

# Stop arming Israel! Stop Israeli terror!

by our Arab Affairs  
correspondent

**The Houthi Yemeni government has vowed to step up its blockade against Israeli and Anglo-American shipping in the Red Sea following further attacks on their missile bases by Anglo-American warplanes this week. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that in order to resolve the crisis in the Middle East the USA must stop its hostilities and stop vetoing United Nations ceasefire resolutions. The Israelis continue their merciless attacks on civilian targets in the Gaza Strip and Oxfam has condemned deadly attacks on two warehouses in an area the Israeli army has designated as a "safe zone".**

The Yemenis are now launching rocket attacks on targets inside Israel – part of a larger Arab resistance campaign aimed at forcing the Zionist regime and its supporters to end the ongoing aggression on Gaza. Resistance groups in Iraq have launched dozens of attacks on US military personnel in Iraq and Syria to force Washington to end its support from Israel's

indiscriminate killing of the Palestinians.

Namibia, meanwhile, has called on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to unite towards demanding an end to the Israel's ongoing genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. The call, made at the NAM summit in Uganda, follows the support of quite a number of member states for the South African action against Israel at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

On Sunday, the Israelis rejected a Hamas proposal to end the war and release more than 100 captives held by the Palestinian resistance movement in exchange for a withdrawal of Israeli forces, the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and recognition of the Hamas-led government

in Gaza. But inside Israel calls for a realistic response to the Palestinian demands are growing on the street and even in the corridors of power in Tel Aviv and Washington.

This week Hamas condemned the deliberate targeting of Gaza's hospitals by Israel as a war crime, urging the international community to take immediate action to stop it. The World Health Organization said most of the Palestinian Arab enclave's 36 hospitals have been damaged by Israeli bombing. Only 15 are partially functioning and those are operating at up to three times their capacity, without adequate fuel or medical supplies, it says.

Hamas called on the United Nations and other international bodies to take

immediate action to halt Israeli attacks on medical centres in the southern city of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. Israeli tanks were firing directly at the upper floors of the specialised surgery building at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis and blockading and targeting other hospitals in southern Gaza, claiming that Hamas fighters operate in and around these places. Hamas has denied the allegations. At Khan Younis's main hospital, the biggest still functioning in the Gaza Strip, bodies were being buried on the grounds because it was unsafe to go out to the cemetery.

In Gaza, the death toll has risen to more than 25,500, predominantly comprising women and children. But despite its deadly and destructive campaign Israel

has so far failed to achieve its main goals in the onslaught, namely destroying Hamas and securing the release of its captives through military means.

While the Zionists try to brush off the genocide claims at the international court in the Netherlands and increasing diplomatic pressure to end the fighting, they cannot ignore the fact that the Palestinian resistance is inflicting heavy losses on the Israeli invaders.

Last week Israel suffered its biggest daily loss in the current campaign. Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed including 21 trapped inside buildings hit by Palestinian anti-tank missiles that triggered a devastating explosion that caused the collapse of two blocks in central Gaza.

TELEGRAM: T.ME/PALESTINERESIST

## WHO ARE THEY?

The military wing of Fatah, established during the Second Intifada. Although the group is often referred to as the military wing of Fatah, it operates independently of Fatah's central leadership.

## NOTABLE FIGURES:

Marwan Barghouti, Zakaria Zubeidi, martyrs Raed Al-Karmi, and Dr. Thabet Thabet.

## WHERE ARE THEY MOST ACTIVE?

Across West Bank & Gaza. Formations: Nablus Brigade, Balata Brigade (Youth of Revenge and Liberation), Burqin Groups (joint with PIJ), Jenin (Wasp's Nest) Tulkarem Rapid Response, Beit Ummar the Loyal Brigade, Samu' Brigade.

## ARSENAL

IEDs, RPGs, small arms, short-range rockets, mortars.

*The Brigades have carried out a number of major operations, such as the Wadi Al-Haramiya operation, and often as joint attacks with other factions. The group persists despite official orders from Fatah to lay down arms. Its activity has significantly increased in recent years.*



**AL-AQSA MARTYRS' BRIGADES**

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## FUND

The fighting fund rose by a further £452 this week pushing the running total to £1,348. This leaves us with £2,152 to raise by the end of January to hit our £3,500 target for the month. And we certainly do need it to guarantee the survival of our press and to build the circulation of the *New Worker* that will enable us to reach out to the millions now demanding an end to the war in Gaza.

Peace, as always is the paramount issue for the class. Whether it's the Middle East, Ukraine or the Korean peninsula the enemy is global imperialism – led, as always, by the USA. Willing tools, such as the Zionists, or indeed the Sunak government, can always be counted on to do the bidding of Washington. But mass pressure on the street and in the labour movement can stop them.

We are fighting for a socialist society where there are no slums, poverty or racism. A society where there are no classes, no exploiters, no bigotry and no war. A new and better world – the world Marx and Engels predicted, and a world that will surely come to pass. It is already being built in the socialist countries of today. It is being fought for in every continent and every country.

Keep up the fight for peace and socialism and above all 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>

# THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## Fanning the flames

The shameful decision of the Sunak government to send the RAF in to bomb Yemen in support of American offensive against the defiant Arab republic has done nothing for the merchant shipping the imperialists claim to be protecting. The Houthi government that controls most of the country have stepped-up their blockade that's closed the Red Sea to all Israeli shipping. And the US campaign, ludicrously called "Operation Prosperity Guardian", has now put the Red Sea off limits to British and American vessels as well.

Although crawling to the Americans is second nature to Conservative and Labour leaders it's a different ball game in Europe. Franco-German imperialism wants to sit this one out and the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrel says that the bloc has no intention to send warships to the US naval mission in the Red Sea.

"This bloc does not intend to escalate the conflict with the Yemeni army, we must do everything possible to ensure freedom of navigation, but at the same time avoid escalation," Borrel said.

The EU wants to distance itself from Anglo-American aggression to guarantee the continued supply of oil and gas from Qatar and the other oil kingdoms of the Persian Gulf, which supply most of the continent with its energy needs these days. Qatar, which has long supported the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, has warned that the escalation of the crisis in the Red Sea could force shipping to take a much longer and more expensive diversion via South Africa that would seriously impact on LNG [liquid natural gas] cargoes to Europe.

It will also affect the delivery of supplies from the Far East to Europe. Tesla has announced that due to the auto-parts flow disruption caused by transportation delays, it will stop its production in its Gigafactory in Berlin. Volvo, the now Chinese-owned car manufacturer, has suspended production at its plant in Ghent, Belgium, due to delays in parts deliveries.

The Houthi leaders have repeatedly said that their objective is to stop the slaughter in Gaza. Their blockade will end when the Israelis cease-fire. One call to Tel Aviv from the White House would do the trick, If the Biden administration had any sense it would it now.

## Preparing for Power?

**The Tory government is on its last legs. Playing the race card over the refugee crisis has done nothing to boost their flagging fortunes. The pundits say Sunak will go for an autumn general election. The opinion polls put Labour streets ahead of the Tories. The media tell us Labour is preparing for power and Starmer is already writing the next King's Speech. But what is Labour preparing us for?**

Absolutely nothing if anything the Labour leadership says is anything to go by these days. No national mass housing plans. No re-nationalisation of the railways or the energy and water utilities. No major increase in public investment in education or the health service. Doing whatever the Americans want – well that goes without saying.

It difficult to see where Labour actually differs from the Conservatives on most issues – and this is what Starmer wants. Starmer's spent most of his time knifing Corbyn in the back and driving the former Labour leader's supporters out of the party. The Labour leader clearly thinks this is the key to victory at the next general election.

But a manifesto that consists entirely of vacuous platitudes will do nothing to mobilise working people to vote Labour – and if Labour can't get their vote out then the Tories will win by default.

# Shapps: the rants and raves of an armchair general

by Mark Blacklock

**Last week Defence Secretary Grant Shapps gave an intemperate speech in London about the UK's current defence posture. His first public pronouncement since he took up his post purported to provide an overview of the needs of the country's armed forces, how they can protect the nation's interests and prosecute Britain's foreign policy objectives, and how the government will achieve this.**

It painted a picture of the UK as a bulwark to foreign military challenges, including China, and it painted China and other nations as existential threats to Britain and its way of life. Some of the language used echoed the belligerent rhetoric of the Cold War – and some of it was plain alarmist.

