

Resistance vows vengeance for death of their leaders!

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Arab resistance movements have vowed to avenge the deaths of their leaders in Beirut and Tehran this week.

Fuad Shukar, a senior commander in the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, was killed in Beirut during an Israeli air-raid on Tuesday. The head of the Hamas politburo, Ismail Haniyeh, died a few hours later when an Israeli missile slammed into his residence in Tehran. Haniyeh had gone to Tehran the day before to participate in the inauguration ceremony of Masoud Pezeshkian, the new President of the Islamic Republic.

The Israelis say Shukar's assassination was in response to an alleged Hezbollah strike in the occupied Golan Heights, which the Lebanese resistance movement say they didn't do, but they have still to admit openly to killing the Hamas leader.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, says Israel will be "severely punished" for the killing of Haniyeh on Iranian soil as senior Iranian officials



• Ismail Haniyeh Abu Al-Abd

held talks with their allies in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen to discuss the next step in the confrontation with the Zionist entity.

Russia and People's China condemned what the Russians called the "cynical murder" of the Hamas political chief who had played a key role in negotiations to end the fighting in the Gaza Strip. And at UN headquarters in New York the Syrian delegate told the Security Council that "the events over the past few days' highlight that the Israeli war criminals have decided to continue their bloody attacks to plunge the region into a full-scale war, benefiting from unlimited US support at the expense of international peace and security and the lives and blood of innocent people".

Qusai al Dahhak warned that Israel's continued disregard of international laws and its failure to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly may lead to igniting the entire region and threatening regional and international peace and security.

The Israeli war criminals would not have continued to

commit war crimes and crimes against humanity if it were not for the unlimited support of the USA and the hypocrisy and double standards practised by some Western countries that are involved in the Israeli war against the Palestinian people and have remained silent on the matter.

Tens of thousands took to the streets of the Iranian capital to pay their last respects to the Palestinian leader at his funeral ceremony on Thursday. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, led prayers for the Hamas leader, whose body will be buried in Qatar, while the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament said "the assassination of the resistance commanders in Lebanon and Tehran is an indication of the weakness of the Zionist regime... these crimes will not affect the path of our movement".

The American foreign minister, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, says the USA "was not aware of or involved in" the killing of Haniyeh, but many Arabs suspect that the Israelis were secretly given the go-ahead by the Americans when Netanyahu was in Washington last week.

all-out war in the Middle East.

The Communist Party of Israel and the communist-led Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) said: "The Israeli settler government is knowingly flaming a regional war that will hurt all peoples of the region, including Israeli citizens. These assassinations give cover to the Israeli government failure to reach the war's objectives and eliminate any chance to reach a deal that will end the war, free the hostages and prisoners, reconstruct Gaza and enable the residents of northern and southern Israel to return to their homes...these are assassinations against diplomacy itself by a trigger-happy government that can only speak the language of violence and destruction".

FUND

The August fighting fund opened with £2,000 in the pot – a very generous donation in memory of Harry Danvers, one of the founders of the NCP, from the comrades in Richmond & Kingston. We now just need £1,500 to hit our target for the month but we won't say no to anything extra to keep us going.

Racist thugs on the streets of Southport and London. NATO troops in Ukraine and the Middle East. The fight for freedom goes on. With the conflict in Ukraine still going strong and Middle East on the brink of full-scale war the communist voice within the anti-war movement needs to be heard more than ever. From Washington to London, Palestine to Ukraine, it's one struggle – one fight.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

No end in sight...

The Middle East is now on the brink of all-out war following this week's targeted killings of Palestinian and Lebanese resistance leaders in back-to-back Israeli air strikes in Beirut and Tehran. Some say this is what the Israeli leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, wants to stave off the Gaza cease-fire he fears would split his coalition and force him to call fresh elections he almost certainly would lose. Bowing out while facing bribery, fraud and breach of trust charges is not how Netanyahu wants to be remembered. He wants to end his days covered in Zionist glory as the man who built 'Greater Israel' and brought the Palestinians to their knees. But he's failed, so far, on all counts.

Israel has failed to drive the Palestinians into Egypt to clear the decks for the Zionist settlement of the Gaza Strip. Israel has failed to stop the confrontation with the Lebanese resistance on its northern border. The Yemenis are maintaining their naval blockade that has closed down Eilat, Israel's port on the Red Sea. The Palestinians still hold scores of Israeli prisoners, and Hamas and the other Palestinian resistance movements fight on using tunnel networks under the Strip that the Israelis have failed to uncover.

It hasn't been for the want of trying. The genocidal Israeli campaign in Gaza has brought death and destruction to the Palestinian enclave on an industrial scale. Some 39,000 Palestinian Arabs have been killed and over 90,000 more wounded in the round of fighting that began in October 2023. Most of them were defenceless civilians.

But behind Israel stands American imperialism. Despite all the talk of "Zionist lobbies" or the "Jewish vote" only the Americans count in Tel Aviv. The Israelis are American puppets that, until recently, enabled the Americans to pose as friends of the feudal Arab kings who allow the Big Oil corporations to plunder their oil in return for a juicy cut and American protection.

Likewise, the Zionist leaders who strut the world posing as independent politicians are just alibis for American aggression in the Middle East. US imperialism provides the military and economic support that keeps Israel going. The country is a virtual American protectorate and their leaders will ultimately do whatever America wants.

The war goes on in Gaza because that's what American imperialism wants. They want the fighting to continue until Hamas is crushed – because Hamas stands in their way, because the Palestinian resistance sabotaged the American plan for NATO expansion in the Middle East when it launched its raid into Israel last October.

But what the Americans want and what they get is another matter altogether. They failed in Iraq. They failed in Afghanistan. They failed in Syria, and they will fail in the Middle East.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 led to the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians from their homes. The war that began in 1948 continues to this day. The Palestinians fight on – and they will continue the struggle until their legitimate rights are restored.

UN resolutions have provided the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. First of all, Israel must withdraw totally from all the occupied territories seized in 1967, including Arab East Jerusalem and Syria's Golan Heights. The Palestinians must be allowed to establish a state of their own on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian refugees whose homes are now in Israel must be allowed to return or, if they so wish, be paid appropriate compensation in exchange. And all states in the region, including Israel, should have internationally agreed and recognised frontiers guaranteed by all the Great Powers.

Maduro wins again

by Lyuba Lulko

Last weekend the people of Venezuela re-elected Nicolás Maduro as president. Do not believe what the Western newspapers say about Venezuela. Maduro celebrates an honest victory.

Venezuela held presidential elections on Sunday. Nicolás Maduro was re-elected for his third six-year term having scored 51.2 per cent of the vote. Opposition candidate Edmundo González gained 44 per cent.

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Maduro on his re-election as President of Venezuela. "Remember that you are always a welcome guest on Russian soil," Putin said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry also congratulated Maduro on his victory. Beijing said it would "further strengthen" relations with Venezuela. "China highly values the development of bilateral relations" Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said.

Iran, Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua also recognised Maduro as president. These countries have experienced American-inspired "colour revolutions" during elections in the past. The Brazilian government will wait for the publication of the protocols of the presidential election in Venezuela before recognising the results of the vote in Caracas.

But the West and its allies expressed concerns. Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado says her candidate, Gonzalez, had won. She states, without providing any evidence, that her candidate "received 70 per cent of the vote, and Nicolás Maduro – 30 per cent". She's called on her observers to remain at the polling stations until the election protocols are made available.

Corina, who was barred from running in this election, has a long history with American-funded organisations. The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that she founded, Sumate, was funded by the USA through the National Endowment of Democracy.

The USA and its allies – Chile, Argentina and Panama – called on Maduro to publish the "true results" of the presidential election in Venezuela. "Maduro needs to understand that it is difficult to ever believe the results," the Chileans said.

The US authorities have "serious concerns" that the results of the presidential election announced by the Venezuelan authorities "do not reflect the will of the people", US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. However, there is no recognition of Maduro's illegitimacy yet – and there will not be any.

The West has a sad experience of not recognising legitimate authorities. Washington still does not recognise Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus. And after the last Venezuelan elections six years ago, the Americans refused to recognise Maduro as president due to alleged falsifications. Opposition leader Juan Guaido was declared president.

