

## Cease-fire now! World demands an end to the fighting!

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

The United Nations has overwhelmingly called for a humanitarian ceasefire in war-torn Gaza. On the streets in the Gaza Strip Palestinian commandos are fighting to stop the Israeli advance as a relentless barrage of Israeli missiles and bombs spread death and destruction throughout the besieged Palestinian enclave. And in Rome Pope Francis renewed his call for an “immediate” ceasefire and pleaded for an end to suffering for both Israelis and Palestinians.

This week 153 countries voted in favour of an end to the fighting at an extraordinary session of the UN General Assembly called at the request of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The resolution called for “an immediate humanitarian ceasefire” and urged all parties to “comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law”. Tabled at the special meeting at UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday, the motion was opposed by Israel and the Americans. But only eight of the most craven vassals of US imperialism backed them. Twenty-three other US allies, including Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and



Ukraine, abstained.

Some US partners in the vital Asia-Pacific region also backed the call for the ceasefire, including India, Japan and south Korea. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, who all voted for the motion, issued a rare joint statement calling for an end to hostilities and expressing alarm “at the diminishing safe space for civilians in Gaza”. The Americans and Austrians moved amendments condemning the deadly Hamas attack on Israel on 7<sup>th</sup> October but both attempts to politicise the vote failed.

The Israeli envoy, Gilad Erdan, ranted against calls for a ceasefire, calling the UN a “moral stain” on humanity. But Egypt’s UN Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek said the

resolution that was “balanced and neutral” called for the protection of civilians on both sides and the release of all captives, while the Palestinian representative said he hoped the vote would send a message to Washington and all the others “protecting and shielding” Israel.

Palestinian envoy Riyad Mansour said the USA cannot

continue to ignore calls for ceasefire, and that protests across the world calling for a ceasefire, including demonstrations outside the UN headquarters, must be heard.

Mansour said the “massive power” of protests culminated in the General Assembly resolution that was overwhelmingly approved earlier and stressed that Washington cannot overlook the will of billions of people across the world. “We hope in a few days – God willing a few hours – that the United States [will] come to the conclusion to force Israel to stop this aggression against our people.”

More than two months of Israeli bombardment on Gaza has killed about 18,200 Palestinians, including 7,729 children, and displaced 90 per cent of its population. Humanitarian aid officials warn of a collapsing health system and “apocalyptic” conditions in the small pocket of southern

Gaza, where most Palestinians are now crammed.

Meanwhile a 28-year old British-Palestinian hunger-striker is demanding that the Sunak government act to stop Israel’s months-long bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

Arafat, 28, stopped eating and drinking on 22<sup>nd</sup> October after learning that his sister and her four children had been killed in an Israeli air raid in Gaza. He plans to continue his hunger strike until the British government backs a ceasefire.

“I want the UK government to do something, and I want the Israeli government to stop killing people,” he said. “I know I might die. I know something could happen to my health,” Arafat said from a hospital in Bath where he is being treated. “I don’t want to die. I’m doing this for my own people who are suffering. Every person in Gaza is my brother and sister.”

### FUND

The December appeal kicked off with £860 in the bag thanks to supporters all around the country, including two £100 contributions from London comrades – one from central London, the other from Southall. A Dagenham reader gave us £6 and a pillar of the fighting fund from Essex sent in a total of £80. A Chiswick reader topped up his sub renewal with an extra £50.

Other donations came from a veteran Dunstable supporter who gave us £15 and a Cornish friend who sent in a tenner, as did another from Scoles. A Welsh supporter gave us £20 and another from the Midlands posted £25.

Make this a month to remember. We need £2,640 by the end of the month to hit our target for December.

Keep our presses rolling by sending 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: <http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

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The New Worker will soon be taking its traditional fortnightly winter break.

The last issue of the Old Year will be published on 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

The first issue of the New Year will come out on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January.



# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Justice for Palestine cease-fire now!

Gaza faces a full-scale humanitarian catastrophe as Israel mercilessly maintains indiscriminate attacks on the civilians in the beleaguered Palestinian enclave that is bitterly resisting the Israeli onslaught. But world public opinion made its voice heard at the United Nations this week when 153 member-states voted for an immediate end to the fighting. Only eight lackeys of US imperialism joined Israel and the Americans in voting against the call for peace. Some of America's NATO allies took the principled stand and supported the demand for peace. Others such as Britain shamefully abstained – although some say this modest departure from the American script is a step forward for the Sunak government.

If that's so, and we can only hope it is, it is largely down to the wave of support that we have seen for the Palestinians in Britain and throughout the rest of the world. Grovelling to the Americans and turning a blind-eye to Israeli war crimes may be second nature for the Tory government and the leaders of the Labour Party, but even they cannot blind-eye the mass protests of millions of people that rock the streets of Britain week after week. Nor can they ignore the view of their Saudi friends, who have shelved a planned summit with Sunak in London over the crisis, or those of the other Arab princes who've invested their oil riches in the UK and made this country their second home.

These protests have encouraged those in the Jewish community that the Zionists claim to exclusively represent to also take the principled stand of supporting the demand for justice for the Palestinian Arabs. These protests are now rippling through the broader labour movement and now we're seeing Palestinian demands taken up by unions at a local and regional level. We're even seeing support for a ceasefire growing within the Parliamentary Labour Party with even some of Labour's biggies now going beyond his meaningless calls for "humanitarian pauses".

This week Labour's Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy slammed Israel over its attacks on Palestinians. He described the death and destruction in Gaza over the last two months as "intolerable" and attacked two Israeli cabinet ministers for "totally unacceptable" support of illegal Zionist settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

A permanent ceasefire must be the starting point to address the underlying causes of the crisis, including decades of Israeli military occupation and a system of oppression against the Palestinian Arabs that is considered internationally to meet the legal definition of apartheid.

Nearly 18,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, with over 40 per cent of those being children. Now is the time to really put the pressure on Labour and trade union leaders and all the other powers that be in the UK to end the slaughter. They need to hear the call for a cease-fire from as many as possible and that Britain must end its complicity in Israeli war crimes now. Make sure they hear it by supporting the protests until the fighting stops

## More lies from the BBC

by James Smith

Over the weekend, a BBC news report accused the British Army of using firms linked to "Uyghur forced labour" in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region to invest in over £200 million of solar panels in order to meet its renewable energy targets. The article, citing a report from Sheffield Hallam University's 'Helena Kennedy Centre', argued in favour of supply chain diversification by cutting reliance on China, which dominates the global Solar Panel supply chain.

The report didn't substantiate its findings, only using the term "very high" exposure in an ambiguous fashion, yet the article repeated its claims as though they're facts. The British government at large has avoided confronting China on solar panels, recognising that the UK has limited industrial capacity and is under tremendous pressure to meet its net zero targets. On the other hand, such documentation was used readily to ban their import in the USA under a blanket assumption of guilt, which speaks volumes about the true motivations of this research.

The 'Uyghur forced labour' issue is a ruse, exclusively driven by the US government. It's designed to promote anti-China supply chain diversifications and commercially motivated protectionism, targeting goods which the US deems 'strategic'. Starting in 2021, the Biden administration U-turned on the Trump administration's neglect of environmentalism and declared that its fundamental policy goal was to dominate the "technologies of the future", which in turn constitutes renewable energy goods – solar

panels, electric batteries, cars and similar technologies.

In doing so, a number of 'studies' quickly materialised from US-funded and linked institutions that, lacking direct evidence, accused China of utilising forced labour from the Uyghur minority in the Xinjiang autonomous region in order to make solar panels. This has never been proven, yet the allegations were repeated by the mainstream media and quickly led up to several US policy decisions including a ban on Chinese made solar panels, as well as all goods from the Xinjiang region, all of which were meted on a 'guilty until proven innocent' premise that asked companies to 'prove a negative', all of which were in deliberate bad faith.

The Helena Kennedy Centre in the UK is but one particular example of how such 'research' institutes are used to co-opt and market America's commercial, economic and strategic goals. The head of the centre, Baroness Helena Kennedy, is a hardline anti-China figure who is the founder of the Sinophobic 'Interparliamentary Alliance on China' (IPAC) pressure group. IPAC is, by its own public admission, funded by the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Taiwan authorities. Similarly, the primary researcher in the Helena Kennedy Centre who created this solar panel "forced labour" report, Laura Murphy, is an employee of the US Department of Homeland Security.

