

New war fears on Lebanese front!

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Palestinian guns blaze across the West Bank as street battles continue throughout the Gaza Strip and Israeli troops swing round to confront Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

This week the director of ambulance and emergency services in Gaza was killed in an Israeli airstrike on a health clinic in Gaza City. Hani al-Jafarawi, described as a “pillar” of Gaza’s health system, is reported to be the 500th medical worker killed by Israeli forces since 7th October. An Israeli soldier was killed and 17 others injured in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin and the American initiative to end the fighting, pushed through the United Nations as an Israeli “peace” plan, is faltering after Netanyahu says he’s only be willing to agree to a “partial” ceasefire deal that would not end the conflict.

Last weekend, some 150,000 people demonstrated against Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv amid growing fears that his hard-line Zionist coalition is poised to open up a new front against the Arabs in Lebanon. Meanwhile the rift between Netanyahu and his top army leadership is deepening following the dissolution



• Hezbollah ready to fight!

of the so-called “War Cabinet”, which was the main link between the executive and the Armed Forces.

Now another retired Israeli general has spoken out against escalation, saying an all-out war against Hezbollah would be “collective suicide” for Israel. Retired Maj-General Itzhak Brik said: “If we look at what Hezbollah is doing to the Galilee in recent months – we find settlements crumbling, empty of people, on thousands of acres of burned land. Scenes that can be seen in Gaza are seen today in the North. The Iron Dome has been failing to stop the UAVs [drones], rockets, and missiles for months. We did not prepare ourselves for dozens of missiles every day let alone the thousands that we will have in the next war.”

On Channel 14, a far-right Israeli TV station, Netanyahu said that Israel was prepared to pause fighting in Gaza for a partial deal in exchange for the freedom of some of the hostages held by Hamas, while maintaining that the war will not end until Hamas is destroyed. But his rejection of any realistic hostage release deal with the Palestinian resistance

has been slammed by the Israeli Hostages and Missing Families Forum. “We strongly condemn the prime minister’s statement in which he walked back from the Israeli proposal. This means he is abandoning 120 hostages and harms the moral duty of the state of Israel to its citizens,” the group that speaks for the Israeli prisoners said this week.

Meanwhile Colonel Jacques Baud, a former NATO analyst and Swiss intelligence officer, says Israel’s tactics in Gaza go against all the rules of counter-insurgency and can only be explained as a deliberate effort to “eliminate the Palestinians” altogether.

Speaking on the Russian media, Baud said that Israel is “not trying to solve the problem [of Hamas violence] on the political side, as we normally should for a

counterinsurgency. They are doing it by brute force, meaning that they destroy people and that’s the name of the game.”

“The only explanation” for Israel’s refusal to entertain a political solution is not that “the Israelis are stupid and don’t know how to wage war,” Baud con-

tinued. “[It’s that] they’re doing this on purpose to eliminate the Palestinians.”

“Palestine will be exclusively Jewish, and that has always been their consistent policy,” he said. “They don’t dare do it in one shot. They are doing it in brutal sequences. The ultimate goal is to empty Palestine of Palestinians.”

While Netanyahu has never called for the wholesale de-population of Gaza, several prominent allies in his hard-line Zionist coalition have. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir have both called for a ten-fold reduction in Gaza’s population, while a policy document compiled by Israel’s Ministry of Intelligence last year recommended that the enclave’s 2.3 million residents be driven into Egypt or sent to the West as refugees.

FUND

The fighting fund went up another notch this week with £600 in the bag thanks to supporters like the Southall comrade who sent in £200 in thanks for our efforts to maintain Britain’s only communist weekly. The June appeal now stands at £2,291. We need £1,209 to hit our target for the month.

While the mainstream politicians and left posers alike strut across the electoral arena with their false promises and phoney patriotism, at least one from their ranks has broken ranks to challenge the bourgeois consensus in support of NATO’s proxy war in Ukraine. But workers can never rely on the bourgeoisie to defend their interests and Nigel Farage is no friend of the working class. We have our own agenda. We must have our own programme. The fight to end the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, the campaigns in solidarity with the people of the Donbas and the Palestinian Arabs are being fought on the streets of Britain in a battle of ideas that the *New Worker* has been in since our foundation in 1977.

Help us get the message across and build the communist movement in Britain. Make sure that the communist voice is heard every week in every factory, office and neighbourhood across the country by supporting the fighting fund. Your contribution, big or small, counts. Join us in the fight for peace and socialism by sending in your donations to the *New Worker* fund. All donations help keep our presses rolling. Please send yours 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/npccentral/fightingfund.html>

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Summer shut-down

Our volunteers are taking their well-earned summer rest immediately after the general election.

The last issue of the *New Worker* before our two-week summer break will be published on Friday 5th July. We will be back on Friday 26th July.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Last lap of the election...

It looks like curtains for Sunak on 4th July. Despite the fact that there is little enthusiasm for Keith Starmer on the street, nothing the Conservatives say can shift Labour's 20-point lead in the opinion polls.

Amongst the Tory grandees the blame game has already begun, with Remainers looking to the Liberal-Democrats while the die-hard racists and what's left of their Brexit faction turn to Nigel Farage's Reform platform. In Islington over a thousand volunteers are helping Jeremy Corbyn in his fight against the Labour machine to keep his seat in parliament, and Nigel Farage managed to break the bourgeois consensus on Ukraine last week.

To the eternal shame of the fake left Labour MPs who pose as peace campaigners while supporting NATO's proxy war in Ukraine, Farage's repeated calls for a peace settlement take Russia's legitimate demands into consideration. To the horror of Sunak and Starmer, who closed ranks to denounce Farage as an apologist for Vladimir Putin, Farage's comments were favourably received on the street even in die-hard Tory and Labour areas. This is not surprising. Though tatty yellow and blue Ukrainian flags still fly over some Government buildings no-one on the street really cares about Zelensky these days.

Assange: the end of a nightmare

Seven years holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London followed by five years cooped up in a dungeon in Belmarsh, Julian Assange paid a very high price for defending journalistic freedom. Now he walks free following a plea-bargain deal with the US courts that led to his release this week. We all wish him well as he starts to rebuild his life in Australia.

The WikiLeaks founder will now fight for a pardon that Donald Trump says he will consider seriously if he returns to the White House while Assange supporters vow to continue to campaign to change the law in the USA to prevent further prosecutions against journalists.

We've learned many lessons from the Assange campaign, whose ultimate victory was undoubtedly due to Assange's refusal to grovel to imperialist demands and his campaign's determination to fight for his freedom across the globe. That campaign swayed the Australian Labor government into pressing for his release. It clearly also influenced the Biden administration that is well aware that it needs to woo the liberal constituency in the USA with a show of clemency if it hopes to beat off the challenge from the Trump camp at the presidential elections in November.

The lesson learnt is to have no faith in British 'justice' nor the courts and constitutions of the other members of the so-called 'free world' in Europe. They will all do the bidding of their masters in Washington when the chips are down. The American whistle-blower Edward Snowden made a wiser choice when he fled to Russia in 2013...

So long Stoltenberg...

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is about to leave his post, and the upcoming NATO summit to be held in the USA next month will be his farewell tour, if nothing else. In the last two days, Stoltenberg went to Washington to warm up for the upcoming summit, at the same time showing off some of his own "achievements" to leave some political legacy for the past nine years in his post as NATO Secretary General. He touted that 23 of the 32-member bloc have met the target of spending two per cent of GDP on defence, while revealing that NATO is discussing the deployment of more nuclear weapons. Stoltenberg's remarks, which make the world feel uneasy and threatened, are said with ease and even great excitement. The NATO chief also continued to threaten China, saying that China cannot "have it both ways" between the West and Russia, and that if it does not change course "there should be consequences".

In his nine years in office, the world saw the prolonged Syrian civil war, and the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as well as the Israel-Palestine conflict. The role of NATO, a product of the Cold War and the world's largest military bloc, in the conflicts of such magnitude, is dishonourable. The Ukraine crisis, in particular, caused by the bloc's eastward expansion, plunged Ukraine into war, further tore Europe apart, and brought NATO back to life. Even within the US and Europe, there has been harsh criticism and warnings about this.