Yet Guaido has long been written off. He's left for a well-deserved vacation in the USA while the other pretender, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, travels from one conference to another as the leader of the imaginary "United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus" that only exists in her head. As for Maduro, the Americans have already begun to co-operate with him, lifting sanctions and buying Venezuelan oil to screen off a stronger enemy – Russia. The European Union also resumed oil purchases from

Venezuela in 2023 against the backdrop of the embargo on the purchase of Russian oil.

If the USA imposes sanctions against Venezuela again, the cost of petrol in the USA will sky-rocket, and this is not a piece of the pie that the Democrats want to get during the run up to the presidential election in November.

Even if sanctions are going to follow, China and the Russian Federation will ensure sales of Venezuelan oil in Asia – been there, done that.

Maduro was re-elected because the economy is recovering. Western media marvel at all the tribulations that the people of Venezuela have to go through amid what they say is Maduro's terrible economic policy. Maduro's economic policy can be defined with one simple word – socialism: the poor get pulled into the middle class by redistributing national income.

Venezuela's main wealth is oil, and oil sales are going well now. The state-run oil company PDVSA contributed \$6.24 billion to the country's treasury last year. This amount was used to pay public sector salaries and health, education and housing purposes.

Venezuela's economy grew by more than five per cent in 2023 and is expected to reach eight per cent this year. According to the Central Bank, inflation reached just under 190 per cent last year, which is lower than the 234 per cent in the previous year.

"In 2024, we will continue the policy to support national production, restore national income, restore workers' income," Maduro told parliamentarians. Inflation this year will be down to double-digit numbers, he said.

Workers' Notes

Take with one hand...

by New Worker correspondent

...while giving little with the other. Monday started off well with the announcement that the Government and the British Medical Association had agreed on a 22.3 per cent pay rise for junior doctors over two years in England. It was not to last, however, and not just because the award, while still substantial, was below the 35 per cent to restore the value of pre 2008 salaries.

In the afternoon the new Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, made a statement in the Commons on the "Public Spending Inheritance" that will set the tone of the new Labour Government. Instead of pulling a rabbit out of a hat to impress the audience she effectively said we will not be getting much more than a few rabbit droppings.

The former Chancellor angrily denied any deception about the state of Britain's public finances and cited the Institute for Fiscal Studies in support of his claim that she ought to have known the true figures. And he has a point.

It is, indeed, clear that things are worse than the Tories let on. But it is also clear that claims of a massive unexpected "black hole" to the extent of £21.9 billion are exaggerated and deployed to justify the sort of cuts Labour used to oppose in opposition.

Rachel Reeves claimed that the former Tory Government planned to spend £35 billion more than announced, of which £13 billion was for emergencies and "slippages". This gave her an excuse to "reduce that pressure on the public finances by £5.5 billion this year and over £8 billion next year".

In particular she complained about the costs of the now shelved Rwanda deportation scheme and the Tory policy of simply handing out more cash to the railways to compensate for post-COVID declines in passenger numbers. Needless to say, she regards Tory

military expenditure, particularly in Ukraine, as sacrosanct.

She boasts that she will be accepting the much-delayed recommendations of the supposedly independent Public Pay Review bodies. While it is technically correct to say that the 5.5 per cent offered to NHS workers and teachers is an above inflation rise, that figure does not nearly compensate for the 14 years of Tory austerity and the recent high inflation.

One of her anti-Tory soundbites, "they spent like there was no tomorrow because they knew someone else would pick up the bill", sounds as though the ghost of Margaret Thatcher's speech writer is being kept busy.

In a classic case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, she said that the £9 billion extra on public sector pay will mean cuts of £3 billion to departmental budgets.

The Measures

Another thing getting the chop is the new educational qualification – the advanced British Standard. Meanwhile drastic cuts are planned in the use of hotel accommodation for migrants. What is going to happen to them is unsaid, but more rapid deportation seems to be the unspoken solution.

£1 billion worth of unfunded transport projects for both road and rail will be cancelled. "If we cannot afford it, we cannot do it" is the Government's mantra. It is a good thing that the road under Stonehenge has been dumped but she seems to have entirely forgotten that taxes can be raised on those who can afford it.

While she denounced the previous Government for its empty promise of 40 new hospitals her only response is to "conduct a complete review of the new hospital programme, with a thorough, realistic and costed timetable for delivery". This can be read as saying the whole thing will be abandoned without a formal declaration.

Likewise, Tory adult social care reforms to cap the lifetime costs borne by recipients were never implemented have now been scrapped on cost grounds. Also, the winter fuel payments worth £200 will now be restricted to those receiving pension credit or £300 to households in receipt

of pension credit with someone over the age of 80. This will adversely affect about 10 million pensioners.

This measure enabled former Tory pensions minister Baroness Ros Altmann to get on her high horse and claim she was "shocked that the Chancellor has chosen to take money away from some of the poorest people in this country". After all that is a traditional Tory task. Reeves claims that 850,000 eligible households do not claim and merging pension credit with housing benefit will enhance uptake among those entitled to it.

The forthcoming Budget, we are warned, "will involve taking difficult decisions to meet our fiscal rules across spending, welfare and tax". That does not sound like good news for the working class.

It is traditional for Tories to condemn the unemployed as work-shy layabouts happy to live off benefits. Reeves takes a similar view, albeit with more polite language than Norman Tebbit's infamous "On yer bike". It is difficult to see what other interpretations can be put on her remarks that "because if someone can work, they should work. That is a principle of this Government, yet under the previous Government, welfare spending ballooned, while inactivity has risen sharply in recent years".

While saying that "we will ensure that the welfare system is focused on supporting people into employment" sounds good in theory, experience suggests that it will be a case of driving sick people off benefits and into poorly paid jobs. It was telling that she speaks of plans to "assess the unacceptable levels of fraud and error in our welfare system and take forward action to bring that down" while failing to mention a clampdown on the much greater losses caused by skilful tax evasion.

She confirmed that the Office for Budget Responsibility will be given an effective "fiscal responsibility" veto – which is a polite term for not annoying bankers.

Public sector reform is promised that looks forward to grasping the "opportunities of artificial intelligence to improve our public services". It might be unduly pessimistic, but it sounds like a recipe for job cuts. No mention was made about reversing penny pinching out-sourcing in the

public sector that would be an effective means of saving public money.

Ironically, on the same day as Reeves's speech, security guards employed by G4S at DWP offices started a week-long strike in protest at being paid only the minimum wage and even forced to undergo training courses in their own time unpaid.

GMB National Officer, Eamon O'Hearn, said that the latter point "constitutes a breach of National Minimum Wage laws and the Modern Slavery Act. G4S gets millions in taxpayer cash to run the job centre security contract for DWP". He added that: "Instead of forking out for expensive agency staff and lining director and shareholder pockets, that money should be used to make sure these workers can live." No chance of that unless Starmer and Reeves are forced to change course.

The Reaction

The response from unions to Reeves's speech was mixed.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "We are the sixth richest economy in the world, where the 50 richest families are worth £500 billion. It is clear irrespective of 'black holes' that we need to consider a wealth tax.

"Workers and communities cannot wait for growth, nor can they be told to pay for another crisis not of their making. People are struggling. Living standards have fallen, inequality has increased and our public services are on life support."

More specifically, the union said of the NHS 5.5 per cent pay offer: "The government has rightly recognised this with restorative pay rises for junior doctors. It's imperative to ensure that we are not dividing NHS workers and creating even greater differentials between different groups." But "health workers being offered less than half of what junior doctors have been offered is not good enough. It will certainly not deal with the recruitment crisis in the NHS.

"The PRB [Pay Review Body] process has today been proven to be broken beyond repair. We cannot have a situation where restorative pay awards are offered to some and not to all."

That, however, is exactly what we have.

Unison, the largest union for NHS staff, sounded more grateful, saying "this is a government thankfully prepared to act quite differently from its predecessors", but added that: "This year's wage increase is already more than a quarter of a year late. NHS staff will be pleased ministers haven't made them wait any longer" and "this year's pay rise cannot be a one-off. It'll take much more than this boost to get the NHS into a better place."