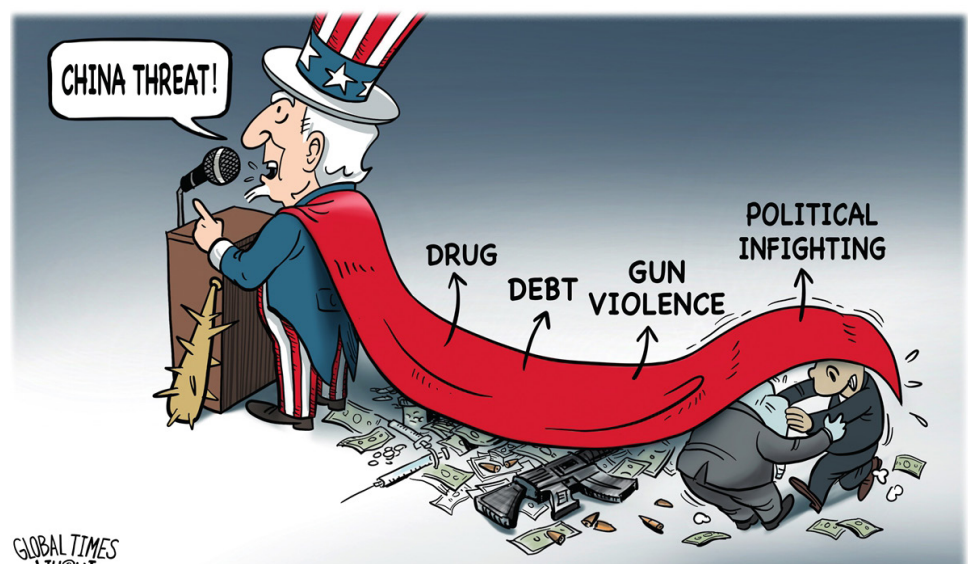
What becomes visible is a 'web' of anti-China institutions that works to create this content, which is then amplified by the media with its claims taken at face value and whose aim is to undermine China's commercial competitiveness.

The real problem is that China is a world leader in solar panel manufacturing and renewable energy goods, and the USA seeks to undermine this for its own economic gain. Thus, to do this, it resorts to bad faith tactics designed at promoting market exclusion that weaponises the rhetoric of human rights. The real US policy thinking is explicitly reflected in the Inflation Reduction Act, which seeks to weaponise tariffs on a wide range of Chinese renewable goods, irrespectively, without any façade of intention.

It becomes even more telling in this respect that minimal resources, media attention or interest are given towards legitimate reports of real human slavery or forced labour practices around the world, especially those committed in countries allied to the USA. Instead, it is used as a ruse to discredit products they disapprove of or seek to sanction. For instance, if it is not feasible to accuse products of being made with "forced labour," it usually instead emerges in the form of baseless accusations of "espionage" or being a "national security threat", such as the attacks on Huawei or Hikvision.

All in all, it is evident that to try and forcibly exclude China from the global solar panel supply chain, who provides 80 per cent of the world's total, will be economically, commercially, and thus environmentally devastating. Such bans would forcibly narrow the market, drive up prices and set the world back decades. Given this, the UK is really not in any capacity to actually act on the propaganda that is being laundered, hence the government only says it will keep an eye and audit its suppliers accordingly.

Global Times





# Workers' Notes

## Stop the Slaughter! Stop the War!

by New Worker correspondent

London comrades joined tens of thousands of people who marched through the heart of the capital for another weekend of protests, calling for an immediate end to Israel's assault on Gaza and condemning the Sunak government for again failing to vote in favour of a ceasefire at the United Nations.

Over 100,000 demonstrators took part in the London protest, the sixth since the war began, to send a clear message to the Establishment that the majority of the population want a ceasefire and that the movement in support of the Palestinians is growing in strength.

Thousands upon thousands of people in London and throughout the country have shown their opposition to the indiscriminate attacks on civilians that have claimed the lives of at least 17,000 Palestinians, including more than 7,000 children. Thousands more are missing presumed dead under the rubble of their own homes.

This has been one of the largest, sustained political campaigns in British history. The determination to keep protesting for an end to the suffering in Gaza is remarkable and the pressure on British politicians who have sided with Israel will not go away. Ben Jamal from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign said: "We are witnessing unrelenting horror in Gaza. Palestinians have been bombed, displaced, deprived of food, water, fuel, electricity and health services for 62 days and counting. The amount of destruction has been compared to that of German cities in World War Two, except it's happened in a far shorter time. The scale of this catastrophe is so great that in a rare move, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter, urging the UN Security Council to act.



"A permanent ceasefire must be the starting point to address the underlying causes of the situation, including decades of Israeli military occupation and a system of oppression against the Palestinian people that is considered internationally to meet the legal definition of apartheid. The British government must end its complicity in Israel's crimes, starting by joining the call for the killing of civilians to stop completely.

"We will continue to march, demonstrate, and organise to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire and justice for the Palestinian people."

## TUC Comes to Life

by New Worker correspondent

Last weekend a remarkably rare event took place: the Trades Union Congress (TUC), rising like Lazarus from the dead, actually stirred itself into action and held a special congress at its London HQ for the first time in 41 years.

This was concerned with the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act. Published in January and passed in July, it intends to force trade unionists to provide a minimum level of services during strikes in the health services, education, fire and rescue, border security, transport and nuclear decommissioning. The measure was not mentioned in the 2019 Tory manifesto that saw them take many formerly solid Labour seats in the north east of England. It is a response to the upsurge in industrial action in

2022. Although it applies across mainland Britain, the Welsh and SNP governments have said they will not apply it. Some Labour English city mayors have taken the same steps. As it puts the onus on employers to issue a "work notice" to implement the Act however, it could easily come into effect in private sector disputes in these places. A previous measure that only applied to the transport sector was introduced the October 2022 but has not yet been implemented.

The main provision of the Act is that if unions involved in industrial action do not provide minimum service levels then unions lose immunity from being sued by the employer for economic loss and workers will lose the long-standing protection from unfair dismissal for striking. Hefty fines for defaulting unions and even sequestration of their assets are also provided for in the Act.

The Act is notably short on detail about what constitutes a "minimum level of service". This will be left to the Business Secretary, which effectively means the law can be made up on the hoof. In effect it means that strike action would be rendered ineffective.

In the recent NHS strikes unions made plans to ensure emergency cover at hospitals, but that is not enough for the Tories. About a fifth of the workforce are now under the rules of the Act. But make no mistake. We won't stand by and let workers get sacked for defending their pay and conditions. And we won't rest until this malicious, unnecessary and unworkable law has been repealed.

When it was first proposed, the General Secretary of the TUC deplored it because it would "prolong disputes and poison industrial relations, leading to more frequent strikes".

In the House of Lords even crusty Tory peers thought it was a bad piece of work.

And even Sir Keir Starmer says the Act is so dreadful that Labour will repeal it in his first 100 days in office – although we are still waiting for the repeal of the Tories' anti-union legislation from the Thatcher years.

The TUC has belatedly announced a national march and rally to oppose the measure. To demonstrate the urgency, this will take place in Cheltenham. From the mid-1980s until the coming of Tony Blair this was the scene of the annual rally to oppose the Thatcher's government's ban on trade unions at the GCHQ spy centre, but there are more convenient venues.

The TUC also said that as a result of Saturday's congress "we agreed to continue our campaign of opposition and non-compliance – across workplaces and across the country". That is not very encouraging as the limited opposition so far has been ineffective.

The TUC also promised to "continue our wider legal challenge to these undemocratic laws – leaving no stone unturned internationally and in UK courts". Many trendy legal practices will be licking their lips at the prospect of more fees.

It said that it would "Call on all employers and public bodies to oppose this counterproductive legislation" and even threatened to "Name and shame any employ-

er who deploys a work notice as anti-union and anti-worker". That is a pointless threat because any employer using the Act would have to do so publicly.

One might legitimately ask why the TUC did not do its mobilising during the passage of the legislation rather than wait for it to become law.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary for shop-workers union US-DAW, used uncharacteristically militant language to warn that: "Make no mistake, any member threatened with a work notice will feel the collective strength of the trade union movement, representing five and a half million workers, standing with them in solidarity and support and unions will work together to deploy the most effective tactics possible."