Most startlingly, Shapps declared that in five years the UK could be at war with China, Russia, Iran and North Korea – all at the same time. He said the world is moving from a post-war environment to a "pre-war" environment. He disparaged those nations as "unstable and irrational" and that they "have the intent to target us". He also said: "Old enemies are reanimated. New foes are taking shape. Battle lines are being redrawn." This is utterly reckless.

Analysis of the more than 3,000-word speech, however, reveals that it is working at three levels.

Firstly, the war mentality is mobilised to create in the minds of the British public the imagined threat of a phantom foe, or foes. As part of this, Shapps presents the current government in which he serves as being competent and alive to the threat (and therefore best placed to confront it).

Secondly, it adheres slavishly to the policy ambitions of the USA, whether it be supporting Ukraine against Russia (at a cost of £7 billion), Israel in Gaza, or endorsing

the confrontational US activities in and around the "Indo-Pacific" and the Red Sea, to name only a few. Where Washington leads, London follows, like a loyal puppy.

Thirdly, and closely related to the first theme, running through his tapestry of fiction is a persistent thread of personal interest, relating to the forthcoming general election. The speech is an unsophisticated, cynical piece of electioneering.

In addition to using the age-old scare tactic of creating an imaginary threat, the speech contains rousing references to both the nation and the government that supposedly serves it. But it also deliberately conflates these with the Conservative Party of which Shapps and his Cabinet colleagues are members, and which is singled out for praise. Opposition parties are deemed "unpatriotic".

He boasts of increased defence spending – £50 billion per year, more than ever before. He points out that the UK is a significant player in NATO, which is "bigger than ever", and that the UK is making its largest deployment since the end of the Cold War, with 20,000 personnel committed to the forthcoming 'Steadfast Defender' exercise. He pompously declares: "The future of the world order is at stake."

In reality, what is at stake is the job to which he is clinging by his fingernails. The Tory government is predicted by a recent poll to lose spectacularly at the next election, which will almost certainly be this year. What this speech

amounts to is a shameless piece of party political campaigning.

It is shocking that a senior government minister can talk so irresponsibly. He is prepared to crank-up the tensions and temperature with talk of war with China and others not for patriotic purposes but for self-serving party advantage. War-mongering as an election tactic is about as politically cynical as you can get.

It's a piece of unsophisticated, opportunistic tub-thumping, so obvious and unsubtle he should be embarrassed.

Shapps is right, of course, to be worried about job security. In the year leading up to his current job, he had held four other Cabinet posts in just one year (one for only six days). He is the classic Jack-of-all-trades but Master-of-none. Sounding off like the poorly informed and misguided civilian that he is, Shapps is performing like the very worst of armchair generals, trotting out that old imperialist lie that attack may be the best form of defence.

In these circumstances, it's reasonable to feel sorry for the personnel serving in Britain's armed forces. Impeccably professional, among the best trained and one of the most highly competent militaries in the world, their single most serious vulnerability must be the low-grade quality of their political masters. As war-monger, Shapps says: "The world is becoming more dangerous." If it is, it's because people like him are making it so.

Global Times



# Workers' Notes

## Musical chairs

by New Worker correspondent

**Another group of workers have announced they are going on strike in protest at their employer planning to sack them and re-employ some for only six months of the year and leaving others even worse off having to rely on ad-hoc freelance work. Their unions will be holding a picket outside their workplace in central London on Tuesday before strike action begins on Thursday.**

The workers in question are members of the Musicians' Union (MU) and actors' union Equity who work at the English National Opera (ENO). The specifics of the protest are that management are axing 19 posts in the orchestra and making the orchestra and music staff part-time.

After it was announced that over 90 per cent of MU members at the ENO voted yes to full strike action, Naomi Pohl, General Secretary of the MU, said: "This is a historic moment for the Musicians' Union and the UK's orchestra sector – the first time we've been on strike since 1980. This is a sign of extremely difficult times for the orchestral sector and opera and ballet in particular."

She added that: "This has been caused by underfunding of the proposed move to Manchester. Management has decided to cut our members down to six months of work per year and this risks a wonderful, talented and specialist orchestra dissipating. It is heartbreaking to see the impact on the individuals affected." The MU points out that "there is no guarantee how much work or what type of work there will be for our members".

Violinist and local MU Steward at the ENO Glen Sheldon added: "It is very rare for musicians to consider strike action – their whole purpose in life is to bring to the public wonderful music at the highest standard. It simply cannot be right for a publicly funded opera company to consider functioning with a

by New Worker correspondent

**NCP leader Andy Brooks joined activists protesting in the centre of London in support of the anti-fascist resistance in Ukraine.**

The protest, organised by International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS), called for an end to the reign of terror being conducted by the Zelensky regime by forces on which the British government has spent £12 billion on training and arms supplies.

A minute's silence was held at the protest, opposite the prime minister's residence in Downing Street, in memory of Chilean-American journalist Gonzalo Lira and all the other victims of the Banderite inquisition in Ukraine.

IUAFS members have participated in every protest since 7<sup>th</sup> October in solidarity with the people of Palestine and the Gaza Strip. The same Western

half-time orchestra but full-time management."

Jo Laverty, the MU's National Organiser for Orchestras, complained that: "Our members at ENO are devastated to be having to consider this level of action but their personal and professional lives are being devastated by these decisions. We know that some members are having to sell their homes and make hugely impactful life decisions without a certain future about their work for ENO."

The ENO was previously threatened with total closure. It fended this off with Government and Arts Council England plans to move out of London to spread culture beyond the M25. The MU say the move to Manchester is unnecessary because that city already has facilities as an opera house. To rub salt into the wound, the ENO's plans for Manchester are still vague, the MU complains.

The MU's main demands at the ENO are a seven-month contract, first refusal on work outside London, equal contracts for orchestral members and equal total hours available to all. Needless to say, the upper reaches of ENO management are not suffering any job or hours cuts.

## End fascist terror in Ukraine



governments who have supported the Ukraine regime with billions in weapons and money have done nothing to stop Israel committing open genocide in Gaza, with hospitals and civilians deliberately targeted and 9,000

children killed. In fact Britain and the USA are continuing to send weapons to Israel, and while they and the EU condemned recent Russian missile strikes in Ukraine, they have failed to declare that Israel is committing

genocide or to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire. The entire world is witness to Israel's war crimes, and to the hypocrisy of the Western governments who support, arm and finance both Ukraine and Israel.

The other union involved, Equity, voted unanimously for action. Chorus member and Equity rep Ronald Nairne said: "It gives me no pleasure to vote for strike action – I joined the ENO Chorus to sing, and to share opera with as many people as possible. Management's proposals to fire-and-rehire me and my colleagues with a 40 per cent salary cut and worsened working conditions will make remaining in the chorus unsustainable for many."

In addition to the MU demands, Equity are also seeking an annual vocal maintenance payment to cover singing lessons, coaching and support with vocal health when the chorus are not working on ENO shows.

Early last year at the nearby Royal Opera House the orchestra voted for industrial action which brought management to offer an improved deal, a fact that offers hope to workers at the ENO.

All this might seem a rather specialist matter, but fire-and-rehire battles are all too common in other businesses so a positive outcome would be welcome beyond the immediate issues. An annual health check to keep performers up to scratch is not too much to ask for.

Not everybody who performs

on stage lives the life of Reilly. For every household name living in a mansion house there will be a hundred others flat-sharing. A few weeks ago the MU was advising would-be musicians that steady employment could be sought in an area of the music business where it cannot organise: the British armed forces.

Late last year the MU conducted a census of its members which revealed that the average musician earns just £20,000 per year, the same as a decade ago, which means a very real fall. At least most get paid. Some musicians are given the opportunity of working for the sheer love of it by publicans and are graciously allowed to keep any money donated by thirsty drinkers.

It was a business hard hit by the pandemic. The 34,500-strong and 130-year-old union is one of the few expanding unions in Britain.

New technology is an especially urgent issue for musicians. Their product can be endlessly repeated. While this has been the case since the time when Thomas Edison first recorded himself saying "Mary had a little lamb", it has become increasingly difficult for musicians to be rewarded for their work after the initial

payment.

The MU is anxious that musicians get a fairer share of the profits from music streaming, which means anyone with a mobile can be supplied with endless music anywhere anytime with the profits going anywhere but to actual musicians.