Daniel Kebede, General Secretary of the National Education Union, the largest teachers' union, doffed his cap and welcomed the 5.5 pay award but described the "so-called independent pay review body as a failed process that has resulted in pay cuts over the last 14 years". He correctly noted that only industrial action had changed the pay review body's thinking on teacher pay.

It is likely the doctors will accept the offer, but what the teachers and other NHS workers will say is more uncertain...

Amazon wins the first round

by New Worker correspondent

It was perhaps inevitable that the GMB's recent attempt to secure union recognition at the Coventry warehouse of predatory online retailer Amazon was ultimately unsuccessful. The result of the workplace ballot of around 2,600 workers was a narrow 50.5 to 49.5 per cent victory for the bosses on an 86.2 per cent turnout, which must count as something of an honourable defeat given the overwhelming hostility of American bosses who do everything except encasing union organisers in concrete to prevent unions getting a foot in the door.

In 2022 Amazon workers at a Staten Island warehouse in New York were the first in the USA to win union recognition, but Amazon still has not sat down to negotiate with the victorious union and continues to fight legal challenges to the vote. Other American sites are still organised,

continued on page 4...

...continued from page 3

with splits in the Amazon Labor Union after failed ballots at other Amazon warehouses. In any case, Amazon does not bother too much with what the courts say when it is dissatisfied with their decisions.

The Coventry vote came after a series of strikes, official and unofficial, amounting to 37 days, which began in January 2023, and a sit-in over the last two years which began after workers angrily rejected a tiny 50 pence per hour rise after the pandemic.

When forced to allow the ballot, Amazon spent an entire eight weeks negotiating the "access agreement" that set the access terms to the warehouse for GMB. During that period Amazon's anti-union campaign went on.

In this case Amazon put up QR codes around the building that would send an automatic message to GMB cancelling their membership. These codes were plastered all over the warehouse. They were on every table in the canteen, on huge screens in the centre of the building – even in every toilet stall. Amazon also put

out anti-union propaganda in the 26 languages spoken in the warehouse.

Seventy members were lost this way while the majority rejecting membership was only 28. This was on top of compulsory anti-union meetings and sudden influxes of workers to dilute the workforce. The warehouse workers suddenly rose from 1,500 to 3,000. The meetings took the form of rare breaks with free snacks on offer. Ethnic minority managers were drafted in from other sites to target specific groups of workers.

In response to the result, which prevents them having a ballot for three years, GMB is launching a legal challenge to the result on the grounds of Amazon using unfair tactics. Stuart Richards, a GMB senior organiser, said: "From day one, Amazon have been relentless in their attacks on their own workforce." Surprise, surprise.

GMB has made a formal complaint to the UK unions regulator, the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), arguing that Amazon's narrow win was a "stitch up" due to bullying, harassment and

use of an unlawful QR code that swung the vote against workers. Should the complaint be upheld, the CAC has the power to order a new ballot.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported a recording from one of these meeting at which Amazon warned workers that "if the GMB is recognised, this means we cannot give you any increases to pay, any one-off payments or bonuses, we cannot make changes to your hours of work, your shift arrangements or holidays – including those changes that you like and you asked for – without the GMB agreeing".

Rosa Curling, of the legal firm Foxglove, which is backing 900 workers who are taking an inducement claim against Amazon, said: "Attention must now turn to Amazon's behaviour before and during this ballot process – they have not played fairly." Again: What a surprise.

While successful and hard-fought recognition battles have been won in the USA, Amazon is non-unionised in Europe, except in France and Germany where unions have to be recognised.

Tom Vickers of Notting-

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ham Trent University noted that: "Many Amazon workers are from a migrant or refugee background and have family in their country of origin who rely on the money they send home... the wider precariousness workers face because of the cost of living, temporary contracts... all need to be

taken into account."

Pay at Amazon starts at between £12.30 and £13 per hour, depending on location, slightly above the National Living Wage, while GMB has been seeking £15 per hour.

This battle also reflects the general weakness of the present-day union movement, which is weakest among unskilled workers, with the TUC now only half the size it was in the late 1970s.

The legal firm Foxglove warned that: "We're looking forward to seeing Amazon in court. And if we can get within 15 votes of winning with Amazon shamelessly breaking the rules and stitching up the process – imagine what we could do if there was a fresh vote without the dirty tricks."

Amazon employs 75,000 workers in Britain at 31 sites so there is scope for many more battles, but that will cost a great deal of money that GMB does not have. GMB said it was "surprised by the fearlessness of an overwhelmingly immigrant workforce, many of whom arrived recently from South Asia". Only five per cent of the Coventry employees are British born and its campaign leaflets were translated into 12 different languages. At the start many were frightened to get involved but confidence grew as the strikes developed.

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

23rd July 2004

ISREALI PREMIER Ariel Sharon was obviously asking for trouble by urging French Jews to flee to Israel to escape anti-Semitism.

Following a speech to American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, Sharon noted that the population of France is now about 10 per cent Muslim, which he said accounts for the rise "the wildest anti-Semitism".

The French Foreign Ministry later called the accusation "unacceptable" and demanded an official explanation. It seems that Sharon missed a good opportunity to keep quiet this time round.

His remarks not only outraged France but

received the cold shoulder from those he described as his "Brothers in France".

Leaders of the country's Jewish community voiced strong disapproval, saying Sharon had no right to speak for them.

Theo Klein, the honorary president of CRIF, an umbrella group representing French Jewish organisations, said Mr Sharon should let the French Jewish community take care of its own problems.

France is home to some 600,000 Jews, the largest Jewish population in Europe, as well as around five million Muslims.

According to the French Interior Ministry, there were 510 anti-Jewish acts or threats in the first half of this year, compared with 593 for all of 2003.

Many of the incidents have been attributed to young French Muslims, who often vent their rage at Israel's policies towards Palestinians by targeting Jewish sites such as cemeteries and synagogues.

Similarly, there has been an increase in attacks against such Muslim targets as mosques and prayer rooms. Certainly, no

political pretext can justify racism.

Significantly, the French Media suggested that Sharon's declaration about French Jews was motivated by a desire to "discredit" France and keep Europe out of any discussions about the Middle East crisis.

Despite moves by many other governments to isolate Yasser Arafat, Michel Barnier, France's new foreign minister, enraged the Israelis when he stayed overnight at Arafat's compound in Ramallah during his June visit to the West Bank. Barnier urged an end to Israel's confinement of Arafat in his headquarters, calling it "undignified".

Sharon said he was "very disappointed" by Barnier's visit that showed France's "unfriendly behaviour" towards the Jewish state.

This may help explain the motivation behind Sharon's words about French Jews.

With the Middle East peace process deadlocked, what Sharon needs to do is rethink Israel's pressing policy towards the Palestinians and its outrageous behaviour in breach of international laws, rather than pointing fingers at other countries.

Unit 731: Japan's hideous war-time experiments

by Xu Keyue

“If the discovery seemed like the opening scene of a murder mystery, it is one that Japan prefers to leave unsolved,” the *New York Times* once commented on the startling and frightening discovery in Tokyo in 1989 of more than 100 human skulls suspected of being linked to the Imperial Japanese Army’s infamous Unit 731.

Thirty-five years have passed, but where the skulls came from remains a mystery that Japanese authorities still appear reluctant to solve. But more and more evidence is pointing to Unit 731, which is notorious for engaging in lethal human experimentation and biological weapons manufacturing during the Chinese people’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931–45), says a Japanese non-governmental organisation (NGO) established the year after the skulls were found.

Dark history

The discovery of the remains can be traced back 35 years. On 22nd July 1989, a large number of human bones were discovered at a construction site at the National Institute of Health and Infectious Diseases (now the National Institute of Infectious Diseases) in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo. At that time, the police identified that several of the remains had been buried for over 20 years.

The site where the bones were found was the former location of the Japanese army medical school. After the 18th September Incident that marked the start of Japan’s invasion of China in 1931, army doctor Shiro Ishii established a research laboratory within the school’s Epidemic Prevention Department. Soon after, the Epidemic Prevention and Water Supply Department of



• Ruins of Japan’s notorious Unit 731 facilities in Harbin.

the Imperial Japanese Army, also known as Unit 731, was established and based in Harbin, North-east China, which was then called Manchuria, for the development of biological weapons. The Japanese army medical school served as the headquarters of the unit.