Yet, Stoltenberg is not satisfied, as he continues to call on the West to supply more weapons to Ukraine in Washington, claiming it is the "path to peace". But he cannot justify it, admitting that this "may seem like a paradox". This is Stoltenberg's way of covering up his culpability as well

as the way of NATO as a whole: to create conflicts in the name of preventing crises and to exacerbate catastrophes in the name of managing crises. As one Western scholar summarised, invasion is hailed as "humanitarian intervention"; coup d'état as "democratic revolution"; subversion as "democracy promotion"; gunboat diplomacy as "freedom of navigation"; military bloc expansion as "European integration" and domination as "negotiation from a position of strength".

Under Stoltenberg's leadership, NATO has also been attempting to interfere in the Asia-Pacific region, aligning with the strategic direction of the USA, and promoting "NATO's Asia-Pacificisation". Although such attempts have encountered resistance from the majority of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and thus remain limited to a small circle of American allies, regional countries must not be negligent. The desire of regional countries to maintain regional peace and development does not mean that NATO has no intention of creating discord. NATO's own history has proved that it strengthens its functions through crisis creation. Since it now intends to enhance its presence and functions on a global scale, it inevitably has to create larger crises.

On this point, insightful individuals internationally, including those in Western countries, have long provided incisive summaries. Organisations like NATO have interfered in nearly all wars and conflicts since its foundation, consistently exporting war and only bringing more problems. In the cycle of seeking enemies, creating crises, and extending its existence, NATO aims to make China the latest target. In recent years, NATO summit declarations have increasingly mentioned China, and provocative actions against China have

become more frequent. Particularly, Stoltenberg himself has repeatedly issued threats this year, demanding that China must choose sides between the West and Russia. In February alone, he created a notable scene during his US visit by making seven provocative statements about China in six days. His speeches are filled with confrontational language and echoes of the Cold War. Given that some political elites in the USA and Europe frequently champion moral causes such as "opposing coercion" and "defending peace", they should feel embarrassed by Stoltenberg's remarks.

Stoltenberg's strenuous efforts to perform and use various occasions to promote the "China threat" narrative indirectly indicate that this task is difficult. China consistently participates in international affairs as a responsible major power, pursuing peace and bringing opportunities. Even within NATO, China is one of the main trading partners for the majority of its 32 member countries. This is one of the reasons why NATO labels China as a "systemic challenge". For a war-dependent entity such as NATO, a China that follows a path of peaceful development naturally becomes a "challenge".

This year also marks NATO's 75th anniversary. Stoltenberg's warmongering rhetoric is the best commentary on the role NATO has played over the last 75 years. If Stoltenberg leaves any legacy during his term, it is conflict and war. People should be particularly wary of Stoltenberg's promotion of the "threat narrative". History has repeatedly shown that such rhetoric always runs counter to peace, development and prosperity. The louder NATO's voice becomes, the more vigilant peace-loving people should remain.

Global Times



Workers' Notes

The Next Prime Minister

by New Worker correspondent



One remarkable feature of the present election is that Labour has had such an easy ride from the bourgeois press. So far, we have not heard anything about Sir Keir Starmer in his former role as Director of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), particularly over his inaction in the case of Sir Jimmy Savile OBE, Britain's 'best-loved' paedophile.

Equally, Starmer's earlier career has not been an issue. Between 1986 to 1987, Starmer was editor of *Socialist Alternatives*, a half-hearted Trotskyist journal which was the organ of the mighty British section of the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (IRMT), an organisation of which Starmer himself was a large percentage of its membership.

In those days he opposed the "paramilitary" policing of the Wapping dispute that broke the print unions in the newspaper industry. He was very keen on a "self-managing socialism" based on democratic control of production for "use" rather than "profit".

Starmer is not of course alone. Several other Trots have turned their coats in the past. Munira Mirza, a former advisor to Boris Johnson, is not the only ex-member of the former Revolutionary Communist Party to find a home in the Tory Party. But to avoid charges of narrow sectarianism we must not forget that Margaret Thatcher's economic policies were shaped by Sir Alfred Sherman, a Young Communist League member who was the youngest Briton to fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

In the right-wing press, such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Telegraph*, there have been attempts to bring this terrifying past of Starmer to light in order to scare the bourgeois out of their skins,

but these have been few and far between.

It is not difficult to see why. At the CPS Starmer was extremely energetic in the case of the anti-austerity protesters who occupied Fortnum & Mason in 2012, when some chocolate bunnies were tragically broken before they could get their heads bitten off by greedy children.

When, after the 2019 election (which was lost partly because of his sabotage), Starmer launched his leadership campaign by saying he would be a more effective advocate of "Corbynism" than Corbyn and he boasted of providing legal support to the McLibel campaigners. This was group who leafleted branches of the American multinational food chain MacDonalds asserting their products were not the of healthiest foodstuffs around, a fact MacDonalds contested in court at great expense. However, as this campaign had been infiltrated and a policeman even helped write the offending leaflet, one wonders if Starmer's pro bono work was precisely that.

Under his watch the CPS actually advised undercover police officers on infiltration techniques. When it was exposed that some of those doing the infiltrating were organising illegal activities and fathering children with other activists, the only investigation by the CPS was a whitewash and no redress was forthcoming for activities organised in the name of an "anti-extremism" crusade – which focused primarily on environmentalists.

Starmer's reluctance to prosecute the police who shot and killed an innocent Brazilian electrician in the aftermath of the 2005 London tube bombings is more typical. In contrast he was a very eager persecutor of Julian Assange, strongly urging Swed-

ish prosecutors to continue their efforts to attack him, while cutting back on the Murdoch press phone-hacking prosecutions.

He even made no less than four trips to Washington to ensure that Assange was deported to Sweden to face sexual assault charges, which even British intelligence said was a fit up. Mysteriously all records of these trips have vanished.

Starmer made the law tougher on those improperly, often accidentally, claiming benefits (about 0.7 per cent of the welfare budget) by putting such offences under the Fraud Act that brought tougher sentences and lowered the thresholds which meant even the smallest offences could be pursued.

He was much softer on the £12 billion lost through corporate tax avoidance but drew up rules giving police officers more power to arrest demonstrators after the 2010 student protests. This meant police could arrest someone for wearing a scarf on the grounds that could hide their identity or carrying deadly weapons such as placards. After the 2011 London riots he visited courts to congratulate judges for tough and rapid sentences. This moved Ken Macdonald, his predecessor at the DPP to say this episode marked a "collective loss of proportion", and an abnegation of "humanity or justice".

MI5 is in debt to Starmer for him not prosecuting those involved in the CIA's overseas torture programme. One might wonder if there is any connection between this and the fact that he secured a safe Labour seat less than two years after joining the Labour Party. Stranger things have happened.

Clearly the bourgeoisie have no reason to fear Starmer. Other papers are also keen on Starmer.

At time of typing, the "paper of record", The *Times*, has not declared its recommendation. But it always likes to be on the winning side, so it and its vulgar brother, the *Sun*, will likely endorse Starmer. The daily cartoons in the *Times* by Peter Brookes are particularly vicious towards Sunak. It is telling that the widespread coverage of the betting scandal involving a few highly placed Tories making a few pounds from multimillion gambling companies willing to take their money has been given such a high profile.

The newspaper endorsements have so far been predictable: The *Telegraph* for the Tories, the *Mirror* for Labour, while the *Mail* has been frightening its readers away from voting for Reform on the grounds that this will only open the door to more Labour gains.

An Unlikely Convert

It is highly unlikely that Reform Party owner Nigel Farage is a *New Worker* reader or has had much engagement with the International Ukrainian Anti-Fascist Solidarity movement, but he certainly set the cat among the pigeons by making the observation that "we provoked this war. Of course it's his [Putin's] fault he's used what we've done as an excuse". Similar sentiments were made over a decade ago by John Pilger in the *Guardian* on the 13th May 2014, and more recently by the Pope in Rome. John Mearsheimer, the Chicago-based "realist" political scientist who thinks America needs to focus its energies on China has taken the same view.