Rousing speeches are all very well, but trade unions are not in a healthy state. Membership is at a historically low level, despite the recent upsurge in strike action. There are only 6,250,000 trade unionists out of a workforce of 28,300,000 – of these 5.5 million are in TUC-affiliated unions. Only in 1938 was there an absolutely smaller number of trade union members and that was with a much smaller workforce.

Already some unions have been engaged in discreet talks about implementing the measure. Community, the former Iron and Steel Trades Confederation which curiously represents nursery school teachers and others, complains that Education Secretary has broken off talks with them and other unions on the fine print.

Helen Osgood, the union's National Officer for Education & Early Years commented: "The talks are reported to have collapsed, but the first that we heard of this was in the press. As far as we were aware, tentative conversations were still ongoing." That does not sound very militant.

## Christmas Blues

by New Worker correspondent

With Christmas coming up a number of industrial disputes are brewing that threaten to impact the holiday season. One is a dispute in Rochdale where distribution drivers employed by Wincanton who distribute

*continued on page 4...*

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who work for supermarket chain Asda.

This, says Unite, will lead to a nationwide shortages of chilled foods if about 80 HGV drivers take strike action. They are cheated off at being paid £1.24 per hour less than their drivers doing the same jobs for the same chain's base at Lutterworth in Leicestershire. In Rochdale the drivers' overtime, night, weekend and bank holiday rates are also less than further south.

The difference is caused by the fact that the drivers north and south used to be employed by EV Cargo before transferring under TUPE regulations to new employers in 2021. Now the Lutterworth drivers are directly employed by Asda while the Rochdale drivers work for Wincanton.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "Our members are sick of being treated as second class workers and are demanding pay parity with their colleagues who are doing the same job. Both Asda and Wincanton are wealthy companies that can more than afford to right this wrong."

"Unite always defends our members' jobs, pay and conditions and these drivers have the full support of their union behind them."

The union points out that

Wincanton can easily afford a decent rise because its pre-tax profits increased by 6.9 per cent to a record £62.1 million in the year to March, while "Asda price" means £24.5 billion in revenue last calendar year.

The drivers will strike on 13, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28 and 30 December and 2 January, and more strikes will be scheduled if the dispute is not resolved.

Unite regional officer Paul Lomax said: "Asda shoppers will be disappointed that shelves could run bare during the festive period, but this is entirely the fault of Wincanton and Asda for denying our members' pay parity."

Asda is said to be planning to use its own network of 2,000 drivers on strike days to limit disruption, according the *Grocery Gazette*.

A similar action by the same union taking place at DS Smith, which delivers packaging cardboard and paper to major retailers such as Amazon, Direct Wines, Cadbury and Haribo, has also escalated to cover the whole Christmas period.

This could mean that Smith's clients could be unable to package items for mail-order delivery to customers during the festive season. Their drivers, based in Launceston in Cornwall, Sittingbourne in Kent, Avonmouth in Bristol and Tuxford in Notting-

hamshire, have rejected a five per cent pay offer.

Strikes took place on two days in later November and another round began on Monday, which could last until the Saturday before the big day.

Sharon Graham, once again, said the employer can well afford to pay up: "DS Smith has huge profits and can well afford to give these drivers a fair pay rise. The company's refusal to do so is just sheer corporate greed." The union also warned that as the workforce at DS Smith includes drivers who pick up recycling at distribution centres for five major supermarket chains a large pileup of uncollected cardboard will cause significant disruption to their Christmas operations.

Also at Asda, 100 workers at its Gosport, Hampshire store are balloting for industrial action over a "litany of grievances". Their union, GMB, claims that the store management have overseen repeated wage errors, pressure to work extra shifts, and ignored many serious numerous health and safety issues including fire exits being constantly blocked.

Regional organiser Nicola Nixon said: "This dispute has been brewing for some time now, with local management continuing to ignore growing concerns and an extremely stressed workforce reaching breaking point."

"It's beginning to look a lot unlike Christmas for Gosport Asda staff," she added, saying that: "Perhaps this dispute may have been avoided had management invested in their staff a little more, rather than paying Michael Bubl  a fortune to front their Christmas campaign."

In response, an Asda spokesperson lamely said: "We value feedback from our colleagues and have established procedures in place for them to raise any concerns they may have."

One positive seasonal matter is that more supermarket chains are closing on Boxing Day to give workers more time off. This is a long-standing issue for USDAW, which has unsuccessfully sought legislation on this matter. Waitrose is the latest to make this modest concession at their 329 stores. Downmarket Aldi, Lidl are Iceland are doing the same. Some shops still open on New Year's Day, however, presumably to sell Aspirin and hangover cures.

Meanwhile the non-food sector workers at DIY chain B&Q arm are up in arms as a result of plans to cut their working hours and pay, according to *Retail Gazette*.

Management has told staff it will cut staff hours from January and to compensate will increase pay to £11.31 per hour instead. Thus employees on 39 hour-per-

week contracts will work for 36 hours and 45 minutes after they abolish the present unpaid breaks.

Staff suspect reduced contracted hours will limit their potential earnings when the new national living wage rate of £11.44 per hour comes into effect.

B&Q claims it will increase pay again in April to be above the national living wage rise as part of its "usual annual pay review to maintain a competitive rate of pay in the market", adding that the changes were welcomed after piloting them at two stores. But they would say that. The lack of trade union comment is telling.

More than seven years ago B&Q tried what seems to be a very similar trick. When the then new National Living Wage was introduced at a rate of £7.20 per hour for workers aged 25, it said that it would raise its minimum to the higher rate of £7.66, it also scrapped double-time for Sundays, ending summer and winter bonuses and axing zone allowances.

It threatened staff with the sack if they did not sign the new contracts that effectively reduced their wages, despite the offer of a year's compensation. Then B&Q ignored USDAW, which it did not recognise.

Workers said they lost up to £4,000 as a result of the imposed changes. In February this year Unite secured a 10.75 per cent rise for Wincanton drivers working out of the Worksop B&Q distribution centre.

But be of good cheer – another group of workers vital to the success of the festive season have called off industrial action planned for earlier this week after the threat of strike action forced employers to offer an improvement on the 6.4 per cent rise on offer.

These are 500 members of Unite who produce essential refreshments such as Chivas Regal, Aberlour, Ballantine's, Royal Salute and The Glenlivet at various distilleries across Scotland.

Unite industrial officer Andy Brown, said: "Unite has been in intense negotiations with Chivas Brothers since we announced our rolling programme of strike action. Following the latest round of talks we have agreed to put a new pay offer to our 500-strong Chivas Brothers membership for consideration."

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

## 19<sup>th</sup> December 2003

*IRAQI RESISTANCE attacks on the US occupation army and its auxiliary forces continue, while anti-American demonstrators defy the troops and puppet police on the streets in the days following the arrest of ousted president Saddam Hussein.*

*The American governor, Paul Bremer, gloated over the images of their number one captive while his master Bush verbally condemned Saddam to death before the show trial has even been prepared.*

*Baghdad has been rocked by car-bombs; a*

*US patrol was ambushed in Samarra; a US army supply train halted and robbed; the northern oil pipeline was again sabotaged; and the office of the puppet mayor of Fallujah was stormed forcing the 'mayor' and his police to flee until the Americans arrived.*

*Tanks were sent into Saddam's hometown of Tikrit on Tuesday to end days of rioting against the occupation, in what the imperialists call the "Sunni Triangle" – the central Iraqi region that had been a stronghold for Saddam Hussein's Baath (Renaissance) Party for decades. Some demonstrators showed their Baathist loyalty by waving posters of their former leader.*

*Others clearly came from other Iraqi movements that have closed ranks with them in the new independence struggle to overcome years of past hostility.*

*Saddam was captured in an underground bolt-hole in a village near Tikrit last Saturday. Although he was armed and had some \$750,000, there was no radio nor*

*did he possess a mobile or satellite phone, dispelling the American myth that Saddam was leading the resistance.*

*The video of the medical inspection of a bearded old man, who once shaved had the appearance of the former president of Iraq, fired rumours in Baghdad that the Americans had got the wrong man or that the whole thing had been staged for propaganda purposes. But on Tuesday a statement released in the name of the now underground Iraqi Baath confirmed that Saddam Hussein had been arrested – probably betrayed by an informer looking for the immense dollar bounty on his head.*

*Although the Americans initially claimed that Saddam was "co-operating" under questioning, this was rapidly withdrawn and he reportedly has denied possessing any banned weapons of mass destruction. That didn't stop Tony Blair from issuing a statement to British troops claiming that the Anglo-American "survey group" had recently found "massive evidence" of a "huge" system of secret laboratories in Iraq.*



# China reaches for the stars

by John Maryon

Since gaining people's power in 1949 the Communist Party of China (CPC) has made remarkable progress to successfully achieve its long-term goal of transforming the once-impooverished country into a modern socialist state. Mao Zedong proclaimed the foundation of the People's Republic of China in front of a vast crowd in Tiananmen Square on the 1<sup>st</sup> October in that year. Influenced by the success of Joseph Stalin, Mao ensured that the communist party would play the leading role in building socialism. Billions have been lifted from dire poverty, life expectancy has soared and today, guided by its adoption of Marxism with Chinese characteristics, China has emerged as a world leader in many fields, respected for its scientific, economic and technical progress. Beijing has also become an important world diplomatic centre and a powerful new force for world peace.