As the burial site was located north of the original epidemic prevention laboratory, the Shinjuku district government said that the bones may belong to “the victims of live human experiments conducted by Unit 731 in Manchuria”.

Residents of Shinjuku requested that Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare confirm the identities of the deceased, but their request was denied. The ministry then asked Shinjuku to cremate and bury the remains, but Shinjuku refused. Suspicions of medical crimes during wartime arose, prompting Shinjuku to promise an investigation.

In 1991, anthropologist Hajime Sakura, a retired director of the National Science Museum, agreed to examine the bones, revealing evidence

of artificial processing and various injuries.

According to investigation and identification released in 1992, traces were discovered of artificial processing such as drilling, sawing, and cutting on multiple skulls, some of which resemble trepanation procedures for neurosurgery or mastoidectomy. Traces of incisions, puncture wounds and gunshot wounds were also found. Additionally, there were severed limb bones, some of which appear to have been fixed with formalin, and others that seem to have been dried specimens of exposed bones.

Sakura clearly stated in a press conference that “these bones are related to the war”. Over the past few decades, however, the Japanese authorities have obstructed all parties from uncovering the truth, or blatantly lied in an attempt to cover up the truth.

Now by deciphering the records of recently disclosed military medical school personnel, the Japanese NGO – the Association Demanding

Investigation of Human Bones Discovered from the Site of the Army Medical College – aims to reveal the connection between the human remains and Unit 731.

“The discovered human bones have long been suspected of being related to Unit 731, and with the disclosure of the new material, those suspicions have only grown stronger,” Yasusi Torii, a member of the association, said last week.

“The new material” Torii referred to are the testimonies and survey responses of individuals associated with a former Japanese army medical school from 30 years ago but were disclosed by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare just recently.

According to the NGO, these records contain firsthand experiences that were not included in the ministry’s previous report.

“By deciphering the disclosed records of those affiliated with the Japanese army medical school, we aim to shed light on the relationship

between the human remains and Unit 731,” the association said in a statement announcing an event on 20th July to mark the 35th anniversary of the discovery of the skulls.

According to Kazuyuki Kawamura, a representative of the NGO, the investigation report from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare quotes one person affiliated with the school as saying: “In the summer of Showa 15 (1940), I remember receiving a formalin-preserved human head in a drum can from Harbin.”

Based on the disclosed material, however, the actual statement was: “In the summer of Showa XX, a formalin-preserved human head in a drum can was delivered from Harbin, and we were forced to participate in the extraction. I remember I was vomiting.”

It was revealed that the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare had omitted the respondents’ experiences. From this description, it is reasonable to assume that it was sent from Unit 731 in Harbin, Kawamura said.

Since its founding, the Japanese association has steadfastly dedicated itself to uncovering the truth. “We are determined to investigate the truth behind the human bones discovered in Shinjuku and, if possible, identify the remains and return them to the families of the deceased,” Kawamura said.

In fact, evidence of Unit 731’s bacteriological warfare and numerous victims and their families have been discovered in various locations such as the Heilongjiang, Zhejiang and Hunan provinces in China. If the identities of the remains unearthed in Shinjuku are confirmed, they will serve as concrete evidence of war crimes committed by Japan.

China leads world in renewable energy

by Lyn Neeley

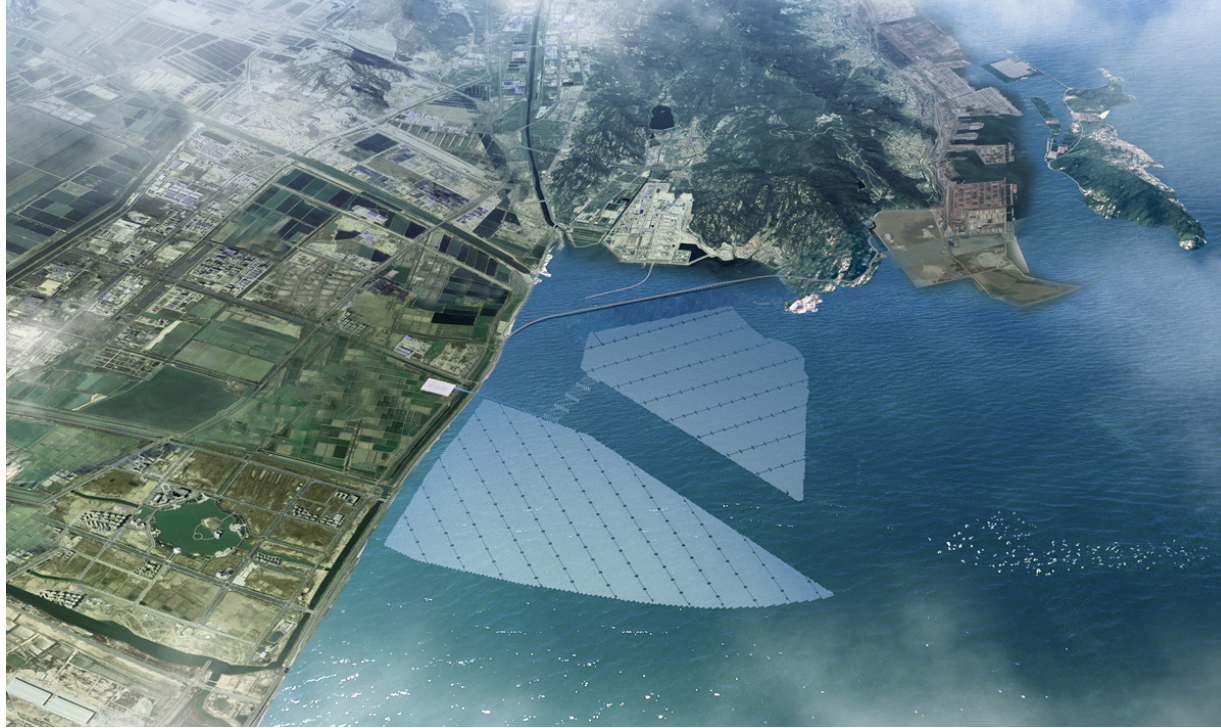
In 2023 People's China produced 60 per cent of the world's electric vehicles, 98 per cent of the world's electric buses and two-thirds of all the world's wind and solar projects. Its workers installed more solar panels than they had in the previous three years combined, nearly twice as much as the rest of the world combined.

These figures account for large solar farms that feed directly into the grid. Small solar farms, which make up 40 per cent of China's solar capacity, make solar power production totals in China much higher. China's growth in wind power also increased in 2023, faster than in any country except the USA.

China's goal of peak carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060 may well be reached sooner than expected. The biggest driver of China's economic growth is innovation and clean energy technology, accounting for 40 per cent of their gross domestic product expansion last year.

Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) now cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 per car on the world market. A few reasons for the drastic price drop of 50 per cent is that Chinese companies are producing their own lithium batteries, which they can produce 51 per cent cheaper. Chinese government subsidies for EVs have risen from \$76.7 million in 2018 to \$809 million in 2023.

Capitalist industry



• The plan for a huge Chinese off-shore solar farm being built in Lianyungang.

based in the USA is unable to produce and sell EVs at such low prices, and its auto manufacturers are still heavily reliant on expensive cars that burn fossil fuels. The American government is raising tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles (now at 25 per cent) to 100 per cent starting on 1st August. The European Union plans to in-

crease tariffs up to 48 per cent sometime this year.

The US government will also increase the tariffs on Chinese batteries up to 25 per cent. It plans to also impose stiff tariffs on semiconductors and raw materials used to make EV cars.

China supplies 60 per cent of global EV batteries and much of the lithium-ion cell components.

Or as the title of a recent article in the *Bloomberg* newsletter says: *China's Batteries Are Now Cheap Enough to Power Huge Shifts*, meaning the shift away from combustion engines.