Farage's uncharacteristically sound remarks came at a time

Jeremy Corbyn's supporters were out in strength last weekend as he battles against the Starmer machine to keep his Islington seat in North London.

when the Tories are putting all their resources into defending normally extremely safe seats and complaining about the dangers to democracy of Labour getting a "supermajority", and so he was roundly denounced by the massed ranks of the third battalion of armchair generals.

Money Talks

Big business is now throwing its weight behind Labour. Electoral Commission figures show that by the half-way mark in the middle of June the Tories only raised £889,000 for the entire campaign. Last time round in 2019 they had a war chest of £8.7 million.

Labour is raking in the dosh from businessmen such as the Bestway Wholesale group and a mysterious organisation known as "The Spring Lunch". In all it secured £5.3 million, of which £2.5 million came from Lord David Sainsbury whose name says it all. Sainsbury was once the main backer of the old Social Democratic Party set up to destroy a more leftish Labour, so it is not difficult to see why he invests in Labour. Autoglass boss Gary Lubner gave £900,000, while hedge fund manager Martin Taylor invested £700,000 in Labour. As train drivers' union ASLEF has only supplied £100,000 it is not difficult to work out who will have the most influence.

The Green Party secured £20,000, which will not buy many ethically sourced biodegradable leaflets. Ironically, the only major contribution to Alex Salmond's Alba Party was one of £36,305 that came from the Electoral Commission by virtue of the fact that it has two MPs who have sworn loyalty to the Crown.

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A Rare Victory

It is not often the left gets to claim an almost total victory against the Establishment, but all the rallies and pickets outside the court and vigils outside the Ecuadorian Embassy and Belmarsh have finally paid off in the case of Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks, which caused so much embarrassment.

A deal means he was released from his dungeon and sent to an American colony in the Pacific, where he will plead guilty in court to one charge for which he will receive a brief custodial sentence that will be cancelled out by the five years already spent in the top-security Belmarsh. After these formalities were completed on Wednesday he was allowed to return to his native Australia, a more agreeable form of deportation than was practised centuries ago.

Naturally the Americans have agreed, for reasons of their own, to come up with this deal. Sleepy Joe Biden desperately needed something to keep his more liberal supporters happy, especially as they have been alienated by his unwavering support for Zionist atrocities. The atrocities committed by the American military

exposed by Wikileaks' hacking of Pentagon computers include those under the watch of Obama and Biden and well as those from George W Bush.

The American government could have more easily prosecuted the *New York Time* which published the material made public by Wikileaks, but that would not look good. Nearer to home, the *Guardian* which initially published some of Assange's revelations showed very little support for the widespread campaign to free him. This is an all too typical stand by that sanctimonious organ of the liberal bourgeoisie. Older readers will remember how it failed to shield the whistleblower who exposed British intelligence spying on CND once they had got their story.

Wikileaks said of the decision: "This is the result of a global campaign that spanned grass-roots organisers, press freedom campaigners, legislators and leaders from across the political spectrum, all the way to the United Nations. This created the space for a long period of negotiations with the US Department of Justice, leading to a deal that has not yet been formally finalised."

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed the announcement, piously claiming that: "I've been very clear as both

the Labour leader and opposition, but also as prime minister that – regardless of the views that people have about Mr Assange's activities – the case has dragged on for too long."

National Union of Journalists (NUJ) general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said: "The release of Julian Assange, after a hard-fought campaign by journalists worldwide, signifies the final stages of an ordeal he has faced for several years...the targeting and persecution of journalists in this way is one that underscores the need to defend journalism and the methods used daily, including when cultivating a source."

Sir Keir Starmer has not made any comment so far.

The Class Struggle Continues

Despite electoral distractions the class struggle continues. One of the most important is that in South Wales, where workers are taking all-out strike action to save the steel works whose owners, Tata, are threatening to close it entirely.

On Monday about 1,500 Tata workers at Port Talbot and Llan-

wern will start all-out indefinite strike action to oppose Tata's plans to cut 2,800 jobs and close its blast furnaces. This will be the first time in over 40 years that steel workers in the UK have taken strike action. This follows an overtime ban that began on 17th June.

Sharon Graham, Unite's general secretary, said: "Our members will not stand by while this immensely wealthy conglomerate tries to throw Port Talbot and Llanwern on the scrapheap so it can boost its operations abroad. They know South Wales is ideally placed to take advantage of the coming boom in green steel.

"The strikes will go on until Tata halts its disastrous plans. Unite is backing Tata's workers to the hilt in their historic battle to save the Welsh steel industry and give it the bright future it deserves."

The union optimistically points out that Labour has promised a £3 billion investment in privatised UK steel and that Labour has also made emergency talks with Tata a priority if it wins the election. The Tories have already offered Tata half that to subsidise Tata's investment.

On Monday Tata threatened an early closure of the blast furnaces, which it claims it wants to replace with greener ones

that cannot produce steel from scratch. These can only cope with recycled steel and cannot produce the high-quality steel needed for construction or vehicle production.

The two other unions involved, Community (the former Iron and Steel Trades Confederation) and GMB, both support the action. Eighty-five per cent of Community members voted to support while the much smaller GMB members voted by 72 per cent for action. Tata's response was the threaten to cut redundancy payments to the bare minimum.

Despite Unite's announcement of all out-strike action, it is unclear if this deepening of the dispute will be followed by the other two unions, who have not had much to say in recent weeks and whose reputation for militancy is patchy to say the least. Despite the importance of this matter to the Welsh, and indeed UK, economy the Welsh TUC has next to nothing to say, preferring to focus on its 50th birthday nostalgia-fest celebrations.

Of lesser importance but worthy of note is the fact that the RMT marked International Seafarers Day on Monday when its members in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) took strike action over pay. They had previously taken global action on the 19th May.

General Secretary Mick Lynch said: "This strike represents more than just a demand for fair pay; it is a stand for the respect and acknowledgment of seafarers and their crucial role worldwide."

He added that: "RFA management and the government must urgently address this dispute and recognise the significant anger and frustration among RMT members."

Finally, it has been confirmed that GMB workers employed by Whyte & Mackay at two distilleries in the Scottish Highlands will definitely be taking strike action despite the other union involved, Unite, calling off its action. Unite's members at the company's bottling plant in Fife voted to accept an improved pay offer that they said amounted to 10 per cent over two years; GMB say it's only worth 6.8 per cent.

Whyte & Mackay warn that supplies could be seriously interrupted.

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

25th June 2024

More than 12,000 trade unionists and pensioners marched through London and Edinburgh last Saturday to demand the Government must "Pay up for Pensions" and ensure a decent retirement for all.

The London march, filled with colourful union banners and led by a giant pink piggy bank, wound its way from the Embankment to Trafalgar Square for a rally addressed by union and pensioner leaders.

TUC research shows that it is low-paid workers who have been being hit hardest by the cutbacks in occupational pensions.

And recent crashes on the stock market have shown that private pensions are not secure.

So one of the main demands of the marchers was for the restoration of the link between average earnings and the level of the state pension.

The link was introduced in 1974 by Barbara Castle and abolished by the Thatcher Government in 1980.

Since then, the relative value of the state pension has declined steeply.

Pensioners can no longer live on this pension alone without means-tested benefits or tax credits on top.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "We have got something like two million of today's pensioners living below the poverty line."

Many on the march had lost occupational pensions they paid into for years because their employers went bankrupt. Around 60,000 workers in Britain have suffered this catastrophic loss.

Many other employers have been arbitrary

changing their final-salary pension schemes for less generous money-purchase schemes. The value of these schemes is not guaranteed but depends on stock market performances.

The unions are also alarmed at a new government plan "to give workers the right to work on until 70". They fear this "right" is likely to become a necessity and many workers will never live to claim any pension at all. They will literally have to work until they drop.

The government has said it intends to transfer the burden from the state to the private or occupational pensions.

But many employers are unwilling to take on that burden and the unions fear that hundreds of thousands of people will have nothing to look forward to but poverty on just the state pension.