Unsurprisingly, this is not a major issue with the Government's Department of Culture Media and Sport. The MU complains that while there have been signs that record labels and online platforms have recently announced new revenue distribution policies that claim to be "artist centric", the MU and other organisations have not been consulted and not much redistribution has been seen.

The progress that has been made will only apply to new recordings and won't compensate musicians who performed on the millions of UK recordings already in existence and being streamed daily. It is not only multinational companies that want to recycle other peoples' work. The Manchester-based Northern Ballet plans to use recorded rather than live music on their tours this year. The MU has launched a campaign to prevent

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this from happening and keep orchestra members in a job. This involved demonstrations in both Nottingham and Newcastle. With what effect remains to be seen.

One notable recent feather in the MU's cap was at the BBC, where it played an important role in mobilising the widespread campaign to save the BBC Singers from closure. Efforts to prevent a 20 per cent reduction in jobs at the BBC's three English-based orchestras announced at the same time are continuing. Over in the Wales the MU is fighting against cuts to the country's national opera company which are being imposed by the arts council because there are no operas in the Welsh language.

The MU actually has a seat on the Labour Party's NEC, due to its union affiliation. That will endear them to the Government and the SNP administration in Edinburgh. The MU welcomed the fact that the last SNP budget boasted it was increasing expenditure on the arts by 100 per cent although the union complains that while the SNP have long been committed to all children having access to free music education "this hasn't been rolled out fully". What a surprise.

Getting money owed to musicians is often a struggle. Last year the MU's Recording & Broadcasting team secured over £1.84 million of income due to musi-

cians from recordings originally made under MU agreements. The MU claims this a success, but it is disgraceful that a union has to fight to secure such money rather than it being paid automatically.

Small specialist unions often provide advice and practical support for its members that the bigger unions do not. While many on the left correctly denounce unions for putting too much stress on cheap holiday offers, the MU's specialist insurance for musical instruments is not to be sniffed at. It also offers advice on getting musical instruments with ivory components through Canadian customs; again a comparatively small point, but that is the sort of practical advice which assists union members.

## In Academia also...

by New Worker correspondent

**As university staff have secured their pension rights, much of the industrial action in the education world seems to be taking place in the Further Education sector where, among other things, local government financial problems are aggravating problems of dreadful management.**

One such case is at the South Shields-based Tyne Coast College, which has five sites. Here

54 staff are at risk of redundancy. These potential cuts were announced by the principal, who informed staff that efficiencies must be made due to a "recognised national decline in higher education". One of the college's components, a sixth form college, was closed last year – however it has ambitious plans to build a new town-centre campus and sell off its main site for housing.

This comes before the conclusion of a long-running pay dispute and saw college authorities start individual consultations with affected staff. The main union, University College Union (UCU) has denounced the last point, saying it is against the law to ignore recognised unions in this manner.

UCU general secretary Jo Grady demanded that the individual consultations be stopped and said: "Coming so soon after strike action over low pay and the closure of an entire sixth form campus, this is a real kick in the teeth for hard-working staff at Tyne Coast College. Management has yet to provide any information to substantiate claims it has to sack staff and unless it starts engaging meaningfully in the consultation process the college is at risk of acting unlawfully."

She also made the obvious point that: "Our members have continued to give everything to their jobs and the education of our local communities. Being

told they are no longer wanted less than halfway through the academic year will not be a welcome message."

Down south in London another further education dispute, this time about pay and workload at the Capital City College Group (CCCG), is well underway. Eight days of strike action at the group's four campuses took place last week. Jo Grady pointed out that: "We have reached deals at 60 colleges, but CCCG is shamefully holding out and refusing to negotiate. It urgently needs to get back to the table, recognise that staff need decent pay, and settle this dispute." These disputes saw pay awards of up to 10 per cent, but CCCG refuses to play ball.

CCCG is the largest FE group in London with the City and Islington College, Westminster Kingsway College and the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London with an apprenticeship branch, Capital City College Training.

Negotiations broke down over CCCG's pay offer of between 4–6.5 per cent. UCU points out this is well below the bosses' Association of Colleges recommendation last September of a 6.5 per cent pay award for all from the start of the 2023/24 academic year.

The other bugbear is the workload and a maximum class size of 20–22 students as opposed to classes of up to 30 students.

They are also demanding an agreement of 36 teaching weeks per year.

This is not the first time in recent years that CCCG staff have taken strike action. Before the end of the 2021/22 academic year, staff then agreed to a nine per cent pay rise for those earning under £30,000 and six per cent for those earning between £30–45,000, beginning August 2022. Now UCU claim that: "Our members are being forced to take sustained strike action because CCCG would rather see its staff use foodbanks than make an acceptable offer."

These disputes take place against the background of elections for a new UCU NEC, with the incumbent General Secretary fighting to be returned for another term.

North of the border the main education union 's further education lecturers belonging to the Educational Institute of Scotland's Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) section have overwhelmingly for both Action Short of Strike (ASOS) and slightly less for strikes.

After the result, General Secretary Andrea Bradley put the boot in by saying: "College leaders have attempted to hide behind some of the most draconian anti-trade union laws in Europe, playing for time and forcing a re-ballot in the hope that lecturer resolve would weaken. Their tactics have failed, as this ballot result demonstrates clearly that Scotland's college lecturers remain determined to fight for a fair pay rise."

She added that: "Scotland's college lecturers should have received a pay rise in September 2022. Today, almost a year and a half later, our members are still waiting for college employers to deliver a fair pay offer. The only proposals to have come from employers come with so many strings attached – such as deep job cuts across the lecturer workforce – that the EIS and its members will never accept them."

As a result of last month's Scottish Budget the higher and further education is facing a massive £100 million cash-terms cut to higher and further education, so it looks as though the forthcoming battles will be tough ones.

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

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2004**

**"THE TRANSPORT Secretary is ignoring what every passenger and railway worker in Britain knows. The only sensible future for a well-planned national railway service is within the public sector."**

*This was the comment of Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT transport union at the announcement of Alistair Darling's comprehensive review of the way British railways are run.*

*The review was meant to end anomalies arising out of the way the Tories privatised the railways, splitting control of the tracks from running train services.*

*These anomalies include that up to four organisations must agree before a minor change in time-tabling can happen. And a decision to terminate a train part of the way through its route because of an accident can lead to a legal dispute.*

*The complexities of the ownership and control of our railways have been described as a dog's breakfast.*

*On Monday it was hinted that the review would be likely to announce some re-unification, such as allowing train companies to take over the maintenance of track in its own areas. By Tuesday Darling was denying this.*

*But in many areas, especially inter-city routes, several different companies operate services and control of the track would have to remain separated.*

*Darling firmly ruled out the only logical end to the confusion – re-nationalisation. Instead he said: "It's a question of what's practical and what works."*

*And he warned train operators not to lose their focus on improving reliability while the review goes on. Nevertheless, waiting for its conclusion is likely to be another excuse for procrastination.*

*He avoided pre-empting the review's conclusions but indicated that the responsibility for safety would be transferred from the Health and Safety Executive to a specialist rail body.*

*Bob Crow warned that the planned re-organisation was more likely to be a "means for further deterioration" than a solution for the worsening state of our railways.*

*Richard Rosser of the TSSA transport union also called on the Government to put the railways under the control of "one person" and end the fragmentation caused by privatisation.*

*Passenger groups expressed doubts about the value of the review. The London Transport Users' Committee said: "Passengers' faith in the rail network is at a very low ebb and they will need reassurance that these will not be cosmetic changes."*

# Teapot Dome and Al Capone: The early days of the American communist press

by Art Shields

**Art Shields (1898–1988), pioneering working class journalist, was present for the birth of the American *Daily Worker* in January 1924. In this article, assembled from reminiscences published in 1969 and 1974, he recalls those early days of the publication and the world into which it was born.**

I got the best job of my life on Chicago's North Side on a cold winter day in 1924. Other jobs have paid more, but none gave such satisfaction. And I wish I could relive the glad moment when the first copy of the *Daily Worker* came wet off the press.

The birth date was 13<sup>th</sup> January 1924. That's a day I'll never forget, as that's the day the working class got a powerful weapon. It came smoking out of the Communist Party's press and began striking heavy blows at the people's enemies in its first issue.

