

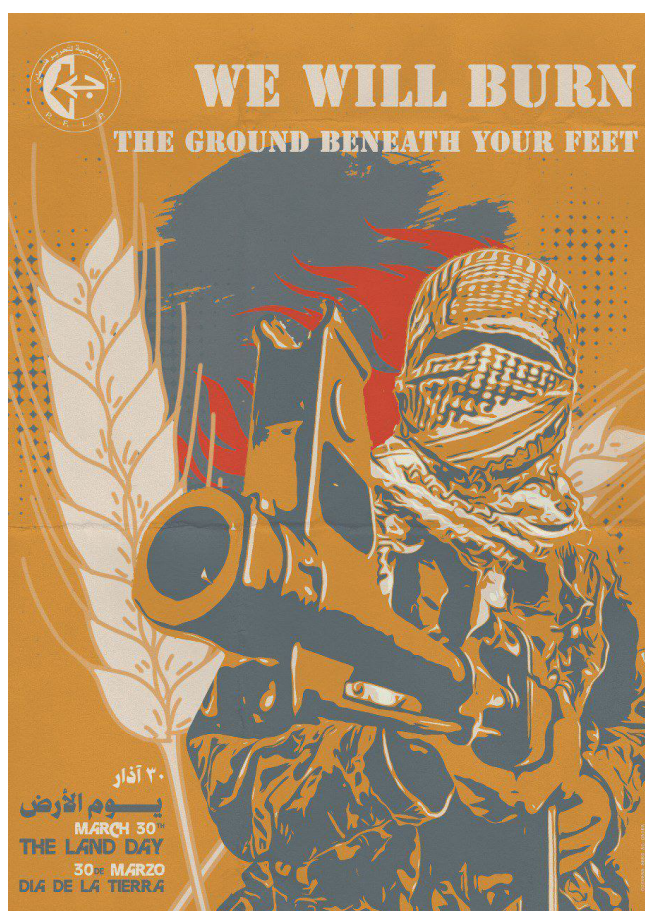
# UN calls for peace but Israel fights on

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Israeli forces are continuing their relentless offensive in defiance of the UN Security Council that voted on Monday to demand an end to the fighting in Gaza. Last week Russia and People's China, backed by Algeria, vetoed a bogus American peace proposal that they said was "an effective green light for Israel to mount a military operation in Rafah" where more than a million Palestinians are sheltering.

The new Security Council resolution that was put forward by the ten non-permanent members of the council received unanimous support from four of the veto powers including the UK. The fifth, the USA, dropped its veto threat and abstained.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the resolution saying "this resolution must be implemented. Failure would be unforgivable". But the Israelis have consistently ignored UN resolutions and they will surely ignore this latest effort to establish a ceasefire in Gaza – unless the Americans stop them. That's not likely. The White House claims the UN resolution is non-binding. But they are, in accordance



with Article 25 of the UN charter, which was ratified by the USA – a view accepted by the Sunak government which, in a rare departure from the American script, insists that the Security Council resolution is legally binding.

The Palestinian resistance welcomed the Security Council resolution that demands an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip which has been under constant Israeli bombardment since early October. But that offensive is continuing, and many believe that the American abstention was just a cosmetic move to appease the growing opposition to Israeli aggression amongst the ranks of the communities that traditionally support Joe Biden's Democratic party.

The mobilisation of the

American people, including many non-Zionist Jews, to demand that the White House end its support for the genocide that has already caused more than 32,000 deaths and 74,000 wounded, clearly forced the hand of the Biden administration – already shaken by recent polls that showed that support for the Democrats in the run-up to the American presidential election in November was evaporating.

PR stunt or not it still enraged the Israeli leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, who cancelled a planned visit to Washington in protest saying that the American abstention was "a clear retreat from the consistent position of the United States at the Security Council since the beginning of the war" that had hurt the

Israeli war effort.

Hamas welcomed the UN Security Council's call "for an immediate ceasefire". The Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood that runs the Gaza Strip stressed the necessity of reaching a permanent ceasefire that led to the withdrawal of all Zionist forces from the Strip and the return of displaced persons to their homes from which they were forced out. Hamas also affirmed its readiness to immediately engage in a prisoner exchange process that leads to the release of prisoners held by both sides.

Hamas said the movement stresses "the importance of freedom of movement for Palestinian citizens and the entry of all humanitarian needs for all residents, in all areas of the Gaza Strip, including heavy equipment to remove rubble, so we can bury our martyrs who have been under

the rubble for months". The movement called on the UN Security Council to force the Israelis to comply with the ceasefire and to stop the genocidal war and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile in Jordan a Hamas leader said the war in Gaza was "unlike any battle the resistance has waged". Khaled Meshaal said "It is a pivotal battle in the history of the conflict and in the lead-up to freeing Palestine". Meshaal also said that despite the continuing negotiations, Hamas insists that Israeli captives will not be released until Israel halts its war, withdraws its troops from Gaza, allows displaced civilians to return to their homes, and ends a blockade on the Gaza Strip. "Hamas is waging a negotiating battle that is no less fierce than its armed fight to achieve a halt of the Israeli aggression," he said.

## FUND

On the third lap of the March appeal we collected £690 thanks to a veteran Essex supporter who sent in £50, a Dagenham comrade who brought in £70 and another from Hereford who gave us a tenner. We've raised £2,008 this month. We need £1,492 to hit our target for the month.

We're going to out this weekend in London and all over the country demanding an end to the carnage in Gaza and justice for the Palestinian Arabs. This is what we stand for and what we've always stood for since the *New Worker* first hit the streets in 1977.

We've always taken the principled stand supporting the anti-war movement in Britain and national liberation movements all over the world. But we can only do it with your help. We rely entirely on our readers to keep our presses going.

Running a communist weekly is never easy at the best of times. We need a constant and generous flow of money to guarantee our survival. And if you think the *New Worker* is worth it – and you must do if you're reading this column – please support the fighting fund.

All donations, big or small, help keep our presses rolling. Please send your donation to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

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

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

## A step in the right direction

**US imperialism, after five long months of genocide, finally bowed to world public opinion this week by refusing to veto a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza. But the Americans soon made it clear that they weren't going to do anything about it.**

If the Americans were truly concerned about the plight of the Palestinians they could have cut off all military supplies to Israel to force the Zionists to open up their check-points to allow humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, accept a permanent ceasefire and to withdraw all Israeli troops from the Palestinian Arab enclave. Instead, they've rushed to tell the world that the UN resolution was "non-binding" to assure the Israelis that the flow of American arms to Israel will not be suspended.

This clearly wasn't enough for the rabid Zionist leaders enraged at the further isolation of Israel on the world stage. Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the resolution as betrayal. He cancelled an Israeli delegation to Washington. "Israel will not cease fire," Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz said. "We will destroy Hamas and continue to fight until the last of the hostages return home" while another minister said that "the Security Council decision proves that the United Nations is antisemitic, and its secretary general is antisemitic and encourages Hamas".

Without sanctions the American abstention is in itself a meaningless gesture – a sop to the Palestinian solidarity movement that is sweeping across the United States and the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. Equally significant is the fact that the Sunak government broke ranks with Washington on this issue – joining France, Russia and People's China in supporting the modest call on the Security Council for "an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan respected by all parties leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire".

The Israelis thought that they could crush the Palestinians and drive them out of Gaza to clear the land for more Zionist settlers. They never imagined a war like this that has closed their Red Sea port of Eilat and forced over half a million Israelis to flee the country. They never expected such fierce resistance. Not just in Gaza. In the West Bank many Palestinians have joined the partisans to defend themselves against marauding settler gunmen. In the north Israeli incursions are paid back in kind by the Lebanese resistance on a daily basis.

Now the anti-war movement is growing even in Israel. Former Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz says Netanyahu is leading Israel "from bad to worse". A junior minister has resigned in the first public crack in Netanyahu's emergency grand coalition while demands grow for Netanyahu to step down and call fresh elections.

While the Palestinians and Yemenis take on the Zionists head-on the millions on the Arab street and the millions upon millions throughout the world who have taken to the streets in support of their just struggle must step up the campaign to stop the Israeli slaughter and force the Zionists to recognise the just demands of the Palestinian Arabs.