Meanwhile the bosses of the top 10 British companies have seen the value of their pensions soar by an average of 1.2 times in 2003, leaving them with pension funds worth an average £8.2 million.

Palestinian Resistance breaks morale of Israel's military

by Monica Moorehead

Eleven members of the Israeli army died on 15th June in a blast of a Namer armoured combat engineering vehicle (CEV) in Rafah, part of occupied Gaza. They were members of the “elite” Combat Engineering Corps’ 601st Battalion. This is one of the highest numbers of Israeli troops eliminated in just one day since 7th October by the Palestinian resistance, which must rely on guerrilla tactics and mainly small, hand-held weapons to fight the military might of the American-backed oppressors of their people.

While the Israeli press reports that over 330 Israeli soldiers have died at the hands of the resistance in Gaza since 7th October, the Zionist government has been known to deflate the real numbers of their dead and wounded.

Of course, the deaths of Israeli troops come nowhere close to the over 37,000 Palestinian civilians massacred – including over 16,000 children – and over 85,000 wounded since 7th October by the Zionist state.

These numbers alone refute the false narrative in the corporate media that the genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza is an Israeli war with Hamas. Despite these horrendous numbers, the support for the resistance amongst the resilient Palestinian people remains strong.

The truth is that for over eight months a united Palestinian resistance made up of Islamic and secular forces has been able to challenge the so-called superiority of the well-oiled Israeli military machine. The determination of the resistance has brought about a growing meltdown and demoralisation of the Israeli army, never seen before since the apartheid Zionist state was established in 1948,

with the support of American and British imperialism.

Many of these soldiers – cannon fodder for a settler-colonial regime – have developed a growing mistrust and disillusionment with the Israeli government, including the main war criminal Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli soldiers who have survived battles with the resistance have stated in public hearings that they are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), along with having to adjust to amputated limbs. According to the Israeli

senior officers, some very senior, criticism of the conduct of decision-makers in the political and security echelons – what I heard tonight is completely different. It is a major crisis of trust, real anger and frustration. It is time to bring the truth to light. Whoever thinks there is an operation in Rafah is wrong. As for those who know that there is not and briefs that there is, they are lying.

“We have no more children left for intermediate situations. The cost of indecision is too high for us. The lack of leadership hurts us too much.

Regarding the lack of humanitarian aid entering Gaza, an Israeli officer made a startling comment about the people of Gaza: “They are not breaking and we are dying!”

Benny Gantz, a member of Netanyahu’s war cabinet, along with another Israeli minister, Gadi Eisenkot, resigned from their posts on 9th June over strategic differences on how to achieve a military victory in Gaza against Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, and also on how the release of the remaining Israeli hostages should be resolved.

in southern Gaza by Israel’s Southern Command to allow the flow of some humanitarian aid. This military decision was disputed by Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, according to reports in the *Haaretz* [The Land] daily. This dispute clearly reflects a schism regarding tactics between the government and the military due to the strength of the resistance.

Mass protests have also erupted across Israel in the tens of thousands, especially in the capital, Tel Aviv, demanding Netanyahu’s resignation. Another main protest demand is an exchange of the Israeli hostages, dead or alive, for the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners. The latter have been kidnapped and illegally detained for months and even years in torture chambers. These protests have been led by the families of the hostages, some of whom were killed on or after 7th October by gun-fire from the Israeli troops.

An Israeli army spokesman stated: “It must be said frankly: we cannot return all the captives through military operational means.”

Coupled with the deepening global isolation of Israel on many fronts in both the Global South and Global North, it is the Palestinian resistance that has played the decisive role in the inevitable crumbling of the Israeli state, along with the growing political isolation of its allies, especially the USA, Germany and France.

But it took the launching of the heroic Al-Aqsa Flood offensive on 7th October to help bring to light that this spiralling crisis is not only impacting on the Israeli army but also on the entire Israeli society built on mass displacement, theft of land and resources and fascist genocide for the last 76 years.

Workers World (USA)



• Calling for a general strike to force new Israeli elections outside the Histadrut labour federation HQ in Tel Aviv.

organisation Nifgashim, over 10,000 Israeli reserve soldiers are now in some kind of mental therapy after their stint in Gaza. A growing number of them have attempted or actually have committed suicide when they returned home, causing a crisis of disillusionment within the Israeli army.

After speaking to Israeli officers in Rafah, Israeli journalist Hallel Biton Rosen wrote: “Eight months and eight days I have been covering the damned war. More than once I have heard from

“The bluff of conquering Rafah is not working. On the other hand, there aren’t enough munitions and not enough engineering tools. It’s really unclear what the forces on the ground are doing right now.

“They are deceiving the public when statements are released saying that we have advanced in another neighbourhood and another area, these few more metres are a joke – the Rafah Brigade [of Al-Qassam] is still standing on its feet.”

The resignation of Gantz is a major political blow to the right-wing-dominated Israeli government because Gantz was the main centrist spokesman within the Israeli cabinet. Gantz was also calling for early elections in order to remove Netanyahu from his powerful position. These two resignations ignited the dissolution of the Zionist war cabinet on 17th June. These war criminals can be likened to rats jumping off a sinking ship.

An 11th hour “tactical pause” has been instituted

The double standards of the imperialist press

by Eduardo Vasco

When the news of the death of the Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, in a helicopter crash broke in May the first thing that came to mind to anyone with a modicum of critical thinking was – is this Israel's doing?

This is absolutely legitimate speculation. The journalists and commentators who work directly or indirectly for the imperialist propaganda machine categorically dismiss it, however. This is pure hypocrisy. It is they themselves who love to make the most idiotic speculations about everything – when it suits their bosses, that is.

When Evgeny Prigozhin's helicopter crashed, for example, the first speculation made by these propagandists was that Putin was responsible for the death of the Wagner Group mercenary leader who had recently led a revolt against the Putin government. That was the great “fact” that underpinned the logic of this argument. He was an opponent of Putin, so Putin would most likely have ordered his elimination.

No matter that Prigozhin had reconciled and been pardoned by the Russian president; that the helicopter had crashed near the Ukrainian border and that the Russians had warned him about Ukrainian sabotage.

We may never know the truth. American propagandists,

however, tried to turn speculation into proof in a campaign led by the *Wall Street Journal* which claimed that members of the Russian government had set up Prigozhin's murder. The sources? Western intelligence agents. In other words, the CIA, MI6 and their subsidiaries.

Everyone knows that they have an endless track record of planting false information in the press against their enemies. Would the *Wall Street Journal* publish a story accusing the Israeli government of shooting down an Iranian president's helicopter, whose source was the FSB (the successor to the KGB)?

Quite the opposite. Most imperialist propaganda outlets don't raise the idea of Israeli involvement even in order to ridicule it. They know that any mention of Israel in connection

with the crash would plant doubt in those who haven't thought about the possibility of foul play.

The BBC's Jeremy Bowen suggested that there was the possibility of sabotage related to internal opponents, both inside and outside the Iranian government “but we have no evidence for any of that”. But these “possibilities”, according to what emerges from his comment, are legitimate speculation. What is unreasonable, by the BBC's standards, is the “instinct to blame Israel”.

“Israeli officials have told journalists that they are not involved in this. It's hard to see how Israel benefits from something that would be interpreted, in practice, as a provocative act of war,” Bowen said.

Let's break this down. Firstly, the fact that Israel denies in-

volvement means nothing. It's just a rhetorical propaganda weapon for reporters to feign impartiality by listening to “both sides”. “So-and-so said this, while so-and-so said that.” That's it, the journalist's job is done. No need to investigate anything!

Secondly, the commentator admits to having cognitive difficulties in “seeing how Israel benefits” from the elimination of the head of state of its greatest enemy. In fact, it's nothing of the sort. He is fully aware of how it benefits Israel, as it would benefit any country whose enemy leader is slaughtered. He's just a hypocrite who tries to absolve Israel of legitimate accusations.

