospitals. For children the death of childhood. Emotionally she spoke of Gaza as an open air prison: "Today it is a mass graveyard where parents put their children to eternal sleep."

In disbelief, she told how this week Israel had informed the United Nations that the entire population of northern Gaza, 1.1 million Palestinians, had 24 hours to leave. "How can they leave? They are trapped within that piece of land!"

A representative from Jewish Voice for Labour mourned the horrific deaths of thousands of Palestinians trapped in Gaza and the West Bank. "As socialists and Jews we say the actions of the Zionist government are not in our name and never have been. We say Israel is an apartheid state and what is happening is genocide."

"They are supporting war crimes and we shall never forget their cowardice," she said as she laid into Keir Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, and Emily Thornberry, a human rights barrister, for their sadistic words saying Israel has the right to defend herself whilst refusing any help to the Palestinian people. Emily Thornbury, a London Labour MP, had refused to say on *Newsnight*

that the cutting off of water, power and food to the people of Gaza is against international law.

In regard to Israeli opposition she emphasised: "We must not allow a divide to open up between Palestinian and Jewish activists. As Jews we unequivocally declare our support for the Palestinian people and the struggle for justice and freedom from terror and pain!"

A young Palestinian woman was frothing with anger as she declared "1,900 Palestinians murdered! Listen to the number. 1,900 Palestinians murdered! 7,700 wounded! Let it resonate in your heads. 1,900 Palestinians murdered! 7,700 wounded! In six days and yet the world is unbothered!"

"Yet the West finds ways to justify the ethnic cleansing and ways to support the oppressor and occupying aggressor. The wounds have never stopped bleeding and our blood is still boiling with rage. We have been trying to wake up the masses but everyone is sound asleep!"

She highlighted the loud silence of complicity, the hypocrisy of their liberal values and their crimes against humanity. "We are tired of your selective humanitarianism and double standards... we are sick to the stomach of you equating oppression with the oppressed! Can you not hear the screams! Can you not hear them! How much blood will it take? How much Palestinian blood needs to be spilled for you to care? For all I see is red rivers flowing and we are all in pain and yet you still don't care! How

many corpses need to be retrieved from under the rubble? How many pictures of grey bodies do you need to see..."

"The impunity is unbearable. The pain is insufferable. The silence is deafening. Let us reassure you. We will continue to yell and screech and howl and shout! Occupation no more!"

A representative from the Youth Fund for Palestine stated that cluster munitions were being dropped on Gaza, which are illegal and a violation under international law.

"Phosphorus which burns hotter than anything hotter on earth is being dropped on innocent men, woman and children... the blood of the Palestinians is on their hands."

Referring to the complicity of politicians and journalists in sanctioning these crimes, they also have the blood of the Palestinian people on their hands, he said: "I hope they will never get a good night's sleep! They do not deserve it! Because people in Gaza cannot sleep...people in Gaza will be traumatised for the rest of their lives if they survive this onslaught!"

He emphasised the need to protest on the streets. To confront and stop their agenda. To increase our support for the Palestinian people. "They need our solidarity more than ever before. We need to raise our voice. We can't be afraid. We can't be cowardly. It is they who are facing the bombs. They are facing the bullets. They are facing the genocide. We have to do so much more. That is our duty!"

John Nicholson from the Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign delivered a powerful and rousing speech, declaring: "We stand with the Palestinians in Gaza! We stand with the Palestinians in the West Bank! We stand with the Palestinians in East Jerusalem! We stand with the Palestinians throughout fortified Israel!...and we stand with the seven million Palestinians refugees across the world... and we support you all in your resistance. We stand in solidarity with Palestinian right to resist!"

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John described how the people of Gaza are being maimed, bombed and starved where there is no longer water, electricity or food.

Police were out in force, creating an initial feeling of nervousness and uncertainty about their potential actions relating to the waving of Palestinian flags. This followed inflammatory and provocative comments made this week about potential public order offences if flags were waved deemed by Tories as supporting terrorism. This quickly evaporated as the sheer size of the march became apparent, with protesters completely outnumbering the police. Palestinian flags defiantly fluttered in the light breeze and were seen as far as the eye could see in every direction. At the front of the march protesters held a giant banner, "IN 7 DAYS ISRAEL HAS KILLED 500+ GAZAN CHILDREN". People were draped in flags and held banners such as "Stop Arming Israel".

Trade unionists from Stockport Trades Union Council and Unite North West Service Industries proudly displayed their banners. On the march protesters loudly chanted to the drum beat of the *Rhythms of Resistance*: "Brick by brick! Wall by Wall! Israeli apartheid is going to fall! Brick by brick! Wall by Wall! Israeli apartheid is going to fall!"

It was an absolutely magnificent demonstration of Palestinian solidarity, with passers-by look-

ing on in awe as trams, buses and cars were brought to a complete standstill as the march wound through Manchester's famous curry mile to St Peter's Square in the city centre despite the relentless outpouring of imperialist propaganda on the TV, airwaves and social media supporting the Zionist Israeli war machine over the last seven days.

The Health of the Nation

by New Worker correspondent

At present doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and porters are no longer on the picket line, but all is not well in the NHS. Thanks to a Freedom of Information request from the *Times* the dire impact of underfunding on staff has been made clear.

The paper has discovered that in the last financial year a record 75,000 workers left the NHS pension scheme, a third of these were under 30 years old. This was highest among low-paid workers with less than £20,000 in pensionable pay. This is despite the fact that the NHS scheme is one of the most generous in the country with an employer contribution of 20.68 per cent of earnings. Employee contributions range from 5.1 per cent for people with pensionable earnings under £13,246 to 13.5 per cent on more than £75,633.

These figures demonstrate that NHS workers are unable to pay into their pensions due to the cost-of-living crisis.

The best that Tory former pensions minister Baroness Altmann could suggest to solve the problem is to shorten the length of time an employee's decision to opt out of auto-enrolment remains in force (at present it is three years).