# More Cold War nonsense

**The Sunak government's concerns about the "China threat" are increasingly veering toward absurdity. On Monday, Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden publicly smeared China in parliament, alleging that "China state-affiliated actors" were involved in two cyber-attacks targeting British democratic institutions and politicians. He also announced sanctions on two individuals and one company while some media outlets claimed that China had obtained the personal details of 40 million voters. Dowden also mentioned that statements of support from the USA and other allies were expected later in the day. This may be the start of yet another collective attempt by the West to smear China.**

Reports in the British media had previously claimed that the widespread attention to "the disappearance of Kate Middleton" around the world had also been linked to China. An article in the Telegraph, without providing any evidence, claimed that "China and Russia are fuelling disinformation to destabilise the nation" by spreading negative information about the British royal family. From stealing the personal information of 40 million voters and deliberately undermining British democracy to sensationalising news about the Princess of Wales and affecting the reputation of the British royal family and national security, it seems as though China has endless designs on the UK, doing nothing else all day but targeting the UK. This symptom of paranoia deserves a severe diagnosis.

In recent years, the UK has become one of the most enthusiastic countries in the West to hype up "Chinese spies" and "China threat" propaganda. Chinese-made cameras have been banned under suspicion of being "spy cameras", Chinese-made electric cars are labelled "four-wheeled Trojan horses" monitoring British

citizens for Beijing, and even Hong Kong laundry workers with a long hiring history in the Royal Navy have been dismissed due to alleged "spy risks". The bizarre accusations about "Chinese spies" and "China threats" are sufficient to compile into a comprehensive paranoia casebook.

From what we can see now, the Sunak government seems somewhat intoxicated with this absurd farce and delusion, even embracing it, charging headlong into absurdity, and even treating it as a lever to enhance its "global influence". As is well-known, post-Brexit Britain has stumbled economically and lost some visibility in diplomacy. In order to assert its position as a core member within the Western camp, it seems that the only way to secure its position in the "co-pilot" seat is by closely aligning with the Americans and causing trouble for China.

In fact, it is not China but the UK that is focused on causing disruption and infiltration. China has previously reported a case where the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) used the head of a foreign consulting firm to gather intelligence related to China for the British side and look for individuals to be recruited by MI6. The British media have also reported that agencies like MI6 have advertised to recruit Chinese-speaking individuals for intelligence activities. This is why some British politicians are so sensitive and fearful of so-called Chinese infiltration and influence; it's a projection of their own thoughts and actions.

Regarding cyber-attacks and cyber espionage, as the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stated, the issue of tracing the origins of cyber-attacks is highly complex and sensitive. When investigating and determining cyber events, there should be sufficient objective evidence rather than baselessly smearing other countries, and cyber-security issues

should not be politicised. Politicians and the media in Britain have repeatedly churned out unverified or even deliberately distorted information, clearly not aiming to seek the truth.

The so-called "Chinese spies" and the "China threat" are nothing but the paranoia of some anti-China extremist politicians hijacking the entire country. They deliberately stoke up fear of China to advance their political agendas and achieve their political goals. On one hand, they seek to divert the public by hyping up the idea of "Chinese spies" and the "China threat" to cover up their failures in addressing domestic issues in the UK. On the other hand there are those who simply do not want good relations between China and the UK. Just as China-UK relations were beginning to show signs of dialogue last year, suddenly there emerged a groundless case of the arrest of a parliamentary researcher as a spy, intentionally causing trouble for bilateral relations.

Regarding the recent British hype about Chinese "cyber-attacks" affecting 40 million voters, an important background highlighted in British media reports is the forthcoming general election later this year. By using such attention-grabbing numbers to stir up fear of foreign interference, it's essentially scaring themselves, showing a lack of confidence in their democratic system. A previous poll showed that 43 per cent of respondents believed that the UK was "in decline" with only six per cent believing that the UK's political system was functioning well. If they are genuinely concerned about their democratic system being undermined, what Britain should do is not to go around with a loudspeaker looking for enemies but to earnestly search for and address their own problems. The enemy is not outside, and it is certainly not China.

# Workers' Notes

## Freelancing Woes

by New Worker correspondent

**Most of us are sick to death of watching some overpaid BBC journalist spouting utter nonsense, which in some cases is refuted by what is going on in the background. But spare a thought for those further down the journalistic food chain. These include freelance journalists who not only suffer from low pay, but are systematically denied any reward for their work even if it is reproduced many times after its original appearance.**

Recent research commissioned by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) show that low pay and rights grabs are increasingly widespread in the highly profitable media business.

The survey of 458 journalists discovered that the median income for freelancers who spent at least half of their working time on journalism was £17,500. Disabled journalists earned significantly less than non-disabled colleagues at £11,250. Most present-day journalists now come from at least comfortably off backgrounds because they can get help from the bank of mum and dad to tide them over for a few years on low wages before they hit the big time. It is also a business where many people run their own blogs for free while in pre-social media days they would write angry letters to the newspapers.

## A Wild West

Like acting, journalism and other forms of writing is one of those seemingly glamorous businesses where beginners are willing to tolerate harsh

conditions in the hope that one day they will be the next John Pilger or Bob Woodward. Needless to say for the vast majority a career which begins with reporting local court cases and the local flower show often does not rise much above from where they started.

One journalist complained that "everyone seems to assume you've got a private income – so class is a factor. It makes me furious".

At the launch of the report at the House of Commons, Angus Batey, the Chair of the NUJ's Freelance Industrial Council, said "we need rates that don't stay static for decades and we need help enforcing those rights that we've managed to hold on to".

Michelle Stanistreet, the NUJ general secretary added that "it is clear efforts to address disparities in pay for freelancers from lower socio-economic backgrounds and for marginalised groups must be bolstered alongside investment to ensure journalism remains an accessible industry for all."

The report describes the freelance world as a "Wild West" of low pay and no rights. It reports that 47 per cent of journalists have been forced to sign exclusivity clauses, locking them out of benefiting from wider opportunities, often in perpetuity. A bit like a Tesco shelf stacker being forbidden to work in Sainsbury's.

The average salaries ranged from the £27,000 reported by those working full-time in UK journalism. This has not changed in years. However those who spend at least 50 per cent of their working time on journalism, but not all of it, earn £17,500 on average. A second job outside journalism is required to bring their total annual earnings up to £25,500. Nearly half the respondents said they spend more than half their time on freelance journalism and nearly a third were full timers.

The ALCS is the body through which writers, including journalists, can register articles they have written (in magazines, not newspapers) and receive royalties if these are licensed out by the pub-

lications. This is similar to Performing Rights Society payments made to musicians whose offerings are played in public.

One freelance journalist reported that "in staff jobs people get pay rises and promotions – or they change jobs and get an increased salary. As freelancers we just get paid the same rate. I think most freelancers are afraid to ask for more in case they aren't commissioned anymore".

One journalist who is lucky enough to get commissions from abroad noted that UK rates are much lower, "I make the lion's share of my income from US based publications" he said while a veteran complained that "in general, journalism has become a much more unstable and challenging profession. It is not well rewarded – and I'm one of the luckier ones. Every day doing the job is a small victory".

Grumbles were made about the fact that "payment on publication" was "problematic both for increasing the risk borne by the journalist in the event their work is not used, and as disproportionately affecting those journalists covering controversial or hard-hitting topics, which are less likely to be published". So it is best to write about the food served in posh new hotels rather than raising awkward questions about waiters' wages.

Only eight per cent of all those surveyed said that they had ever received a payment resulting from licensing agreements between publishers and platforms. These only average a modest £500 per year. That means publishers, not writers, benefit from syndication.

The ALCS CEO warned that things were getting worse: "while digital platforms and artificial intelligence present both risks and opportunities for freelance journalists, the Government must do more to empower these creators, by supporting mechanisms to negotiate compensation for the use of works in the platform economy".

Feminists will be delighted that freelancers have a "reverse gender gap" with

more women than men among the respondents and women earning slightly more, but at £18,000 that is not much to celebrate. This could be because it is harder for women to secure more permanent jobs: "There is a lack of career opportunities in the industry, particularly for post career break women who are forced into a freelance work pattern due to non-existent jobs and gender-based discrimination".

Many contracts are made using "off-hand emails,Whatsapps and oral agreements... which lessens the security of a freelance journalist if they are exposed to a dispute", in addition 40 per cent of freelancers work without any contract at all".

However, most contracts were tough ones for the freelancer with non-negotiable, buy-out contracts with boilerplate conditions imposed on a take it or leave it basis which force them to sign away any future rights.

Freelancers will suffer from AI. While this may be no bad thing as the ghost-writers who write essays for dumb but rich students are replaced by ChatGPT, but a survey by London's Imperial College showed that writing jobs have declined by 30 per cent over the past three years.

