

Israel spurns calls for peace

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Major airlines are suspending all flights to Israel as the Arab resistance steps up the fight against the Zionists in Gaza and along Israel's northern border with Lebanon. In Jeddah top Muslim diplomats said Israel was "fully responsible" for the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran at an emergency meeting of the Saudi-based Organisation of Islamic Co-operation. The Iranian leaders say they will avenge the death of Haniyeh at a time and place of their own choosing. Turkey has broken ranks with its NATO allies to formally submit its declaration to join South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and Britain, France and the EU have condemned a senior Israeli minister for suggesting it might be "justified and moral" to starve people in Gaza.

In Israel, the skies are unusually quiet these days. In normal times 132 airlines used Israeli airports. Now just 24 remain. And in Israeli West Jerusalem a bunker has been prepared for



Netanyahu and other senior leaders should war break out. The bunker, reportedly built almost 20 years ago, can sustain hits from a range of existing weaponry, has command and control capabilities, and is connected to the Israeli Defence Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Gaza continue, with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in Tehran for talks with the Iranian leaders while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held telephone conversations with the foreign ministers of Egypt and Jordan.

Although the Chinese have condemned the assassination of Haniyeh they also say that retaliatory action leads to a vicious cycle, and violence begets more violence, exacerbating conflict. People's China will strengthen solidarity with the Arab countries, and work with all parties

to avoid further escalation and deterioration of the situation. The complexity of the situation requires joint efforts from all parties, especially the USA and Israel, to address the current crisis and avoid escalation.

The only way to avert a major war in the Middle East is to end the fighting in Gaza. But efforts to get Israel to comply with the UN call for a cease-fire are faltering in the face of American indifference and the fanatical Israeli leader's determination to crush the Arab resistance.

Just this week Moshe Ya'alon, the former chief of staff of the Israeli armed forces, condemned Netanyahu, saying the Israeli premier is ready to "sacrifice" the Israeli captives held by the Palestinian resistance to appease far-right members of his cabinet who oppose a ceasefire.

Ya'alon singled out Israeli National Security Minister Itam-

ar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, accusing them of pushing to displace Palestin-

ians during the war. Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, who recently said it might be "justified" to starve Gaza's entire population to free Israel's captives, are both key players in Netanyahu's coalition and have previously threatened to abandon him if he makes concessions to end the war.

Einav Zanguaker, the mother of hostage Matan Zanguaker and a prominent activist for the captives' release, said "[Director of Mossad, Israeli intelligence] David Barnea, [Director of the Israeli Security Service] Ronen Bar – stop co-operating with the criminal prime minister. His hands are awash in the blood of the victims, and if you continue – yours will be too. Tell the public what you tell us behind closed doors – that Netanyahu is not interested in a deal and doesn't want the hostages home. He wants war."

FUND

The August fighting fund went up a notch with £440 in this week's post. The running total now stands at £2,440 and we need £1,060 by the end of the month to hit our target.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

We can beat the racists!

Thousands of people have taken to the streets to counter the racist mobs who terrorised asylum seekers, members of the Muslim community and other ethnic minorities in a wave of violence that swept through a number of towns in the north of England last week.

The bourgeois media that routinely scapegoats immigrants, asylum-seekers and ethnic minorities goes into top gear whenever there's a Labour government while some politicians will always court the extremists when there's a leadership contest in the offing. And summer always brings out the football thugs who've nothing to do when their team's not playing.

But although egged on by the likes of Nigel Farage and the man who calls himself "Tommy Robinson", the riots were clearly organised by a hidden hand that spread the lies on social media about the murder of three young girls in Southport that sparked off the violence.

The fact that racist attacks continued even after it was confirmed that the Southport murderer was neither a Muslim nor an asylum-seeker shows that covert forces were at work – although whether they are far-right extremists, maverick intelligence officers or cynical politicians seeking to exploit the genuine grievances of white workers remains to be seen.

The direct hand of the state can be ruled out on this occasion. The bourgeoisie don't like random violence. Torching cars, looting shops and burning libraries is not in their play-book. They know it can easily spread to the homes of the well-to-do if not immediately curbed. So the Tory media has closed ranks with the Starmer government in support of the police and the judiciary. Hundreds of rioters have been arrested. Trials are being fast-tracked and three men have already been jailed for violent disorder.

The New Communist Party recognises the need for any sovereign state to set an immigration policy in accordance with its resources. But we firmly oppose any immigration policy that discriminates, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of race, creed, colour or gender.

We call for the repeal of the Immigration and Asylum Acts of the 1990s, passed by both Tory and Labour governments, which make it very difficult for many genuine asylum seekers to establish their claims.