Financial consultancy 'The Lang Cat' said employers could offer a "compromise" for employees struggling to meet their pension contributions. Its director suggested that: "The employer could go for a compromise scheme where employees only pay in one or two per cent and employers put in eight per cent, and it becomes a money purchase pension."

Nobody seems to think of paying decent wages so that people can afford a decent pension.

That might help stop NHS workers departing to become supermarket shelf stackers at the time when a record 7.75 million people are on the NHS England waiting lists, this is before the extra pressures that every winter brings.

At the same time, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is demanding that nursing staff employed by GP practices get a six per cent pay rise to match that received by salaried GPs. They also want this backdated to last April and fear GPs will once again delay paying up.

The RCN has also con-

demned another barrier to much needed NHS recruitment. Health and care visa application fees are about to increase by 15 per cent, with overseas nursing students facing a massive 35 per cent rise in visa fees, and the cost of applications for indefinite leave to remain is set to rise by a 20 per cent to £2,885.

RCN head Pat Cullen warns: "We are concerned that these fee increases will make the UK a less attractive place to live and work for the nurses and other health professionals who make vital contributions to our health and care sector every day." At present 53 per cent of registered nurses who joined the Nursing and Midwifery Council register last year were educated abroad.

Parallel with the growing waiting lists the NHS is heavily dependent on expensive agency nurses, which benefits their employers more than the actual nurses. Wales alone has seen a 21 per cent rise on spending on agency nurses, which costs the NHS the equivalent of an extra 1,863 full-time posts. As a result

of excessive workloads many nurses are thinking of leaving the NHS. Unfortunately the only way some nurses think they can get a decent pay rise is to resign and sign on with an agency where they have better control over their hours.

Unison has meekly welcomed Labour Party plans announced at their conference to introduce an overtime shift system to cut waiting lists. Given that staff are already at breaking point, it is difficult to see who such sticking plaster solutions will work.

Further up the NHS food chain, SAS doctors (Specialist and Associate Specialists) belonging to the British Medical Association (BMA) are balloting for strike action over low pay.

Since 2008, SAS doctors in England have been faced a 30 per cent decline in real-terms pay, which is the same as working more than three and half months annually for free. To rub salt into the wound, SAS doctors on a new contract were excluded from the last general NHS doctor's pay rise.

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

24th October 2003

THE BANKING union Unifi last week said it would fight plans by HSBC bank to close processing and call centres in Britain and transfer 4,000 jobs to Asia. Most of the jobs will go to India and Malaysia, but some will go to China.

HSBC Holdings said it would make every effort to avoid compulsory redundancies but "it will not be possible to avoid these entirely".

It is following a growing trend among big firms – including BT, Tesco and the insurance firm Aviva – to

transfer administrative and call-centre work to Asia.

Unifi official Rob O'Neill said: "Unifi has managed so far to ensure that there have been no compulsory sackings but the world's local bank has shown that if a job can be done cheaper somewhere else then they'll move it."

He pointed out that HSBC has already "globalised 2,400 jobs". With these, the union succeeded in negotiating only voluntary redundancies. He said that more jobs could go in 2006.

The centres threatened with closure are in Swansea, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Brentwood in Essex.

The union said it would campaign along with local communities in these areas and HSBC customers against the job cuts.

"The world's local bank needs local people to deliver the high quality service that its UK customers have come to expect," said he said.

"They might as well tear up any corporate social responsibility statements they have made about caring for these stakeholders."

Guardian political commentator George Monbiot argued that this tide of transferring jobs to Asia is a kind of restoration of jobs that were destroyed there by the British Empire 200 years ago in the early stages of the industrial revolution – to wipe out market competition for British commodities.

He believes the transfer will improve living standards in Asia.

This is not the way capitalism works. This is playing one lot of workers against another to see who is willing to work for the lowest wages and will inevitably drive down wages all around the world.

The jobs now being transferred to India will probably be transferred again within a few years to an area of even lower wages. If this process is allowed to continue, only those workers willing to work for bare survival wages get jobs.

The Savagery of the War against the Palestinian People

by Vijay Prashad

WHO knows how many Palestinian civilians will be killed by the time this report is published? Among the bodies that cannot be taken to a hospital or a morgue, because there will be no petrol or electricity, will be large numbers of children. They will have hidden in their homes, listening to the sound of the Israeli F-16 bombers coming closer and closer, the explosions advancing towards them like a swarm of red ants on the chase. They will have covered their ears with their hands, crouched with their parents in their darkened living rooms, waiting, waiting for the inevitable bomb to strike their home. By the time the rescue workers get to them under the mountains of rubble, their bodies would have become unrecognisable, their families weeping as familiar clothing or household goods are excavated. Such is the torment of the Palestinians who live in Gaza.

A friend of mine in Gaza who has a 17-year-old child told me on the first night of this recent spell of Israeli bombing that his child has lived through at least 10 major Israeli assaults on the Palestinians in Gaza. As we spoke, we made a list of some of the wars we could remember (because these are Israel's wars, we are using the Israeli army names for their attacks on Gaza):



• Rescued from the rubble in Gaza.

- Operation Summer Rains (June 2006)
- Operation Autumn Clouds (October–November 2006)
- Operation Hot Winter (February–March 2008)
- Operation Cast Lead (December 2008–January 2009)
- Operation Running Echo (March 2012)
- Operation Pillar of Cloud (November 2012)
- Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014)
- Operation Black Belt (November 2019)
- Operation Breaking Dawn (August 2022)
- Operation Shield and Arrow (May 2023)

Each of these attacks pulverises the minimal infrastructure that remains intact in Gaza and hits the Palestinian civilians very hard. Civilian deaths and casualties are recorded by the health ministry in Gaza but disregarded by the Israelis and their western enablers. As the current bombing intensified, journalist Muhammad Smiry said: “We might not survive this time.” Smiry’s

worry is not isolated. Each time Israel sends in its fighter jets and missiles, the death and destruction are of an unimaginable proportion. This time, with a full-scale invasion, the destruction will be at a scale not previously witnessed.