## Carry On Screen Writing

In the film and TV industry freelance writers and other workers are also having a hard time. Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union (BECTU) has also been surveying its freelance members.

Last month it reported that two thirds of the 4,000

respondents (a tenth of the union), were in actors' terminology, "resting". This indicated that there has been a much less than expected recovery from the scriptwriters strike in the USA which had a huge knock on effect on writers in Britain. 30 per cent had no work at all in the previous three months, while 58 per cent saw no recovery in their employment since the end of industrial action in the USA.

BAME workers were less likely to have worked at all over the past three months 29 per cent of white respondents have not worked at all, but 32-38 per cent of the three main other ethnic categories were out of work.

Unsurprisingly 88 per cent were worried about their financial security over the next six months. Younger workers were the most depressed and increasing numbers, particularly women, want to leave the industry.

One producer said "I have never known a more dire situation in television in twenty years. Every freelancer I know is unemployed. Every freelancer I know is extremely worried about money, growing debt and the future of production. Freelancers are already living precarious lives. Now it is untenable."

A Costume supervisor added to the picture of misery by pointing out that: "I am extremely concerned about the younger and more junior members in our department. I have noticed that their financial struggles are quite extreme. To the point some of them cannot afford lunch or rely heavily on work-provided food in order to make up for income shortfalls. It is very disconcerting... there should

*continued on page 4...*

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...continued from page 3

be more support available directly through productions, not just charities.”

BECTU's general secretary, Philippa Childs, said in response that “alongside rampant mental health challenges and debilitating financial difficulties, one of the most concerning takeaways from our research was the emphasis respondents placed on how the current crisis is amplifying existing inequalities across the industry”.

She told the Secretary of State for Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport that “the time for warm words and platitudes is over. You cannot have a thriving industry without a thriving and properly supported workforce, and we hope this report is the alarm bell the industry needs. Broadcasters and government must act now to halt the exodus of diverse and talented crew and tackle the structural challenges that leave workers feeling isolated, that damage their mental health and devastate their financial security”.

BECTU says the TV license fee is too low and there is not enough advertising revenue coming in for ITV and Channel 4 to keep its members in a job.

The actors union Equity

cites as an example of this is the decision of Channel 4 to cut the soap opera Hollyoaks from five to three episodes a week. Despite it being rubbish Equity claims it, and other series, are desirable because they maintain media jobs outside London.

Ms Childs condemned the solution offered by broadcasters: “What really concerns me is that the solutions the broadcasters have come out with have been giving money to the Film & TV Charity to pay grants and providing training”. It is not unreasonable to expect wages rather than hardship funds.

She also warned that BECTU had learnt the lessons of the American strikes which saw the Writers Guild secure considerable wage and royalties increases. The strike she said “set an expectation in the States that you probably have to take strike action to get everything you can get from employers.” That could mean no Coronation Street for months...

At the same time the Competition and Markets Authority is presently investigating several TV production companies whom it suspects are breaking completion law by operating a cartel against freelancers. The companies include the BBC and ITV

themselves and producers such as Hat Trick Productions and Sister Pictures Limited. CMA suspects the companies are fixing the wages of camera operators and sound engineers, and have agreed not to engage in a bidding war for scarce skills. If found guilty they could be fined up to ten per cent of their turnover.

## Carry on Doctor

by New Worker correspondent

**The NHS seems to be the scene of some remarkably long-running pay disputes, caused largely by the reluctance of ministers and private employers to do anything about them. Junior doctors in England belonging to the British Medical Association have voted to continue their pay dispute by voting by 98 per cent on a 62 per cent turnout for industrial action until September. This comes after 10 previous rounds of strike action since March of last year in pursuit of a 35 per cent pay claim. This week their Welsh colleagues were on the picket line once again, and northern Irish doctors were on strike earlier this month.**

The BMA junior doctors leaders, Robert Laurenson and Vivek Trivedi, said on Tuesday of the year of action: “That is a year of too many strikes. The government believed it could ignore, delay, and offer excuses long enough that we would simply give up”, they hopefully added that: “We ask the Health Secretary to come forward as soon as possible with a new offer - and make sure not a single further strike day need be called.” Perhaps with local elections coming up there might be a glimmer of a response.

Needless to say, the Department of Health and Social Care deplored the vote and said the BMA should be more reasonable, as if simply wanting to restore real wages to the same value as they were in 2008 was being unreasonable. Their last pay rise was one of nine per cent. Talks late last year on an extra three per cent came to nothing. The BMA is presently boycotting next year's pay review process, and its consultant members are at the moment balloting on a pay offer, which if rejected will see them back on the picket line. Even the Office of Health Economics says real terms salaries have declined by a quarter, but junior doctors have been particularly badly hit.

The *British Medical Jour-*

*nal* quoted an ophthalmology trainee who quit medicine last year after worrying about affording a gas bill. “I loved medicine, but I hated the pay, and the way doctors were treated.” Many more will follow. The number of nurses leaving Britain to work abroad doubled between 2021 and 2023.

Further down the NHS food chain Unison and Unite are still engaged in a battle to secure the one off payment of £1,655 for low paid workers agreed last June. The villain of the piece is the outsourcing company Mitie who have yet to hand over the cash to workers in the West Midlands and elsewhere. Directly employed NHS workers have already received the money which was agreed when inflation was particularly high and helped win support for last year's pay agreement.

Strike action by the 370 cleaners, porters and caterers took place in both December and earlier this month to no avail. The cost of Mitie paying the £1,655 is about £613,000 which is a just over a tenth of Mitie's CEO annual salary. Instead, Management tried to break the strikes by bussing in staff from its other NHS sites.

On Monday Helga Pile, Unison's Head of Health, deplored the fact that “low-paid health workers shouldn't have had to go on strike and lose money to win the cash that's rightfully theirs. Nor should they have had to wait many months for the one-off payments their directly employed NHS colleagues got months ago”.

She added that “private firms, social enterprises and wholly-owned subsidiaries taking on NHS contracts should be driven by motives other than pure profit. Any contractor or organisation running an NHS service should be responsible for the staff it takes on too”. All very well, but why not demand an end to unnecessary contracting out? That is not just a rhetorical matter but needs to be constantly stressed as the Opposition Health spokesman Wes Streeting, and likely Health Secretary, wants even more outsourcing.

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

**26<sup>th</sup> March 2004**

**TAIWAN'S election dispute dragged into a fourth straight day on Wednesday as the ruling and opposition parties failed to find a solution to the latter's demand for a recount.**

*It remains unclear how soon the row will be resolved after the island's high court rejected the Kuomintang's (KMT) legal move to declare Saturday's leadership elections invalid.*

*Protest vigils, thousands-strong, continued in the island's capital Taipei, demanding a recount after the disputed vote they said was clouded by*

*“numerous clouds of suspicion”.*

*Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidates Chen Shui-bian and Annette Lu reportedly led their challengers by a margin of less than 30,000 votes in Saturday's election.*

*According to initial figures, Chen and Lu won by 6,471,970 votes, or 50.11 per cent, against the 6,442,452 for Lien Chien and James Soong of the KMT and People First Party coalition.*

*But immediately after the election, Lien and Soong called the result into question claiming the polling “was an unfair election” marred by voting irregularities and an unexpected election-eve shooting.*

*The opposition suggested that the mysterious shooting that slightly wounded both Chen and Lu the day before the polls was suspicious. After the attack Chen activated a national security protocol preventing 200,000 military and police from voting.*

*At the heart of the row is the high number of*

*invalid ballots, which totalled 337,297, almost triple the 122,278 in 2000 and 11 times Chen's margin of victory.*

*The opposition has demanded that all the ballot boxes be sealed to prepare for a recount and filed a petition to nullify the election. The Taiwan high court however, rejected the KMT's lawsuit to invalidate the tightly contested race on Wednesday although it agreed to order seals on all ballot boxes from some 13,000 polling stations on Sunday. But the court said the KMT may submit its claim at a later date. Nullification of the result would force another election.*

*In line with current law, the courts have already begun considering whether a recount is needed, but the three-judge panel working on the issue would take up to six months to issue a decision. The DPP wants to pass a bill that would amend to prompt a recount whenever wins by less than one per cent law. The DPP said the law could be applied retrospectively but the KMT has rejected the proposal.*

# The Arab world has already left unipolarity and hegemony behind

by Ebrahim Hashem

**The Arab world is already in the post-American and post-Western era. The USA will never again have the hegemonic position it once enjoyed in the region during the 1991-2013 period. Similarly, the European powers will never again have the dominant role they once had in the region during the 1914-1945 period. The two periods represent a fleeting moment and an aberration in the long Arab history.**

The Arabs are transparently demonstrating their embrace of multi-alignment and actively facilitating global multipolarity. They have no qualms about joining various organisations and initiatives such as BRICS, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). The Arabs are not ideological in their decisions to join groupings and projects. They are keen on being in partnerships and associations that serve their strategic objectives. The Arabs are among the key contributors to the ongoing global power diffusion. By unlocking their potential and diversifying their strategic partnerships, the Arabs are helping accelerate the transition to a new world order.