Asylum seekers must be treated humanely and their claims dealt with swiftly. While this process takes place they must be given decent accommodation and welfare benefits to survive. No asylum seekers should be locked up unless there is good reason, with evidence, to believe they are criminals – and no child asylum seeker should ever be locked up.

Scapegoating minorities is an old trick the ruling class use to divert working people away from their real problems. In the old days it was the Jews – now it's the immigrants and the refugees. The real problem is capitalism itself – a system that enables a handful of parasites to live the lives of Roman emperors on the backs of the millions upon millions of working people.

Long-standing anti-fascist movements such as Stand Up to Racism mobilised tens of thousands of people this week to defend their communities from racist attacks. That's all right as far as it goes. But we have to build an even bigger movement to tackle the underlying causes of violence and drive the racists off our streets.

Riots rooted in economic and social crises

by Gao Jian

The UK is currently experiencing its most serious violent riots in 13 years, which were sparked by an incident on 29th July. A 17-year-old boy armed with a knife entered a children's dance workshop and carried out an attack, resulting in serious injuries and three fatalities. False information quickly spread on social media, incorrectly claiming that the attacker was a radical Muslim immigrant. This led to anti-immigrant protests breaking out in various towns and cities. The truth is, the suspect was a legal immigrant who was born in the UK and whose parents had immigrated from Rwanda legally. This incident has brought to light a deeper social crisis in the UK.

In recent years, immigration has emerged as a major social issue in developed countries in Europe, with different political parties competing for votes on the topic. Following the Second World War, many developed European countries implemented more relaxed immigration policies to address labour market shortages to satisfy economic development needs. By the end of the last century, as economic growth continued in Europe and the USA, these more relaxed immigration policies persisted, with multi-culturalism being widely accepted as a politically correct stance.

In the past decade, however, with global economic development slowing down and industries in developed countries facing challenges, internal contradictions within European and American societies have intensified. Immigrant groups, who were once important contributors to socio-economic development, are currently experiencing negative reactions and protests from others in society. Far-right political forces in Europe have gained momentum in recent years, even becoming mainstream ideologies in some countries. The rightward shift in European politics is now an undeniable political reality that shows no signs of slowing

down. Meanwhile, concerns over increasingly restrictive policies grow as Europe shifts rightward. In the recent violent riots the far-right activist, Tommy Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon), used social media to spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion, leading to widespread social unrest in many cities. The riots started from a rumour, but this also reveals the British people's stance on immigration issues.

The desire of the public for governments to listen to social demands has been repeatedly overlooked. An article in the US magazine *Foreign Policy* argues that by any measure, the UK "faces a serious economic and social crisis, one that will deepen without big shifts in policy". The article contends that current "average UK real wages are now lower than 18 years ago, which is unprecedented in the country's peacetime economic history". According to recent analysis by experts cited in the *Financial Times* the average household income in the UK will soon be lower than that of Slovenia.

As Britain is witnessing the slowest economic growth among the largest developed countries in Europe, some Western media outlets have dubbed the UK the "sick man" of Europe. The current immigration crisis in the UK fundamentally stems from entrenched economic development crises and social livelihood issues. Social and cultural attitudes prevalent in the UK do not lean toward extremist ideologies or behaviours, nor are its people devoid of patience and resilience.

However, the landslide victory in the recent UK general election and the subsequent intense violent riots underscore the intolerable state of social conditions for the British public.

The hyping of immigration issues has long been a major tool for different political forces to attack each other, underscoring the persistent socio-cultural identity crisis in Western developed countries, as exemplified by the UK. A large number of immigrants to the UK originate from its former Asian colonies and Middle Eastern countries, with a relatively high proportion of Muslims. With differences in language, ethnicity and cultural-educational backgrounds, the integration of immigrants into British society remains a key concern.

Objectively, how to achieve true cultural fusion with Islamic communities is a real challenge that the UK and all of Europe must confront earnestly. Addressing this social problem cannot be achieved merely through the formulation of a specific policy or simple institutional changes. What's needed is ethnic harmony and a consciousness of inclusivity. It is evident, therefore, that constructing shared core cultural values and forging a unified national cultural identity is crucial for a country's long-term stability and well-being.

The author is director of the Centre for British Studies at Shanghai International Studies University and China Forum expert of the Centre for International Security & Strategy at Tsinghua University.

Global Times



Workers' Notes

Holiday Special

by New Worker correspondent

As the holiday season is upon us it is appropriate to take a look at workers involved in the tourist and travel businesses at home and abroad.