And those enemies were all around. The national government was led by the "Ohio Gang", sometimes called the "Oil Gang", with Warren Harding, a bibu-



• The *Daily Worker* hot off the press.

lous, amoral politician in the White House; Harry Daugherty, a bribe-taker in the Attorney General's office; Albert Fall of Teapot Dome oil infamy was the Secretary of the Interior; and there was Charles Evans Hughes, Standard Oil lawyer and Secretary of State.

They were servants of the real rulers – the Rockefellers, the Morgan bankers, the duPonts and the Pittsburgh Mellons. On 13<sup>th</sup> January 1924, the national drive against labour was at its height. The unions

had lost nearly half their members since the end of the First World War. Big Business was bringing in what it called the "American Plan". It took courage to fight these enemies – in Chicago especially.

In Chicago, the smells from the meat-packing houses of Armour and Swift, the smoke from the South Side mills of the US Steel Corporation, the clatter of machinery from the giant Western Electric works in Cicero came from open shop plants where workers were fired if they uttered the word "union".

In Chicago also, the *Daily Worker* was menaced by gangsters. A bullet fired by one underworld thug just missed the head of our circulation manager, Jack McCarthy, when he dared to challenge the big newsboys at the *Chicago Tribune* and the Hearst Corporation.

This city, where our paper began its work, was the headquarters of this country's most powerful gang lord. That was Al Capone, who railed against "Red literature".

Capone was a busy man. He ran the beer racket during Prohibition. He sold millions of bottles of

bootleg whisky. He helped crooked politicians steal elections. He broke strikes. He ran gambling halls and houses of prostitution and murdered many men. Nevertheless, he once found time to say this for our publication: "Bolshevism is knocking at our gates... we have got to organise against it...we must keep the worker away from Red literature."

By "Red literature" Capone meant America's only daily working-class paper in the English language. He meant the paper that was demanding peace and friendship with the Soviet Union – the paper that was working for a socialist world without gangsters or other exploiters. That was the *Daily Worker*.

But gangsters couldn't stop us. The *Daily Worker* reached the people at the factory gates and neighbourhood sales and by letter carrier. Every morning, two Lithuanian comrades were at the Armour and Swift gates in the 'Packingtown' jungle with bundles of *Daily Workers*. And it was a joy to see the bundles disappear into the hands of stockyard labourers and transport workers.

From time to time, I also watched US Steel workers grabbing our paper at the big mill on the South Side. They gave their two cents – the price in those days – to a young Jewish comrade, who never failed to be there.

These cases were typical. The districts of the Communist Party, without exception, mobilised their members to distribute our paper. And no *Daily Worker* reporter who visited a union hall or a picket line did his job unless his paper was with him.

*People's World* (USA)

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# Lodestar of Revolutionary Advance For Human Emancipation

*Lenin, the leader of the Russian revolution died 100 years ago on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Shot and wounded by a fanatic in 1918, Lenin's health had never fully recovered. The Bolshevik leader led the revolutionaries who swept away the old order in 1917. Lenin led the revolutionaries who found the new Soviet republic that beat back counter-revolution and imperialist intervention in the civil war that followed.*

by Sitaram Yechury  
General Secretary of the  
Communist Party of India (Marxist)

**IN a short span of 54 years, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin left an unerasable imprint for the advance of the global proletarian revolution. He not only mastered the essence of the creative science of Marxism, but updated it to his contemporary times and led the Russian Revolution to victory leading to the establishment of the first socialist country in the world – the USSR. He enriched Marxism combating all forms of deviations and protected the revolutionary movement from derailment. He was a master tactician adopting correct and appropriate tactics for every twist and turn of the revolutionary movement. He was a Marxist theoretician, strategist and a tactician par excellence. His contributions merit a continuous study in order to advance the revolutionary movement globally and in every country in the world.**

## Mastering the essence of Marxism

Leading the triumphant Russian Revolution – the Great October Socialist Revolution – Lenin demonstrated the practical realisation of Marx's famous exhorta-

tion: "Philosophers have often interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

Lenin was able to lead such a changing of the world by comprehensively mastering Marxism, its scientific method, creative potential and its world outlook. Often, these aspects of his unique and pioneering contributions to the treasure house of Marxism are taken up separately for a deeper understanding. Many have studied various important works of Lenin such as the *State and Revolution*; *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*; *What is to be Done?* and *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

This, of course, is important, absolutely important. Each one of these works must be properly understood and its essence grasped by every revolutionary in order to carry forward the battle for complete human emancipation in today's conditions. But it is equally important to also understand why Lenin undertook these works, at particular points in the twists and turns of the Russian Revolution and the world proletarian movement.

Let us put together two formulations that Lenin had made regarding Marxism, which, I think, helps us in under-

standing his supreme internalisation of this creative science.

Firstly, he had said in *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* that "hundreds of thousands of working people are attracted to Marxism because it is the only philosophy that combines two aspects, at the same time, ie, being revolutionary and supremely scientific. This is not combined because its founders combined both these aspects in their own life. Marxism combines them integral and intrinsically."

Secondly, Lenin underlined that: "The most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions."

It is through the combination of both these aspects of Marxism – revolutionary and supremely scientific – that the revolutionary objective of human liberation can be realised. Any



over-emphasis on one and under-emphasis of the other can lead to deviations. Ignoring the revolutionary potential and only concentrating on a scientific analysis of the situation will invariably lead to reformism. Ignoring the scientific evaluation of the situation and resorting to only revolutionary sloganeering will lead to a Left adventurist deviation. In order to steer clear of such deviations, the proper combination of both these attributes is essential.

"Concrete analysis of concrete conditions" requires an objective assessment of the concrete conditions and to draw the correct revolutionary analysis on that basis. An incorrect estimation of the concrete conditions based on subjective considerations will lead to faulty and erroneous political analysis and can derail the revolutionary movement. Hence, the ability of a revolutionary to objectively assess the concrete conditions and

from there proceed to analyse by combining the above two attributes of Marxism is the foundation on the basis of which the revolutionary movement can advance. Even when the estimation is correctly drawn followed by a proper analysis and evolution of the correct political-tactical line to be pursued by the revolutionary movement, the translation of this political correctness into practice will depend on the strength of the Party organisation.

Stalin once famously said, following from Lenin, that even when the political line is 100 per cent correct, it has little effect without an organisation capable of carrying this political line to the people. Party organisation, its capacities and capabilities, thus play a crucial role in advancing the revolutionary movement – the 'subjective factor' of the revolution, as Lenin calls it.

On all these aspects, Lenin relentlessly fought against all deviations of both varieties, reformism and Left adventurism (which he called "an infantile disorder"). In order to demolish each one of these deviations and to steer clear from adopting a wrong direction, at crucial junctures of revolutionary advance, he wrote his monumental works clarifying to the working class movement the correct way to move forward. He had to ideologically

fight and combat many an accepted leader of the working class movement of his time, in order to steer a clear direction for the revolutionary movement, leading it ultimately to its triumph.

By correctly understanding Marx and Marxism, Lenin realised that no revolution, including the Russian Revolution, can succeed without a proper analysis of global developments and contradictions along with the analysis of domestic conditions and its contradictions.

Following the developments in capitalism at the global level, Lenin, on the basis of Marx's dissection of capitalism and its tendencies, noted that the tendency of centralisation and concentration of capital, as capitalism develops, has reached new levels, leading to a qualitative change. Marx, towards the end of his time, had noted the trends of monopoly capitalism, which Engels subsequently incorporated into Marx's posthumous publication of *Capital, Volume 3*. Lenin noted that, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the development of monopoly capitalism had reached the levels of global enslavement by the rule of capital – the stage of imperialism.

Lenin categorised this stage as the highest stage of capitalism. The consequent contradictions that imperialism generated were properly assessed and analysed

by Lenin. He noted that capitalism in the imperialist stage had enchained the world that and inter-imperialist contradictions must be utilised to break this imperialist chain at its weakest link, which at that time in human history was Russia. He gave the call to convert the inter-imperialist war (the ongoing First World War) into a civil war advancing the slogan of “peace, bread and land” to the Russian people. On the basis of such concrete analysis of concrete conditions, Lenin led the Russian revolutionary movement to its eventual triumph in the October 1917 revolution.