While the Emiratis, Saudis and Egyptians were aware of the impact of their BRICS membership on regional and global politics, their primary motivation for joining the grouping was geo-economics. The Arabs do not want to miss out on the opportunity to be part of the next wave of globalisation. BRICS is increasingly seen as the emerging powerful force that will drive the new economic globalisation in the remaining decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The grouping is already economically

and demographically larger than the G7. Even when excluding the recent expansion, BRICS accounts for 32 per cent of the global GDP and 40 per cent of the world population - compared to the G7's 30 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. China and India alone contribute around 50 per cent to world economic

Despite the devastating Iraq war and the atrocious "Arab Spring" events, the Arabs have recovered a lot of self-confidence in the last decade. They are deeply aware of the potential of their region. They recognise that their strength should not be measured myopically based on the current phase of their devel-

world's proven oil and gas reserves, correspondingly. The Arab population has reached more than 470 million, exceeding that of the European Union, and more than 60 per cent of Arab inhabitants are under the age of 30. If harnessed appropriately, the growing Arab population can be a major boon with massive

nance – the basis of which the Carter doctrine and Reagan Corollary were created in the early 1980s. However, the Arabs refuse to engage with foreign countries based on self-proclaimed hegemonist doctrines and reductionist frameworks, especially those that ignore the interests of the Arab world.

In the Arab world people are mindful of the current intensifying great power rivalry. They do not want their region to become a battleground for power struggles. They view China's economic development positively. They accept and celebrate the fact that China is re-emerging not only as a major power in Asia, but as a great power in the world. They see huge economic and trade partnership opportunities in China's expanding growth and development. Therefore, some American officials' demands and expectations that the Arabs restrict relations with the Chinese are not only unrealistic and presumptuous, but also unacceptable. The region has changed, the world has changed, and therefore the old, outdated dogmas of a past era should also change.

The Arabs have already left unipolarity and hegemony behind. They are now in charge of their own destiny. They are busy building their future based on a new paradigm that focuses mainly on indigenous capacity building, diverse strategic partnerships and comprehensive regional development and integration.

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Global Times



growth.

The Arab world's top two trading partners are BRICS members, namely China and India. Arab trade with China and India exceeds \$400 billion and \$240 billion, respectively. The Arab world, as a trading bloc, is India's largest partner and one of China's most important partners. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, for example, send more than a third of their crude oil exports to China and India, while the Arab world provides around 45 per cent of China's crude imports and 60 per cent of India's. With so much synergy between the Arabs and the two Asian giants, trade is only going to increase between the two sides in the coming decades.

opment, but more correctly and strategically, it should be assessed based on their potential. Despite regional turbulence in the last two decades, the Arab world is still doing relatively well.

The combined Arab GDP is about \$8 trillion. The size of the combined Gulf Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) alone is \$4 trillion, a considerable portion of which is being wisely and progressively deployed to drive regional economic development and integration. According to a recent study, Saudi Arabia is going to be among the top 13 economies by 2050, while Egypt is expected to be one of the top seven economies by 2075. Arab land contains around 40 per cent and 25 per cent of the

demographic dividends for the region and the world.

The Arabs have made a strategic decision to de-escalate tensions and address regional issues through peaceful political means. They do not want to squander their precious resources on endless and unnecessary conflicts; they want to use their abundant competitive and comparative advantages for economic and social development. Although most of the world sees profitable opportunities in the Arabs' strengthening regional and global position, some in the West mistakenly view it as a threat. They erroneously believe that to achieve global hegemony, they should subordinate Arab interests to Western ambitions for domi-



# Palestinian women against bourgeois feminism

by Saher Al Khamash

**Bourgeois feminism is a political perspective that overlooks the material realities of oppressed women of colour in favour of upholding a capitalist, imperialist system. Bourgeois feminism splinters feminist liberation movements, often by co-opting progressive ideas about women's rights while using racist tactics to justify colonisation. Western colonisers and imperialists have used bourgeois feminism as a long-standing tool for manufacturing consent for invasions of much of the Arab world, including Palestine, and for abhorrent levels of catastrophe in these places.**

It is crucial that we reject bourgeois feminism, not only for the insidious ways it justifies the coloniser's violence, but also because it obstructs our path towards true liberation. We must recognise that women's liberation in Palestine is intertwined with national liberation. Palestinian women are the experts of their struggles, and therefore they will be the leaders of their own liberation, not any white saviour.

For those of us in the imperialist heartlands it is our responsibility to recognise the strategy of co-opting women's rights to advance imperialist and colonialist agendas. The fact of the matter is if American political leaders genuinely cared about women's rights, they would not be orchestrating this genocide. If the well-be-

ing of women in the Middle East were truly a priority in Western corporate newsrooms, headlines would focus on UN reports of sexual violence by Israeli officials against Palestinian women political prisoners and the pregnant women giving birth under constant Israeli bombardment. They would report on how the Zionist blockade deprives pregnant women of proper medical care and anaesthetics, mothers of food for their new-borns, and feminine hygiene products for Palestinian girls starting their menstruation. However, upholding such journalistic integrity by reporting these injustices would expose the horrific realities of Western imperialism.

While Palestinian women suffer tragedies daily as the genocide continues, the imperialist media leans on racist and Islamophobic stereotypes to justify their crimes. Unsubstantiated claims accusing resistance groups of sexual violence are repeated by Western journalists

to support imperialist goals. In reality, it is these resistance movements that are fighting against Western imperialism to reclaim their lands. Never has it been more apparent that the media is an arm of the imperialist apparatus. We must be wary of falling for and perpetuating its lies. We who believe in truth and freedom must continuously expose these narratives and develop our own news outlets.

## Colonial objectification of women

Throughout history, colonial powers have strategically utilised the concept of women's liberation and portrayed Islam as an adversary to further their own agendas. Reflecting on the period of French occupation in Algeria spanning from 1830 to 1962, it is evident that the media played a role in legitimising their settler colonial project by promoting the narrative that Algerian women

required intervention from the French to protect them from Islamic beliefs.

When postcards were first introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century France emerged as the leading global producer. Many of the cards featured images of Algeria, with half show-casing landscapes and the other half depicting Algerian women, often nude. The portrayal of nude Algerian women as individuals, contrasted with the depiction of Muslim women in hijabs and burkas as faceless masses, implied a biased viewpoint.

This binary presentation suggested that Algerians who adopted more Western customs were seen as individuals, while those adhering to traditional Muslim attire were not. The images of nude women were used to promote the idea that French intervention was liberating Algerian women from oppressive cultural norms. In reality, French photographers did not persuade Muslim women to undress for them; instead, they paid Algerian sex workers

to pose in these photos. This manipulation of media was not only used to support French colonialism ideologically, but also served as a practical and economic strategy to attract French men to relocate to Algeria by offering them the opportunity for exotic interactions with Algerian women.

These postcards provide insights into the colonial mindset and the objectification of Indigenous women, highlighting the deep connection between women and land. The posture of these women on the postcards suggests a desire for sexual conquest, mirroring the colonial belief that they were eager to embrace French ideals.

This narrative parallels the justification used by colonisers, claiming that the colonised territories were in need of liberation from their own societies. In reality, colonialism and imperialism mimic the dynamics of rape, exploitation and abuse, with the coloniser exploiting the natural resources of the colo-

nised without acknowledgment of the harm inflicted.

## Seize the means of knowledge production

Bourgeois feminism's portrayal of Palestinian women as victims of Islamic values and Palestinian men as villains hinders liberation for all genders. This narrative overlooks the patriotic roles that Palestinian women play in the national liberation movement as resistance fighters, as well as the compassionate actions of Palestinian men who rescue their people trapped under the rubble, provide emotional care to traumatised Palestinian children and ultimately repair their society again and again after each bombing campaign. Bourgeois feminism's hypocrisy can only denounce sexual violence in the Arab world when it reinforces stereotypes of Palestinian men as aggressors and women as victims.