The transport sector has strong unions on the railways, buses and airports. Pilots are well represented by the British Airline Pilots Association, which has secured healthy wage packets. But other parts of the tourist industry are not so fortunate. As demonstrated once again by the P&O ferries sackings two years ago, unions in the shipping industry remain very weak despite more than a century of activity. Employers are still able to replace union-rate workers with those willing to work for much less.

At home, the hotel industry is traditionally low-paid and largely non-unionised. With workers often having to live on the job, industrial action is virtually ruled out. Large multinational chains are just as hostile to unions as the proverbial Blackpool landlady. Students eager for a summer job to keep down future student loan repayments down are not terribly interested in the long-term rewards for changing sheets during the summer break. Unite has a Hospitality section and the GMB also organises, or at least pretends to organise, in the sector. In the latter case this means GMB collecting membership fees from the bosses so that hotels can claim to be unionised to get the stamp of approval for trade union conferences.

Going on Holiday

Monday saw over 4,600 workers at Gatwick Airport secure an average 8.3 per cent rise. Workers employed by 11 different companies include 400 Wilson James passenger assistance workers,

who had voted to strike won a 10.5 per cent rise. ICTS baggage screening workers got 11 per cent; 1,900 directly employed Gatwick employees secured a £900 award on top of an eight per cent increase; 1,100 DHL EasyJet workers won 9.8 per cent.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "As these phenomenal results show, Unite is reversing the trend of jobs at Gatwick being underpaid and undervalued. Unite is achieving this by organising workers at Gatwick and relentlessly focusing on improving jobs, pay and conditions."

Regional officer Dominic Rothwell added: "Unite's work at Gatwick shows why it is the union for the UK's airport and aviation workers. Workers who want better wages and working lives should join Unite and get their colleagues to do the same."

At a slightly smaller airport, Inverness, Unite has also won an improved deal for over 20 employed by Skytanking as "front-of-house" customer service agents, who got a 7.75 per cent rise or £1.00 extra per hour. The deal also includes an increase in shift allowances that equals a 29.6 per cent rise, plus an extra day's holiday and double time at Christmas and New Year.

Regional industrial officer

Free Ukrainian political prisoners!

by New Worker correspondent



Activists from International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity (IUAFS) and the newly created Scotland Against NATO Action Committee (SANAC) held protests in Glasgow and London last week calling for the release of thousands of Ukrainian Political Prisoners, many of whom have been falsely convicted of acting on behalf of the Russian and Donbas forces, beaten or tortured, and sentenced to years in prison with confiscation of all property. The protesters also called for the restoration of full political and media freedoms in Ukraine after almost all political parties and dozens of media outlets have been banned.

The British government has routinely ignored this repression taking place on a massive scale and continues to send hundreds of millions of pounds in arms and other support to Ukraine, at a time of acute shortage of housing in Britain, a health service in deep crisis, prisons and schools in shocking condition, 30 per cent of UK children living in poverty and almost two million people suffering undernourishment.

Further protests are planned in London, Glasgow and Dublin in August and IUAFS members in London at the national Palestine solidarity march on 3rd August highlighted the links between the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen – and now Syria as the NATO powers continue their dangerous and relentless drive to war using their proxies in Ukraine and Israel.

Marc Jackson said: "Unite held successful negotiations with Skytanking at Inverness airport to ensure our members got a significant boost to their take-home pay. It's a deal we are pleased to have got over the line on behalf of our members."

This is only the latest in a number of victories at Scottish airports, which at least go some way to help offset pandemic era reductions and redundancies. These include: 12.8 per cent for ICTS workers at Aberdeen and Glasgow, 12 per cent basic increase in pay for Edinburgh Airport Services workers and 11.9 for 100 OCS at the same airport.

On the railways no further strikes are planned but the end of last month saw Avanti West Coast caterers take two days of strike action over imposed unreasonable rosters. The outsourced workers face short notice changes to shifts, job cuts, and enforced overtime, impacting their ability to plan family commitments and attend medical appointments.

RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch said: "Avanti West Coast's chaotic management has left staff unable to plan their lives, creating unacceptable stress and fatigue. Our members, who deliver crucial on-board catering services, have endured continuous job reductions, unpredictable work

hours, and mandatory overtime."

Low Pay Yet Again

In the hospitality industry Unite has launched a "Fair Pay and Fair Tips" campaign that aims "to ensure that workers in the lowest paid sector receive fair pay and fair tips". This modest objective is necessary despite new legislation coming into effect on 1st October.

It will name and shame rogue employers who try to ignore or distort the new legislation. Others will attempt to include tips in wages to boost their profits.