US sanctions have made life very difficult for some Chinese companies and severely hampered the world's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The manner in which China has responded however, has come as a major shock for the Americans. In what has been described as another 'Sputnik moment', Huawei has quietly released its new Mate 60pro 5G satellite smartphone using 7 nm microchips. Panic and dismay set in among the neo-cons in Washington as the realisation dawned that despite harsh illegal sanctions, they had lost an important battle. China has emerged to make impressive advances in science and technology. In particular, its progress in space research has been of concern to the USA.

By its ban on Chinese participation in the so-called International Space Station (ISS) and ending all co-operation in space research, the USA intended to isolate China in the



• Chinese Taikonauts land in Inner Mongolia in October.

field of space research. China's response has been to create their own Tiangong Space Station, which will become a hub for real international scientific research. Future plans for the station include expanding it first from its current T section to an X configuration by docking a new heavy module, and then ultimately to double its size. China's Taikonauts only entered space some 40 years after the early Soviet and US missions, but today China regarded as a key player.

Following its successful landing of a rover on Mars and the collection of soil samples from the Moon's surface, China has great plans for the future and aims to share its research with the world. Above all, its plans are for the peaceful use of outer space and do not include military bases. China's position is a dramatic contrast from the time of early Soviet and US achievements when Mao said that they could not even put a potato into space.

The Chang'e 6 lunar probe is intended to land and collect rocks and soil from the far side of the moon and return them to earth in 2024. Around 2026 Chang'e 7 will land at the lunar south pole to look for water. By 2028 it will be joined by Chang'e 8 to co-operate in establishing a small basic lunar research station. The main purpose will be to test communications and terrain suitably

for the building of a permanent large Moon base.

China's ambitions include sending Taikonauts to the lunar south pole region by 2029 in the region of its proposed Moon base. The space centre will become a centre for international scientific research as well as providing a stopping-off point for further deep space missions. Two carrier rockets will be used for sending two spacecraft into lunar orbit for China's first manned moon mission. One will have carried the Taikonauts from earth and will then dock with the other, a landing craft. Taikonauts will transfer to the lander for the automatic descent. Upon completion of their mission they will transfer back to the first module for return to earth. The same procedure is proposed for China's first manned mission to the Red Planet. The voyage using conventional rockets, however, could take between 128–333 days. Both China and the USA are working on atomic engines that could reduce that time.

China's permanent Moon base, The International Lunar Research Station, is expected to start operation by the mid-2030s. China looks forward to co-operating with other nations in space research. Studies are underway to possibly employ AI technology in the automatic construction processes for building the station. If the lunar

soil is found suitable it may be possible to employ 3D-printing techniques to make the building blocks. It could take over 20 years for the whole project to be completed.

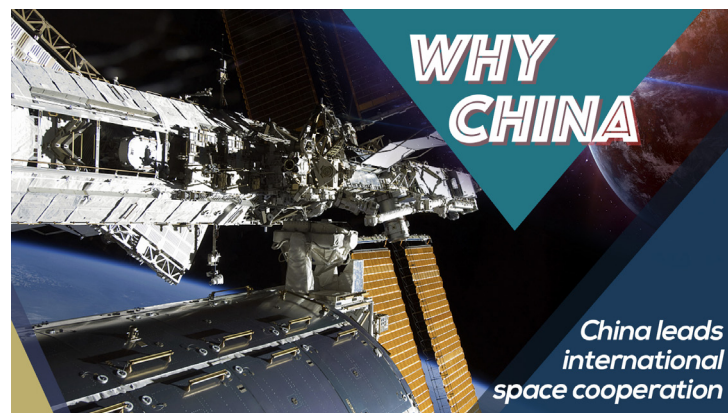
Bans, sanctions and embargoes by the USA and its craven allies will not deter China from its goals. The reality is that they have stimulated China to make rapid progress and demonstrated the power unleashed by socialism. Its future plans, as I understand them, include returning samples from asteroids and also Mars. The latter mission to be undertaken in a similar way to its manned lunar missions, with a lander transferring samples to a deep space module in Martian orbit. By 2026 it is expected to scan the Venusian surface down to one-metre resolution images. Later efforts will be made to explore the Jupiter system, including its moon, Callisto.

The USA is a world leader in space research, but the

People's Republic is catching up fast and in some areas has surpassed the USA. The James Webb telescope, which has produced remarkable images of deep space, will soon be joined by China's own Xuntian telescope. It will be placed into an orbit close to the space station for easy maintenance. America's Global Positioning System (GPS) now shares space with China's BeiDou satellite radio navigation system. The new system will bring great security and economic benefits for China. It has been approved by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

China has made progress with the successful launch of its first liquid methane reusable rocket and expanded its range of Long March rockets. They will assist future deep space missions to Venus and the Jupiter system's moon, Callisto.

To achieve success in reaching for the stars requires comprehensive and ground-breaking advances in science and technology. At every step the USA attempts to sanction and isolate China, to cripple its development. China believes that so much more could be achieved through co-operation with the USA as opposed to competition. The USA should abandon its quest for hegemony driven by greed and a misguided belief in its own exceptionalism. President Xi Jinping understands the importance of scientific progress and the dynamic policies necessary for sustainable development. The USA, on the other hand, has a president by proxy to the military-industrial complex dedicated to eternal war for profit.





# The Doolittle Raid: friendship forged in blood and fire

by Leng Shumei

Liao Mingfa, an 88-year-old man living in Jiangshan county, Quzhou, in East China's Zhejiang Province still remembers that on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1942, when he was a little boy, his father, Liao Shi-yuan, rescued a foreign man in the local mountains.

"That was a man with a long nose, red hair, and was very tall. Some villagers discovered him in the mountains and reported to my dad (who was the then village leader). My dad, along with four other villagers, went to rescue him. They took him back to home at around 9 pm. My dad guessed he was probably an American," Liao Mingfa recalled.

Despite not knowing the man's identity or why he had appeared in a small mountain village thousands of miles away in China, Liao Mingfa's parents took good care of the mystery foreign guest, cleaning his wounds and treating him with medical herbs.

At a time when Chinese people were facing tough living conditions, members of the Liao family also tried their best to treat the guest as best as they could. They would specially cook rice or eggs for the wounded guest while they themselves just ate corn paste.

"At first, he dared not eat the egg my mother cooked for



• Some of the raiders soon after.

him; he relaxed and started eating only after my father took a bite," Liao Mingfa recalled.

The mystery American the Liao family rescued turned out to be Lieutenant Charles J Ozak (1916–2010). He was one of the 80 Doolittle Raiders who launched the USA's first airstrike on Tokyo, on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1942, in retaliation for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

The mission, led by Doolittle, marked the first successful US military bombing on Japanese soil during the Second World War, targeting Tokyo and four other cities.

The film *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, produced by MGM in 1944, detailed the arduous process of the Doolittle Raid. Compared with the initial target to bomb Tokyo, however, the real challenge of the raid lay in the second half of the

journey – landing in China.

According to Zheng Weiyong, a local history researcher who spent 20 years studying the Doolittle Raid's history in Quzhou, the planes were supposed to land in Quzhou airport, but had to make emergency landings in the mountains and waters near the airport due to various unexpected conditions such as loss of communication and low fuel.

The American movie *Midway* released in 2019 features this dramatic landing scene.