Politicide

Gaza is a ruin populated by nearly two million people. After Israel’s horrific 2014 bombardment of Gaza, the United Nations reported that “people are literally sleeping amongst the rubble; children have died of hypothermia”. A variation of this sentence has been written after each of these bombings and will be written when this one finally comes to an end.

In 2004, Israel’s National Security Director Giora Eiland said that Gaza is a “huge concentration camp”. This “huge concentration camp” was erected in 1948 when the newly created Israeli state’s ethnic cleansing policy removed Palestinians into refugee camps, including in Gaza. Two years later, Israeli intel-

ligence reported that the refugees in Gaza had been “condemned to utter extinction”. That judgment has not altered in the intervening 73 years. Despite the formal withdrawal of Israeli settlers and troops in 2005, Israel remains the occupying power over the region by sealing off the land and sea borders of the Gaza Strip. Israel decides what enters Gaza and uses that power to throttle the people periodically.

When the Palestinians in Gaza tried to elect their own leadership in January 2006, Hamas – formed in the first Intifada (Uprising) of 1987 in Gaza – won the election. The victory of Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) was condemned by the Israelis and the West, who decided to use armed force to overthrow the election results. Operation Summer Rains and Operation Autumn Clouds introduced the Palestinians to a new dynamic: punctual bombardment as collective punishment for electing Hamas in the legislative elections. Gaza was never allowed a political process, in fact, never allowed to shape any kind

of political authority to speak for the people. Israel has tried with force to eradicate Gaza’s political life and to force the people into a situation where the armed conflict becomes permanent. When the Palestinians conducted a non-violent Great March of Return in 2019, the Israeli army responded with brute force that killed 200 people. When a non-violent protest is met with force, it becomes difficult to convince people to remain on that path and not take up arms.

As this conflict takes on the air of permanency, the frustration of Palestinian politics moves away from the impossibility of negotiations to the necessity of armed violence. No other avenue is left open. Palestine’s political leadership has been either tethered by the European Union and the USA and so been removed from popular aspirations or – if it continues to mirror those aspirations – it has been sent to one of Israel’s many, harsh prisons (four out of 10 Palestinian men are in or have been in prison, while the leaders of most of the Left parties spend long periods there under “administrative detention” orders). Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling has argued that the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians has resulted in “politicide”, the deliberate destruction of Palestinian political processes. The only road left open is armed struggle.

Indeed, by international law, armed struggle against an occupying power is not illegal. There are many international conventions and UN resolutions that affirm the right of self-determination: these include, Additional

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Protocol 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974), and UN General Assembly Resolution 37/43 (1982). The 1982 resolution “reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle”. You could not have a stronger statement that provides legal sanction for armed struggle against an illegal occupation.

Why does Hamas attack Israel?

Because a political grammar has been imposed on the relationship between the Palestinians and the Israelis by the nature of the Israeli occupation. Indeed, any time there is a modest development for talks – often brokered by Qatar – between Hamas and the Israeli government, those talks are silenced by the sound of Israeli fighter jets.

War crimes

Each time these Israeli fighter jets hammer Gaza, leaders of Western countries line up metronomically to announce that they “stand with Israel” and that “Israel has a right to

defend itself”. This last statement – about Israel having the right to defend itself – is legally erroneous. In 1967, Israeli forces crossed the 1948 Israeli “green lines” and seized East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank. United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 sought the “withdrawal of (Israeli) armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”. The use of the term “occupied” is not innocent. Article 42 of the Hague Regulations (1907) states that a “territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army”. The Fourth

Geneva Convention obliges the occupying power to be responsible for the welfare of those who have been occupied, most of the obligations violated by the Israeli government.

In fact, as far as Gaza has been concerned since 2005, Israeli high officials have not used the language of self-defence. They have spoken in the language of collective punishment. In the lead-up to the ongoing bombing, Israel’s prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: “We have decided to halt electricity, fuel, and goods transfer to Gaza.” His defence minister Yoav Gallant followed up, say-

ing: “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.” Then, Israel’s energy minister Israel Katz said: “I instructed that the water supply from Israel to Gaza be cut off immediately.” Having followed up on these threats, they have sealed Gaza – including by bombing the Rafah crossing to Egypt – and closed down the lives of two million people. In the language of the Geneva Conventions, this is “collective punishment”, which constitutes a war crime. The International Criminal Court opened an investigation into Israeli war crimes

in 2021 but was not able to move forward even to collect information.

The children huddled in their rooms waiting for the bombs sit in the dark because there is no electricity and wait – with parched throats and hungry bellies – for the end. After the 2014 Israeli bombardment, Umm Amjad Shalah spoke of her 10-year-old son Salman. The boy would not let his mother go, being in terror of the noise of the explosions and the death around him. “Sometimes he screams so loudly,” she says. “It almost sounds like he’s laughing loudly.”

People’s Democracy (India)

Gaza: What we are experiencing cannot be described

by Christina Malyk

A humanitarian crisis is rapidly unfolding in the Gaza Strip, as local residents are deprived of water, food, medicine and electricity. At the same time, dozens of Israeli Air Force planes are turning the enclave into ruins. All this was the Israeli armed forces (IDF) response to Hamas’s deadly attack on Israel last Saturday.

Adel Zharna is a journalist from the Gaza Strip. He highlighted that there is no shelter or refuge in Gaza at all: “At these moments, the occupation completely cuts off electricity and



• Another victim of Zionist terror.

cuts off the Internet and water. What we are experiencing now cannot be described. A humanitarian, social and economic disaster. I am talking to you and I do not guarantee my life for a minute.”

Shehab Younis,

a photographer and filmmaker, is based in Rafah city, near the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. He described the humanitarian situation there as “increasingly acute”.

“Our living conditions have deteriorat-

ed significantly after the complete cut-off of electricity and water supplies. For the seventh day Israeli aircraft have been bombing our residential areas, killing entire families and forcing hundreds of thousands of people

to flee to nowhere.”