Chinese innovations: people before profit

Chinese workers and scientists have created the first seawater electrolysis system that produces hydrogen directly from ocean water using offshore wind power, a renewable energy source. Hydrogen is a clean, versatile fuel that traditionally could only be produced using an expensive high-energy process to first de-sali-

nate ocean water.

Chinese researchers have designed a material that reflects the sun's rays and can be welded together in planks. When attached to the outside surface of buildings, the planks reduce temperatures inside, cutting down the need for air conditioning and reducing carbon emissions. The plank material is made of gelatine and DNA from organic matter, which can be made biodegradable and converts ultra-violet (UV) radiation into visible light. This plank technology opens the way for further innovative, sustainable cooling materials.

At the end of 2023, China had produced 1.27 million registered drones; these are huge pilot-free cargo planes that can carry a 500-kilogram load as far as 500 kilometres (310 miles) with a maximum range of 1,800 kilometres (1,118 miles). They can be used for transportation, fire and rescue teams, and flood control and disaster relief work. They are 70 per cent quicker and 30 per cent cheaper than conventional cross-sea transport.

American corporations are threatened by all the Chinese innovations being developed and transforming the world. They know that when privately owned capitalist industries have monopoly control of an industry, their only goal is to maximise profits.

China just completed the largest floating solar farm in the world on top of an old coal plant! In contrast, American industries trespass on



• EVs roll off the line in China.

sovereign Indigenous land to construct solar plants, wind farms, power transmission lines and copper mines for lithium extraction for electric batteries – without consulting with leaders of the Indigenous nations and tribes.

American-based industries are still heavily

reliant on profits from the fossil fuel economy. The US government, while beginning to invest in renewable fuels, is moving in on Native American reservations and sacred lands.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), which includes the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi

and Navajo Nations, is suing the Bureau of Land Management for constructing a solar plant on 4,000 acres of their ancestral homelands. They have been fighting the plans since 2006. The CRIT explained they are not against solar power, but they object to not being consulted – and

because of the effects it will have on the ecosystem, cultural resources, groundwater and the Colorado River.

In February, members of the San Carlos Apache Nation in Arizona asked that work stop on the \$10 billion construction of a copper mine on the reserva-

tion's sacred territory. Tribal member Verlon Jose said: "We do not disagree with renewable energy, we are for renewable energy. You know what the fix to this issue is? They could have rerouted it. But they didn't listen."

Native activist, ecologist and author Winona

LaDuke added: "In the endless pursuit of energy, once again, Native people are in the eye of the storm." She calls mines and other projects that could imperil tribal sovereignty "the next Standing Rock".

Workers World
(USA)

What We Can Learn from the Global Microsoft Outage?

by Bappa Sinha

A Global IT outage on 19th July, 2024, affected more than 8.5 million Microsoft computers worldwide, disrupting airlines, hospitals, banks, train services and even government agencies. The outage was caused by a faulty update from the cybersecurity provider, CrowdStrike, which caused Microsoft Windows machines to crash and get stuck in the infamous 'blue screen of death' booting loop. Interestingly, the global disruption wasn't caused by cyber-attacks from hostile hackers but by the cybersecurity firm whose product was meant to prevent such attacks.

This is not the first time that CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz has been involved in a global IT disaster. In 2010, antivirus company McAfee released an update that caused millions of Microsoft Windows machines to crash globally. George Kurtz was McAfee's CTO at that time. McAfee's reputation took such a hit that it had to end up selling itself. George Kurtz resigned from McAfee and went on to start another cybersecurity company, CrowdStrike. Clearly,

last week's events show that Mr Kurtz, Microsoft, the tech community and regulators didn't learn much from the 2010 disaster and the mistakes were repeated to cause another such global outage.

CrowdStrike was involved in investigating the now discredited "Russian Election Interference" case. In 2016, Democratic National Committee (DNC) servers and Hillary Clinton's campaign chair's emails were hacked. These emails ended up with WikiLeaks, which published them causing major embarrassment to Hillary Clinton as they exposed the disingenuous and cynical nature of her presidential campaign and her direct involvement with the American invasion of Libya, leading to charges of Russian interference from her and the Democrats. CrowdStrike had claimed to have found evidence of Russian hacking attempts. The Steele dossier that officially laid the grounds for the "Russian interference" allegations and FBI investigations has now been thoroughly debunked. Earlier this year, the CrowdStrike CEO also made claims of hacking attempts by the Chinese state actors.

CrowdStrike has strong ties with several Israeli cybersecurity firms.

Perhaps having such powerful friends in the political and intelligence establishment provides CrowdStrike with immunity from regulatory authorities over its negligence. As per CrowdStrike's contract, its liability for causing such a global disruption is limited to a simple refund of the fees paid for its software. Such was their casual attitude to this incident that they even offered \$10 Uber Eat gift cards to "teammates and partners" for "the additional work that the July 19 incident has caused".

Microsoft also shouldn't escape blame for these repeated incidents involving its software. The CrowdStrike update didn't affect Linux servers. The free and open-source Linux software has a proven record of being more stable and secure than the expensive operating system software provided by Microsoft, which has a near monopoly in the personal computer space. The fact that Linux is open source allows for more rigorous scrutiny of its software while Microsoft's proprietary nature, the need to support legacy code

and various surveillance features that snoop on user activity and report back to the company, result in their software being more vulnerable to attacks.

The widespread global impact of a single faulty update also highlights the risks involved in our near-total dependence on software and cloud services provided by American technology monopolies such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, Amazon and Facebook. These companies today provide services on which most of our critical services rely, such as government services, banking, telecommunications, health care, power distribution, airlines, trains and other transportation services. Not only should we worry about the impact of inadvertent outages and faults in these products and services but given the US Government's total control over their tech companies, the threat to national sovereignty from an over-dependence on such companies also needs to be considered.

The Snowden revelations on the US National Security Agency's (NSA) activities along with WikiLeaks' Vault 7 documents about the CIA's global hacking

program clearly show the extent of US surveillance reach and control over technology products and services. According to Snowden documents released in 2013, the NSA runs a programme codenamed 'BULLRUN' whose explicit mandate is to undermine encryption and secure communications by working to undermine encryption standards and working with companies to install 'backdoors' in their products. Every conceivable technology product such as communication equipment, encryption software, operating systems such as Microsoft, Apple, Android, etc, and popular internet services such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc, have backdoors for the US Intelligence to snoop over and control their products and services.

Wikileaks "Vault 7" documents released in 2017 exposed the CIA's covert global hacking programme. These documents revealed that the CIA had built a programme parallel to the NSA whose scope matched, if not exceeded, the NSA programme. This programme "had over 5000 registered users and had produced more than a thousand hacking systems, tro-

jans, viruses, and other 'weaponised' malware". These tools can target smartphones such as iPhones and Android phones, iPads and smart-TVs to effectively convert them into listening devices. Vehicle control systems in modern cars and trucks could also be hacked. The CIA had developed techniques to "bypass the encryption of WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, etc, by hacking the smartphones that they run on and collecting audio and message traffic before encryption is applied". The programme developed tools to attack operating systems such as Windows as well as Internet routers.

The US government can at the drop of a hat not just impose economic sanctions on a country, as witnessed against Russia, but also cripple the digital infrastructure on which many of our critical services rely, bringing a country to its knees. Thus, given the importance of technology in today's world it becomes imperative for countries, in order to maintain their independence, to invest in developing their own home-grown technology supply chains as far as possible.

People's Democracy (India)

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The Political Bureau of the Lebanese Communist Party condemns the Zionist aggression against the southern suburb of Beirut and considers it an escalation that occurs within the chain of continuous Zionist crimes against the Palestinian and the Lebanese people and their resistance, with full US support.

The Party expresses its deep condolences to the families of the martyrs while wishing speedy recovery for the wounded.

We call for a broad and massive popular mobilisation on the regional and international level in solidarity with Lebanon and its resistance fighters, while condemning the Zionist aggression against Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburb.