The Leninist understanding of imperialism, its analysis and the emergence of inter-imperialist contradictions, was resoundingly vindicated with the outbreak of the Second World War, where these contradictions led to the quest for a new global re-ordering spearheaded by Germany. The utilisation of inter-imperialist contradictions resulted eventually in the defeat of fascism and the liberation of Eastern Europe. This also ushered in a qualitatively new phase of welfare capitalism in response to the international correlation of class forces that moved in favour of socialism.

Today, when we call ourselves a Marxist-Leninist party, we do so consciously due to the manner in which Lenin enriched Marxism in all aspects – fighting all forms of deviation, reformist and Left adventurist; the tactics for mobilising all sections of the exploited classes with its axis being the worker–peasant alliance; the building of a party of the working class capable of intervening in the concrete situation on the basis of the concrete analysis

to shape the course of history towards human liberation and the appropriate tactics required to advance the revolutionary movement. Stalin defined Leninism as “Marxism in the era of imperialism”.

## Global anti-imperialist struggle

Lenin was the leader of the world proletarian revolution. He realised that the triumph of socialism in Russia and the formation of the USSR provided the impetus for advancing the revolutionary movement against imperialism globally. It was with this understanding that the Communist International assisted the formation of Communist parties in almost all countries of the world and, most importantly, linking the domestic people’s struggles with the global struggle against imperialism. Lenin’s theses on the *National and Colonial Question* laid the foundations for integrating the national liberation struggles in all colonial countries

with the global struggle against imperialism.

This thesis had a profound impact on the national liberation and anti-colonial struggles the world over. Such was the impact that it led to history changing advances of the revolutionary movement. This impact is sharply revealed by the reaction of Ho Chi Minh who, living in France, was distributing pamphlets denouncing the crimes committed by the French colonialists in Vietnam: “At that time, I supported the October Revolution only instinctively, not yet grasping all its historic importance. I loved and admired Lenin because he was a great patriot who liberated his compatriots; until then, I had read none of his books...

“(Then) a comrade gave me Lenin’s *Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions* published by *l’Humanité* to read. There were political terms difficult to understand in this thesis. But by dint of reading it again and again, finally I could grasp the main part of it. What emotion, enthusiasm, clear-sight-

edness and confidence it instilled into me! I was overjoyed to tears. Though sitting alone in my room, I shouted out aloud as if addressing large crowds: ‘Dear martyrs compatriots! This is what we need, this is the path to our liberation!’”

Lenin established the University for the Toilers of the East. Many a revolutionary from across the world steeled themselves both in theory and practice and returned to their countries to strengthen the revolutionary movement. Hence, Lenin played the pioneering role in cementing the international solidarity of the working class movement – Communist Internationalism – “Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains”.

Capitalism never collapses automatically. It requires to be overthrown. This decisively depends on the strengthening of that material force in society led by the working class, which can mount, through popular struggles, the intensification of the class struggle to launch the political of-

fensive against the rule of capital. The building of this material force and its strength is the ‘subjective factor’, the strengthening of which is an essential imperative. The objective factor – the concrete conditions of the crisis – however conducive they may be for a revolutionary advance, cannot be transformed into a revolutionary assault against the rule of capital without the strengthening of this ‘subjective factor’.

Various intermediary slogans, measures and tactics will have to be employed by the working class to sharpen class struggles and to meet the challenges of these real conditions in order to strengthen the ‘subjective factor’ and thus advance the process of revolutionary transformation in their respective countries.

## Revolutionary tactics

In order to advance this process and the appropriate tactics needed, again, Lenin’s teachings and practice provide guidance. The late M Basavapunniah, on the

occasion of Lenin’s birth centenary, had written an article in the *People’s Democracy* titled *Master tactician of the working class in its struggle for political power and its consolidation*. Most often, many do not pay attention to the tactical genius of Lenin and how he worked out correct tactics at every turn of events leading to the triumph of the Russian Revolution. At the global level, he gave the direction for the tactics to be adopted to advance the world revolutionary movement against imperialism.

Stalin, in *Foundations of Leninism*, summarises Lenin’s tactical principles as being based on:

1. national peculiarities and characteristics;
2. utilising the smallest possibilities of acquiring allies for the proletariat, even if they are temporary, vacillating, wavering or unreliable, for advancing the revolutionary struggle; and
3. truth that propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient for political education as the practical political experience of the masses.

In order to advance in this direction, in the current Indian situation, the immediate task is to isolate and defeat the BJP, sever its control over State power that it utilises to destroy the Indian Constitution and transform the secular democratic republic into the RSS vision of a rabidly intolerant, fascistic Hindutva Rashtra (Hindu State). To achieve this, appropriate tactics, based on Leninist principles of revolutionary tactics, must be adopted.

Long Live Lenin!



• Stalin, Kalinin and other Soviet leaders at Lenin’s funeral.

## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

Paula Vennells was Chief Executive of the Post Office from 2012–2019. She presided over the biggest miscarriage of justice in British history. When what was happening became clear the Post Office tried to cover it up.

Vennells herself obfuscated and gave misleading information to some assiduous MPs.

She also spearheaded a policy of aggressively prosecuting sub-postmasters when the Post Office already knew that the computer system was flawed. And she sacked Second Sight, a forensic accounting firm brought into find what had gone wrong.

For this Vennells was paid £4.9 million including performance-related bonuses. Plus she got a CBE.

Now she has been forced by public opinion to return that honour. But surely a criminal investigation into her conduct must follow.

**Alan Stewart**  
Wakefield

### Dear Comrades

German engineering has earned a well-deserved reputation for excellence and quality. Until recently its economy has been strong and resilient. The country has now entered recession, however, inflation is increasing and a slump in manufacturing is expected to reduce industrial production by over 0.5 per cent this year. Germany faces an economic debacle of its own making that may weaken it for decades and cause political instability.

Its own actions have

created the perfect storm. Germany's lacklustre coalition of Social Democrats, Christian Democrats (CDU), Greens and Free Democrats (FDP) is beset by crises. The position of the inept German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, becomes weaker by the day and he is likely to be replaced as the deckchairs are rearranged. Otto von Bismarck, the great Prussian politician who unified the Germany nation, must be turning in his grave.

Capitalist states face permanent crisis due to the nature of their political system, but the added impact of the defeated Ukraine Project has struck a fatal blow.

Angela Merkel, the former Christian Democrat Chancellor, supported the Western-engineered coup in 2014 that had been planned since 2008 and was intended to further expand the EU Mafia and extend the aggressive NATO block further east to threaten Russia. Since that time Germany has done all in its power to keep the tragic proxy war going. No diplomacy. No talk of peace. No regard for the loss of life their policies have caused. Sanctions against Russia have spectacularly backfired to create serious economic problems. Those problems have now been turned into a major disaster as it is widely believed that Germany connived to blow-up the Nord Stream pipelines leading to a dependence on US gas supplies four times more expensive.

More German people now realise that the entire-

ly unconstitutional take-over in Ukraine, which saw American political leaders standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the neo-Nazi parties, is being defeated. All the mainstream German political parties, especially the Greens, share collective responsibility for the debacle.

Local elections due in June may see the far-right Alternative for Germany populist party make large gains. Unrest is growing with large demonstrations by farmers and strikes are spreading. Industry is starting to flee to the USS and China.

Where is the left? Die Linke, the Left Party, has recently split with some members thinking that it had not played an effective role by being too cosy with the establishment. Will the new party be able to inspire the political left to come out and fight and unite for a better future, one which would match the standards of the former German Democratic Republic? The establishment has marginalised smaller communist and other left parties by bans so as to prevent their participation in elections and is also considering extending restrictions to Alternative for Germany. The left must unite around true socialist policies to put forward a dynamic and convincing real alternative way forward.

**John Maryon**  
Suffolk

### Dear Friends

The decision by Bahrain's Khalifi dictators to join the 'Red Sea Alliance' formed by the USA, UK and several other countries has been widely condemned by the local people. They say it compromises the safety and security of the country at a time of heightened tension. They also say that Bahrain does not share common borders with Yemen and has not been targeted in any way by the Yemenis. The

Khalifi decision to join the alliance is a provocation of the Yemenis and could seriously backfire. No other Arab country has joined the offensive Alliance.

It has now been three years since the arrest of Saudi women's rights activist Salma al-Shehab. She is a PhD student at the University of Leeds and mother of two children. Salma is serving a 27-year prison sentence – reduced last year from 34 – for tweeting in support of human rights. Calls have been made by international human rights bodies for her freedom.