In the pitch-black night, a plane shook violently in the storm, with a flashing red light warning of critically low fuel. After repeated unanswered calls to airport ground control, Colonel Doolittle made a difficult decision – to parachute out and abandon

the aircraft.

"I don't know if the land below belongs to the Chinese or the Japanese, so everyone be careful. Let's meet in Quzhou..." Doolittle encouraged his comrades before ejecting from the aircraft.

Fifteen of the 16 B-25 bombers that had participated in the Tokyo air raid crashed into the sea and the mountainous areas of East China's Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Anhui and Fujian provinces, leading to a massive rescue operation by Chinese people. Among the 75 raiders on the 15 planes, 64 were rescued by Chinese people.

The strange tall men who suddenly fell from the sky did scare the villagers at the beginning. After learning that they were American pilots who were fighting the Japanese, however, no effort was spared to protect and

take care for them as well as help to reunite with their team.

After spending four days in the Liao household, Ozak was transported by local villagers to an air force base in Quzhou. The villagers carried him along the 30-kilometer route across rugged terrain. Another 50 rescued pilots were also assisted in making their way to the base and, together, they were transported to Chongqing.

Another pilot, Major Ted William Lawson (1917–1992), suffered severe injuries when he fell into the area abutting the sea in Quzhou. On a boat, villagers transported him across the enemy ships' blockade line to send him to the nearby hospital for amputation surgery, risking their own lives to save Lawson's.

What these pilots did not expect however, was that, after

their departure, the Japanese army would launch a brutal attack in Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces in retaliation. The month following the raid saw the relentless bombing of Quzhou airport and a brutal campaign of germ warfare in the city, leading to an estimated 250,000 deaths.

## A treasured history

Doolittle Raid survivors and their descendants have not forgotten the efforts of the Chinese people.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Doolittle Raid, Doolittle wrote a letter expressing gratitude to the Chinese rescuers: "On behalf of all members of the Doolittle Bomber Squadron Association, I sincerely appreciate our Chinese friends – those who risked their own lives and the lives of their families to rescue and take care of us!" he said.

In 1990, a delegation composed of surviving Doolittle Raider veterans, visited Zhejiang to express their gratitude. Wherever they went, the delegation presented a commemorative bronze plaque engraved with the Chinese characters "duoxie" (Thank You), along with the signatures of the 44 surviving Doolittle veterans at that time.

China also remembered these old friends. In September 2015, Jeff Thatcher, the son



of David J Thatcher (1921–2016), another participant in the Doolittle Raid who was rescued by Chinese people, was invited to China on behalf of his father to attend the commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931–45) and the World Anti-Fascist War. He followed in his father’s footsteps and paid a visit to Quzhou.

In 2018, the Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall opened in Quzhou. In October that year, a delegation of 24 members from the Children of Doolittle Raiders visited Quzhou to participate in the opening ceremony.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Thatcher said: “Today, this exquisite building in front of us is a witness to the hardships endured by our ancestors and a symbol of co-operation and friendship between China and the US since April 18, 1942. We hope that the Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall can become an educational base for visitors, allowing more people to understand how 80 brave American pilots and thousands of brave Chinese people united together.”

As they walked through the memorial hall, the eyes of the Doolittle raiders’ children were gradually filled with tears. Susan Ozak, daughter of Charles J Ozak, knelt in front of a photo and pointed to a soldier with trembling hands, saying: “Look, this is my father. Thank you for helping me understand my father better.”

As a symbol of her gratitude to the Liao family, Susan Ozak



• One of the descendants of the Doolittle raiders talks with students in Quzhou.

donated \$15,000 during her stay in Quzhou in 2018 to help renovate and preserve the old Liao house, where her father once lived for four days.

After learning that the renovation programme had been completed in September 2023, Susan sent a video to the Quzhou government to express her gratitude again to the Chinese people. “I am grateful that this project was recently completed. By making this donation, I want to show the people of Jiangshan and of China my deep appreciation for all they did to help the Doolittle raiders during the war. Thank you!”

Susan also forged a friendship with Liao Mingfa. “I hope she can come back to have a look every year. I am 88 this year, I hope I can still see her when I am 120,” Liao Mingfa said.

Doolittle’s friend Bryan Moon (1928–2015), a former vice president of Northwest Airlines, was also dedicated to investigating Doolittle raiders’ history in China for many years. In September 1990, he organised a

five-strong inspection team to visit Zhejiang and Anhui to look for the Chinese people who had participated in the rescue.

Thanks to his efforts, the state of Minnesota, which had modified the Doolittle Raid’s bombers, intersected with Quzhou. In 1994, Quzhou and the city of Red Wing in Minnesota became sister cities, marking a new era of friendship between US pilots and Chinese farmers.

Nowadays the young generation has taken on the mission of exchanges between the two places. In the last 30 years, Quzhou and Red Wing have exchanged delegations many times, with more than 200 people, including 30 teachers visiting each other’s schools and 13 artists having taken part in artistic exchanges.

Pan Zhiqiang, a former teacher and principal of the Quzhou No2 High School, was the first exchange teacher from Quzhou to visit Red Wing. “At that time, overseas understanding of the Doolittle Raid was only limited to the event itself and few

knew about the Chinese people’s contribution to the action.” During Pan’s stay, schools in Red Wing added a course called ‘China’ and a seed of mutual understanding was quietly planted in the two places across the ocean.

### An enduring friendship

This history caught the public’s attention after Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned it in his speech at a welcome dinner for the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation summit (APEC 2023) on 15<sup>th</sup> November this year in San Francisco. He referred to it as a vivid example to demonstrate that “the foundation of China–US relations was laid by our peoples”.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the USA sent 16 B-25 bombers on an air raid to Japan in 1942. Running low on fuel after completing their mission, Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle and his fellow pilots parachuted in China. They were rescued

by Chinese troops and local civilians. But some 250,000 civilian Chinese were killed by Japanese aggressors in retaliation.

The American people, on their part, always remember the Chinese who risked their lives to save American pilots. Offspring of those American pilots often visit the Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall in Quzhou of Zhejiang Province to pay tribute to the Chinese people for their heroic and valourous efforts. These stories fill me with firm confidence that the friendship between our two peoples, which has stood the test of blood and fire, will be passed on from generation to generation, Xi stressed.

Due to his research on the Doolittle Raid, local history researcher Zheng Weiyong has also become a friendship ambassador between China and the USA. He has been invited many times by the Doolittle Raiders Association to participate in commemorative events in the USA.

Looking back on the numerous journeys across the Pacific

and the experience of traversing history and the present, Zheng deeply feels that as long as people stand together and overcome difficulties, and follow the trend of peace, development, co-operation and a win-win spirit, the future of China and the USA will surely be bright.

The Doolittle Raid is an important manifestation of China–US co-operation during the Second World War. It extends to the present, when we are still working for world peace and economic development. The presentation of historical artefacts is not to commemorate the war, but to celebrate humanitarianism and keep history ‘alive’ and ensure it is passed down.

Global Times

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## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

Jonathan Freedland in the *Guardian* says that Israel faced a tragic choice after the Hamas attack of 7<sup>th</sup> October. They had to choose between doing nothing or launching a military campaign to destroy Hamas. Of course they chose the latter.

There was a third way, however, and the choices will still be there when 'Operation Swords of Iron' is over. Israel can end the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza. Outrageous though it may seem to many people to say so, Hamas were always open to the two state solution.

There is also a fourth way, the piecemeal obliteration of Palestine, with intermittent bouts of destruction. That is the path Israel has pursued since 1967.

**Brendan O'Brien**  
London

### Dear Comrades

Henry Kissinger has died. We should not mourn. Remember what he did to Chile.

In 1970 Salvador Allende, a socialist, won the Chilean presidency.

He wanted to redistribute wealth and to bring key enterprises – including American-owned companies such as ITT – into public ownership.

Sure enough in 1971 Chile's national congress took management control of ITT.

It also nationalised two American enterprises, Kennecott and Anaconda, which dominated the min-

ing of copper (Chile was the world's largest copper producer).

The Americans were incensed. Nixon ordered the CIA to "make the economy scream". Henry Kissinger said: "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people."

Allende spoke out about what was going on. At the United Nations on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1972 he condemned the attempts of the US Government and multi-national corporations to topple him. "We find ourselves opposed by forces that operate in the shadows," he said.