**Lebanese Communist Party
Beirut**

Dear Comrades

International relations have reached an historic watershed as unprecedented geopolitical changes rapidly take place throughout the world. New alliances are being formed that will be able to oppose imperialist hegemony and to challenge the exploitation policies of western leaders still stuck in a colonial mindset. The catalyst for these events can be traced back to the Great October Revolution in Russia in 1917. The world's first worker's state was able to demonstrate

that when united both the working class and emerging nations may achieve great goals.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will host the 2024 BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan. Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for a rapid expansion of countries to join the BRICS family to make global governance fairer and more reasonable. The 10 existing countries may soon be joined by a further 50 plus – including NATO member Turkey, Malaysia, and US treaty ally Thailand. Increasing membership reflects a growing vexation with the imposed US-led world order and a growing desire to rid themselves of the diktat of the World Bank and IMF. As it grows BRICS will include members with very different cultures, values and levels of development. It will be a natural process for differences to emerge but as the body operates on consensus and good will solutions will be formed and understandings reached.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), established by Xi Jinping in 2013, has already had a significant economic impact across the developing world. More than 140 states are taking part in BRI. Sustainable quality projects, largely financed by China, are raising prosperity, creating opportunities and enabling real independence for emerging nations.

Regional groupings are working closely with BRICS and BRI to create essential transport infrastructure and co-ordinate development. Eurasian economic integration is being encouraged by Russia to enable post-Soviet states to develop. A process that is assisted by pipeline construction for oil and gas with new East/West rail links effectively enhancing the ancient Silk Road

between Europe and Asia. The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation is the world's largest regional body. Its aims include economic co-operation and building free-trade agreements with payments increasingly made in non-dollar currency.

All these developments are in sharp contrast to the decline and failure of American imperialism. An economic system in crisis, no longer able to exploit on the vast scale as in the past and now attempting to place its burdens on others. The left in Europe must wake up and support the new world order that grows elsewhere and unite to struggle for a socialist future.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

I loathe Starmer. But this needs to be said.

Yes, Labour's share of the vote was only 34 per cent. Yet we have a first past the post electoral system. And the point is to win individual seats. Labour concentrated its resources on winning target seats – and even those that weren't originally targets – instead of piling up bigger majorities in the seats they already had in the bag.

It's also clear that Labour and the Liberal Democrats did a deal whereby Labour would lay off in seats where the Lib-Dems were second and in a good position to topple an incumbent Tory.

Plus, there were many – Labour inclined at first perhaps – who, given that Labour seemed already certain to win, thought they could safely vote for the Greens. Hence the Greens got seven per cent of the vote and four MPs.

Now some Marxists have made much of there being a big vote to the left of Labour. But was this the case?

There were four in-

dependents elected on pro-Gaza platforms. Yet how left are they on other issues? One of the four is a recent Lib-Dem.

George Galloway of the Workers Party of Britain (WPB) lost his Rochdale seat. Indeed, the WPB didn't win anywhere. And anyway, the WPB remains totally reactionary on many issues, social issues and environmental issues included.

As for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), it really needs to be put out of its misery. It did poorly, with about one-third of the total vote it got in 2015.

**Alan Stewart
Wakefield**

Dear Friends

You will be pleased to know the new government has done two of the three things we asked of them in our recent lobbying letter to David Lammy, the new Foreign Secretary.

The government has reinstated UK funding for UNRWA, the UN relief works agency. It has also withdrawn the previous government's unprincipled intervention on Israel's behalf with the International Criminal Court in its deliberation on the Chief Prosecutor's request for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defence Minister Gallant. We will continue lobbying for the government to recognise the State of Palestine.

**Executive Committee
Jews for Justice for
Palestinians
London**

Dear Friends

**Urgent: Join the Global
Day of Action on 3rd
August for Palestinian
Prisoners and to end the
Genocide in Gaza.**

The BDS movement calls on supporters to answer the call from

continued on page 9...

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.

SAT 3 AUG

Keep Grangemouth Working Campaign: March & Rally. Muster: 11:00 Grangemouth Stadium FK3 OBS for 11:30 march for 13:00 rally at Zetland Park.

SAT 3 AUG

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: National March for Palestine. Assemble 12:00 at Park Lane, London W1 for march to Whitehall.

TUE 6 AUG & FRI 9 AUG

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

SAT 10 AUG

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Divest for Palestine conference, 10:15–16:30, Central Hall, Westminster, Storey's Gate, London SW1H 9NH. Book on PSC website.

MON 12 AUG

Venezuela Solidarity Campaign: Venezuela's Elections: Eyewitnesses' Report Back. 18:30–20:00. Online book on Eventbrite.

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, 10:30–16:00 Church Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk IP22.

FRI 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.

SAT 7 SEPT

Wigan Diggers Festival. 11:30–21:30. Open-air free festival, The Wiend, Wigan WN1.

THUR 12 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: That Devil Wilkes. 18:30, In person MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU.

SUN 15 SEPT

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

MON 16 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Online taster session on Marx

and Marxism. 19:00–20:00 Details TBA.

WED 18 SEPT

Birkbeck College: Anti-racism and anti-antisemitism seminar. 10:00–18:00, Birkbeck Clore Management Centre, 27 Torrington Square, London WC1E 7JL. Book on Birkbeck website.

WED 18 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Michael Roberts on The Long Depression and the Tepid Twenties. 19:00 Online and in person. Book on MML website.

SUN 22 SEPT

Calton Weavers Memorial Committee: Commemoration of 1787 strike, 13:00 Calton Burial Ground, Abercromby Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 2DD.

MON 23 SEPT

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: End the Blockade on Health. 18:00, The Casa, 29 Hope St, Liverpool, L1 9BP.

MON 23 SEPT

Labour Friends of Progressive Latin America: Viva la Solidaridad! Stand with Latin America's Left 18:30–20:00, Racquet Club Hotel & Ziba Restaurant, 5 Chapel Street, Liverpool L3 9AG. Register on Eventbrite.

TUES 24 SEPT

Socialist History Society: Ariel Hessayon on The World of the Ranters Revisited. Online lecture. 19:00 Register on SHS website.

WED 25 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Exhibition launch: People & Protest: Radical Clerkenwell Reinterpreted. 17:00.

THUR 26 SEPT

Marx Memorial Library: Costas Lapavistas on Contesting the Rise of the Far Right in Europe. 19:00, In person and online. Register on MML website.

THUR 26 SEPT ONWARDS

Townsend Theatre Productions: *Behold Ye Ramblers*. Touring play by Neil Gore. See TTP website for details.

SAT 28 SEPT

Fife Trades Union Council: Commemoration of Fife's International Brigade volunteers. 11:00, memorial stone on Forth Avenue, Kirkcaldy KY2 5PR.

THUR 10 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Unemployed Workers Fighting for their Rights: From the National Unemployed Workers' Movement to the Present. 19:00, Online and in person panel. Book on MM website.

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

...continued from page 8

Palestinian civil society and prisoners' rights organisations in Palestine for mass global mobilisation on 3rd August to free all Palestinian prisoners and end complicity in Israel's #GazaGenocide.

Since the beginning of Israel's genocide, thousands of Palestinians from Gaza have been rounded up, detained, stripped and taken to unknown locations. Across the West Bank, Israel has embarked on a campaign of arbitrary mass arrest and systemic torture.

At least 9,845 Palestinians have been detained, from the occupied West Bank alone since 7th October 2023.

The UN Human Rights Office published a report today detailing Israel's horrific torture and treatment of Palestinian detainees:

"Detainees said they were held in cage-like facilities, stripped naked for prolonged periods, wearing only diapers. Their testimonies told of prolonged blindfolding, deprivation of food, sleep and water, and being subjected to electric shocks and being burnt with cigarettes. Some detainees said dogs were released on them, and others said they were subjected to waterboarding, or that their hands were tied and they were suspended from the ceiling. Some women and men also spoke of sexual and gender-based violence."

The UN report also details that at least 53

Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza have been killed in Israeli detention since 7th October.

Lawyers visiting Palestinian prisoners have said that the situation in Israeli detention and torture centres "is more horrific than anything we've heard about [in] Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo".

Act now and share the call for the global day of action.

The BDS movement calls on supporters and partners worldwide to mobilise on 3rd August through:

Demonstrations and peaceful occupations or other forms of creative and strategic disruption targeting complicit governments, corporations and institutions (including media outlets).