Index on Censorship remembered her, saying: "Today, we reflect on the third year of Salma al-Shehab's imprisonment. Her courage in the face of injustice inspires us all. Join the call for her freedom, use your voice, and let the world hear our collective plea."

**John Hughes**  
Bahrain Freedom Movement  
London

### Dear Friends

We're all working on the assumption that Rishi Sunak will find the courage to call a General Election sometime this year. Political parties are keener than ever to speak directly to you – but they won't get into your inbox or social media feed unless they can capture your personal data.

With trust in political processes at an all-time low, political parties being open, transparent and accountable about the use of your data is essential for a healthy democracy. Yet early indications show political parties are riding roughshod over crucial data rights, so we're launching a campaign to protect them.

Our first challenge takes on an online tool launched by the Tories which claims to calculate the effect of recent changes to national insurance con-

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## *Diary*

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

#### EVERY SAT

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 31 MAR

Martin Parr Foundation: *Photographs from the Miners' Strike 1984–5*. Paintworks, 316, Arno's Vale, Bristol BS4 3AR.

#### SAT 27 JAN

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Conference 2024. 10:00–17:00, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD. Book on CND website.

#### SAT 27 JAN

Trades Union Congress: Protect the right to strike: March and rally. 12:00–14:00, Montpellier Gardens, Cheltenham, GL50 1UL.

#### MON 29 JAN

Korean Friendship Association: Film Night. 18:30, <https://fb.me/e/1hXxOaSb5>

#### TUE 30 JAN

Campaign Against the Arms Trade: No to the Arms Dealers Dinner! Protest outside a central London hotel. Details TBC.

#### WED 31 JAN

Jews for Justice for Palestine: Benefit performance for Medical Aid for Palestinians. 19:30, Camden Comedy Club, 100 Camden High Street, London NW1 0LU.

#### FRI 2 FEB

Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group: Picket. 12:00–13:00, DWP HQ, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA.

#### SAT 3 FEB

Korean Friendship Association: Juche idea as perfect and great builder of the socialist society in the DPRK. 14:00, King Cross Neighbourhood Centre, Argyle Street, London WC1H 8EF.

#### 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.

#### FRI 16 FEB–SAT 16 MAR

10 To 4 Productions: *Cable Street*. A New Musical at Southwark Playhouse Borough, 77–85 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BD. Book on Southwark Playhouse website.

#### TUES 20 FEB

Free Assange Campaign: Picket of High Court.

#### THUR 22 FEB

Marx Memorial Library: Andrew Feinstein on Armaments and Global Trade. 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 MARCH

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

#### WED 6 MARCH

Marx Memorial Library: Mary Davis on The Labour Government of 1923–4: a constitutionalist takeover of a working class party. 19:00. Hybrid event. Register on MML website.

#### SAT 9 MAR

Essex County Association of Trades Councils: Essex and the 1984–85 miners' strike. 10:00–15:00, Friends Meeting House, Chelmsford CM1 2QL.

#### SAT 9 MAR

1984–85 Miners' Strike commemoration, Doncaster. Details TBC.

#### THUR 14 MARCH

Marx Memorial Library: With John McDonnell MP on The Labour Governments 1974–76: challenging the rights of capital. 19:00. Hybrid event. Register on MML website.

#### THUR 21 MARCH

Marx Memorial Library: Ravi Raham on *Global Labour and Peripheral Capital*. 19:00. Hybrid book launch. Register on MML website.

#### SAT 13 APRIL

Marx Memorial Library: Booksale. 11:00 at Library.

#### SUN 28 APRIL

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

## CONTACT US...

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tributions on individuals, but looks more like a data-harvesting exercise.

There's nothing wrong per se with parties collecting information about voters – although this can generate the kinds of socially divisive campaigning that have so damaged democracy – but this “calculator” breaches data protection law. So we're challenging this flagrant breach.

We've instructed a leading specialist data rights law firm to take the first formal step in legal proceedings against the Conservative Party. The case focuses on how they are processing my data – but it is really about how they are processing all the data they collect through this tool. Mine, yours and everybody's.

**Jolyon Maugham  
Executive Director,  
Good Law Project  
Sevenoaks  
Kent**

# Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

**Boris Johnson did not come out of the UK-wide COVID-19 Enquiry very well. His already battered reputation was worsened by the revelations of his rule breaking and mismanagement of the crisis. The same enquiry's visit to Edinburgh has made even him look like a model of rectitude and efficiency however, compared with the doings of his opposite number in Edinburgh, Nicola Sturgeon, whose reputation has fallen even further under the gaze of Lady Hallett's Enquiry.**

While Johnson was justly criticised for his selective retention of important social media messages, Nicola Sturgeon went one better and “retained no messages whatsoever”. Later Sturgeon said she had handed over all her personal messages relating to the period – but now all but the very few remaining devotees believe a word of what she says.

Another important revelation was that one day in May 2021 senior civil servant Ken Thomson, Director-General for Strategy & External Affairs, messaged his colleagues: “I feel moved at this point to remind you that this channel is FOI recoverable.” The National Clinical Director Jason Leitch promptly responded by typing: “WhatsApp deletion is a pre-bed ritual.” On Tuesday he told the Enquiry that this was merely a “flippant exaggeration”, but the damage had been done and it was clear that the exaggeration was only a mild one.

Boasting and joking about destroying evidence only compounds the folly and is the sort of thing one can expect from the

fictional *Yes Minister*. He claims his deletions were in line with the Scottish Government's policies on using and retaining informal messaging. Thomson was the man responsible for ensuring rules were kept.

Nicola Sturgeon's main reason for this cover up is that obviously she did not want the reality of her handling of the COVID-19 crisis made public. This is largely because there was almost no difference between what Boris Johnson and Nicola Sturgeon actually did. They both banned public events, closed schools, sent untested old people from hospital to care homes, promoted hand-washing and mask-wearing etc. The only difference was that after meetings Sturgeon usually hastily announced Johnson's policies with some minor cosmetic changes for the sake of being different.

The Scottish COVID Bereaved group was particularly scathing about the deletions. One of its members was quoted as saying of Leitch: “I trusted them, I felt him and Nicola Sturgeon were honest and trying to be open with us and to find out that was all just a façade, I don't understand how they can hold their head up high.” Their solicitor Aamer Anwar noted: “We appreciate in recent days there are those who have developed selective amnesia on the promises made by the Scottish Government, but there is no conspiracy, no smear, it is by her own words that the former first minister Nicola Sturgeon is being judged,” a reference to her previous claims that she had kept and handed over all the relevant records.

This affair will also haunt our new First Minister, Humza Yousaf, as it has been obvious since October that civil servants had been deleting messages and it is reasonable to ask what he knew about such activities and what he did about it,

either to prevent further cases or disciplining those responsible.

Anyone who has ever been on a trade union committee knows the importance of minute keeping, but that seems to have escaped Sturgeon. It will be a long time before Sturgeon herself has to appear at the inquiry – but it is to be hoped her selective amnesia clears up by then.

Another curious revelation on Tuesday came from Jason Leitch, who boasted of giving then Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf advice on how to get round the indoor mask-wearing rules that we were constantly told were so vital to defeat the coronavirus. He was told to “have a drink in your hands at all times” to get round the rules. It is a telling comment on Yousaf that he could not think up something as simple as that by himself and needed to be told.

## Two Different Policies in a Day

Another interesting revelation from the Enquiry concerned the discrepancy between two statements made on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in the first few months of the pandemic, when Sturgeon told the BBC that: “Anybody who is trotting out political or constitutional arguments is in the wrong place, completely.” She went on say she was angry at “comments yesterday that sounded as if we were dealing with something that was a constitutional argument”. Earlier that day she privately told her colleagues: “Agreed that consideration should be given to restarting work on independence and a referendum, with the arguments reflecting the experience of the coronavirus crisis and developments on EU exit.”

At the same time it is very difficult to see important government documents that do exist. These include not just potentially embarrassing ones, such

as the evidence of collusion to build up the sexual assault case against Alex Salmond, but legal advice from their solicitors that the SNP claim backs up its policies on such matters as Holyrood's authority to call referenda. Had the legal advice been as supportive of the SNP case as they claim, no doubt it would have been shouted from the rooftops.

Two other legal matters came back to haunt the SNP. Firstly it agreed to cough up the £15,000 legal costs of the UK Government incurred in the SNP's hopeless fight against the veto of the unpopular Gender Recognition Reform Act, which has now been finally buried but technically remains on the Holyrood statute book to keep the Greens happy.