Finally, he considers that Israel killing the president of Iran “would be interpreted, in practice, as a provocative act of war”. Does

he also think that Xi Jinping having Joe Biden killed wouldn't necessarily be a provocation to the USA? It's obvious that if Israel shot down Raisi's helicopter, it was an act of war! And therefore, Iran would have the absolute right to respond in kind to a war started by Israel.

The American-led propaganda machine euphemistically called the “international press” is just a mouthpiece for Israel. On 23rd October last year, Joel Pinheiro da Fonseca, a columnist in the Brazilian daily *Folha de S. Paulo*, claimed it was the Palestinians themselves who bombed Gaza's al-Ahli Hospital a few days earlier. In a shamefully misleading article, he cited the news reports that pointed to Israel as the culprit and refuted them with the conclusion that, nevertheless “the emerging consen-

sus is that the missile did not come from Israel. It was a rocket from the Islamic Jihad group that broke apart and fell in the hospital car park. In all likelihood, there were fewer than 500 deaths.” Where did you get that from?

He didn't say. He only quoted *Folha* itself and the *New York Times*, which decided to be “cautious”. He didn't provide any sources for his statement, nor did he even indicate whether the two newspapers had been based on any facts. Also, if he had provided a source for his statement, he would have revealed his total bias: it was Israel and the USA that accused Islamic Jihad of responsibility for the hospital deaths. The pair responsible for the genocide in Gaza are a less reliable “source” than the CIA when it was used by the *Wall Street Journal* to accuse Russia of killing Prigozhin. And the *Folha* columnist's article was written with all the pomp of one who is above the “narratives”, with the sacred mission of disproving that Israel was to blame!

The columnist hid the source of his “discovery” because he knew that if he revealed it, his article would be mocked and no-one would have taken him seriously. He also – wilfully? – ignored investigations by the BBC, Channel 4 and Al Jazeera published before his article, which pointed out serious inconsistencies in the Israeli-Ameri-



can version and which stated that it was not yet possible to reach a conclusive result on where the attack came from.

Four months later, Goldsmiths College's Forensic Architecture research agency published a study that also reveals serious inconsistencies in the Israeli-American version bought by Joel Pinheiro da Fonseca and states that "what happened at al-Ahli remains inconclusive", also accusing the Israelis of having "launched an aggressive disinformation campaign" after the event.

The study conducted by Forensic Architecture and led by Eyal Weizman, an Israeli-born researcher, concludes that Israel is the logical culprit. Over the previous 10 days, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had counted 51 Israeli attacks on Gaza's medical infrastructure. Four days earlier Israel had ordered the evacuation of all hospitals in northern Gaza, including al-Ahli; and three days earlier Israel had attacked the cancer treatment ward of the same hospital, possibly as a warning that a larger attack would take place, as Israel is wont to do.

Furthermore, the study concludes, Israel's attacks on Gaza hospitals follow a "consistent pattern" with attacks on the surrounding area, direct targeting, siege and occupation. These notes mean that everything indicates that the direct attack on the hospital, with almost 500 dead according to the Gaza Ministry of Health, was by Israel, and nothing indicates that it was the Palestinians themselves. Therefore, Joel Pinheiro da Fon-



• Iranians mourn the loss of their leader.

seca's claim that "it was a rocket from the Islamic Jihad group that smashed into the hospital car park" is not backed up by any serious investigation – and there were already many that refuted it. It is therefore a lie. It's fake news.

But a report in *Estado de S. Paulo* (*Estadão*) has managed to outdo the falsehoods of the *Folha* columnist. In fact, it's an Agence France-Presse (AFP) dispatch published in the *New York Times* that *Estadão* reproduced on 16th May this year. The fake news is headed "Nationalist and pro-Russia activist shoots Slovakia's premier 5 times".

Within the story, there is no proof of what the headline says. Just a description in the headline that the shooter is "an ultranationalist and a sympathiser of Russian President Vladimir Putin" and in another section that "he is a sympathiser of the paramilitary group Slovenskí Branci, linked to the Kremlin".

There is no connection between the information in the ar-

ticle. In fact, the only information that could support the headline is the latter, but being a sympathiser of a Slovak group (supposedly) linked to the Kremlin doesn't make him a "sympathiser of the Russian president", as the headline says, nor does it make him a "pro-Russia militant", as the headline claims.

So far, the report published in *Estadão* is an aberration that uses a small piece of information at the end of the text to misrepresent and exaggerate it. Technically, its headline can be considered a lie because the text doesn't corroborate what was announced. It's the eagerness to blame Russia for a most repulsive crime.

That's not all. The entire report is manipulated, not just the headline. Juraj Cintula, the shooter, has, it is true, expressed pro-Russian sentiments, as Hungarian journalist Szabolcs Panyi "discovered" by "digging through his Facebook posts", as mentioned in the report published in *Estadão*. But that was many years ago.

In 2022, when Russia intervened militarily in Ukraine, Cintula began to express support for Kiev and the neo-liberal ideas disseminated by the USA, as well as to heavily criticise Prime Minister Robert Fico, who has suspended arms shipments to Ukraine and supports rapprochement with Russia. Cintula even took part in an anti-government protest on 24th April in which the demonstrators carried an EU flag and shouted "Long live Ukraine", according to a video broadcast by Slovak media. In fact, even the report itself recognises that Cintula is a critic of the government's policies, particularly Fico's position on the press.

The Slovak press, as in any country where the ruling class is a vassal of imperialism, has a pro-NATO, pro-EU and pro-Ukraine editorial line and has put a lot of pressure on the prime minister and his government to abandon neutrality and fully support NATO's policy on Ukraine and Russia. Fico is branded

a "pro-Russia" leader – almost a puppet of Putin, by both Slovak and Western media.

The Slovak government has been accusing the mainstream media of being the main culprits in the attack, since they are running a "hate speech" campaign against the prime minister and good relations with Russia. The report published by *Estadão* could easily be included in this campaign, as well as being one of the most bizarre pieces of international fake news in recent days, because it completely inverts the facts and reality.

Furthermore, an attack on a head of state is rarely carried out by a "lone wolf", as Cintula wants to paint it – or as they do with Lee Harvey Oswald, John F Kennedy's assassin. Taking into account Fico's political positions and government practice of neutrality and therefore opposition to imperialist orders, and the fact that the shooter is a follower of imperialist politics and an opponent of Fico, and considering the long record of at-

tacks orchestrated by the USA and European powers, it is quite possible that they are behind this assassination attempt. Contrary to what *Estadão* says, Fico was attacked by a "pro-NATO" and anti-Russia militant, not a pro-Russia one.

But let's go back to the Ebrahim Raisi case. It would be the duty of any member of the press to question the conditions in which the helicopter "crashed". We won't see these questions in the major newspapers, because their job is not to put their finger on the wound, but to hide it.

Doesn't anyone find it strange that the percentage of heads of state killed in helicopter or aeroplane accidents is so high? Security policy analyst Michael Maloof raised a question: there were three helicopters together in a convoy and one of them crashed, with no emergency signal. And if it was due to fog, why didn't the other two crash, only the helicopter carrying the president of the republic and the foreign minister?

It seems that aeroplanes really hate heads of state. What bad luck for Raisi and Iran's prime minister, poor things!

But to avoid bad luck, a word of advice for the next Iranian president: be careful when getting on a helicopter, especially if your country is in a cold war with Israel, which has already blown-up gas pipelines in Iran, assassinated Iranian nuclear scientists, and less than two months ago bombed its embassy in Syria. You never know. Accidents do happen...

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

During the 1970s and '80s Japan emerged as a world leader in technical excellence. It was unmatched in the field of consumer electronics as it captured the market with outstanding products that set new standards for quality and performance. Cars and motorcycles renowned for their reliability and quality sold in increasing numbers. The USA, which had once been a great innovator in the early days of competitive capitalism, was no longer able to compete. State monopoly capitalism had developed, and it was now cheaper and easier to ensure greater profits by other means. With its powerful dominance of world trade and finance, American imperialism was in a position to impose trade restrictions and to influence currency exchange rates. The Japanese phenomenon was over.