Escalation of all BDS campaigns against Israel, and in particular the #BoycottHP and #NoTechForApartheid campaigns, due to the direct complicity of HPE, Google and Amazon in Israel's crimes against our prisoners and hostages.

Lobbying your government and parliament to impose targeted sanctions on Israel, including a comprehensive security and #MilitaryEmbargo.

In solidarity.
The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC)

The non-violent BDS movement for freedom, justice and equality is supported by the absolute majority in Palestinian society. BDS rejects all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

Humza Yousaf is calling for the banning of the English Defence League following racist riots in Southport.

The former First Minister told Yvette Cooper, the Home Secretary, that Britain has a "far-right problem" following the violence in the Merseyside resort following a deadly knife attack by a teenager the racists falsely claimed was a Muslim asylum-seeker. Over 40 police officers were injured after drunken thugs torched a police van and stoned a local mosque. The SNP politician, who stepped down from high office in May, said it was "time we took on the English Defence League and the evil ideology that drives them".

"One of the immediate steps, in your gift as Home Secretary, is to proscribe the English Defence League, and their proxies, under the Terrorism Act 2000," Yousaf said, adding that while this would not provide an "overnight fix" it would demonstrate the Government's intention to be "proactive in tackling far-right violence and terror that has been allowed to run rampant in the streets of the UK for far too long".

Meanwhile...

...the blame game begins as the nationalists try to come to terms with their hammering in the July general election.

Defeated SNP Edinburgh MP Joanna Cherry KC has denounced her old enemy Nicola Sturgeon. Madame Sturgeon in turn blames the current leader, John Swinney. Swinney in turn blames the voters, whom he said were "unappreciative" of all the SNP's

great achievements. As these achievements include the highest drug death rates in Europe, the famous two ferries and the still un-dualled A9, even SNP loyalists might be a bit sceptical about this theory. Former Health Secretary Alex Neil took a more blunderbuss approach, saying: "Nicola was the main author of this defeat along with Humza and John." Others blame former Health Secretary Michael Matheson and his famous holiday laptop bill, while Angus Robertson more perceptively said his party was knocked down because the "public has just been so sick of Conservative UK Governments".

The loss of 38 MPs is going to hit the depleted SNP hard: £900,000 worth of 'short money' from Westminster has been lost. With membership plummeting in recent years this has been their most reliable source of income.

That a leaked draft of the agenda for the forthcoming conference has only six motions from two branches on it tells us much about the state of the party. According to the leak, more time will be spent discussing how to combat the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases than analysing the election results. We will have to wait and see if this event sees either an uprising of angry rank-and-file or them sinking into collective despair.

Since the election two SNP councillors have resigned from the party to become Independents. In South Ayrshire the defector was actually the SNP leader on the Tory-run council, who was speedily rewarded with a cabinet post. In Inverclyde the defector cited the SNP's management of public finances as the reason for her departure. No doubt more will come to realise that the SNP label is not the automatic meal ticket it was until very recently and others will follow suit. In these circumstances the news that an SNP branch's

former equalities officer (of all people) has been jailed for six years for a series of sexual assaults will be of small beer. The fact that the SNP recently gained a seat from the Liberal-Democrats on Argyll & Bute Council will be of little comfort in present circumstances.

Another source of potential conflict comes from the 'The Filth' – the 'Failed in London, Try Holyrood' – cohort of over 20 former Westminster MPs hoping to prolong their political careers in the Scottish parliament. Ex-Westminster leader Ian Blackford piously observed: "Those who have been at Westminster would bring a wealth of experience to Holyrood to add to the talent pool that is there already." Who could he possibly have in mind?

Back at...

...the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party, the loss of half the vote and the ex-Scottish leader's seat has sparked a leadership contest.

So far only two candidates have come forward. The first is Russell Findlay, a West Scotland MSP. Nearly a decade ago, when he worked for the *Sun*, he

survived an acid attack by someone annoyed by his crime reporting. The second on the starting block is South Scotland MSP Brian Whittle, an ex-Olympian sprinter.

Apart from a new leader the Tories are also at war over revived suggestions that the Scottish party should split from the UK party and create a separate organisation similar to the Bavarian Christian Social Union, which is allied to the Germany-wide Christian Democratic Union. But we shall leave them to their private grief.

Rumblings about a leadership contest in the Scottish Green Party are also circulating. The back-stabbers are out for co-leader Lorna Slater who blotted her copybook when she made a mess of the expensive failed recycling scheme, which was one of the reasons the coalition with the SNP was broken.

So far triumphant Labour has avoided any splits, but they are sure to come when actual decisions are taken at Westminster. It was notable that not a single Scottish Labour MP actually rebelled against the retention of the two-child benefit cap, which Scottish Labour officially opposes.

THE NEW WORKER

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British students cherish memories of China

by Zhao Juecheng
and Ji Yuqiao

“I think having the chance to come to Beijing and experience what China’s really like has been the cherry on the cake. It might be a unique once-in-a-lifetime experience for me.”

Last week at the Beijing Language & Culture University, British youths rushed forward to speak about what they felt about their trip to People’s China during the closing ceremony of a summer camp that attracted nearly 1,200 teens from 61 UK schools.

The summer camp for helping UK students better learn Chinese started at the beginning of July. During the 11-day event, the attendees’ footprints covered 10 cities in China, including Beijing, Shanghai and several capitals of provinces such as Chengdu in south-west China’s Sichuan province, not only to learn and practice Chinese in real situations but also to throw themselves into Chinese culture and taste its diverse flavour.

Nick Thomas, a diplomat at the British em-



• On the Great Wall.

bassy in Beijing and the country director of the British Council China, one of the sponsors of the event, said that the summer camp for Chinese learning was the largest ever for this excellent kind of Chinese programme.

“To come to China, to experience the culture, to engage with all sorts of different situations, whether it’s shopping, whether it’s cultural activities, we think will really motivate them when they go back to England as well to continue their studies with what we know is a very challenging language,” Thomas said.

The young students who have been studying Chinese for several years recalled their impressive experience in different cities.

In Chengdu, they drank tea, had local snacks and chatted with residents at Renmin

Park, a popular focus for local life. They also learned to cook a speciality dish at the Sichuan Cuisine Museum and wandered around the Sanxingdui Museum, listening carefully to the historical stories about the ancient Shu civilisation.

In Beijing, they climbed the Great Wall and sauntered around the Forbidden City, digging deep into the history of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties as well as the marvellous building techniques of ancient China. They also walked through the old quarter of the city to explore the hutongs – the narrow streets and alleys that snake around different blocks in the capital – and learned to bargain with merchants in Chinese, just like local residents.

“I think when we learn Chinese Manda-

rin in the UK, it’s quite static. Most of the time, it’s very slow moving, while being in Beijing, it’s always very fast. And speaking face to face with people who might not know that much English really gives us real life experiences which are so helpful,” said Jack, a ninth-grader who has been learning Chinese for three years.

Another student, William, added: “The main reason why most of us chose to pick Mandarin was the promise of coming to China. And it’s been an absolutely amazing three years of learning Chinese. It’s been very difficult, but at the same time, very interesting.”

The 11-day trip earned these teenagers cherished and unique memories of China. For William, it was the stunning scenery captured on the Great Wall, while for Megan, it was the tree

covered Beijing streets and jasmine tea. Daisy collected Chinese-style bookmarks to keep the journey in her mind.

Chinese and UK students landed opportunities to communicate and show their friendliness to each other during the summer camp. They played basketball and soccer together, deepening understanding of their peers’ lifestyles.

Thomas pointed out that cultural exchange is the core of the relationship between China and the UK, and the exchange and trust between young people of the two countries are of particular importance. Language is the bridge for exchanges, so learning Chinese is of special value for UK students.

The director added that the students attending the summer camp have learned Chinese for three years now, and they do eight hours a

week and actually speak it very well. They are a window for British youths to come into contact with a large, historically rich, and culturally diverse country, where many significant things have happened. “Chinese is indeed a difficult language to learn, but it’s worth the effort,” he said.

The summer camp has been running in the UK since 2016. The aim of the project is to build greater Chinese skills among young people in the UK. So far more than 11,000 students across the country have gone through the programme.