The Employment (Fair Allocation of Tips) Act 2023 covers four million workers who receive tips or service charges. It obliges bosses to hand over 100 per cent of all tips. It also allows workers to take their employer to a tribunal for failure to ensure fair tips within 12 months of the breach. The tribunal will be able to order the re-allocation of tips plus up to £5,000 compensation for each worker impacted.

Sharon Graham warned that "if employers think they can continue to get away with failing to give workers their tips or docking their pay they need to think again.

Unite will use every avenue to ensure our members secure pay and tip justice".

We have, of course, heard that before. For instance, in 2018, Unite Hospitality members at TGI Fridays needed a strike to win a fairer tips policy. More recently, in 2022, workers at the Cameron House Hotel on Loch Lomond won back £138,000 in unpaid tips and service charges when it was discovered that their employer had not been transparent or fair with distribution.

The union also makes the hardly revolutionary point that workers should be paid enough so that they don't need to rely on tips to make ends meet and that they should receive 100 per cent of any gratuity without any employer deductions, that they are distributed equitably according to job role and determined by democratically elected workplace committees.

Gold Medals for Striking

Good timing is often the key to successful industrial action. This has been demonstrated by two recent actions in Paris. Workers at a five-star hotel where members of

continued on page 4...

...continued from page 3

the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are staying walked out the day before the opening ceremony.

The Hôtel du Collectionneur collected £18.5 million for exclusive use of the facility for the IOC biggies. The hotel paid out an eight million pound dividend last year but only offered a two per cent pay rise and refused to pay the customary French “13th month” bonus.

Workers mounted a demonstration lining the corridors with signs reading “luxury hotel, poverty wages” and “Give us back our social benefits”. Their union, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), said workers had not had a rise in seven years.

Workers at Paris airports also threatened strike action just before the Games, a move which forced bosses to cough up an improved pay offer that saw workers securing bonuses for all that had originally only been offered to a select few.

In Australia journalists employed by Nine Entertainment’s, the media giant which has the country’s monopoly for Olympic broadcasting, took strike action for the first five days of the games that greatly affected coverage on such papers as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Brisbane Times*. Staff had previously rejected a 2.5 per cent pay rise.

Selling the Family Silver

London’s Great Russell Street is the address of two major institutions: the British Museum and the TUC HQ, Congress House. But not for much longer. While the classical 19th Century Museum is staying put the 1950s modernist Congress House is up for sale.

This little noticed decision is a damning reflection on the state of Britain’s trade unions, which now represent less than a quarter (22 per cent to be precise) of the workforce.

After the TUC’s Finance Committee decided it is no longer viable to keep the building, its General Council agreed that point in early June. It is claimed that essential refurbishment will cost around £20 million.

Congress House was opened in 1958, some 14 years after the 1944 TUC called for a new building. It is the grandest purpose-built labour movement building in Britain, although the nearby British Medical Association’s Tavistock House and the National Education Union’s Hamilton House are equally impressive.

In 1946 David Du Roi Aberdeen won the design competition against 180 rivals, but it was not until 1958 the building finally opened.



The competition brief was to provide a building that would be “fitting to the dignity and propagation of the great ideals for which the Movement stands”.

It is centred on a large semi-basement conference hall surrounded with offices and smaller meeting rooms. It had a library (now at the University of North London), a catering hall, and a well-lit entrance hall. The panelled rooms are the result of timber donated by unions from across the globe. All the construction workers had to have a union card. As the TUC is very respectable, the Royal Horse Guards played at the opening ceremony.

Modernist architecture is not to everybody’s taste, being rather plain, but the building has important unique features. Its internal courtyard is dominated by Sir Jacob Epstein’s 1957 sculpture of a mother carrying her dead son, a

striking anti-war monument. This was designed specifically for the building. At the front, the plain Cornish granite slabs frontage looks down on the bronze “Spirit of Brotherhood” statue of a strong man helping a weak one, by communist sculptor Bernard Meadows. Being a Grade II listed building such important features will have to be retained, which certainly will put off buyers. A mysterious Ministry of Defence building at the back enabled the spooks to know what was going on.

The TUC claims it needs a “modern fit-for-purpose” building. But this is something that they already have. It is near to three major railway stations connected to the north of Britain. The building is used by other trade unionists. As a humble trades union council delegate, this correspondent recalls sitting in the top floor council chamber listen-

ing to both fiery and long-winded speeches.

Parts of the building are already rented out to sympathetic bodies such as law firm Thompsons. Its large hall has been rented out to all and sundry including for large company AGMs, which bring in cash, albeit at the cost of generating controversy.