Another little-noticed achievement of the SNP has been to unite virtually the entire Scottish legal profession against it. The Scottish Solicitor Bar Association (SSBA) is calling on its members to boycott juryless trails for serious

sexual offences as provided for in the new Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill.

The SSBA says it would be tantamount to professional misconduct for a lawyer to let a client take part in the test trial. With the pilot only able to go ahead with the consent of the accused, the future of the whole experiment and evaluation now looks in doubt.

While some have supported the measure on the grounds it will increase the very low conviction rate for rape, they need to be reminded that such processes can just as easily apply to those who get picked up on picket lines or take part in political protests.

In recent months several juries have effectively let off people charged with damaging the offices and factories of arms manufactures and environmentally damaging businesses. That will make the prospect of juryless trials more welcome in certain unpleasant quarters. It is unwise to give them any precedents.

### FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

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

# Zionism, Anti-Semitism and the Palestinian Tragedy

by Raúl Antonio Capote

**The recent events in the Gaza Strip have laid bare, as never before, the essence of Zionism and the complicity of the West and the USA with the Israeli regime.**

With total impunity, the Zionist military forces have acted against the civilian population. They stop at nothing.

Women, the elderly and children are buried under the rubble of their homes, schools and hospitals, thanks to the weapons delivered by Washington.

Anyone who raises their voice to denounce the crimes is immediately branded as an anti-Semite, or of trying to re-enact the Jewish Holocaust, a tragic event carried out by a regime that claimed the necessary 'living space' for a race that considered itself superior and chosen.

To label as anti-Semitism those governments, institutions or personalities in the world who condemn the Israeli massacre in Gaza is a nonsense devoid of any scientific, historical and ethical perspective.

The Israeli regime could rightly be accused of anti-Semitism as a result of the murder, persecution and dispossession of the Arabs and other peoples that inhabit the multi-ethnic region, where the great family of Shem's descendants coexists.

Modern Zionism emerged at the end of the 19th Century in Europe. Its main creator was the Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl, who convened the first

Zionist congress in the city of Basel, Switzerland, in 1897.

It is an ideology born of the contradictions and internal nationalist tensions in Eastern and Central Europe in the 19th Century. It was not born in the Middle East, among the communities that lived there and coexisted without problems; it is the putative daughter of Western colonialist doctrines.

The causes of its emergence are extremely complex. The influence of religious prejudices, of elements of the cultural heritage of Europe, even the complex mythical and racist motivations that led to the persecution of the Jews, had an important weight.

It is necessary to emphasise that this ideology is not defended by all Jews, nor do all Zionists practice Judaism; not all Jews are Israelis either, they live in many parts of the world, they are Americans, Poles, Russians, Spaniards, etc.

## **A land without a people for a people without a land?**

This was the slogan of the Zionist movement: "A land without people for a people without land," something that was absolutely based on a false premise.

The first Zionist colonies were established on the coastal plain north of Jaffa, Palestine, in the 1880s. The land had been acquired by Baron Edmond Rothschild, financier and promoter of the colonialist project.

The Balfour Decla-



ration of 2nd November 1917 committed Britain to the Zionist project by announcing its support for the establishment of a "national home" for the Jewish people in the region of Palestine.

They never took into account the opinion of the inhabitants of the region, nor even, as the text stated, did the idea of consulting them cross their minds.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War the British Army entered Jerusalem and Palestine came under military control.

A census carried out in 1921 showed a population of 762,000 inhabitants in Palestine, 76.9 per cent Muslim, 11.6 per cent Christian, 10.6 per cent Jewish and 0.9 per cent of other denominations. It is important to note that only 2.4 per cent of the total area of the country was in Jewish hands.

In May 1936 a great Palestinian insurrection

took place. This lasted for three years until May 1939, when the British Government published the acceptance of part of the Arab claims, in the so-called White Paper, in which they proposed, to be undertaken within a maximum period of 10 years, a referendum on the self-determination of Palestine.

The Zionists reacted violently. The director of the Jewish National Fund, Josef Weitz, expressed: "Perhaps with the sole exception of Bethlehem, Nazareth and the old city of Jerusalem, we should not leave a single settlement, not a single tribe."

On 29th November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution to create two states in Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish. The document granted 57 per cent of the territory to the future Jewish State and 43 per cent to the Arab State. As expected, the Arab countries rejected the

disparity of the project.

Thus, in December 1947, the planned and systematic mass eviction of the indigenous population from their homes and lands began. By March 1948, the Israeli leadership launched Plan Dalet, which provided for the destruction of villages and the carrying out of operations to exterminate any resistance.

When Israel's founding father, David Ben Gurion, proclaimed the State of Israel in May 1948, more than 300,000 Palestinians had already been evicted from their homes.

On the very day of the Declaration of Independence, the first Arab-Israeli war began, which lasted from 15th May 1948 until 6th January 1949, when the UN imposed a truce. Thus came to an end the so-called "war of independence" of the State of Israel.

During the 1948 conflict, Israel not only managed to keep the territories granted to it by the UN, but even increased them. Zionist forces then expelled more than 800,000 Palestinians and expropriated their homes and lands.

It was the Palestinian Nakba, the disaster, the dismemberment of the community, the mass exodus of its members.

The Israeli state lost some of its allies after the 1967 conflict, when it invaded and occupied East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights – it but maintained the unconditional financial, political and military support of the USA and Europe.

There are no religious, ethnic, historical or geographical reasons to justify what has happened during all these years. The Zionist occupation of Palestine is an action as barbaric as Nazism, which exterminated millions of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Magyars, Russians and other peoples of the Old Continent.

The massacre in Gaza has been going on for more than 100 days and the number of dead has reached 24,000.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu celebrated the Israeli actions with a haughty and defiant speech, in which he promised to continue the fighting until the final victory. "No-one will stop us," he said.

The similarity of his 'prophecy' takes us back in time to the final months of the Second World War, when the leader of a racist and genocidal ideology and system, guilty of the murder of millions of people, many of them Jews, promised to fight until the "final triumph". Zionists and their accomplices should remember how that story ended.

*Granma*

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# Solidarity in Action: A Chinese bomb-disposal expert in Cambodia

by Xie Wenting

In the heart of Cambodia, a nation scarred by the remnants of war, Liu Wenzhi, a retired military veteran turned demining specialist, has embarked on a dangerous, yet fulfilling mission of land-mine elimination.

Once in Cambodia, Liu found himself immersed in a landscape where land-mines posed a constant threat to the safety of the local population. Casualties were frequently reported in the country and many villagers did not even dare to go to their farmland as many unidentified dangers lurking under the ground make the life of local people – who depend heavily on farming – even harder. Even so, what struck Liu most during his missions are the resilient and never-give-up spirit demonstrated by locals.

“I encountered individuals of various ages who had been disabled due to undiscovered land-mines in Cambodia. Their stories painted a portrait of resilience – some continued their work with prosthetic limbs, others learned to play music after losing their eyesight, and a few exhibited extraordinary perseverance by joining the national basketball team. These people highlighted the indomitable spirit of humanity amid adversity,” Liu said.

Liu once served in a field force for 12 years and took part in three peace-keeping operations in Lebanon. He had witnessed first-hand the devastating consequences of land-mines on people’s lives during his participation in peacekeeping missions.

Motivated by a deep understanding of the importance of peace, Liu eagerly embraced the chance to contribute his skills to a cause that resonated with his values.

In Cambodia, Liu is not alone in the demining missions as many Chinese people are actively contributing to this cause. His story is a testament to the transformative power of individuals and organisations working together for a common goal – a world where the haunting spectre of landmines is replaced by the promise of peace and safety for generations to come.

Last week a handover ceremony for China-supported mine-clearance equipment to Cambodia was held in Phnom Penh, where both countries also signed a memorandum of understanding on mine-clearance co-operation.

“As Cambodia strives to achieve the mine-free goal by 2025 as scheduled, China stands ready to step up co-operation with Cambodia,” China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media last week.

Mao noted that as one of the countries that are worst affected by

land-mines, Cambodia is, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Manet, making an all-out effort to achieve its mine-free goal by 2025. As a good neighbour, good partner and good brother of Cambodia, China has cared much about the landmine problem in Cambodia.