And topple him they did. A military coup on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1973 was followed by mass killings, torture and imprisonment of suspected leftists.

The USA quickly recognised and provided aid to the military regime. That regime was led by Augusto Pinochet. In July 1976 Kissinger visited him and said: "We are sympathetic to what you are trying to do here."

**Alan Stewart**  
Wakefield

### Dear Comrades

As potholes spread, highlighting our crumbling infrastructure, the NHS reaches breaking point and the real value of wages continues to fall, people realise that something is fundamentally wrong. While those who are already rich become even more wealthy, increasing numbers of the despised poor are forced to rely on foodbanks and may end up on the streets. Great Britain, the famous "Land of Hope and Glory", is rapidly becoming a paradise for oligarchs. This is of course business as usual for the Tories – but the revolting sight of the leader of the "Opposition" singing the phrases of

Margaret Thatcher must represent a watershed in British Politics.

The lies and propaganda of the entire mass media are employed to praise and justify our magnificent democracy. A system that in practice is unstable, unjust, corrupt, unequal and immoral. A system overseen by a crisis-ridden government enjoying the support of a fairytale opposition committed to the status-quo. Communists are in a unique position to dispel this gloom and doom. We can show that the way forward is to build real socialism. To create a beautiful new society free from war, hunger, cold and the daily anxiety of making ends meet. A society of free peoples in which everyone will be able to develop their full potential. A society that will be based upon the traditional co-operation of British socialists as opposed to the selfish individualism promoted by Margaret Thatcher.

Socialism works as demonstrated by their many achievements, in the face of threats and sanctions, within the socialist countries. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has ambitious plans alongside free education, free healthcare and full support for the elderly to also provide free housing for its workers. Vietnam and Laos have risen from the ashes of brutal war to build socialist societies. The power of socialism has enabled Cuba to withstand 60 years of harsh sanctions by US imperialism as it attempts to cripple and isolate the small nation. People's China has developed on a scale and at a pace unseen since the great Soviet leader Joseph Stalin built socialism in the USSR. As the new multipolar world order develops, China is ready to share its development experience with emerg-

ing nations and to offer development assistance through the Belt and Road Initiative.

Comrades, we have a positive message about a system that really works. We will support the Labour Party when it produces progressive policies and we will support those genuine people within its organisation as they face expulsion. Being a right-wing social-democratic party, Labour will never bring about the revolutionary changes necessary for true socialism and the failure to recognise this fact by the masses has held back socialist advance in Britain for decades. The powerful dynamic philosophy of Marxism as embraced in Britain by the New Communist Party is the only way forward.

**John Maryon**  
Suffolk

### Dear Friends

I just had to share with you this news today – after years of campaigning, with sustained actions by PSC branches, PUMA has been forced to end its sponsorship of the Israel Football Association (IFA).

PSC played a vital role, leading the Boycott PUMA campaign in Britain. PSC branches organised regular protests and pickets at PUMA stores and stockists, informing tens of thousands of potential customers about PUMA's support for Israel's colonisation of Palestinian land.

PSC branches ran campaigns in their local areas, causing PUMA to lose lucrative contracts. For example, in 2020, Luton PSC ran a successful campaign that led to Luton Town FC dropping PUMA as its kit supplier.

Today's news shows us that effective, targeted campaigning works! But

*continued on page 9...*

## Diary

### Check the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Stop the War Coalition websites for emergency Gaza protests across the country.

#### SAT 16 DEC

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.

#### MON 18 DEC

Stand Up to Racism: UN International Migrants Day: Picket. 17:30, Home Office, Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

#### 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.

#### TUE 9 JAN 2024

Marx Memorial Library: Marxism, the State and Revolution. Eight week online course. Register on MML website.

#### SAT 13 JAN

Radical Options for Scotland and Europe: Conference. 11:00–13:00. Unite HQ, 145–165 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 4RZ.

#### WED 17 JAN

Anglia Ruskin University: Sir Christopher Pisarides on Automation and its impact on the labour market. 18:00–19:00. Online event. Book on Eventbrite.

#### SAT 20 JAN

Marx Memorial Library: Lenin in Britain: Symposium to Commemorate the centenary of Lenin's death 1924–2024. 11:00. Hybrid meeting. Book on MML website.

#### THUR 25 JAN

Scottish CND: Peace Poetry Night. The Renfield Centre, Kirk Lounge, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JP.

#### SAT 27 JAN

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Conference 2024. 10:00. Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD.

#### THUR 8 FEB

Marx Memorial Library: Book launch, David Lane's *Global Neo-liberal Capitalism and the Alternatives: from social democracy to state capitalism*. 19:00. Hybrid event. Register on MML website.

#### SAT 24 FEB

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: AGM 9:30–16:30. Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1 4RL.

#### SAT 2 MAR

Women Against Pit Closures: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Durham. Details TBC.

#### SAT 9 MAR

1984–5 Miners' Strike commemoration, Doncaster. Details TBC.

#### SUN 28 APRIL

Workers Memorial Day. See TUC and STUC websites for local events.

#### WED 1 MAY

International Workers Day. See TUC and STUC websites for local events.

#### SAT 18 MAY

Burford Levellers Day. 10:30–15:00. Burford, Oxfordshire OX18, starting at the Green by Warwick Hall.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday. You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@NCP.clara.net



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...continued from page 8

this win has taken the help of thousands of ordinary people, taking action and chipping in to keep the Boycott PUMA campaign going.

Unable to stop our protests, PUMA desperately tried to organise flashy events to improve its reputation. But we didn't let PUMA hide, every time, we were there to protest outside the venue. But it took time, sustained co-ordination and funding – only possible with support from people like you.

By forcing PUMA to end its sponsorship of the IFA, we've sent all corporations a powerful message: if you choose to be complicit in Israeli apartheid, you will face the strength of the solidarity movement. And we will win.

**Ben Jamal**  
**Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

## Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

**As the political year draws to an end apart for the Scottish budget, which takes place next Tuesday, this is an appropriate time to take a look back at the year's political events.**

In some respects Scottish politics can be summed up in two images. The first was of the contenders for the SNP leadership moments before the results were publicly declared. One was smiling and the other glum, but in this case the loser was the smiling one. The other was the spectacle of a police cordon around the house of the former First Minister as they searched for clues to the £600,000 missing from SNP accounts. Adverse comment has been made at the slow progress in the investigation that has yet to see any charges brought. But on a more positive note, the SNP were able to find a Manchester-based accountancy firm to handle its accounts after no Scottish firm would touch them.

The surprise resignation of Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister was of course the event of the year. This was caused by her failure to raise support for independence by more than 0.9 per cent in eight years, disclosures about the SNP's internal financial affairs, and by her Gender Recognition Reform Act (Scotland) that passed at Holyrood just before last Christmas despite the unprecedented action of nine SNP MSPs rebelling against it. One clause in particular was to cause particular trouble: that of allowing male sex offenders into female prisons by them

simply taking advantage of the Act's purpose.

The Act was refused the Royal Assent on the grounds in improperly conflicted with existing UK laws. Despite opposition from many of its members, the SNP at the behest of the Greens, continued to fight for it in the courts, despite lawyers being almost united against it. At the time of typing the Edinburgh-based Court of Session ruled the Westminster veto was perfectly legal, and it was unclear whether the SNP would appeal to the Supreme Court or give up in despair. On the whole it was not the best issue around which to rally the Scottish nation against the "evil Westminster Tories" as the measure is extremely unpopular with the voters at large.

### Factional bloodbath

The contest to find a replacement for Sturgeon was marked by allegations of hustings meetings being stuffed with Humza Yousaf's supporters and of SNP staff members doing most of the campaigning on his behalf. The SNP establishment's chosen son's narrow victory was followed by the formation of a new Cabinet of former Sturgeon loyalists, which ignored Lyndon Johnson's precept that it was best to have your opponents in the tent pissing out rather than the opposite. Thus a lot of senior nationalists no longer felt the need to toe the line. But Yousaf should be grateful to Alex Salmond for setting up the Alba Party, which has become a magnet for many of SNP dissidents.

October was a particularly bad month for the SNP. Two SNP parliamentarians departed in opposite directions. Exiting stage right was West-

minster MP Liz Cameron who, after battles with her constituency and other MPs, surprisingly joined the Tories of all people. Going in another direction was the failed leadership candidate Ash Regan MSP who defected to Salmond's Alba Party.