Forty jobs, largely of catering workers, are at risk from the TUC’s planned move. TUC General Secretary Paul Nowack said the decision was “an incredibly difficult one” but was in the movement’s best interests.

In some respects this is like a 20-strong congregation struggling to keep a Victorian church built for hundreds water-tight. But things are not as bad as that for the TUC. Given its location, the TUC could clearly do more to exploit the building rather than simply throw in the towel, even if that meant hiring its soul for corporate AGMs. The alternative will likely be a suite of offices occupying a couple of floors in an expensive nearby office block.

The planned sell-off is definitely a retreat at a time when trade unions need to go on the offensive. There is a petition against the sale, focussing on the risk of lost jobs, at: <https://www.change.org/p/save-congress-house-jobs>

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

13th August

Dock workers throughout Britain are to vote in a ballot organised by the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) after they overwhelmingly rejected a 2.9 per cent offer last week.

This could lead to the first national dock strike since the end of the National Dock Labour Scheme and will involve TGWU members at all Associated British Ports (ABP) who cover 23 port operations.

TGWU national organiser Graham Stevenson said that the offer was a “wholly inadequate response the union’s comprehensive claim,

which seeks to establish a minimum wage of £7.50 per hour for all employees and £10 per hour for drivers.

This result sends a very clear message to ABP that our members are serious about fighting back this year to win realistic and meaningful improvements to wages and conditions,” he said.

“We are looking to raise not just the standard of living of our members but to bring employment conditions into the 21st Century. If it takes a full national strike ballot to make progress, so be it”.

The union lists the key points of the claim: A minimum hourly rate of £7.50 and a five per cent increase to all rates currently £7.50; A one-hour reduction in the working week to 38 hours with no loss of pay.

A £10-per-hour minimum hourly rate for LGV1 drivers on a 48-hour week, sick pay to be based on average earnings; 23 days holiday per year (excluding public holidays);

three weeks family and paternal leave on basic pay; average weekly earnings for the full two weeks of statutory paternity leave or £100, whichever is higher.

The ABP response has been to refuse to discuss most of the claim and to keep the complexities and inequalities of different rates of pay for doing the same job and personal contracts.

The company has offered a pay rise of only 2.9 per cent to those covered by collective bargaining. The TGWU believes a 3.5 per cent pay rise has been imposed on those with personal contracts.

The union has argued that ABP can afford a comprehensive modern pay and working conditions package.

The figures from ABP’s last full-year results reveal a rise of profits by four per cent to £74.5 million, a seven per cent increase in turnover to £174 million and a three per cent rise in tonnage throughput.

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South Africa 30 years on

Nelson Mandela's inauguration as president of South Africa in May 1994 was seen as heralding the creation of a new non-racial and more equal South Africa. But although there was some progress in the early years and South Africa has a progressive foreign policy, it is still the world's most unequal society. Thirty years after the end of apartheid, DAVID KENVYN examines the balance sheet and looks at how ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa) is still working for justice and equality in Southern Africa.



• Solidarity with South African workers.

Thirty years ago, apartheid ended. There is much to consider about what has happened since then. It has been a bumpy road, like many of the Eastern Cape's rural roads and, without doubt, not all of it has been good and some of it has been very bad indeed.

In 1994, there was a great deal of hope as Nelson Mandela set about rebuilding the Rainbow Nation. It had been torn apart by the ravages of apartheid, with thousands murdered, sometimes brutally, and many people not knowing what had happened to their loved ones.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu had the task of finding out the truth and seeking reconciliation in the Commission of that name, which he led. It is not necessary to read the documentation presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to recognise the monumental nature of its task. Antjie Krog's book *Country of my Skull* gives sufficient chilling detail of the horrors that were committed in apartheid's defence. It is questionable that the TRC could achieve the goal of reconciliation, but it gave people back their dignity, it recognised their grief, and for many it allowed them to find out what had happened to their sons and daughters, their sisters and their brothers for the first time. This is an

achievement that should never be underestimated.

A new constitution had to be written, and what emerged in the course of the following two years was a truly remarkable document. South Africa's constitution enshrined the right of everyone to be treated equally irrespective of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or age. But more than that, it enshrined the rights of everyone to healthcare, education, housing and social welfare. It proclaimed the right of all people to be treated with decency. In many of these things, it was the first country in the world to enshrine these rights in its constitution.

There was practical action to ensure that these constitutional rights were put into action. When I was in Hobeni in the Eastern Cape, I watched the vaccination teams going out every day. The apartheid state did not vaccinate Black children against diphtheria, rubella and other childhood diseases, so approximately a fifth of all Black children died before they were five years old. This no longer happens.