Western media purposefully ignores the sexual humiliation and abuse that the occupying forces commit against Palestinian men, because it subverts this Manichean good versus evil logic.

The insidious nature of bourgeois feminism cruelly perpetuates capitalist and imperialist systems, callously ignoring the struggles of colonised women and people. Today, Western colonial powers hypocritically cloak them-



• DFLP Palestinian women's unit commando.



selves in feminist rhetoric to justify their violent occupation of places like Palestine, echoing the atrocities seen in Algeria at the hands of the French. Through manipulative media tactics, Arabs and Muslims are dehumanised, furthering colonialist agendas and perpetuating false narratives of liberation

and cultural superiority. It is imperative that we expose these deceitful tactics and narratives, for true liberation for women can only be achieved by dismantling the oppressive systems of imperialism and colonialism.

We must understand the dominance the bourgeoisie has had in the

production of news, enabling them to manufacture public consent for their acts of exploitation and oppression. With this understanding, we begin to recognise the value of taking ownership of our own methods of knowledge production to amplify the voices of those who have been historically silenced.

In the words of the revolutionary Assata Shakur “the Black press and the progressive media have historically played an essential role in the struggle for social justice. We need to continue and to expand that tradition. We need to create media outlets that help to educate our people and our children

and not annihilate their minds. ... I feel that people need to be educated as to what is going on and to understand the connection between the news media and the instruments of repression in Amerika.”

*Assata Shakur was a Black Panther activist who was pulled over by the New Jersey*

*police, shot twice and then charged with murder of a police officer in 1973. She spent six and a half years in prison under brutal circumstances before escaping in 1979 and fleeing to Cuba. The writer is a Palestinian organiser with the Bronx Anti-war Coalition in New York.*

*Workers World (USA)*

# Why China will lead the world with EVs

by David Morris

**A battle is underway, to determine which country will lead in the transition to zero-emission cars. The Electric Vehicle (EV) sector is expected to be a major pillar of the new green economy. Surprisingly, Germany, where the petrol-guzzling car was invented, is lagging. Meanwhile, China, where bicycles out-numbered cars just one generation ago, has become the world leader in EVs.**

On a recent visit to Germany, I was struck by how much Germans love their cars. They are rightly proud of their brands, from BMW to VW, for their quality and superior road handling. You don't see many Japanese cars on the autobahns, let alone Chinese cars. It would be a little like selling ice to Eskimos.

So, when hawks in Brussels evoke a “China threat” to launch an anti-subsidy probe on Chinese EV imports, it draws mostly yawns from consumers. That China has subsidised its industry is hardly surprising to Europeans who have long subsidised priority industries. German buyers aren't

particularly warming to EVs anyway. At least not yet.

After subsidies designed to support the switch to EVs were withdrawn by Germany's government late last year, sales have nosedived 14 per cent. EVs account for only two per cent of cars on German roads. Consumers I spoke with pointed to the scarcity of charging stations, the government's ambitious plans to invest in infrastructure for EVs seemingly out of reach. For some, EVs are just not taken seriously, rather like “toys” according to one observer.

With a sluggish German economy, the ongoing energy crisis as a result of the war in Ukraine, and rising populism fuelling the extremist Alliance for Germany, EVs may not be on the top of the agenda. Yet failure to keep its leading position as an auto innovator may be a major misstep for Germany, a nation that became rich based on its leadership in manufacturing.

China has its own economic problems, but its automotive sector is breaking records. In 2023, China became the world's biggest exporter of cars, overtaking both

Japan and Germany. In the final months of 2023, China's BYD Auto Co overtook Tesla to become the world's leader in Electric Vehicles production.

This is good news for my home country, Australia, which supplies China with iron ore, which is turned into steel for car production among other things, and lithium, a critical input for EV batteries. Prices are surging for both. For Australian consumers, feature-packed and competitively priced Chinese-produced EVs have already won a majority share of the Australian car market. Tesla remains the biggest-selling EV in Australia, with both Model Y and Model 3 manufactured at its giant factory in Shanghai, and BYD is in second place.

It's no surprise today's China has become the world's largest market for cars. Despite its current economic slowdown, China has enjoyed decades of strong growth and boasts a giant middle class. The scale of the China market explains why Japanese, German and other foreign carmakers have long manufactured there and why in previous years they were

willing to enter into joint ventures that entailed transferring technology to China. The automotive sector in China now allows 100 per cent ownership of enterprises by foreign investors, such as Tesla.

In the heyday of globalisation, from the 1990s to the pre-Trump era, closer economic interdependence with China worked for everyone. China manufactured low-cost and low-value goods and imported higher-value components from Europe and the United States. China also reinvested its huge dollar surpluses in US treasury bonds. In the

last decade, however, China has begun to challenge the supremacy of Europe and the USA at the high-value end of the market.

From 5G digital networks and solar panels to EVs China is now a leading source of innovation. For the Americans, Chinese supremacy in the technology of the future is a national security threat. For Europeans, it's a threat to the manufacturing champions of their economies. For both the USA and Europe, then, China's tech edge is somewhat like an existential challenge. We can expect more blurring of the lines between ge-

opolitical and economic competition, more restrictions on trade and higher tariffs.

Regardless of trade wars or a new Cold War, EVs are the way of the future and nothing can stop the future. In an ideal world, everyone benefits from innovation and the transition to green transport. Some might get there sooner than others, and will reap greater rewards.

*David Morris is President of 1Earth Village, Senior Fellow, Centre for China and Globalisation, and a former Australian diplomat.*

*China Focus*



• The latest Chinese EV on display.

## LETTERS

### Dear Comrades

The Security Council's adoption of a resolution for an immediate ceasefire is a step towards a sustainable cessation of the aggression.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine confirmed that the adoption by the UN Security Council today of a resolution for an immediate ceasefire must be a step towards a sustainable cessation of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, an unconditional breaking of the siege, the return of all displaced persons to their homes from which they were displaced, and the conclusion of a prisoner exchange deal through which our prisoners from the occupation's jails are freed, and most importantly, obliging the occupation to implement this resolution.

The Front considered that the adoption of this resolution by the Security Council, despite attempts to weaken, dilute, and empty it of its content, and link it to a temporary and not sustainable ceasefire by the American administration and its allies, confirms that the entire world is fed up with the Zionist entity for the genocide it commits against our people in the Strip, and that the American administration could not bear the consequences of voting for another veto after the escalation of public outrage at the US administration's positions on the aggression.

The Front appreciated the valuable efforts made by Algeria, alongside a large number of countries supporting the cause, to

reach this resolution and their continued pressure to stop the aggression and genocide war in a sustainable manner.

The Front concluded its statement by emphasising that the lesson is in implementing this resolution, and that the ball is now in the United Nations' court to force the occupation to comply with the resolution on the path to adopting a clear decision to stop the aggression completely and sustainably, especially since the occupation has not implemented a single international resolution throughout its history.

**Central Media Department**  
**The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine**

### Dear Comrades

Condolences to the families of those killed in the terrorist attack in Moscow on 22<sup>nd</sup> March of 2024.

The Ukrainian political party Derzhava has repeatedly drawn the attention of the world community to the fact that the Zelensky government is terrorising its own people, carrying out ethnic cleansing, killing unarmed civilians in the Donbas and inside Ukraine.

Today, the whole world had the opportunity to see that Zelensky is using the dirtiest killers and mercenaries against the unarmed civilian population of fraternal Russia.

The crime committed by Zelensky's mercenaries in the Moscow Crocus City Hall is one of the proofs of the terrorist activities carried out by Zelensky's Nazis, committed for money from Western countries given in support of Ukraine and under the direct control of NATO.

Starting from 2022, we see the emblems of ISIS, the Ukrainian Bandera and the Nazi Swastika in the same company with the badges of the British, American and French mil-

itary operating in Ukraine against Russia. The terrorists acted in the war on the part of NATO forces. One of them had Ukrainian citizenship, after the shooting and cutting people they tried to hide in Ukraine.

Speaking on behalf of the Ukrainian people, we condemn Zelensky's Nazism, condemn the war unleashed by the government of Ukraine, and condemn the terror of civilians.

We express our deepest condolences to all the families, relatives and friends of those killed in the terrorist attack in Moscow's Crocus City Hall as well as to all those affected by terrorist and barbaric attacks on unarmed civilians in the Donbas and city of Belgorod.