The young Palestinian also noted that the Gaza Strip infrastructure could not cope with the ongoing disaster under the total blockade. Mortuaries and hospitals are full and overcrowded.

“IDF operations in Gaza leave behind large numbers of dead. Mortuaries can no longer accommodate them, there are too many corpses. The number of wounded is constantly growing. All beds are filled in our hospitals, the wounded are forced to crowd in the corridors, and the queues are huge. They are also placed in intensive care units and operating rooms.

So, this threatens to collapse the health-care system. But the fact is that hospitals can stop working at any time due to lack of electricity,” he explained.

Moreover, Shehab mentioned that civilians in Gaza will face a slow and painful death without humanitarian aid and opened corridors. He pointed out: “This is happening in front of the whole world, but no one has been able yet to find corridors for the humanitarian aid supplies to Gaza Strip. A delay in responding to the distress signal we, the people of Gaza, sent yesterday would result in the enclave turning into a mass



• searching for survivors after an Israeli air-raid

grave, where people would die either due to bombing and destruction, hunger, lack of safe drinking water, or because of the spread of an epidemic and infectious diseases.”

Gaza Strip residents cannot even leave the enclave. There were only two checkpoints through which to exit – Kerem Shalom to Israel and Rafah to Egypt. The first one was com-

pletely destroyed during Hamas’s attack on southern Israel last weekend. And the second one, Shehab said, is closed too.

“The Rafah checkpoint on the border with Egypt does not work, since it is being shelled by Israeli Army,” he summed up.

The Gaza Strip, has been hit by airstrikes since Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant ordered

a “total siege” of the area, including cutting off electricity, food, water and fuel supplies. According to UN data, more than 260,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in Gaza. More than 2,500 houses have been destroyed in Gaza, and about 23,000 have been left so damaged that living in them is impossible.

Sputnik

Chinese moves to end crisis

China’s special envoy on the Middle East issue will visit the relevant countries in the region in the near future, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said as the Israel–Hamas conflict has shown no signs of easing and chaos, panic and confusion filled the region under an Israeli barrage of airstrikes ahead of a ground invasion.

Wang’s comments were made while answering questions on the sidelines of the 12th EU–China Strategic Dialogue with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. China’s top diplomat said that in view of the current grave situation in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, China believes it is imperative that a ceasefire be put in place as soon as possible.

China will provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian National Authority through UN channels, Wang said. He noted that the root cause of the conflict lies in the historical injustice

suffered by the Palestinian people, which has not been rectified. China believes that only when the ‘two-state solution’ is fully realised will there be real peace in the Middle East.

Israel says it has attacked 750 military targets overnight in the densely populated Gaza Strip. As of press time, at least 1,537 Palestinians have been killed and 6,612 wounded in Israeli air attacks on Gaza. The number of people killed in Israel has reached 1,300.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said last week that China will “make the utmost effort” to prevent the conflict from further escalating and to avoid a severe humanitarian crisis.

In recent days, China’s special envoy on the Middle East issue Zhai Jun held a series of phone calls with the foreign ministers of Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other Middle Eastern countries to discuss the current situation, stressing that the fundamental solution to

the Israeli–Palestinian conflict lies in implementing the two-state solution.

As international aid groups warned of a worsening humanitarian crisis, the USA has given “a powerful green light” to Israel to march ahead with its retaliation against Hamas with the arrival of Secretary of State Antony Blinken along with shipments of US weapons.

Chinese experts believe that the USA does have the capability to mediate and prevent further escalation in the Middle East but lacks the motivation and will to do so.

“Peace or conflict in the Middle East doesn’t really affect the USA because the region’s strategic importance has been decreasing in recent years, partly due to reduced American dependence on Middle Eastern oil and gas resources,” says Zhu Yongbiao, director of the Centre for Afghanistan Studies at Lanzhou University. What the USA really cares about is whether Israel will lose influence over the

Arab world, which could indirectly affect its control over the whole region, he said.

In that sense, the peace that the USA wishes to see is a conditional one that caters to its own strategic interests, and it will go to great lengths to ensure that, rather than genuinely caring about the suffering of people in the region, observers noted.

A subtle change has been observed in the attitudes towards the conflict in the Western world. The EU’s top diplomat Josep Borrell said last week that Israel’s actions in Gaza may have already breached international law, as he

underlined the need for the EU to continue funding the Palestinian Authority.

Hamas’s surprise attack on Israel has been widely labelled as a “9/11 moment” and the darkest moment for the Israeli people in decades. Kenneth Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch, however, believed that the analogy carries a cautionary note, because if the Israeli government responds to this moment like the USA did, it will soon follow the same route from global sympathy to global outrage, the *Guardian* reported.

If Israel insists on launching a large-scale ground assault

in Gaza or even attempts to exert military control over the region, the conflict may be further prolonged and intensified, Zhu warned. With the USA and UK adding fuel to the fire, the exacerbating tensions may force some Islamic countries to respond, making the situation even more complex and difficult to control, and providing opportunities for other forces to take advantage of the social unrest.

Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amirabdollahian has already said that if Israel’s bombardment of Gaza continues, the war may open on “other fronts”...

Global Times



• This is Gaza...

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

On 9th October 2023, the Donetsk Declaration was adopted in the city of Donetsk. We call on all political parties, trade unions, public organisations and movements to discuss the text and join the Donetsk Declaration.

Today the world is in grave danger. The financial capital of the USA and the NATO countries, acting together with the Ukrainian oligarchy, brought the Ukrainian bourgeois nation to the state of Nazism, provoked the war in Ukraine, using its people as a battering ram directed against Russia.

The imperialist goal of the USA is the weakening and dismemberment of Russia into a number of warring entities. All this was supposed to make it possible to seize the economic territory and natural resources of Russia, as well as to establish control over political processes with the help of a puppet government.

At the same time, the imperialist efforts of the USA are aimed at maintaining its hegemony by unleashing bloody conflicts in different parts of the world, and this can lead to nuclear war.