The health campaign that was a disaster was HIV and AIDs. It began well with the South African Government taking the pharmaceutical companies to court and eventually winning the right at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to use generic anti-retroviral drugs, at a tenth of the cost of those manufactured by the drug companies. But that

was still too costly at about \$80 million a day for treatment to be given. There was also the unnecessary embarrassment of the President querying how it was possible for a virus to turn into a syndrome. Quite frankly, who cared? People were dying, and there was a reticence in talking about the disease because it was sexually transmitted. Civil society responded and the Treatment Action Campaign took on the government, setting an example to the whole world.

South Africa's foreign policy over the last 30 years has been consistently independent. Taking action against the pharmaceutical companies at the WTO was one example of South Africa not kowtowing to the USA. Another was the decommissioning of its nuclear weapons. South Africa is the first and, indeed, the only country to have done this. Joining the economic bloc that is known as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is another example. The most compelling, however, is taking Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and getting its agreement that there is a plausible case that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians, and securing a call for an immediate ceasefire from the ICJ. South Africa's insistence that all states are subject to international law has reverberated throughout the international community, leading to the increasing

isolation of Israel. Another example of South Africa's internationalism is the fact that it took the lead in making sure that the continent had fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccinations. These are all things to be celebrated.

What cannot be celebrated is the way that apartheid's tentacles still stretch across the country. When a wildcat strike was launched at the Lonmin-owned Marikana mine in 2012, the South African police reaction was brutal. They opened fire on a miners' demonstration, killing 38 people and wounding many more. This was a stark reminder of the apartheid era's brutal massacres and is a blot on South Africa's international reputation.

The other stain on South Africa's reputation is corruption. This was endemic under apartheid. The Bantustan leaders sold their souls to the apartheid government in order to get their noses in the trough. During the Eschel Rhoodie corruption scandal, Connie Mulder and Jimmy Kruger had to resign from the apartheid government because of the misappropriation of funds. But Jacob Zuma and his cronies, the Gupta brothers, transformed pilfering into looting on a stratospheric scale, aided and abetted by major international companies such as Bain & Co, HSBC, the Bank of Baroda and KPMG. Bain & Co were so complicit that Jacob Rees-Mogg took

action against them!

Hundreds of charges of corruption are still outstanding against Jacob Zuma and he has already been jailed for contempt of the Constitutional Court. His newly formed party is now the third largest in the South African Parliament. Corruption is an issue on which the new government and the international solidarity movement must take a stand.

ACTSA has played its part in helping to transform South Africa. It supported the court case against Cape PLC to gain compensation for South African asbestos miners and their families. Cape PLC claimed that they had cleaned up its former mines. In 2002, an ACTSA Scotland delegation visited one of the areas around the Penge mine and Ga-Mathabatha. We took photographs that proved conclusively that Cape PLC was misleading the court in its assertion that the area had been cleaned up. We found great lumps of blue asbestos on the ground. Cape PLC went bankrupt to try to avoid paying the compensation, but the court assigned £8 million of its assets for that purpose. Since then, ACTSA has taken up the cudgels for gold miners in South Africa and for copper miners in Zambia.

In 2004, an ACTSA Scotland delegation visited the Phelophepa healthcare train in Idutywa in the Eastern Cape. We saw how the train was offering health and medical treatment to hundreds of people. On our return, Glasgow Caledonian University was persuaded to send ophthalmology students to the healthcare train each year. It is now almost 20 years since this project started.

The key task facing the new government of South Africa is the eradication of poverty. The main task for ACTSA, in helping to overcome the legacy of apartheid, is to assist in that programme. The struggle continues and we cannot turn back until the task is completed.

James Baldwin: on his centennial

by Jenny Farrell

James Baldwin, the important left Black author and activist, was born 100 years ago in Harlem, New York on 2nd August 1924. Baldwin's stepfather David, a Pentecostal preacher, was a factory worker, earning too little to provide for his family of nine children. His mother Berdis, a migrant from the South, worked in domestic service. The young James's first encounter with police at the age of 10 brought home to him the realities of racism. David's preaching initially led the teenage Baldwin to become a young minister.

During his time at Public School 124 in Harlem (with its first Black principal, Gertrude Ayers), Baldwin's potential was recognised by Orilla Miller, a white teacher and communist from the Midwest. Miller introduced him to literature and theatre, including *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens and the landmark play popularly referred to as the "Voodoo Macbeth", directed by Orson Welles with an all-Black cast. These experiences deepened Baldwin's literary passion, broadened his cultural horizons and provided a secular alternative to his religious upbringing. The Harlem Renaissance also played a central role in shaping

his artistic and intellectual outlook.