These defections came after the Rutherglen & West Hamilton by election, where Labour romped home after the SNP's Westminster MP was unseated for treating the COVID-19 rules as casually as Boris Johnson. Several Westminster MPs including former leader Ian Blackford demonstrated their confidence in Yousaf's leadership by announcing they are standing down while another colourful SNP MP, Angus MacNeil, who was temporarily suspended, refused to accept the whip after the suspension period and now sits as an Independent.

These losses were paralleled in the year's nine council by-elections: Labour took four seats off the SNP, the Liberal Democrats held one and lost another to an Independent, and the Tories won two from the SNP. Finally, in one case the daughter of an Independent succeeded her father who formerly stood under the same label. The SNP lost their minority control of North Lanarkshire Council to Labour due to defecting councillors, and in Dumfries & Galloway minority SNP control was ceded to the Tories after a falling out with their former coalition partners.

The hold that the SNP's coalition partners the Greens have on the party is wearing thin. Green opposition to the oil and gas industries, which were to be the basis of an independent Scottish economy and presently the source of 196,000 jobs in Scotland,

annoys many. The failed bottle return scheme, botched up by a Green minister, aborted plans to ban fishing in huge swathes of the Scottish coast, and their opposition to improving vital roads among others has added to the declining membership numbers.

But public opinion, if the pollsters are anything to go by, shows the nationalists still ahead of the unionists although short of the decisive majority they need to demand a new independence referendum. Despite all of the set-backs in the year the Scottish nationalists are streets ahead of the Scottish Labour Party in the latest Ipsos Mori survey that gave the SNP a 10 point lead over Labour. It also showed that amongst those who would vote in a referendum, 54 per cent would vote Yes in an immediate referendum, while 46 per cent said they would vote No.

### SNP at Work

As regards the matters that the SNP government actually governs, successes are hard to find. The long-running ferries saga continued its stately progress. The cost of the two huge unbuilt ferries at the Port Glasgow Ferguson Marine yard, commissioned in 2014 for £90 million, rose in the course of 2023 from £350 to £600 million, with completion dates receding into an ever more uncertain distant future. At the same time breakdowns of the existing ancient ferries became ever more frequent, seriously disrupting life in the Western islands. The recent news that much-needed, planned replacement vessels would not be forthcoming for the foreseeable future will only make things worse.

Education standards have declined so much

that the SNP have stopped contributing figures to the OCED's international comparisons. Even if pupils are not learning their ABCs, primary pupils have been developing practical skills such as smuggling knives into school to the horror of teaching unions.

Local government has also not fared well at the hands of the SNP. Even loyal SNP councillors complain about underfunding and in the field of social care are at risk of losing yet more powers from SNP under delayed legislation to create an alleged National Care Service – which seems to be largely a smokescreen for privatisation.

The Scottish National Investment Bank, which was hailed as the means of transforming the Scottish economy, still has no CEO since the last one resigned at the start of 2022, which makes one wonder why no one is touching it with a barge-pole. Scottish lawyers have taken the same view about SNP plans to abolish juries in rape trials. 2023 also revealed that under SNP administration the decennial census, which was postponed from 2021 to 2022 allegedly because of COVID-19 had the worse response rate in the UK at 89 per cent, even with an extra month.

We conclude with two uplifting points about Scottish politics. Early 2023 saw the Scottish Parliament come first a hard-fought worldwide competition. It secured the "World's Ugliest Building" award from *Buildworld*, a sign that the £400 million building was money well spent. In September the new Social Security Scotland agency made important changes in providing benefits more humanely: it stopped using brown envelopes and replaced them with friendlier white ones.



# Liverpool calls for justice for Palestine!

by Peter Hendy

Protesters marched through the busy streets of Liverpool to Derby Square following a rally at the Metropolitan Cathedral on Saturday. The rain had lashed down and the wind howled in from the Irish Sea but ceased as the rally began. Undeterred, the people of Liverpool gathered to demonstrate their support for the Palestinian people and demand “Justice for Palestine!”.

Over 17,000 Palestinians have died and many more have been wounded as the Zionist war machine moves through the devastation and rubble of Gaza. Destroying and obliterating anything in its path including hospitals, mosques and schools.

The march was organised jointly by Liverpool Friends of Palestine (LFP), Merseyside Pensioners Association, Scousers for Palestine, and the For the Many campaign. LFP have campaigned for decades against Israeli aggression in the Occupied Territories.

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Len McCluskey, the former General Secretary of Unite who retired in 2021, were the main speakers. Despite leadership shortcomings, Corbyn has always been outspoken, courageous and defiant in demonstrating international solidarity and in campaigning against imperialist wars.

Corbyn, who was warmly greeted, told of

the continuing occupation of the West Bank where the situation gets worse. Some 600,000 settlers have taken over the most fertile lands and water supplies. He solemnly stated: “The killing has gone on...the killing of people with first world weapons...the killing of people with no method of defence whatsoever.” He strongly emphasised a need for justice, to promote the spirit of internationalism and to unite millions of progressive forces around the world.

Former Liverpool docker and union firebrand McCluskey declared: “The establishment and media are conducting a campaign to bully people into si-

lence. How dare they do it!” Referring to how newspapers and the TV conflate criticism of the Israeli Government with anti-Semitism, he angrily stated: “People here have been fighting anti-Semitism for decades! I was on the streets of Liverpool as a young lad fighting the National Front!”

“How dare they tell us we are anti-Semitic for challenging the disgraceful behaviour of the Israeli Government!”

Len powerfully rebuked the Israeli government for persistently breaking international laws for decades while its lackeys hypocritically drone on about the value of law. He said: “We will not be silenced! We will not be bullied!”

McCluskey strongly admonished the US and UK Governments for vetoing the UN vote for a ceasefire describing their actions as “fucking outrageous!”.

McCluskey proceeded to savagely attack Starmer whom he called “a supposed human rights lawyer” for supporting the blockade to stop humanitarian aid to Gaza. “What sort of man is he? He’s a disgrace!”

Haneen, from Scousers for Palestine, stated that a \$1 billion deal with BP has been struck by a company to exploit oil and gas fields in Gaza. Rishi Sunak’s wife is a shareholder, and the greedy couple are set to gain millions in profits from the blood of dead

Palestinian children. She spoke of the renowned bravery of the Palestinian people passionately declaring: “Palestinians fight like heroes –but let me tell you, heroes fight like Palestinians!”

Sarah Weiner (University and College Union) stated that she was Jewish but an anti-Zionist, as were all her Jewish friends. Sarah spoke of her solidarity with the Palestinian people and that: “It is not a war... it is genocide...when one side has the military hardware supplied by the UK and US and the other doesn’t...that is not a war...it is a genocide.”

Disappointingly, but not surprising, was the absence of local Labour MPs, thereby demonstrating their yellow and venal nature, lacking the courage to stand up to Starmer’s pro-Israeli dictats.

Palestinian flags and banners were proudly held aloft proclaiming support for the Palestinian Arabs against the Zionist regime. Slogans declaring political and moral outrage at the crimes being perpetrated as Gaza is systematically destroyed and turned to dust. Written on pieces of cardboard and even the back of a fruit box, such as: “How many more war crimes? When will our leaders stop being cowards? Ceasefire Now!”

“Have you noticed that Israel doesn’t stop bombing Gaza on the Sabbath!” and “Stop the Genocide!” The chanting was relentless, demonstrating the passion and anger of those marching. “Ceasefire Now! Ceasefire Now! Ceasefire Now! Ceasefire Now!”, “1, 2, 3, 4! Occupation

no more! 5, 6, 7, 8! Israel is a terrorist state!” and aimed at Christmas shoppers: “While you are shopping! Israeli bombs are dropping! While you are buying! Palestinian children are dying!”

The global anti-imperialist struggle involves supporting all those people experiencing imperialist aggression. The International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) campaign leaflets were distributed to highlight the similarities of both conflicts involving racism and ethnic cleansing of Russians and Palestinians supported by US imperialism and its western lackeys. To promote the need for a unified struggle against imperialism and to counter the endless lies and propaganda. To demonstrate our solidarity and support for both the people of the Donbas and Palestinian people. Demanding that the perpetrators of atrocities in both conflicts must be punished for their abhorrent crimes against humanity.

We demand a permanent ceasefire recognising that a peaceful settlement can only be based on the restoration of legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs.