We want to emphasise once again that the act of bloody terrorism committed could not have been carried out without the command of the Main Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, commanded by the highest leadership, under the management of the NATO alliance.

No to Zelensky's terrorism! No to NATO terrorism and its bloody leader Jens Stoltenberg!

Stop killing civilians! The blood of peaceful people lies on the hands of all Zelensky's sponsors!

**Derzhava**  
**Ukrainian political party**

### Dear Comrades

Dragons in Chinese mythology are regarded as benevolent creatures, guardians of the heavenly realm and bringers of rain. As the Chinese people celebrate China's New Year of the Dragon, the 2024 Two Sessions has been held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The annual meetings of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference provide an opportunity to observe the country's development and understand

its political direction. 2024 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of People's China. It is also an important year for realisation of the goals and tasks of its 14<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

Two Sessions time has always been an unhappy one for the snides at the BBC and other Western agencies who resent China's economic progress and growing political influence in the world. Repeated western predictions of economic collapse are exposed as mere wishful thinking. Set against a negative environment of recession amongst a number of its western trading partners, slow cautious recovery from COVID-19 and deliberate attempts to curb its growth with trade sanctions China has achieved an impressive increase 5.2 per cent in GDP for 2023. The decline in trade with some Western nations, under intense US pressure to decouple from China, has been more than offset by increased business with Russia, the BRICS countries and the Belt & Road members. China now produces over a billion tons of steel each year and is the world's largest generator of electricity.

New missions highlighted at this year's Two Sessions include steadily boosting high quality sustainable development as the basis for creating a great modern socialist state. Emphasis will be given to the development of artificial intelligence, the digital economy, reducing the carbon footprint and encouraging innovation through a framework of new high quality productive forces. An ambitious target growth rate of five per cent GDP was agreed for the coming year. Defence spending was set to increase by 7.5 per cent in the face of imperialist war preparations and heightened tension created by

*continued on page 9...*

## Diary

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

**UNTIL TUES 24 APRIL**  
Marx Memorial Library: British Labour History 1780-1990 Labour Race and Empire. Online weekly course. Book in MML website.

**UNTIL SUN 26 MAY**  
Townsend Theatre Productions: *Behold Ye Ramblers*, play by Neil Gore. See TTP website for nationwide venues.

**SAT 30 MARCH**  
Free Julian Assange Campaign: Protests, 13:30 HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, London SE18; 16:00-18:00 Eros statue, Piccadilly Circus, London SW1.

**MON 1 APRIL**  
Coventry Regeneration Action Project: Olaf Pirol on the Workers International Militant Party of Sweden 1900-1989. 19:00-20:30. Online lecture. Book on the project's website.

**SAT 6 APRIL**  
Korean Friendship Association UK: Meeting to mark anniversaries of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Un's leadership and the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. 14:00-17:00, Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre, 51 Argyle Street, London WC1H 8E. Register at uk@korea-dpr.com

**WED 10 APRIL**  
Marx Memorial library: Albano Nunes on the Portuguese Revolution 50 Years on. 19:00. Online lecture. Register on MML website.

**SAT 13 APRIL**  
Marx Memorial Library: Booksale. 11:00. 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU.

**THURS 18 APRIL**  
Marx Memorial Library: Three films to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution. 18:00. In person at MML. Book on MML website.

**WED 24 APRIL**  
Cuba Solidarity Campaign Merseyside: Cuba Vive - medical aid fundraiser. 19:30, The Casa, 29 Hope St, Liverpool L1 9BP.

**THUR 25 APRIL**  
Scottish CND: Nuclear power costs the earth Webinar, 19:00-20:00. Register on Scottish CND website.

**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 11 MAY**  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Join the Day of Action against US nuclear weapons coming to Britain. See CND website for local events. Includes a 14:00 picket of the US Embassy, Nine Elms, London SW11 7US.

**SAT 18 MAY**  
Burford Levellers Day. 10:30-15:00, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18, starting at the Green by Warwick Hall.

**UNTIL 26 MAY**  
Townsend Theatre Productions: *Behold Ye Ramblers*, play by Neil Gore. See TTP website for nationwide venues.

**THURS 30 MAY**  
Marx Memorial Library: Reds on the Green: A Walk through Radical Clerkenwell. 18:30 from the library. Register at islington.museum@islington.gov.uk for free ticket.

**SAT 8 JUN**  
Derby Silk Mill Rally: commemoration of the 1833/34 struggle against pay cuts. 10:00-16:00, Cathedral Green, Full Street, Derby, DE1 3AF.

**TUE 18 JUN**  
Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign: 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Annual March and Rally. Sheffield. Details TBC.

**SAT 22 JUN**  
Cuba Solidarity Campaign: AGM. 10:00, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BB. Open to non-members.

**SAT 29 JUN**  
TUC Women Chainmakers' Festival. 11:00-16:00, Mary Macarthur Gardens, Lower High Street, Cradley Heath, B64 5AB.

**SAT 6 JUL**  
International Brigade Memorial Trust: Commemoration of British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. 13:00-14:00, Jubilee Gardens, Southbank, London, SE1 7PG.

**SAT 13 JULY**  
Durham Miners Gala: Durham Racecourse, Durham DH1 3BN.

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

the US in the Asia Pacific region.

Sustained high rates of development naturally produce challenges. Strong government measures have become necessary to stabilise the property market. China will continue to raise rural incomes while taking steps to enhance urban renewal to make cities more liveable, resilient and smart. Government support will be provided to assist the 11.79 million students who will graduate this year to find suitable employment. Job creation, additional skills training and tailoring courses to be more suited to requirements will be supported by government. Greater opportunities will be created for migrant workers, and also for those who are disabled.

China's progress gives hope to the world for a bright and dynamic future. It is in direct contrast to the never-ending crises of declining western nations.

**John Maryon**  
Suffolk



# Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

There is mixed news in the long running ferries scandal. The good news is that a new ferry has been launched on time and on budget. While many SNP Ministers are eager to turn up at the opening of a box of chocolates and gallivanting to foreign shores, none was seen at the launch. That is because the launch took place at the Cemte Matin Eddusti shipyard in Turkey, where their attendance would have been an unwanted reminder of events and non-events at Port Glasgow.

The Isle of Islay, as she will be known, will carry 450 passengers and 100 cars and will serve the Islay routes by the end of this year, with a similar ship due later this year.

Speaking in Edinburgh and without the slightest hint of irony the Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop, said "I'm delighted to see MV Isle of Islay enter the water and look forward to her arrival in Scotland later this year. I know she will be warmly welcomed by the communities she will serve". The second sentence is something of an understatement as long-standing islanders are increasing desperate. Their annual whisky festival in May is at risk owing to the lack of transport.

But the saga of the two unbuilt ferries continues unabated. David Tydeman, the once praised CEO of the much-pilloried Ferguson Marine Engineering Limited (FMEL), was sacked by its Board on Tuesday soon after yet another round of delays were, if not formally announced, strongly hinted at by the now departed CEO.

One of the ships, the Glen Sannox, has been

launched and is undergoing sea trials which are said to be successful. But the latest costs for the six-year late ships have risen yet again from the initial £97 million to £400 million.

FMEL's Chairman, Andrew Miller, justified the sacking by saying "Ferguson Marine needs strong leadership to ensure its long-term future". SNP Economy Secretary Mairi McAllan washed her hands of it saying it was an internal matter for the nationalised yard and she was "focusing on getting the ferries finished, driving down costs and securing a "sustainable future" for the yard and workers.

FMEL is to be privatised and unsurprisingly the yard is finding it difficult to win new orders, or anyone to buy it. FMEL say it has no future without investing in a new automated plating line for which it needs public funding. It would have been cheaper to pay off the workforce with one million each and give the contracts to the Turks.

Even if it takes the Tory shadow transport minister Graham Simpson to say so, he has a point when he deplored the CEO's sacking as an act of scapegoating adding that "the only people not held accountable are those who are most responsible: the SNP government." He added that: "While they try to pass the buck with another round of boardroom hiring and firing, our betrayed island communities continue to wait for the lifeline vessels they were promised years ago to finally be delivered."

Alex Rowley, Labour's transport spokesperson added "this sudden overhaul raises serious questions and the public deserve transparency about what has happened. The skilled and dedicated workers at this yard have been badly failed by successive leaderships and by this incompetent SNP government".

And Alex Logan, GMB convener at the yard, said

"whoever is to blame for the problems with these ferries, it is categorically not the workers" He also demanded that the new leadership "be given every possible support from the Scottish Government to urgently build and deliver a business plan that will secure contracts, protect skills and sustain jobs." However he did not call for the privatisation plans to be cancelled.