At this historic moment, we, the undersigned parties, state:

1. Economic claims and political practice show that the United States of America is the only imperialist, the one most aggressive state, with the highest expenditure on armaments, with the largest number of foreign military bases, which took part in unleashing the greatest number of wars and conflicts with the aim of enslaving countries and peoples.
2. Today, the government of Ukraine pursues an open Nazi policy, openly calls itself "Bandera", ie Nazis who exterminate people on the basis of ethnicity.

We consider it necessary to recognise that the current government of Ukraine is fascist and Nazi.

3. On the part of the governments of the United States and NATO countries, the war unleashed in Ukraine is predatory, unjust, and purely 'imperialistic'. On the part of the Russian bourgeoisie, the war has a defensive character, therefore it is 'defensive'. On the part of the working people of the main territory of Ukraine, the most conscious and best strata of society, the form still has an 'underground anti-fascist' form. On the part of the workers of Donbas, since 2014, the war has taken the form of national liberation from the Ukrainian Nazis – is 'anti-fascist' and is clearly 'people's liberation'. Defending its right to sovereignty, ie to the independent exploitation of labour resources and the sale of natural resources, the Russian bourgeoisie objectively contributes to the just people's liberation struggle of the working people of Donbas.
4. The actions of the armed forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine have a progressive component to the extent that they fulfil the goals of the Special Military Operation (SVO) declared by the Russian authorities (de-militarisation, de-Nazification, neutral status), in contrast to the actions of the armed forces of Ukraine, which are reactionary, bringing death and enslavement to the rebellious people of Donbas.
5. While recognising the right of people to self-determination, we call on the international community to recognise

the choices made by the people of the Kherson, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Lugansk regions and to force the Nazi government of Ukraine to remove all its pro-NATO armed forces and punitive death squads from these territories.

6. Taking into account the current circumstances, we consider it necessary to help the organisation of the anti-fascist underground movement in Ukraine, relying on such organisations as the Derzhava political party and those indicated in the list below.
7. We consider it necessary to emphasise that it is possible to rid the world of fascism, wars and social vices only by following the path of progressive revolutionary transformations of society.

Representatives of political parties and organisations participating in the conference:

- Russian Communist Workers' Party
- Donetsk Republican Branch of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation
- Communist Party-Communists of Russia
- United Communist Party (Russia)
- Communist Youth League (Russia)
- Communist Party of Lithuania
- Derzhava (Ukraine)
- New Communist Party of Britain

Derzhava Ukraine

Dear Comrades

During my childhood everyone was aware, often at first hand, of the horrific brutality of the Nazis and their allies. The mass killing of Jewish people and others considered a danger or racially inferior must never be forgotten. I can

remember the arrival of telegrams with bad news. I cannot forget being told of a prisoner of war returning home without his fingernails following torture who just sat rubbing his hands, rocking to and fro and existing in tears and despair.

By opposing the creation of an independent state for the Palestinian people, as proposed by the UN in 1947 with its capital in East Jerusalem, the Israel government, backed by the USA, has been responsible for decades of conflict. Their actions make the vital task of opposing fascism today a more difficult one.

It is almost unbelievable that some Western bourgeois politicians are now attempting to rewrite history. Efforts are being made to whitewash the crimes of the Nazis; to blur the facts and put the blame upon their victims. The shocking events in the Canada Parliament when standing ovations were given to a former member of the Waffen SS cannot be excused. It clearly shows that blinded by media-induced hatred of Russia and ignorance of history, the bourgeois politicians expressed their sympathy with the Nazis. The sight of Canadian PM Justin Trudeau and Ukrainian President Zelensky applauding enthusiastically was both frightening and deplorable.

With over 27 million deaths it was the Soviet Union that played the major role in defeating the Nazis during the second world war. We shall never forget the supreme sacrifices made by the Soviet Union and the skill and courage of the Red Army.

Racism and Fascism are encouraged by the ruling class and their supporters when capitalism and imperialism are in crisis. They are promoted

continued on page 9...

Diary

Check websites of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Stop the War Coalition for emergency Gaza protests.

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.

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.

SAT 21 OCT
Palestine Solidarity Campaign: March for Palestine: End Apartheid! Assemble 12:00 Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1A 1AA.

SAT 21 OCT
Korean Friendship Association UK: Down the lying British Brainwashing Corporation! Defend People's Korea! Picket of the BBC 14:30–16:00. Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1A 1AA.

SUN 22 OCT
Working Class Movement Library: Radical Readings: Revolt, Revolution and Revenge

14:00–15:30. Maxwell Hall, University of Salford, Crescent, Salford M5 4WT.

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.

WED 8 NOV
Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies: Colin Turbett on *A People's History of the Cold War: Stories from East and West*. Zoom Online Talk 19.00–20.00. Book via SCRSS website.

THUR 9 NOV
Marx Memorial Library: Book launch: *Unite History Project – a new resource for trade union education*. Hybrid event, 19:00 MML and online.

WED 15–21 TUE NOV
Havana Glasgow Film Festival: at CCA Glasgow and GFT. Details and bookings at <https://hg-filmfest.com>.

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

The Middle "Class" by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)
The ruling class, fascism and the State by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)
The poisoned well (an insight into imperialist intelligence work). £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
Communists and the united front by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p. (New Worker reprint).
New technology and the need for socialism £2 plus 50p p&p.
Communists in Britain today £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
Peoples's China in perspective £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
The case for communism £2 plus 50p p&p.
The basis of scientific socialism, the 1st chapter of Anti During by F Engels. £2 plus 50p p&p.
On Stalin £2 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).
Stalin & the BRS £2 plus 50p p&p.
How we got in the State we are by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)
All in the family by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
Arab nationalism and the communist movement by Andy Brooks. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
Killing ourselves to live by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).
The first 30 fighting years of the New Communist Party of Britain £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)

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

...continued from page 10

when a reactionary regime attempts to maintain itself against increasing discontent. The aim is to divide the working class, to curtail long-established rights and prevent its united strength. It is an attempt to stop the march towards socialism.