Global Times

The NCP badge



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Blast In Golan Heights Not from Hezbollah

by Ian DeMartino

Veteran war correspondent Elijah Magnier says that what little information is available on the Golan Heights explosion that killed 12 Arab Druze Muslim children contradicts the official story offered by the Israeli government.

On Saturday, an explosive fell onto a sports field in Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, killing 12 children. Israel blamed Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia movement. They have denied the accusation.

“First, [Israel has] refused any Western investigation by Israeli allies. So they don’t want anyone to investigate the type of rockets and/or the debris,” Magnier explained. “And the technical details of the explosions are very telling. The Falaq rocket that Hezbollah fires is a 50-kilogramme explosive. Now, a warhead with such a quantity of explosive doesn’t leave the damage that was left by the explosion that happened in Golan Heights, [it would be] much bigger.”

Magnier, who has over 35 years of experience covering conflicts in Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia, says that the evidence the Israelis have provided has been unconvincing.

“We have not seen any picture... of the guidance system, or any component that [we] need to under-



• People in Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights take to the streets to oppose the visit of Netanyahu to the site of the deadly explosion many believe was down to a faulty Israeli missile

stand what kind of rocket [or missile] that exploded in this place,” Magnier said. “They showed us two pieces with serial numbers that match the Falaq, but not on the same scene of the explosion. They’re completely different on a white plank. So, we don’t know where these pieces were taken from.

“Normally, when the forensic team is on the scene, [they] take hundreds of photographs with every single piece before they touch anything. We haven’t seen all that, but we’ve seen a rush of accusing Hezbollah.”

Images taken from civilians on the scene show a small crater on the edge of a football field, next to a partially destroyed fence.

“The diameter of the crater [from a Hezbollah Falaq rocket] can [be] between four to six metres and the

depth can be... between 1.5 to three metres, which is not the case at all of the explosion we’ve seen,” Magnier says. “We’ve seen in this explosion only a small part of the fence [was] damaged and the other part of the fence is still intact. So, even the fragment of the explosion is different. The shrapnel is different.”

On Sunday, Israel bombed 12 settlements in Lebanon after saying that Hezbollah had crossed a “red line” in the attack. Hezbollah has vehemently denied it was involved. Magnier pointed out that they do not have a reason to attack Druze Muslims in the Golan Heights, which is illegally occupied by Israel but still contains a large Muslim population.

“Hezbollah has thousands of civilian objectives [it could hit] that are close to the borders of Leba-

non, and it can really destroy any village or any Israeli-occupied city without the need to go to another village that is occupied by Druze Muslims who have [influence] in Syria and Lebanon and want to declare their support to the Palestinians,” argued Magnier, who added that Hezbollah has not been hitting civilian targets since it started shelling Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

Magnier argued that a faulty Israeli air defence missile was a more likely culprit in the Golan Heights explosion. “I can say that there are malfunctioning missiles and there are malfunctioning rockets that can fall anywhere and these incidents are very frequent, in particular with the Israeli interception missiles, where they say that only 60 to 65 per cent reach their target and

the others miss,” he said. “A strong possibility... an Israeli interception missile of the type Tamir... they carry around 10 to 15 kilogrammes of explosive and they have a very similar impact to what we’ve seen in the pictures provided on the ground by the people of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights.”

Magnier noted that the size of the crater matched what the Tamir could create and that there was still grass from the field around the crater, which would not happen with a larger Falaq rocket. “Everything there indicates that we’re talking about a small-sized missile [and] not a big sized rocket of 50 kilogrammes.”

On Monday, US and Israeli media reported that an Israeli official said its response was still coming and that it would be “limited but significant” in order to

avoid an all-out war.

“So, we understand that Netanyahu is really trying to avoid being involved in a war that he doesn’t know what the consequences would be. He can start, but he can’t end it,” concluded Magnier. “What is the ultimate objective [in attacking Hezbollah]? Destroy Lebanon? Destroy the airport? He will have his airport destroyed. Attack the capital? He will have Tel Aviv destroyed. So this is where we see that things are not as smooth as the Israelis are trying to show.”

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Russian victories and NATO escalation

Another month of hostilities in Ukraine is coming to its end. Over the last month, Russian forces took control of one of the largest areas since the beginning of the year. The advance of the Russian army is comparable to the gains made in the spring of 2022.

The Russian military maintains the military initiative and continues offensive operations along the entire front, stopping the Ukrainians massing large reserves in any one direction.

After the Russian army launched an offensive in the Kharkov region and contained large Ukrainian forces near the border, it managed to achieve major territorial gains in the Donbas. The Pokrovsk direction, where the Ukrainian line is crumbling, remains one of the most dangerous areas for the Ukrainian military

while the Russians continue to advance across the rest of the front.

But Kiev's patrons in Washington are finishing this month with new dangerous gifts. The USA has announced another \$200 million-worth of military assistance to Ukraine.

The Americans pay special attention to the supply of anti-aircraft

missiles for medium- and short-range air defence systems, a serious shortage of which the Ukrainians are currently suffering. At the moment Russian reconnaissance drones that are co-ordinating the strikes on strategically important Ukrainian facilities operate unhindered over the Ukrainian skies.

Kiev's other Western

friends are also stepping their efforts. Poland announced a number of military operations to begin on 1st August. In particular, the air operation called Eastern Dawn and the Safe Podlachia overland operation will be launched in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country. These are not exercises but military operations that allegedly

have defensive goals. In fact, the Polish military is preparing for an escalation of the Ukrainian conflict, which may spread to NATO territory. Moreover, Warsaw is ready to ignite it.

Warsaw has signed a joint defence agreement with Ukraine. The Poles are willing to shoot down Russian missiles and they've declared

their readiness to provide airfields to deploy the F-16 fighters gifted to Ukraine by NATO. The Kremlin warned that the Ukrainian F-16 bases will then become legitimate targets for Russian strikes.

In July numerous flights of F-16 NATO warplanes were recorded in the airspace bordering Ukraine. Some flights were carried out with transponders turned off. NATO warplanes have increased operations at airfields in Poland and Romania, including at night. An operational exercise on the covert transfer of F-16 aircraft to the Ukrainian airforce has been held near the Ukrainian border.

Presumably, NATO is preparing to launch an air operation in Ukraine and the Polish Air Force is getting ready to enter the war.

SouthFront

The Harris Effect

by **Guillermo Alvarado**

The abandonment of President Joe Biden's re-election race and the arrival of Kamala Harris have breathed new life into the Democratic Party.

Biden's supporters clamoured for his resignation, not only because of his poor performance during a debate against his rival, the controversial real estate magnate Donald Trump, but also because the head of the

White House has been showing signs of intellectual weakness for some time.

Things are changing with the help of the current vice-president, who launched her candidacy with unexpected energy and managed to excite her supporters and, most importantly in this country, the donors who have already contributed more than 100 million dollars to finance the campaign. Kamala Harris is now walking with a firm step towards

the official nomination at the national convention of the Democratic Party.

But let us remember that in America elections are more than a matter of sympathy or empathy between candidates and voters, they are a matter of money, a lot of money. The ability to extract dollars from citizens has a great influence on the race and becomes a powerful campaign argument.

Kamala Harris has already proven her mettle in this regard, in ad-

dition to attracting the support of virtually the entire leadership of her party, including the until recently reluctant former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle, who have pledged to do everything possible to achieve victory.

With little more than two weeks to go before the convention, there are other signs of enthusiasm that are multiplying across the country, and that is the massive influx of young people, especially women, to serve

as volunteers in the campaign.

According to the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, more than 600 people showed up at Democratic offices in Michigan and Nevada, and there are another 400 "ready to get on the bus" and campaign in New Hampshire. "There is a renewed enthusiasm in the Democratic Party for our candidate," says Minnesota state legislator Angie Craig.

Gone are the dark

days when they feared the Republicans would not only take the White House, but also control the House and Senate with absolute majorities.

The elections are about 100 days away, and we will witness the oratorical excesses of Trump, who has promised a third world war if he loses, and see if Kamala Harris manages to neutralise him and maintain her upward trajectory.

Radio Havana Cuba