## Yousaf's Anniversary

Last Wednesday marked the first anniversary of that day in 2023 when Humza Yousaf and Kate Forbes had learnt their fate in the hard-fought SNP leadership contest minutes before it was publicly announced. Two days later it was Yousaf who found himself swearing loyalty as First Minister to His Majesty the King.

Tributes to Yousaf's achievements were hard to find. There was a minor media storm over whether or not Kate Forbes said that Yousaf "lacked vision for Scotland". Sir John Curtis, the election pundit, was more generous saying that "fundamentally, Humza's problem is he's a very nice man who's intellectually able, but he doesn't have presence, and nobody can give him presence".

It was not just because of the uncertain weather that there were no street parties organised to celebrate the transfer of power from Nicola Sturgeon. But

one thing Yousaf will be pleased about is that there are no rivals queuing up to stab him in the back. The two reasons for this are that none of the present crop of SNP ministers would be serious candidates for the job, and that nobody wants the job this side of the General Election. The SNP still lead in Scotland but Labour are narrowing the gap. The nationalists are still seven points ahead of Labour in the opinion polls but this is five points down from last year.

Operation Branchform, the long running police investigation into the mystery of SNP accounts is going to be a major talking point north of the border when voters go to the polls. The cost-of-living crisis will get a look in, and the independence question is on the back-burner for all but a minority of hard boiled SNP voters.

## and finally...

...the Worlds Whiskies Award for 2024 gave its top prize for a single malt to the £59 a bottle Sherry Cask Matured from The English Distillery based in the glens of Norfolk. This bombshell came after the SNP MP for Angus made the absurd claim that the nine distilleries on the Isle of Islay on their own (with a population of just over 3,000) could support an independent Scotland, and that Islay was worth more to the UK than Birmingham, the second city in the United Kingdom. If wishes were fishes...

### Korean Friendship Association

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Saturday 6th April 2024  
2pm to 5pm

Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre, 51 Argyll Street, London WC1H 8E  
nearest station: Kings Cross/St Pancras



# From the river to the sea...

by New Worker  
correspondent

Over 200 people demonstrated outside an Israeli owned factory in Bristol last weekend to protest against its complicity in the genocide ongoing in Gaza.

Despite a bitter cold wind plus at times rain and a hailstorm protesters gathered outside the Elbit Horizon H2 factory in Filton in north Bristol, in solidarity with the victims of Zionist aggression.

Elbit Systems is Israel's largest weapons company and the Israeli military is Elbit's largest client. Elbit technologies are integrated into Israel's fighter aircraft, tanks, and warships.

Elbit's "Torch-X" command & control is made in Bristol factories and Israel is using Elbit's MPR range



of bombs to attack Gaza.

On Saturday people hung children's toys and clothes on the fences around the site and they laid cloth bundles stained with red on the road to the factory to symbolise babies killed in Gaza. In addition, children chalked slogans

on the tarmac.

The crowd listened to a range of speakers including a local hospital doctor, a university academic, a journalist, local campaigners, and Zoe Goodman, an independent city councillor who earlier this year resigned from the Labour

group in protest at their shameful position on Gaza.

There was a message of support from Ronnie Barkan, an Israeli dissident who recently stood trial as one of the 'Elbit Seven' found guilty of "criminal damage" when they occupied the nearby Aztex

West Elbit site last year. The seven Palestine Action campaigners who took part in a protest at the firm were given suspended prison sentences and ordered to pay more than £5,000 in compensation.

There was a further message from Andrew

Feinstein, an arms trade expert and Jewish member of the post-apartheid ANC government in South Africa.

Feinstein is considering standing as a protest candidate against Starmer in his north London constituency of Holborn & St Pancras at the next general election.

Some names of the dead in Gaza were read out to the crowd who chanted "Killed by Elbit; killed by Israel".

The crowd was also joined by members of the "Big Bike Ride for Palestine" who cycled up from central Bristol.

The rally concluded with a photo opportunity with a massive banner saying "STOP ARMING ISRAEL" and with the crowd singing *We Shall Overcome*, the CND and 1960s American Civil Rights anthem.

## ...Palestine will be free!

by Theo Russell

Protestors marched in solidarity with the people of Gaza last weekend in Camden, North London, and held a rally near Sir Keir Starmer's constituency office, in one of dozens of local actions across Britain.

For the first time there was a pro-Israel counter protest near the rally on Saturday with some 30 or so Zionists with a loud PA system trying to make as much noise as possible. While the Palestine protest was smaller than previously in Camden, it was still more than twice as many as the Zionists. Over a dozen cars passed by beeping in support, some with Palestinian flags, but of course there were none supporting the ultra-Zionists.

According to activists who were there the ultra-Zionists looked like



"English Defence League" (EDL) types. The EDL is known to have been working with the pro-Israel fanatical extremists.

Liz Wheatley from Camden Unison told the rally that "we in the trade union movement support those who are fighting for their liberation, we support

our Palestinian brothers and sisters against the absolutely outrageous genocide that's being committed in Gaza.

"We have a lot of discussions about the future of Palestine in our trade union branch, and we decided after a vote that there should be one democratic state

where both peoples have equal civil and democratic rights.

"We realise that not every trade unionist and every trade union branch thinks that, but it's important that people know that trade union branches have such debates."

Paul Rennie from Cam-

den Palestine Solidarity said "there comes a time in history when you're put to the test as a moral person, a person with humanity. It happened during Iraq. This is another time. Camden Friends of Palestine are standing with the oppressed.

"People in Gaza are

starving, and young children are dying in hospital corridors because there are no medical supplies. We cannot let this brutality go on!

"It's time for a ceasefire, bring all the hostages home, and all the Palestinian prisoners too!"

*There will be a workplace day of action on May Day for people to plan activities on Palestine.*

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# Putin: We know who did it the question is why

**Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that the barbaric terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue in Moscow had been committed by Islamist extremists. On Friday 22nd March gunmen broke into the concert hall packed with fans coming to see the Russian group, Picnic, opening fire and throwing incendiary bombs into the crowd in a terror attack that left 139 dead and many more wounded. A number of arrests have been made including four of the terrorists captured fleeing to Ukraine.**

“We know that the crime was committed by the hands of radical Islamists, whose ideology the Islamic world itself has been fighting for centuries” Putin said. Russia knows who carried out the terrorist attack but the mastermind behind it is still in question.

“In the course of the joint work of our special services and law enforcement agencies, it is necessary to get answers to a number of questions, for example, whether radical, even terrorist-minded Islamic organisations are really interested in striking at Russia, which today stands for a just solution to the escalated Middle East conflict,” Putin said at a consultation with Russian authorities on measures taken after the terrorist attack.

The important thing is to find the mastermind behind the terrorist attack. “The horrific crime committed on 22nd March in the capital of Russia is an act of intimidation... and the question immediately arises: who benefits? This atrocity can only be an element in a whole series of attempts by those who have been fighting our country since 2014 with the hands of the neo-Nazi

Kiev regime.”

Those who attacked the Crocus City Hall concert venue had tried to escape to Ukraine, where, according to preliminary data, a “window” was prepared for them to cross the border, Putin previously said. All five who were directly involved in the shooting were arrested.

“Of course, we also need to answer the question of why the terrorists tried to leave for Ukraine after committing the crime and who was waiting for them there,” Putin said during

a conversation with Russian authorities on security measures taken after the terrorist attack.

President Putin went on to add that the USA is making a comprehensive effort to convince everyone that Ukraine had nothing to do with the attack and that the responsibility lies solely with ISIS. “We see how the US is taking to various channels to convince its satellites and other countries that according to the data from its intelligence, there is allegedly no Ukrainian trace in the

Moscow terrorist attack and that the bloody terrorist attack had been carried out by those professing Islam — members of IS, an organisation banned in Russia. We already know by whose hands this atrocity against Russia and its people had been carried out. Now we want to know who the mastermind is,” Putin said.

Investigators must conduct an objective probe into the terrorist attack despite the desire to bring the perpetrators to justice. “Despite the universal

pain, sorrow, compassion and legitimate desire to punish all the perpetrators of this brutal atrocity, the investigation must be conducted in a highly professional and objective manner, without any political bias,” Putin said. “Our society has shown an example of real solidarity, cohesion and mutual support at this difficult time”.