Today a feeling of *déjà vu* becomes apparent as a similar situation develops between the USA and People's China. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China the people's republic has risen from dire poverty to become a major economic powerhouse and the world's leading manufacturer. China threatens no-one. It seeks peaceful co-operation with the world. There is, however, a great deal of difference between the responses of China and Japan. People's China will not be

bullied and meekly obey the diktats of US imperialism. The Chinese leadership remains resolute and strong and will not sacrifice the achievements of its people at the altar of US hegemony.

China's progress is impressive. Although a late-comer to space exploration it has demonstrated its prowess in undertaking extremely complex tasks. In the field of aircraft design and manufacture, COMAC, which was only established in 2008, is developing a full range of commercial planes to securely meet its own requirements and to challenge the duopoly of Boeing and Airbus. Its first aircraft, the 97-seat AR J21 regional jet, has now been joined by the C 919 to compete with Boeing 737. Two wide-bodied aircraft, the C929 and C939, are under development and both will have Chinese jet engines. China's electric cars have become world leaders in quality, value and design. China's infrastructure projects are awesome and its green technology second to none. The electronic giant Huawei, which the Americans attempted to strangle, has made a remarkable comeback with new class-leading products.

With rising levels of prosperity China's vast market is growing strongly, presenting tremendous opportunities for western products and services. Will the second-rate imperialist powers continue to follow the wishes of their masters in Washington by imposing further sanctions that may lead to their own economic failure, or will they embrace a sense of realism by increasing trade and co-operation for their mutual benefit with People's China!

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Comrades

Seventy-four years ago the US imperialists, the ringleaders of world imperialism and international reactionaries, provoked a war in Korea on the 25th June 1950 by instigating their south Korean puppets to attack the young Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The US imperialists were hungry for profits and conquest. The US imperialists fought an unjust aggressive war against the Korean people. The US imperialists launched a war of conquest against the DPRK, a war to destroy the Juche-based people's democratic system in the DPRK as well as to destroy socialism in Asia and the world.

The Korean people led by the great revolutionary leader and national hero Kim Il Sung, a true military strategic genius and ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander, fought a fierce anti-imperialist, anti-US struggle against US imperialism and the allied forces of international reaction. It was a fierce class struggle against the enemies of the people. The Korean people fought a national liberation war against the Yankee imperialist invaders, a war of justice for independence and freedom and also a war to reunify the sacred motherland. The Fatherland Liberation War of the Korean people proved to be a crucible of the Songun idea.

We condemn the appalling barbarity of the US imperialists during the Fatherland Liberation War. We denounce their crimes of massacring civilians, the use of biological and chemical weapons. Some 35,383 people were murdered by the Americans at Sinchon-ri and 1,050 people at Susan-ri (one-third of the population of the area), just to give a few exam-

ples. The US imperialists tried to exterminate the Korean people by carrying out the war that they long planned.

The US imperialists have increased their threats to People's Korea and have been carrying out numerous military exercises threatening the DPRK. The US imperialist and south Korean puppets are stepping up their war moves plus the USA is openly deploying strategic nuclear assets.

On this occasion we express our wholehearted support for the DPRK led by respected Marshal Kim Jong Un in its struggle for independence, justice and peace. We must step up our campaigning to defend People's Korea with No Ifs or Buts.

Dermot Hudson
London

Dear Comrades

It is interesting to see who the biggest donors to the Tories are.

Frank Hester and his private company TPP have given £15 million to the Tories. His company has profited from £135 million worth of contracts with the Department of Health and Social Care in less than four years. And Hester was found to have made repeated racist and sexist comments, including a vile attack on Diane Abbott.

Then there is billionaire Mohamed Mansour. He was a Minister in President Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt between 2006 and 2009. That regime arrested and tortured opponents who were demanding democratic and workers' rights. Mansour has given the Tories £5 million with a further £600,000 also coming from one of his companies.

Alan Stewart
Wakefield

Diary

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

UNTIL SUN 15 SEPT

London School of Economics: A Say in the End of the World: Solidarity and Nuclear Defence in the Cold War. Exhibition, LSE Library, 10 Portugal Street, London, WC2 2HD.

UNTIL MON 30 SEPT

Working Class Movement Library: Here We Stand: The Art of International Solidarity. WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

SAT 29 JUNE

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Boycott Barclays to demand it ends in complicity in Israel's genocide. See PCS website for local actions.

SAT 29 JUNE

TUC Women Chainmakers' Festival. 11:00–16:00, Mary Macarthur Gardens, Lower High Street, Cradley Heath, B64 5AB.

SAT 29 JUNE

Stand Up To Racism: National Demonstration Against Deportations to Rwanda. Assemble 12:00 Bath Road, London UB3 5BQ for march to Colnbrook Refugee Detention Centre.

SAT 29 JUNE

Korean Friendship Association: Picket of US and south Korean puppet London embassies 15:00 hours Details TBC.

THURS 4 JULY

General Election Nationwide. Vote Labour except in Islington North.

SAT 6 JULY

National March for Palestine: Tell the new government to stop arming Israel! 12:00 Central London. Details TBC.

SAT 6 JULY

International Brigade Memorial Trust: Annual Commemoration of British volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. 13:00–14:00, Jubilee Gardens, Southbank, London, SE1 7PG.

WED 10 JULY

CND Trade Union Advisory: How can trade unions organise against the growing nuclear threat? 19:00–20:00, webinar. Register on CND website.

SAT 13 JULY

Durham Miners Gala: Durham Racecourse,

Durham DH1 3BN.

SAT 13 JULY–25 JULY

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: International peace camp. Details TBC.

THUR 18 JULY

Marx Memorial Library: Stories of Solidarity: Tolpuddle Martyrs & Clerkenwell Green. 18:00 MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU.

THUR 18 JULY

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Eurobomb? No thanks! Preventing nuclear proliferation in Europe. 18:30 Webinar. Book on CND website.

FRI 19–SUN 21 JULY

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival: Tolpuddle, Dorchester Road, Tolpuddle, Dorset, DT2 7EH.

TUES 23–SAT 27 JULY

Oranges and Stone symbolic play about Palestine by Mojisola Adebayo, Theatro Technis, 26 Crowndale Rd, London NW1 1TT. Book on TT website.

SUN 28 JULY

No Pasaran Memorial Committee North Lanarkshire: 13:00, Duchess of Hamilton Park, 117 Avon Street, Motherwell ML1 3AL.

TUE 6 AUG & FRI 9 AUG

Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day: See CND website for details of nationwide events.

SUN 18 AUG

Potteries Chartist Festival, 11:00–16:00, TUC Midlands, Market Place, Burslem, Stoke on Trent, ST6 4AT.

SUN 1 SEPT

Burston Strike School Rally, normally held at Church Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk.

6 SEPT–10 OCT

10 TO 4 Productions: *Cable Street*: A New Musical. Southwark Playhouse Elephant, 1 Dante Place, London SE11 4RX.

SAT 7 SEPT

Joseph Arch Day Barford Warwickshire. Details TBA.

SUN 15 SEPT

Scottish Morning Star Conference, Scottish TUC, 8 Landressy Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 1BP.

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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(cheques to New Worker)

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

While the Tories are getting into trouble for senior officials placing bets on the date of the general election, the SNP have been getting into hot water for allegedly using parliamentary supplied stamps for electoral purposes. First Minister John Swinney predictably denied any wrongdoing saying it was only a case of "humorous remarks", but the case is being taken seriously enough for an official investigation by parliamentary officials.

The matter came to light when a whistleblowing SNP staff member at Holyrood exposed the fact that his four of his colleagues were discussing on WhatsApp means of obtaining postage stamps for the election campaign. Swinney's own office manager was recorded as saying that the "stamp fairy is very useful when it comes to campaigns" and another asked if stamps could be traceable back to the purchaser.

Some SNP election literature has been delivered using Christmas stamps. This perhaps small affair says much about the present state of the SNP: once a mighty party of some 125,000 members and a legion of volunteers, it is now reduced to scrabbling about in office drawers for the means of distributing their election propaganda.