The Millers were supportive of the socialist side in the Spanish Civil War, took Baldwin to a May Day parade organised by the CPUSA [Communist Party of the USA], and significantly influenced Baldwin's political education. Through them, Baldwin learned that racism could be opposed and that solidarity could be built across racial lines.

Baldwin's political consciousness was further shaped by his English teacher Abel Meeropol, a communist and staunch anti-racist, author of the anti-lynching song *Strange Fruit*. Meeropol's adoption of the sons of executed communists Ethel and Julius Rosenberg added another layer to Baldwin's awareness. Additionally, his encounter with artist Beauford Delaney introduced Baldwin to the secular tradition in Black music, which transformed his emotional experiences into artistic expression.

By 1941, Baldwin had lost faith in Christianity and rejected his father's authority. After leaving school in 1942, he faced economic hardship and was unable to afford college. The war-time labour shortage meant he found work. He joined a writers' workshop taught by communist Mary Elting, aligning with the Communist Interna-

tional's Popular Front strategy, and received a scholarship from the League of American Writers in January 1942, cementing his connection to left-wing politics. The 1943 Harlem riots and Baldwin's experiences during

on African Americans, considering the CPUSA a haven for young Black writers. Between 1920 and 1950, many Black intellectuals, including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, found a political and

ture should create an all-encompassing humanism, elevating individual suffering to a collective level, as reflected in his reading of Shakespeare and Gorky. In 1947, Baldwin published reviews of Gorky's works, praising his expanded vision.

In 1946, Baldwin's best friend, Eugene Worth, committed suicide, profoundly impacting Baldwin and later reflected in his novel *Another Country* (1962).

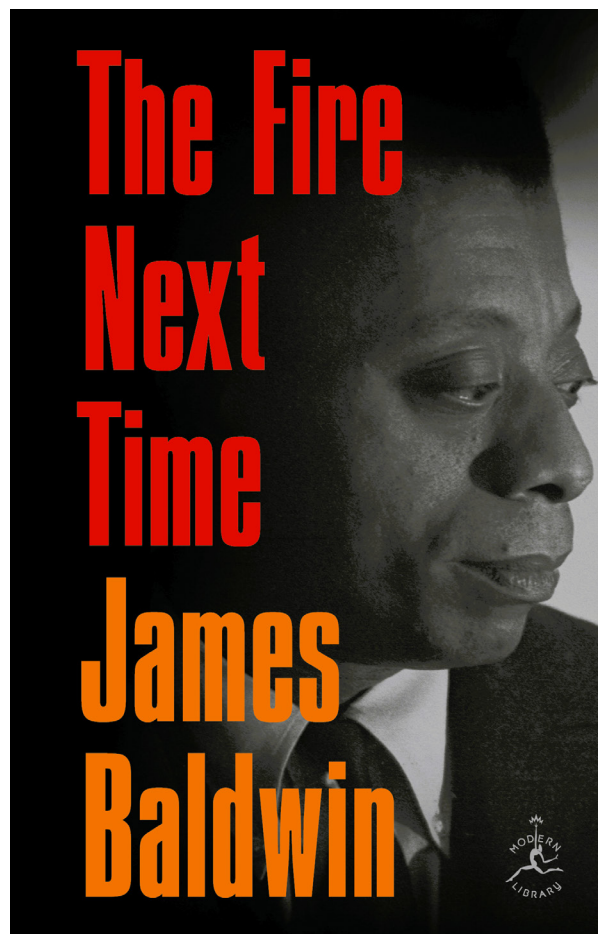
These formative experiences solidified Baldwin's commitment to social justice and influenced his decision, at the age of 24, to move to Paris in November 1948. Seeking a more open environment to continue his radical work, Baldwin left the repressive atmosphere of the USA. In Paris, he found the freedom to explore his identity, including his queerness, and to articulate his revolutionary ideas, which would shape his prolific career as a writer and activist. The move solidified his commitment to writing and led to major works like *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (1953), *Notes of a Native Son* (1955) and *Giovanni's Room* (1956). By the 1980s, he openly identified as gay and collaborated with Black feminists, critiquing both imperialism and white supremacist thinking, including in this context racism, sexism and homopho-

bia.

Baldwin's debut novel, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, draws on his upbringing in Harlem. At 24, he published an essay titled *The Harlem Ghetto* criticising the conditions affecting African Americans. In this way, he became part of African-American protest literature, articulating the realities of oppression. The rise of Black Power and revolutionary groups made him more optimistic about the possibilities of revolution in the USA.