• A warm welcome for Jeremy Corbyn.

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# Kissinger and the class he served

by John Catalinotto

When a leading political figure of US imperialism, someone hated by hundreds of millions of people, if not billions, dies – as Henry Kissinger did on 29<sup>th</sup> November – writing an analysis of their role presents a challenge. This challenge does not regard repeating the details of this individual’s life. It’s in explaining the relation between Kissinger and the class and system that he served, the billionaire Western ruling class and world imperialism, led by the USA.

Anyone reading comments in the major corporate media following Kissinger’s death could sense that challenge. On his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday last May the media treated Kissinger as a major US statesman and political intellectual, with minimal criticism. After he died, however, and could no longer respond, many analysts admitted that much of the world considers him a top war criminal.

The world has good reason: While a top official of the US government, Kissinger provided the intellectual framework for mass murders in Bangladesh and the carpet bombing of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He gave a green light to the Indonesian military dictatorship to slaughter 20 per cent of the population of East Timor. Decisions he helped make and carried out killed millions of people in Asia.

Kissinger also helped plan pro-fascist military coups in Chile and Argentina. Or as *Workers World* wrote last spring: “To expand the interests of a tiny class of



billionaires, Kissinger provided the strategy for carrying out war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

## Kissinger and the imperialists

By commenting on a major opinion piece in the New York Times – and there were similar ones elsewhere in the corporate media – we can answer the question of the relationship between Kissinger and the class he served.

Ben Rhodes, a former national security adviser during the Barack Obama administration, wrote a lead opinion piece in the 1<sup>st</sup> December print edition of the *New York Times* – the edition containing five pages of text for Kissinger’s news obituary. In an additional three-quarters of a page, Rhodes makes an argument, highlighted in a call-out quote, that Kissinger was “a practitioner of a foreign policy at odds with US concepts of human rights and international law”.

Rhodes adds: “Over the decades, our [the US] story about democracy has come to ring hollow

to a growing number of people who can point to the places where our actions drained our words of meaning and ‘democracy’ just sounded like an extension of American interests.” Indeed.

Rhodes writes that Kissinger, by his actions and ideology, undermined the US story, what Marxists more accurately call the myth of US democracy. Rhodes omits explaining that the largest propaganda machine in human history sells this myth along with the illusion that everyone in the USA has access to an upper-middle-class standard of living or more.

In brief, Rhodes argues that by coddling obvious dictators and killers and by committing war crimes himself, Kissinger has destroyed the credibility of the US story of democracy. Without this myth, US foreign policy has less worldwide support and is weaker.

In reality, US class society favours the wealthy, the capitalists, against all working people, and its ruling billionaires rob the resources of the people of the planet. This system depends on its ideological dom-

ination and its ability to divide the working class using racism, misogyny and anything that keeps them from uniting against the rich.

## Kissinger understood his bosses

Where Rhodes’s argument is weakest is where it overestimates the wisdom and charity of the US imperialist ruling class. Judging by how he acted advising Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, Kissinger had a lower estimation.

The US ruling class, with few exceptions, mistrusts politicians and generals who show the capability of thinking, of appreciating the many facets of subtle relations of human society. They mock intellectuals, real or self-appointed. They apparently prefer leaders who decide without thinking, who never read books and who will commit any crime in the interest of the ruling class.

If the profits for this quarter fail to gain 50 per cent over last quarter, the capitalists want to know why, and they want those profits increased,

no matter how many human lives have to be sacrificed, no matter how much of the Earth is laid waste. Kissinger had to know that, and his was a hired brain in their service that wanted to stay hired. Someone too dedicated to democracy, human rights and international law was less likely to keep that job.

If you look up Ben Rhodes with a search engine, you read that as deputy secretary he played a role in two significant foreign accords during the Obama administration. One was the joint pact involving

relieving the sanctions against Iran in exchange for that country’s not building nuclear weapons. The other was to slowly lift the blockade against Cuba in return for more access to Cuba’s economy, more contact with dissidents, that is, counter-revolutionary Cubans.

Both these pacts, while easing international tensions and relieving the lives of millions of Iranians and Cubans, represented another strategy that might expand imperialist interests in the long term. But it wasn’t a path that pleased the ruling class.

Donald Trump was elected and quickly sabotaged both pacts. His is a more accurate face for the US imperialist ruling class. Throughout his adult life, Kissinger played to that face.

His ruthless policies were no anomalies. They expressed the short-sighted avarice of the US billionaire class and the drive of capitalism towards war. Not only is Kissinger a war criminal, so is the class he served.

*Workers World (USA)*

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# Facing the threat from climate change

by María Josefina Arce

Climate change is a potential danger to the health and well-being of humanity. This is reaffirmed by research released at COP28 – the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which has just closed in Dubai, the largest city in the United Arab Emirates.

Heat-waves, droughts, hurricanes and rising sea levels associated with this problem are already having a negative effect on the health of millions of people in the world.

According to studies, among the impacts already recorded are an increase in respiratory and vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, and

malnutrition.

Vanessa Kerry, first special envoy of the director general of the World Health Organization for Climate Change and Health, stated in Dubai that more than three billion people in the world are vulnerable to the impacts

of global warming.

She pointed out that currently one out of every four deaths on the planet is due to preventable environmental causes, while eight million people die every year due to air pollution, a situation that has worsened due to the increase in tem-

peratures.

And the forecasts are not at all encouraging. In the coming decades, climate change will cause more than 250,000 additional deaths per year.

Added to this is the challenge that this problem represents for health cen-

tres around the world. It is imperative that these facilities are safe and able to keep functioning during and after disasters.

PAHO, the Pan American Health Organisation, has stated that in the Americas, 67 per cent of healthcare institutions are

located in disaster-prone areas.

Health authorities have warned that globally only about 0.5 per cent of multilateral climate finance has been allocated to health projects.

In Dubai, a significant step was taken to make this challenge visible. Health finally made it onto the climate change agenda and was included in the discussions. For the first time at a summit of this nature, a day was dedicated to health.

COP28 is already showing progress with the signing by more than 120 nations of the Declaration on Climate and Health, which focuses on gathering support, promoting actions and mobilising funds to improve the resilience of health system.

*Radio Havana Cuba*



# Zelensky begs for cash as unrest grows

by Andrei Degalin

**Ukraine is on the brink of a coup as Zelensky begs for more dollars from the Americans.**

Nearly two years since the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict in February 2022, the Kiev regime finds itself dependent on financial and military assistance from its Western sponsors.

With Ukraine's economy in tatters, the country's leadership now struggles to find the money it desper-

ately needs amid the ongoing conflict with Russia, as political powers in the USA and the EU become increasingly reluctant to waste their money on Kiev's military escapades.

Ukraine's President Vladimir Zelensky arrived in Washington this week to plead before the US Congress for more military and financial help, essentially trying to convince the US legislators that spending another few tens of billions of dollars on satisfying Kiev's war effort is a good

idea.

While the fate of the next US package to Ukraine currently hangs in the balance amid the Congressional debates between Democrats and Republicans, renowned political commentator and economist Professor Rodney Shakespeare has suggested that "elements in the USA's political structure" apparently hope to convince Ukraine to sue for peace by delaying this funding.

Prof Shakespeare did not seem to think highly

of this tactic, however, arguing that "Ukraine (like the West, having broken all agreements with Russia) has nothing with which to negotiate".

"Ukraine does not understand this and neither does the West. At present, both Ukraine and the West think that there is some sort of military stalemate." But now, he says, "there is NO stalemate – only the continuing and disastrous loss of Ukraine's manhood (and apparently, even its pregnant women)", apparently refer-

ring to Kiev's recent efforts to press-gang women into military service.

As the reality of the "disastrous situation" Ukraine currently finds itself in becomes apparent, "a coup in Kiev is becoming likely", he said, adding that the recent death of a top Ukrainian military officer who was "accidentally" killed by a hand grenade while celebrating his birthday, as well as the poisoning of the wife of the country's spy chief, "all point in the

same direction".

"Ukraine will stagger on for a little while but a coup and recognition of the disastrous military situation are likely to make irrelevant the terms for allocating (or not) new funds and make much more relevant the overall outcome of the war."

He also pointed out that in its current state, Ukraine "will soon collapse" if the flow of money from Kiev's foreign sponsors were to cease.

*Sputnik*