An Unlikely Villian

Alex Salmond's Alba Party has not made much of an impact in this election. One of the few occasions was when their candidate for

Lothian East (and former SNP MP for the constituency), George Kerevan, denounced his Labour rival Douglas Alexander as "a war criminal who helped invade Iraq and kill half a million people".

Wee Dougie Alexander (who lost his seat in the 2015 SNP landslide) makes an unlikely pantomime villain. True he was a member of the Blair Government, but only in the non-Cabinet role of Minister for State at the Cabinet Office at the time of the invasion and was later Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a post which has not involved much slaughtering since the 15th Century. Labour was probably correct to reply that this was an "ever more desperate attempt to generate publicity for his failing candidacy". Alba does not feature, even in Scotland-only opinion polls, except amongst the "others" category who account for about two or three per cent collectively.

minster seats in Scotland.

Keir Starmer said he would not enter such negotiations with the SNP Government even if the SNP wins a majority of Scottish seats – which is not likely to happen on 4th July. SNP leader John Swinney refuses to say what Plan B is.

Despite this being a Westminster election the Tories have been very modest about their UK record and spend most of their time attacking the SNP and attacking what the SNP have done, or failed to do, at Holyrood.

The Tories are not perhaps the best people to promise to cut NHS waiting lists, so they are trying to rally their troops around the usual Tory fare – abolishing the SNP's different rates of income tax, putting more police on the beat and longer sentences for dangerous criminals. The latter would be impossible as Scotland's prisons are already full up.

It does not really matter that Westminster MPs have no influence on such matters (except for energy), but they give an excuse for SNP bashing that might do down well in the seats they are defending.

The Struggle Continues

On Tuesday, back in the real world, two events took place highlighting the staggering state of Scotland.

First, Iain Kennedy, chair of the British Medical Association (BMA) Scotland, said at the BMA's annual conference in Belfast that the NHS in Scotland is in "permanent crisis" and its very existence is under threat because anyone who can afford it now opts for private treatment.

He also deplored the SNP Government's "lack of clarity and urgency" in facing up to problems in the health service. In particular he notes that over the last year "over 58,000

patients have waited more than 12 hours in a Scottish A&E department, which is 24 times greater than 2019.

"But we all value an NHS free at the point of use. Yet, Scotland is sleepwalking into sacrificing this principle, threatening the very existence of the national health service as we know it." Unsurprisingly he thinks one solution is to "properly invest in and value doctors", though he should have said something about porters and nurses as well.

On the same day, hundreds of teachers, parents and their offspring took part in a short march from the Glasgow branch of John Lewis to the City Chambers to protest against the cuts imposed on councils that are particularly damaging for education.

Led by the Glasgow City Parent Group, protesters demanded that the SNP and Green minority reverse major cuts to teacher numbers and other education services in the city. Up to 450 teaching jobs could vanish in the next three years after the last budget.

Leanne McGuire, chair of the Group, said: "These cuts will ripple through all schools and year groups. We have 45 primary schools in Glasgow where only the headteacher will not be class-committed." At the rally Susan Quinn, a principal and EIS representative, warned that her union "has a mandate for industrial action and we will be moving to a statutory ballot at the beginning of September".

The NCP badge



£4.50 inc P&P from New Worker, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Stop the War in Ukraine!

by New Worker
correspondent

London comrades joined a picket in Whitehall last week calling for an end to British weapons supplies to Ukraine, and for Ukraine's puppet leader, Vladimir Zelensky, to step down to make way for talks to end the war in Ukraine. NCP leader Andy Brooks and other activists were interviewed by RT, the Russian TV news channel, during the early evening protest opposite the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street.



The demonstrators highlighted the grave dangers in the current battlefield situation of an all-out

NATO war against Russia, sparked by support from some hotheads in the Western alliance for weapons

they are supplying to be used in strikes deep inside the Russian Federation. This was the latest initia-

tive of the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) campaign, which has been supporting

the people of the Donbas and the anti-fascist Ukrainian resistance on the street since 2014.

Zelensky's electoral mandate in 2019 – won by promising to end the war in the Donbas – expired last month, and under the Ukrainian constitution he is no longer the country's sovereign representative. Any peace agreement has to involve the Russian Federation as the war is in reality a NATO proxy war against Russia, and that genuine negotiations to end the war in Ukraine must acknowledge Russia's fundamental security interests.

Korean solidarity in Berlin

by New Worker
correspondent

British members of the Korean Friendship Association (KFA) joined German solidarity workers last week to discuss the life-time achievements of Democratic Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Korean solidarity activists from Germany and the rest of Europe met at the Kom Treff Centre in Berlin for a hybrid seminar held under the auspices of the European Regional Committee For Friendship with the Korean People and the KFA of Germany.

The meeting was presided over by KFA UK Chair, Dermot Hudson, and Jeremy Bieringer, Chair of KFA Germany. Dermot introduced the meeting stressing that the recent visit of Russian president, Vladimir Putin, to the DPRK Korea proves that Democratic Korea is at the centre of world politics.

A recorded version of the keynote address of Christer Lundgren, the



Chair of the Sweden-Korea Friendship Association was played at the meeting. He said, in part, that the "ideological and organisational work during Kim Jong Il's first years in the Central Committee explains why the party, despite great difficulties, has stuck to its ideology and its revolutionary position and maintained its firm base among the working class and the people".

Dermot said that: "Today the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK] shines as a

Party of Juche, a party of independence and militant anti-imperialism with its own guiding idea, the Juche idea, and a party that is not just a mass party in terms of numbers but has members from all walks of life. Today, under the guidance of respected Marshal Kim Jong Un, the successor to comrade Kim Jong Il, the Workers Party of Korea continues the work of the great leader comrade Kim Jong Il."

Jeremy Bieringer, the Chair of KFA Germany,

said in his contribution that: "Today, Marshal Kim Jong Un is continuing the policy of Comrade Kim Jong Il. Foreigners who visited Pyongyang recently noted that the city has changed a lot. Under the leadership of Marshal Kim Jong Un, new roads the size of small towns have been built, as well as new subways and buses for the convenience of the people of Pyongyang. A new greenhouse was also built in which 1.800 people work and which

supplies the population of the socialist capital with high-quality vegetables free of charge."

Sara Russo, Organisation Secretary of KFA Germany pointed out: "I speak for everyone here that we all appreciate his ambition and his hard work in the WPK to proceed to build the WPK as the party of Juche."

The speech of the Chair of the Denmark-DPRK Association was read out by Mathias Fantoni, who said that: "Comrade Kim

Jong Il was a pioneer in many ways. He began working tirelessly in the WPK at the very young age of 22. Beforehand, he had excelled in the party and the youth league, as a strong revolutionary with great insight in theory and practical knowledge."

Alejandro Cao De Benos, who joined the meeting online from Spain, said that the visit of Russian President Putin to the DPRK was highly significant and said: "Let us honour our Great Leader Kim Jong Il by reaffirming our commitment to the principles he championed. Let us continue to build a strong, prosperous, and independent Korea, guided by the Juche ideology and inspired by his enduring legacy. As we look to the future, we draw strength from his example, knowing that the path he laid out will lead us to greater heights."

"His spirit lives on in our hearts and our actions, propelling us forward in our pursuit of a brighter, more prosperous future."

Escalation: Americans help Ukraine terror strike Sevastopol

by
Ekaterina Blinova

The USA has raised the Ukraine conflict to new level by facilitating a terror strike on the Russian Crimean port of Sevastopol. On Sunday at 12:15pm local time, Ukraine attacked the Russian city of Sevastopol with five ATACMS tactical ballistic missiles equipped with cluster bombs. Russian air defences intercepted four missiles, but the explosion of the fifth cluster warhead led to the death of four civilians with 153 more injured.

Washington’s involvement in the Ukrainian missile strike on Sevastopol is undeniable, given that it was conducted with the US-made ATACMS missiles programmed by American specialists, while a US RQ-4 Global Hawk reconnaissance drone was operating near Crimea that day, Russia’s Foreign Ministry stated on 24th June.