Recent events in Canada and Ukraine should be a wake-up call to the ever present danger of fascism. The working class and all good people of conscious should be alert and aware of the threat that clearly exists. "Fascism Shall Not Pass" is as relevant today as ever it was. It should be on our lips and in the minds of us all.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Comrades

The events in Palestine have impacted on Bahrainis who rushed to the streets to support the cause and express solidarity with the victims. Demonstrations took place in many towns and villages, day

and night. Palestinian flags were raised and pro-Palestine slogans were raised.

Many drew parallels between Bahrain and Palestine, arguing that both countries are under occupation and the people of both countries are subjected to persecution, harassment, killing, displacement and imprisonment.

The ruling House of Khalifa normalised their relations with Israel three years ago. Since then the people have drawn a line in the relations with the Khalifi royal family, whom they accuse of treachery and betrayal of the Palestinian cause. They also called for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador from the country. The whole country has been incensed by the statement of the khalifi foreign ministry, which was hostile to the Palestinians and sympathetic with the occupiers.

John Hughes
Bahrain Freedom Movement

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political
affairs correspondent

The SNP's annual conference at Aberdeen has been and gone. It met in the shadow of the unexpected defection of MP Lisa Cameron to the Tory Party. In her valedictory statement she said: "I do not feel able to continue in what I have experienced as a toxic and bullying SNP Westminster group, which resulted in my requiring counselling for a period of 12 months in Parliament and caused significant deterioration in my health and well-being as assessed by my GP including the need for antidepressants." This is telling, as it comes from a psychologist who has worked at Carstairs, the Scottish Broadmoor for the criminally insane.

Cameron, who defected on the eve of her likely deselection, said she is not planning to stand again. Her husband is "standing back" as an SNP councillor on the delicately balanced South Lanarkshire Council. Some say the Tories have promised to reward her with a seat in the House of Lords once the dust settles.

Needless to say not everyone in the SNP agrees with her reasons. President Mike Russell describes the switch as an "odd tantrum", however it is clear that the SNP at

Westminster spend more time fighting each other than the Government. The particular case she complained about, that the group failed to adequately deal with an SNP MP who sexually harassed a member of staff, has been well documented. There is a secret recording of the former Westminster leader successfully rallying support for the MP rather than the victim. That is one reason why he is now the former leader. Another MP, Johanna Cherry KC, has made similar complaints. First Minister Humza Yousaf claims "she probably never believed in [independence] in the first place". That could be true as she was selected as a candidate only four months after joining the SNP.

To return to the conference, on Sunday members obediently endorsed the leadership's policy of insisting that winning 29 seats at the next General Election would give them a mandate to begin serious discussions to break away from the UK and rejoin the EU. At present the SNP hold 43 of Scotland's 59 Westminster seats, so losing seats and votes would give them a mandate according to this cunning plan.

Delegates massively rejected an amendment requiring the party to win the majority of the votes, not seats, to start negotiations. That is both wise and stupid. The SNP have no chance of securing a majority of votes, but obviously a majority of seats secured on a minority of votes (as is the norm) in the face of a large hostile majority is worthless. "Flatulence in a trance" was how the policy was described by an unimpressed Graeme McCormick who failed in his bid to challenge the incumbent for the post of party president.

On more mundane issues the leadership admitted that their elec-

toral computer systems are "out of date" and in urgent need of renewal despite having spent millions on them. Computer geeks say the cost per staff member amounts to £100,000 each, which would be acceptable for NASA but is way over the top for a political movement. This it blames on inadequate management, who went unnamed.

Lisa Cameron's complaints were partly confirmed in the same report, which noted a backlog of complaints about members' conduct, lack of communication with the membership and a lack of financial accountability.

On Monday afternoon this correspondent was one of 83 viewers briefly logged onto the live stream coverage. The cameras were firmly fixed on the speakers and no shots of the audience could be found. The highlight of the day seemed to be the stage-managed arrival of the former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who still seems to have adoring fans. To show loyalty to her successor Ms Sturgeon at least pretended to welcome the new independence plans that are an explicit rejection of her own strategy. The only standing ovation Yousaf received was when he mentioned the name "Nicola Sturgeon".

In his closing Leader's speech on Tuesday afternoon Yousaf announced a freeze on Council Tax. This is presumably a crowd pleasing measure. The Council Tax was something the first SNP First Minister planned to abolish but they have never got round to actually doing it. The freeze will be welcome to householders but will be bad for council services. A revaluation of properties is long overdue. Very recently the SNP announced it planned to increase the tax on second homes by a fifth. But that and a revaluation would not be good for well-heeled voters. He was silent about where funding for hard-pressed councils will come from, which infuriated the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities who had been promised powers to increase the tax.

Yousaf also promised an extra £300 million to reduce NHS waiting lists and £100 million more for arts and culture. He also announced plans to enter the international bond market to raise funds for infrastructure projects. He also repeated yet again long-standing SNP plans to ensure that wind turbines are made at home rather than being imported. He did not tempt fate by saying the same thing about ferries...

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Blood on their hands!

by New Worker
correspondent

Palestinian solidarity activists sprayed Broadcasting House in central London with red paint last week in protest at the BBC's consistent and long-term bias towards Israel.

Palestine Action sprayed the BBC's Headquarters with blood-red paint in response to its recent coverage of Palestine, which has been complicit in manufacturing consent for the occupation's genocide of Palestinians. The action occurred before a protest for Palestine was due to begin at the BBC HQ. Since 7th October the BBC has given biased and inaccurate reporting on the Israeli massacre of the Palestinian people. It has only ever invited

Palestinians to comment when Israelis are killed, with little regard for Palestinians killed by Israel, such as in the case of Palestinian ambassador Husam Zomlot who was expected to condemn Israeli deaths immediately after informing the BBC he had lost six family members.

The BBC has not reported on the racist lies spouted by international media, including claims of mass rape and decapitated babies, all of which have either gone unconfirmed or been retracted once the damage has been done. Its "guides" to the "conflict" do not mention the 75-year-long occupation and oppression of Palestine by the Zionist entity.