Alexander Bastrykin, chairman of Russia’s Investigative Committee said “preliminary findings of the investigation suggest that the terrorist attack was carefully planned and prepared. The attack left 139 people dead”. He said 137 people died in the attack, while two succumbed to their wounds in hospital. At least 40 victims died from gunshot wounds and 45 lost their lives in the fire that erupted during the attack. Bastrykin added that another 182 people were injured.

*Sputnik*



## Zyuganov: a cowardly and merciless attack

**Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), joined in the mourning following the Crocus attack. “A terrible tragedy has occurred in Russia. It shocked our country and all conscientious inhabitants of the planet. The world is watching what is happening with anxiety and tension, worrying with us, mourning for the dead,” the communist leader said.**

The victims were neither military nor law enforcement officers. They were civilians. Among them women and children. There can be no justification for the cowardly and merciless attack. Only monsters who have lost

all notions of mercy can cynically shoot unarmed people. We are all united by deep indignation, a desire to get to the bottom of what happened, to punish those responsible and to prevent this from happening again.

“There is no doubt that the attack was carefully prepared. It was the largest terrorist attack in Russia in twenty years,” Zyuganov declared. “The goal of those who ordered the despicable crime is to sow fear and confusion among the citizens of the country, to force the authorities to make concessions in international issues.

“The details of the organisation of this heinous attack are yet to be clarified by the investigation. However, it is already clear

that it was the result of the formidable processes in which humanity is plunging. A relatively peaceful period of development is coming to an end. Imperialism’s grin is becoming more and more vicious, and its actions are becoming more and more brutal. We communists know very well that the main sponsor of terrorism is oligarchic capital. These are their methods – to kill and intimidate, to carpet bomb the civilian population, to throw phosphorus and uranium bombs at cities.

“Wishing to preserve power and wealth in their clutches, the forces of imperialism are increasingly fomenting bloody conflicts, pitting peoples against each other, and not

squeamish about using the most despicable methods. Ukraine and Russia are one of the most lucrative morsels for these brutalized circles.

“In recent months, it has become increasingly obvious that the Bandera regime is slipping into terror tactics. Unable to win on the battlefield, the junta entrenched in Kiev is increasingly resorting to sabotage in the hope of intimidating our citizens. More than once, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have tried to attack the border settlements of Russia in order to mock civilians and take out their anger on them against everyone who proudly speaks the Russian language...

“The terrorists careful-

ly timed the carnage. They burst into the Crocus City Hall building and opened fire on people. Then these monsters set fire to the auditorium and started a large-scale fire in the building...

“A war of destruction has been unleashed against us. And it is impossible to sit out a war. It is impossible to win in it by fighting half-heartedly. Awareness of the depth of the threats should become the basis for transferring the country onto a mobilisation track with a complete refusal of the state to follow the tenets of the “dashing nineties.” The destructiveness of liberal policies is obvious in everything - from the incessant leakage of Russian finances abroad to

the state of minds and souls poisoned by anti-Sovietism and Russophobia.

“Fascism always breeds war, hatred and terror. Only by solving the tasks of the special military operation to denazify Ukraine and improving the life of Russian society itself, can we guarantee our country a peaceful life and a decent future!

“The peoples of Russia cannot be intimidated! We will cope with all the challenges. The answer to the meanness of terrorists and their patrons will be to unite the people in the struggle for Russia’s independence and a just peace!”

# The Americans, wars and drugs

by Guillermo Alvarado

**America fuels the war in Eastern Europe, gives weapons and political and diplomatic support to Israel to continue the genocide against the Palestinian population, but curiously shows itself incapable of solving a serious internal problem such as drug trafficking.**

According to recently published statistics, in 2022 the USA once again broke the record of deaths due to an overdose of illicit drugs, with 107,941 deaths, which indicates that the drug epidemic has

been growing unstoppably during the last few years.

To give an idea of the seriousness of the issue, America lost a total of 60,000 military personnel in the wars it waged against Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, all three together, a figure much lower than that caused by the failed fight against trafficking in prohibited substances.

Worse still, only one of the drugs circulating in that country, fentanyl, killed more people than those three conflicts, since according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Health Statistics, by



• This is America.

the end of 2022, the latest figures released, some 74,000 people succumbed to this drug.

It is striking that the richest country in the world is not capable, for

example, of cleaning up the now infamous Kensington neighbourhood in Philadelphia, where druggies wander around like zombies and require urgent medical assistance.

Fentanyl is undoubtedly the most dangerous substance on the streets of America – and other countries – for a number of reasons, the first being that it can be produced entirely in a laboratory, unlike opioids, which require natural raw materials.

Second, and even more dangerous, it is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine, so that an excess of a few milligrams in the dose is enough to kill a person.

Recently, the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, participated in a

UN conference on narcotics held in Vienna where he called for unity in the fight against this scourge.

It is true that international coordination is needed to confront drug trafficking, but it is also true that so far Washington has seen the issue only as a police and military problem and is trying to solve it outside its territory, where the world's largest consumer market is located.

Get rid of the demand through education and public health and the supply will disappear. It is not easy, but it is the way to go.

*Radio Havana Cuba*

## Crocus massacre: not ISIS

by Vadim Gorshenin

**NATO says that the ISIS terrorist group was behind the attack. Yet, there are a number of arguments that cast doubt on their involvement in the Crocus tragedy.**

Firstly, the terrorist attack occurred during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, when such actions are considered unacceptable.

Secondly, the detained terrorists were not religious fanatics, nor did they have relevant literature.

***A large-scale bloody terrorist attack took place in Moscow last week. Russia has started an investigation, but other countries persistently try to convince Russia that they know who the perpetrators were. How do they know? Russian special services have captured the terrorists and made them talk. They have obtained first-hand facts but someone from across the Atlantic is telling people not to listen to them.***

Thirdly, their motivation, apparently, was to receive monetary rewards in roubles. There were no religious beliefs involved.

Fourthly, the target of the attack was a concert centre owned by a Muslim of Azerbaijani origin.

I could only find the ISIS video of the attack on a website of the I'lam Foundation, which is reg-

istered in NATO Belgium. The website widely advertises the so-called activities of ISIS. Yet, they cover the acts committed in the countries or against the countries, in which the United States has interests in one way or another.

The I'lam Foundation usually receives funding from external donations in cryptocurrency, mainly

from Western supporters of ISIS.

As a result, we have a picture in which the domain that distributes materials about the involvement of the 'Islamic State' is located in one of the founding countries of NATO, and the Western media actively pick up this version.

"John Kirby [a Biden aide] first said that the warn-

ings before 8<sup>th</sup> March about imminent terrorist attacks in Moscow were not connected with Crocus. He then said that the warnings were about ISIS, that everything was interconnected."

Based on the information we have at hand, we may assume that those who committed this terrorist attack are not

religious fanatics. Their knowledge of Islam and its dogmas remains unknown to us.

The NATO countries that confront Russia in Ukraine are obviously trying to impose their interpretation of events without having access to investigative materials. This suggests that certain forces are interested in destabilising the situation in Russia under the guise of the fight against terrorism.

*Vadim Gorshenin is the founder of Pravda.Ru*

## ILO condemns forced labour

by Ed Newman

**Criminals are reaping obscene profits of nearly one-quarter of a trillion dollars from forced labour, says the International Labour Organization (ILO).**

The United Nations agency published its latest report: Profits and Pov-

erty: The economics of forced labour last week. It states that illegal profit from forced labour rose by 37 per cent over the past decade to \$236 billion per year, with sexual exploitation accounting for nearly three-quarters of the total.

The rise in ill-gotten gains is due to growth in the number of people

forced into labour, as well as an increase in the profit generated from the exploitation of each victim, said the report.

Traffickers and criminals are now making close to \$10,000 per victim, up from \$8,269 a decade ago. In terms of profit per victim, figures were highest in Europe and Central Asia,

followed by the Arab States, the Americas, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific.

"Forced labour perpetuates cycles of poverty and exploitation and strikes at the heart of human dignity. We now know that the situation has only got worse," said ILO Director-General Gilbert F Houngbo, appealing to the international

community for action. "People in forced labour are subject to multiple forms of coercion, the deliberate and systematic withholding of wages being amongst the most common," he said.

After forced commercial sexual exploitation, the sector with the highest illegal profits from forced

labour is industry (\$35 billion), followed by services (\$20.8 billion), agriculture (\$5 billion), and domestic work (\$2.6 billion).

The report stressed the urgent need for investment in enforcement measures to stem illegal profit flows and hold perpetrators accountable.

*Radio Havana Cuba*