An American RQ-4 Global Hawk drone was in the airspace over the Black Sea south-east of Crimea at the time of the Ukrainian missile attack on Sevastopol. “The USA is very complicit in this,” says Earl Rasmussen, a retired US Army lieutenant-colonel and international consultant.

Rasmussen said it was “highly likely the Global Hawk was providing reconnaissance, targeting information and potentially guidance information for the ATACMS itself...”

“ATACMS... essentially needs to co-ordinate with something. So, typically a lot of

times drones’ or satellite information are used to help guide the target and guide the missile,” Rasmussen explained. “ATACMS is pre-programmed to some degree. But to ensure that it gets to its destination, there’s definitely communication of some type with an aerial drone

ATACMS missiles, it also expressed interest in obtaining MQ-9 Reaper spy drones from the USA, stressing that it needs new surveillance capabilities to strike Russian targets “deep behind the front lines”.

On the *EurAsian-Times* website commentators suggest that “with

to Ukraine, fearing that they would be shot down and captured by Russian forces. But the Pentagon and its NATO allies have manned electronic intelligence planes and surveillance drones constantly circling over the Black Sea, south of Crimea.

“The Global Hawk...

population to prompt “some type of concern there, to provoke some type of uprising or dissatisfaction with the government”.

“Targeting the Russian population, we’ve got some dream here of some of the neo-cons that are very influential, of overthrowing

both the EU as well as US leadership, senior leaders regarding that. So it’s just based on their discussions. Is that rhetoric? Perhaps. But there are ulterior motives in this and it’s beyond the battlefield itself.”

Rasmussen thinks that Washington will now play down the recent slaughter of civilians in Sevastopol as ‘collateral damage’. But the problem remains that the Biden administration not only provided Ukraine with long-range weaponry but is “actually facilitating the use of it”.

“It definitely looks like the USA has kind of escalated this one more level,” he said. “And the role that it’s playing in not just authorising the use for long range, but actually playing a role in facilitating the execution of these long-range targeting efforts into Russia,” warning that the attack “drags the USA very, very much right into the war”.

Sputnik



• Sevastopol’s bomb disposal units in action after the attack.

system.”

The US government admitted in October 2023 that it had covertly provided Ukraine with a model of ATACMS with a range 165 kilometres. Longer-range ATACMS missiles, capable of striking targets at a distance of up to 300 kilometres, were secretly included in the \$300 million aid package and delivered to Ukraine in April. Both ATACMS variants have cluster warheads, prohibited by the international Convention on Cluster Munitions – which the USA has declined to sign.

In May *Politico*, the online Washington newspaper, reported that after Ukraine received

the acquisition of the 300-kilometre-range variant of ATACMS, the thinking in Ukraine is that pairing it with an established unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) is the only way to attain some gains in the large artillery and ground systems-centric war”.

The Washington *Defense Post* also reported that US-made ATACMS and MQ-9 Reapers “could work in tandem in Ukraine, with the Reaper collecting target information and the ATACMS ensuring precision strikes”.

The Americans have repeatedly refused to supply sophisticated drone systems

has a long flight duration... It can be up in the air for over 30 hours and has a very long range, both from a flight perspective as well as from a reconnaissance perspective as far as providing detailed information,” said Rasmussen. “It can provide very precise information down to less than a metre and basically a third of a metre diameter area.”

But the military expert emphasised that Ukrainian attacks deep inside Russia cannot affect the balance of power on the battlefield in the zone of special military operation.

He argues that the strike on Sevastopol was aimed at the civilian

the government and dismantling Russia. We’ve heard comments from

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Julian Assange: free at last!

by Ed Newman

The plane carrying Julian Assange, who has fought American espionage charges for more than a decade for his whistleblowing efforts, landed in his native Australia on Wednesday. Julian was permitted to walk free after pleading 'guilty' in a US court in the Northern Mariana Islands, an American possession in the Pacific, to a felony charge for publishing US military secrets.

According to documents from the court in Saipan, the largest island and capital in the Northern Mariana Islands, Assange pleaded guilty to one criminal count of conspiracy to obtain documents, writing and notes connected with the national defence of the USA and communicating these materials.

As part of the plea agreement, the USA was bound to withdraw its extradition request and recommended a sentence to time already

served, with no additional fines issued.

"The chilling effect is the United States pursuing journalism as a crime," Assange's US lawyer Barry Pollack told a press briefing after the Saipan hearing, warning this sends a "chilling precedent" to the rest of the world.

He noted that Assange had acknowledged, accepted and disclosed documents from Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, and that, "unfortunately, that violates the terms of the Espionage Act" – a federal law instituted shortly after the USA entered the First World War in 1917 – that oversees the handling of information sensitive to American national defence.

"Mr Assange said very clearly he believes there should be First Amendment protection for that conduct, but the fact of the matter is, as written, the Espionage Act does not have a defence for the First Amendment," Pollack



• Julian Assange: free at last!

said, with reference to the American constitutional right that governs freedom of speech and the press.

The Australian Labor administration of Anthony Albanese had pressed for Assange's return.

"Regardless of the views that people have about Mr Assange's activities, the case has dragged on for too long. There's nothing to be gained by his continued incarceration, and we

want him brought home to Australia. And we have engaged and advocated Australia's interests using all appropriate channels to support a positive outcome, and I've done that since very early on," Albanese said in the Australian parliament on Tuesday.

In a breakneck denouement to a 12-year stalemate with the US government, Assange left London's high-security Belmarsh Prison on

Monday and boarded a Bombardier Global 6000 private jet for Saipan, with a brief stop-over in Bangkok for refuelling. He was not permitted to fly commercial airlines to Saipan and onward to Australia, and his wife, Stella, has made a social media appeal for urgent donations to cover the \$520,000 cost of travel.

The 52-year-old Assange has been battling

extradition for more than a decade. In that time, Assange has spent seven years in self-exile in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and the last five years at Belmarsh.

Assange was wanted in the USA on 18 charges, including 17 under the Espionage Act and one under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. He did face up to 175 years in prison after WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of leaked confidential military files and diplomatic documents related to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

WikiLeaks gained international prominence in 2010, when the website released footage from a 2007 US helicopter attack that killed two Reuters news staff and several others in Iraq's capital, Baghdad. It followed up this high-profile release by publishing hundreds of thousands of other classified files, making disclosures that often embarrassed Washington.

Radio Havana Cuba

Ramaphosa and the new era

by Roberto Morejón

A skilled negotiator, Cyril Ramaphosa, the leader of the African National Congress (ANC) has been inaugurated for a second presidential term in South Africa, 30 years after the beginning of efforts to leave behind the heavy legacy of development separated by races, the hated apartheid system.

In these plans to re-

duce inequality, unemployment and insufficient basic services, the ANC, until now with the absolute majority in parliament, has had great weight, but the difficulties have been accentuated in a country of 62 million inhabitants.

The historic ANC, which contributed so much to the independence of countries such as Namibia and Angola, lost its absolute majority in the legislative elec-

tions on 29th May this year.

President Ramaphosa quickly spoke with other political forces and ultimately managed to build a national unity government in South Africa, described by observers and the president as significant and the beginning of a new era.

As the ANC won 150 seats out of the 400 that make up parliament, Ramaphosa will now lead a government in

which power is shared with some representatives of the opposition, something unprecedented.

Among those included in the new political range, the conservative Democratic Alliance stands out, a formation with 87 deputies that accepted the call to reach a consensus. So did three other parties.

In this way, Parliament re-elected Ramaphosa as Head of State, who in his words is permeated by the interest of many compa-

triot to work together and to face the current difficult circumstances.

Uniting the people of South Africa has been one of the lines enunciated by the re-elected president, committed to building a growing and inclusive economy, with opportunities and livelihoods for all people.

For Ramaphosa, everything possible must be done not to lose what has been built over the

last three decades, and to move towards the creation of more jobs and greater opening of basic services.

Ten years after the death of Nelson Mandela, the ANC remains the main party in a country with the most industrialised economy in Africa, but with needs to be met, hence the re-elected President's insistence on achieving national unity.

Radio Havana Cuba