Since 1998, China has been providing Cambodia with support of various forms, including funding, mine-clearance equipment and personnel training. Mine-clearance co-operation has become an important part of the China–Cambodia comprehensive strategic co-operative partnership, an important component of the “diamond hexagon” bilateral co-operation framework, and a vivid example of the two sides working together to implement the Global Security Initiative.

## A difficult task

In early 2020, Liu discovered an opportunity to make a meaningful impact by joining the demining project run by the Peaceland Foundation, a Beijing-based NGO, after retiring from military. The demining

project in Cambodia, initiated in 2019, has become a beacon of hope for a country haunted by this deadly legacy of war.

At the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Co-operation in 2023, the demining team members from the Peaceland Foundation walked on the stage together with children from Cambodia, hand in hand, showing the solidarity and love which moved audiences.

While Liu tried to tone down the hardship of demining, he admitted that the job is full of challenges. The foremost obstacle, he said, has been the funding gap, hindering the progress of demining initiatives. Environmental factors also play a significant role, with hot weather and the presence of mosquitoes posing considerable challenges. The tropical climate, characterised by high temperatures and humidity, creates extreme physiological challenges for demining team members. Insect bites not only affect morale and efficiency but also increase the risk of disease, further complicating the demining process.

Demining is an in-

herently dangerous task, subjecting team members to immense psychological stress. Liu and his team must remain highly vigilant at all times to prevent accidents.

“This heightened state of tension not only affects the mental health of team members but can also lead to issues such as anxiety and depression. Addressing and alleviating these psychological pressures have become critical aspects of the demining mission,” he said.

Enhanced co-operation with Cambodia, through bilateral or regional mechanisms, is essential to tackling technical challenges and management issues in demining. Furthermore, promoting education and raising awareness on the global stage can garner the support needed to prioritise and address the urgency of demining efforts, Liu said.

During Liu’s time in Cambodia, he together with his demining team have embraced a collaborative approach, engaging in mutual learning and exchanging technical expertise with their Cambodian counterparts. This co-operative spirit has strengthened

their mission, fostering understanding and solidarity between diverse communities.

One of the most memorable moments in Liu’s journey occurred when the responsibility for the safety of a minefield was handed over to local residents. Despite language barriers the expressions of understanding and solidarity transcended these obstacles, symbolising a shared commitment to peace, Liu recalled.

In addition to the work done by the Chinese NGOs, at the governmental level many efforts have paid off with successful results.

Ly Thuch, senior minister and first vice-president of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), said at a recent press conference that the China-Aided Cambodia Landmines Elimination Project, which has been carried out in three phases from 2018 and 2025, has helped to find and destroy approximately 78,000 landmines and unexploded ordinances.

“We had cleared more than 107 square km land with the support from China, a huge achievement, creating 1.5 million beneficiaries,” he said after receiving a new shipment of mine clearance equipment from China.

As the demining project enters a new year, Liu said they also plan to set up a new team to join local efforts in eliminating landmines, which will be built upon the current working model, contributing to Cambodia’s ongoing journey toward a mine-free future.



• Cambodian children play near minefield.

## Working for the Global South

by María Josefina Arce

**Cuba hands over presidency of the Group of 77 & China to Uganda this week – a responsibility it has held since January last year and which it assumed with the will to work in favour of the aspirations of the nations of the South.**

This was clearly expressed by Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel when he said: “You can count on Cuba and its unwavering commitment to work tirelessly, together with all the members of this essential grouping in the defence of the supreme interests of our nations.”

This is evidenced by the work carried out during these 12 months, which has been highlighted by members of the co-ordination mechanism, who describe it as highly positive.

Cuba brought to the different international forums the urgency of taking into account the developing countries, in view of the problems facing the world,

such as poverty, inequality and the climate crisis.

The voice of the South was strongly felt in New York at the UN General Assembly and the Climate Ambition Summit, where Cuba called on the industrialised world to support the climate actions of the South in a real spirit of co-operation.

During its presidency, Cuba encouraged the necessary unity of the bloc, consensus and complementarity among its members.

Cuba, which has always been an example of solidarity, also promoted

co-operation among its members and with other blocs. During his participation in the BRICS Summit in South Africa last August, the Cuban leader referred to the multiple joint actions that can be developed by both mechanisms.

In his year at the head of the co-ordination mechanism, the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 & China was held in Havana last September, with the participation of UN Secretary General António Guterres. Declaring 16<sup>th</sup> September as the Day of Science,

Technology & Innovation in the South was a proposal of the meeting, approved earlier this year by the UN General Assembly.

Cuba handed over the presidency at the start of the Third South Summit that opened on Sunday in Kampala, the Ugandan capital that is hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Third Summit of the South Group of 77 and China.

Representatives of more than 100 countries have been working on the documents for the NAM meeting. The crucial challenges

facing the nations of the South and how to face them in a co-ordinated and supportive manner are at the centre of the attention of the members this bloc, which was created in 1961.

Ugandan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeje Odongo, pointed out that multilateralism and solidarity are more necessary than ever to respond collectively to the challenges of the future.

Co-operation is one of the principles of the NAM, which, more than 60 years after its emer-

gence and with a broader and more representative membership from all continents, maintains its importance to defend the interests of the South.

The bloc’s Working Group was created to gather the humanitarian needs and requirements of member countries and make aid feasible.

In this context, Cuba, one of the founders of NAM, sent medical brigades to many of the member nations and shared the anti-virus vaccines created by the Cuban scientific community.

Throughout all these years, the Movement has been a defender of the sovereignty of peoples, territorial integrity, the right to self-determination of peoples and non-interference in internal affairs. It is one of the largest organisations in the world and undoubtedly plays an outstanding and vital role in the international geopolitical scene.

*Radio Havana Cuba*



## West turns blind eye to latest Zelensky atrocity

by Oleg Burunov

**Western leaders remain tight-lipped on the Kiev regime’s deadly terrorist attack on Sunday, with many mainstream media headlines only mentioning the very fact of the event without singling out who was behind the tragedy.**

On Sunday, Ukrainian troops shelled Donetsk’s Kirovsky district, a busy area with markets and shops which are full of people, especially on weekends. It left 27 civilians killed and 25 more injured.

The BBC went so far as to quote a “Ukrainian army group operating in the region” as saying that

they “did not carry out the attack” – despite the fact that Denis Pushilin, head of the Donetsk People’s Republic, confirmed that Ukrainian troops used 152 mm and 155 mm artillery systems during the shelling. CBS News and Fox News, in turn, preferred not to report on the attack at all.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was the only official who decisively denounced Ukraine’s shelling attack on Donetsk. “The secretary-general strongly condemns all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including today’s shelling of the city of Donetsk, which reportedly killed at least 25

people and injured more than 20 others,” a spokesperson for the UN chief said on Sunday.

Guterres stressed that “attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law, are unacceptable and must stop immediately”.

He was echoed by Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, who told reporters that Russia strongly condemns the attack and that the special military operation “naturally will continue in order to protect our people from this danger”. He denounced the shelling as a “monstrous act of terrorism, as weapons were used indiscriminately”.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, for its part, slammed the attack as “a barbaric terrorist act against the civilian population of Russia”, urging international organisations and national governments to condemn the shelling. According to the ministry’s statement, any “silence will mean unspoken approval of the massacre of civilians”.

The ministry added that: “Kiev’s terrorist attacks clearly demonstrate its lack of political will to reach a peace settlement through diplomatic means.”

The collective West is no less responsible for this terrorist attack, however, because it has the “desire to inflict a strategic defeat on

the Russian Federation using Ukrainian puppets”, a desire that has pushed Kiev to take even more “reckless steps”, including “terrorist acts, mass violation of international humanitarian law and war crimes”, the statement pointed out.

The ministry underscored that the Ukrainian Army used Western weaponry during the shelling, which “once again confirms its [the West’s] direct involvement in the conflict and makes it a partner in the crimes of the Zelensky regime’s atrocities”.

According to the statement, in the light of the Donetsk shelling, the

necessity to implement the goals of the special military operation become even more evident since “Ukrainian territory must not be a source of security threats” and a platform for terrorist acts.

Shelling the Donetsk region and targeting civilian areas is not uncommon for the Kiev regime, which has killed at least 9,152 civilians, including 233 children, in the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk since May 2014, according to the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination (JCCC) of issues related to Ukraine’s war crimes.

*Sputnik*