These guides make Al Nakba (which translates as 'The Catastro-



phe' in English) sound like an unfortunate tribal conflict during the first Arab-Israeli war (1948–1949) that accidentally resulted in Palestinians fleeing, and not the deliberate and carefully planned campaign of ethnic cleansing carried out by Zionist militias.

Words upon words are dedicated to the Zi-

onist settler colony's declarations of genocide, the support given by imperialists and the feelings of Zionists, whilst large-scale loss of Palestinian life is treated almost like a footnote. These actions come at a time when Palestine Action has expanded its reach, starting what it calls Palestine Action

• Outside the BBC.

Underground, which targets any and all partners of Elbit Systems, Israel's largest arms suppliers.

Providing a guide and a map of over 50 Elbit sites, Palestine Action asks those who want to do something about the Israeli arms trade to form autonomous groups able independently to strike at the facilitators

of Israel's systemic and military violence. This action follows that principle, holding the media accountable for facilitating Israeli terror.

A Palestine Action spokesperson said: "We at Palestine Action cannot stand by and let Western media justify and manufacture consent for genocide through racist, callous coverage. The media has long been an insidious weapon of Western imperialism against Palestine and other Arab countries, with the use of colonial myths and orientalist tropes laying the ground for millions of people to be murdered. As the Palestinian poet Mohammed El-Kurd said: 'This is the Iraq war all over again. The media has the bloodiest hands in all of this'."

Let us live in peace!

by New Worker
correspondent

Humza Yousaf, the Scottish First Minister, says he's fearful for the safety of his extended family in the Gaza Strip after an Israeli rocket hit the home across the road from theirs in Gaza on Tuesday. His wife's parents had gone to the Strip to visit relatives prior to the fighting and they are now trapped, like millions of other Palestinians, under Israeli rocket and drone attacks.

"We are just torn apart with worry as you can imagine, because their supplies are low," he said. "Yesterday an Israeli missile hit a house across the road from

my mother-in-law and father-in-law's house and it shattered every window... broke all the mirrors and gave them a real fright."

Humza Yousaf's wife, Nadia el Nakla, also described how

her relatives trapped in Gaza were left covered in shrapnel after a drone attack. She said her heart turned to stone after three family friends were killed in an Israeli air-raid.

She told delegates

about her fears at the SNP conference in Aberdeen last week while offering her heartfelt condolences to people in Israel and Palestine who had been killed.

"We are watching unimaginable horror.

Families of 20 people are being wiped out. My brother is an ER doctor, his friend who is a nurse came to the ER to help, when there he found his own two children dead.

"Yesterday my cousin was walking with friends, five minutes after leaving them he received a call that those three friends had been killed.

"One million people told to move south, then they bomb the south. Outside our home are football pitches, people are sleeping there and still they are dropping bombs."

She said she is in "complete despair" and hit out at the blockade on food, water and electricity in Gaza. "We are

seeing an attack on humanity."

Nadia el Nakla, who is an SNP councillor, said her heart had turned to "stone" and claimed the Israeli Government is using "dehumanising" language. "We are a proud people. Let us survive. Let us live in peace."



• Palestinian solidarity in Scotland.

The NCP badge



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Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

A memorandum addressed to friendly parties about the war of annihilation practised by the Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian territories.

**Dear Comrades,
militant greetings**

Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has witnessed a severe and illegal siege in which the occupation imposes complete control over land, sea and air crossings, causing a severe humanitarian crisis. The occupied Palestinian territories are witnessing an unprecedented escalation of the occupation's crimes, which included repeated incursions into Jerusalem, the Palestinian West Bank, and Palestinian Islamic and Christian holy sites, which led to cold-blooded killings of civilians, arbitrary arrests of children and women, home demolitions and confiscation of land, in addition to increasing the pace of settlement and continuing the siege of the Gaza Strip.

Now the residents of the Gaza Strip, inhabited by more than two million Palestinians who suffer from deteriorating living conditions, are being exposed, as a result of an ongoing Israeli siege, to a horrific crime that amounts to war crimes of genocide and crimes against

humanity, in which entire residential neighbourhoods containing thousands of homes and residential towers were demolished, and massacres of murder were committed.

Hundreds of Palestinian families and about half of Gaza's population were displaced from their homes.

While the Israeli occupation forces had killed thousands of citizens in Gaza during five multiple and successive wars on the Strip (2008–2014–2018–2021–2022).

So far, they have killed more than 3,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including about 500 children, and wounded 9,000.

Israel continues to bomb civilians, public and private property, and infrastructure, as well as cutting off supplies of water, electricity, food, and other basic facilities to the Strip.

The Israeli occupation in the West Bank killed more than 54 Palestinians in one week and wounded more than 1,100.

Today, the Israeli entity has revealed an old-new plan aimed at displacing our people in the Gaza Strip towards



Egypt in a transfer process and a major crime that brings to mind the Nakba of 1948, but our people will remain committed to their land and resist the occupation by all means and forms, and if anyone is to leave the land of Palestine, it is the Zionist occupation.

The Israeli occupation and some Western countries, led by the United States of America, are carrying out a systematic and widespread media campaign to deceive world public opinion and falsify the facts about what "Israel" is carrying out in terms of a war of genocide against Palestinian civilians.

They portray the Israeli entity as a victim and being subjected to killing at a time when their deceptive methods have been exposed by publishing pictures of wounded children from Gaza

as Israeli children, to make it clear that they do not have any evidence that the Palestinian resistance killed Israeli children.

The Al-Aqsa Flood operation came in response and in defence of the rights and dignity of our people, who are suffering from the longest occupation in history, and who are exposed every day to terrorism, murder and arrest at the hands of war criminals in the Israeli enemy entity.

The Al-Aqsa Flood battle confirmed the fragility of the occupation forces, which have lost their prestige before the entire world.

Our people demand that all free and honourable people in the world intervene immediately and seriously to stop the Zionist crimes against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip

and the occupied Palestinian territories.

We also call for exerting maximum pressure on the occupying entity to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, release prisoners, stop settlement activity, and stop the war of extermination and mass massacres that occupation forces are practising.

We demand that full protection be guaranteed to the Palestinian people in accordance with international law and the Geneva Conventions.

We also call on international courts, especially the International Criminal Court, to open an investigation into the crimes committed by the occupation authorities.

We call for exposing the Israeli propaganda that receives support in Western media circles, and we call for the refutation of the deceptive narratives of the Zionist media and some journalists and media professionals in many Western countries who promote the false Zionist narrative of the truth.

Our steadfast people on the land of Palestine today

face a war of extermination carried out by the Israeli occupation forces, supported by the United States of America, which has become a partner and party leading this aggression, which is also blatantly supported by some Western countries that seek to protect the Zionist entity and its continued occupation of our land and our country.

Our heroic people, the people of the free and the martyrs, will not kneel or retreat, and will continue the struggle and resistance until their full inalienable national rights are restored and their independent state is built on the land of Palestine.

Stopping the Zionist aggression, the war of extermination and population displacement is the duty of all honourable and free people in the world.

We are confident that you will support our people and our just cause.

With our deepest regards

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

15th October 2023

Communists score in Greek poll

by our Balkan Affairs
correspondent

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) scored many victories in the country's two rounds of regional and municipal elections on Sunday 15th October and the preceding Sunday. Putting the results of both rounds together, their candidates under the banner of "Popular Rally" with a red carnation as their symbol won over 10 per cent of the national vote share compared with 6.8 in 2019 and 7.6 in this year's general election. If this result were to be replicated in a general election it would give the KKE their biggest vote share since 1989.

In the first round of voting a communist candidate was elected as mayor on the 'red' island of Ikaria. In the second round another five other mayors were elected, including in Greece's

third largest city of Patras where the mayor was up for re-election for the third time and gained 56 per cent in the second round. He has been mayor since 2014 and the large port city is considered an example of successful communist governing. Communist mayors were elected in four more municipalities: Kaisariani, Peritroupoli, Chaidari and Tyrnavos. These areas are mostly in the Attica region, in large working class areas near to the capital and the port of Piraeus.

Hundreds of other communists were also elected as municipal and regional councillors and these extraordinary successes were due to the broad appeal of KKE by creating a large militant working class movement under the "Popular Rally" banner that attracted disaffected voters, students and those who would normally not vote at all. In fact the KKE leadership instructed its members and supporters not to vote for any other candidate other than one of their own, and in places where a communist

candidate had not reached the second round, they were encouraged to leave the ballot paper blank or spoiled. Many political commentators suggested that this stopped the normal horse-trading and tactical voting amongst candidates and showed a clearer sign that KKE did not need any support from other parties to achieve the success that they did.

The governing conservative New Democracy Party (ND) did not do well – as one would expect after years of austerity, scandals, wild-fires and floods. In Athens

itself the New Democracy candidate for Mayor, and nephew of the Prime Minister no less, was not re-elected. Neither was the ND candidate in Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city. Both lost to the traditional social-democratic PASOK party. Perhaps the most telling of results were in the areas recently destroyed by mass flooding, where the voters rejected government candidates in favour of those backed by the left-social-democratic SYRIZA front such as

in the area of Thessaly, where 60 per cent voted for a new Governor.

So only months after the July general election, the people of Greece made their voices heard loud and clear. This was the first time local people had a chance to choose local mayors, councillors and councils – the people who make a difference to their lives on a daily basis – since 2019.

The strong communist vote in these elections was not just a protest vote, but a vote for local candidates who live in the same villages, islands, towns and cities that ordinary working-class people live and work in. Each area had its own programme and manifesto detailing how it would benefit the local population if it voted communist, and now these victories will surely spur on the Party and the movement onto greater victories to come.



New campaign to free Assange

by Ed Newman

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has launched a new global communications campaign as part of its long-standing efforts for the release of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange.

Beginning on Wednesday 18th October, the "Collateral Damage" campaign will run RSF content, in print and online, highlighting the danger posed to all the media and the public's right to know by the US

government's prosecution of Assange.

Developed in partnership with the French advertising agency BETC, the campaign features a depiction of Assange with his facial features made up of the logos of dozens of media organisations from around the world. They are among those that initially ran stories based on the leaked classified documents published by WikiLeaks in 2010.

As Assange's fate hangs in the balance, it is more crucial than ever for media organisations and journalists around

the world to speak out in support of the principles at stake. If the US government succeeds in extraditing Assange and prosecuting him under the Espionage Act, anyone who publishes stories based on leaked classified information could be next. It's time for global solidarity in support of journalism and press freedom – before it's too late.

The campaign tagline "Collateral Damage" refers to the danger that the US government's prosecution of Assange poses to media around the world, as

well as the public's right to information. It is also a reminder of the "Collateral Murder" video that was among the leaked materials published by WikiLeaks in 2010, exposing an attack by a US helicopter gunship in Baghdad that killed at least a dozen civilians, including two Reuters journalists.

The campaign is supported by *Le Monde* and *The Guardian*, who were among the original media partners that worked with WikiLeaks in 2010 on the "Cablegate" documents – a tranche of more than 250,000 leaked diplomat-

ic cables. The campaign has also been supported by other news outlets around the world.

RSF has launched this campaign less than a week before Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's state visit to Washington later in the month where he will be hosted by US President Joe Biden. The two leaders have been urged to use this opportunity to find a diplomatic solution to the Assange case. RSF will also be launching a global twitter-storm targeting Biden and Albanese over weekend

leading up to the visit.

The campaign launch also takes place in the run-up to the final stage of legal proceedings in London, where a hearing is expected to be called at any point – a date being referred to as "Day X". This hearing will mark the final stage of domestic proceedings, leaving only the possibility of an application to the European Court of Human Rights if the UK court rejects Assange's appeal against the extradition order.

Radio Havana Cuba