Baldwin's writing career encompassed bestselling novels, essays, plays and articles. His major political works, such as *The Fire Next Time* (1963) and *No Name in the Street* (1972), were penned abroad, addressing international issues. His revolutionary ideas were motivated by a relentless critique of the present and a drive to change the world.

Living in Paris, he became aware of the struggles of North African refugees, leading him to see global struggles as interconnected. Baldwin's awareness of Black internationalism addressed Western imperial power in the Middle East. He was a vocal supporter of Palestinian self-determination, viewing Israel as a proxy for Western imperialism and Palestinians as oppressed victims. The Black Lives Matter movement has



this tumultuous period further fuelled his radicalisation. He joined the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), navigated various left-wing camps, and published poetry in the American *Daily Worker*.

Seeking an alternative to oppressive US society, Baldwin was drawn to the communist movement, especially with its anti-racist stand and its influence

artistic home here, though some drifted away.

After various jobs, Baldwin found employment closer to the publishing world, including a stint as messenger in the progressive newspaper *PM*. In 1944, Baldwin took a theatre class at the New School, sparked by the renaissance in African-American theatre. Baldwin believed litera-

revived Afro-Arab and Afro-Palestinian solidarity, a tradition Baldwin significantly influenced. In 2013, over 1,000 Black intellectuals signed the Black for Palestine statement after Michael Brown's murder by police in Ferguson, Missouri, when Palestinians tweeted solidarity statements and tips for the demonstrators on how to deal with tear gas.

From his early encounter with communists and other progressive political activists, Baldwin knew that his experience was not limited to African Americans but was intrinsic to capitalism and imperialism. Baldwin expressed this understanding on many occasions, related it geopolitically to colonialism in Africa, to South Africa, and Palestine, for example, or here in a later, 1970 letter to the imprisoned Angela Davis: "White lives, for the forces which rule in this country, are no more sacred than Black ones, as many and many a student is discovering, as the white US-American corpses in Vietnam prove."

In September 1956, Baldwin attended the First Conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists at the Sorbonne, sponsored by the Negritude Movement, a literary, cultural and political movement developed in the 1930s in response to French colonial rule and the dehumanising effects of colonialism. It sought to reclaim the value of Black culture and heritage, promoting a collective Black identity and solidari-

ty across the African diaspora. This movement, led by figures like Frantz Fanon, Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire, sought to unify the African diaspora's cultural heritage, akin to the 1955 Bandung Conference.

The years 1957–62 were pivotal for Baldwin as he became an internationalist. His experiences with the civil rights movement

in *New Yorker* editor William Shawn inviting Baldwin to write about Africa, alongside an invitation from Israel, setting Baldwin's thought in new directions and leading to a book on Africa with Israel as a prologue.

Baldwin's visit to Israel shifted him further away from a Western perspective towards anti-imperialist international-

Baldwin was pioneering in exposing American racism and drawing parallels with international struggles. His essay *What Price Freedom?* in the journal *Freedomways* connected American racism to its imperialist actions abroad, critiquing the American idea of 'freedom' imposed by violence. Baldwin's work increasingly highlighted the sim-

Baldwin's anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist stance, opposing the Vietnam War, South African apartheid and Israeli settler-colonialism. It expresses solidarity with liberation movements and projects a socialist future. His relationship with Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party underscored his commitment to long-term anti-colonial

to permanently move to St Paul-de-Vence in France, buying a home there.

In October 1973, following American support for Israel during the October War against Egypt and Syria, Baldwin made his strongest public criticism of Zionism and expressed support for Palestinian rights. He highlighted the creation of Israel as a means to control Arabs, condemning the Western powers for using Israel and Vietnam to enforce their interests.

The Reagan administration, with its harsh stance on issues like HIV/AIDS, intensified Baldwin's despair and rage over the USA. Baldwin received an honorary doctorate from the University of Massachusetts in 1978 and became a Distinguished Fellow there in 1983. He continued his work as a political journalist and author, producing his only poetry book and his final novel, *Just Above My Head*.

In his 1979 essay *Open Letter to the Born Again* Baldwin condemned Western anti-Semitism and expressed solidarity with Palestinian self-determination, criticising the Zionist project and its colonial roots.

Towards the end of his life, Baldwin sought to redefine gender and racial identities. Diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in early 1987, Baldwin spent his remaining lifetime at his home in St Paul-de-Vence, passing away at age 63 on 1st December 1987. His lasting influence cannot be overestimated.

People's World (USA)



"But the state of Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews; it was created for the salvation of the Western interests. This is what is becoming clear (I must say that it was always clear to me). The Palestinians have been paying for the British colonial policy of "divide and rule" and for Europe's guilty Christian conscience for more than thirty years."

JAMES BALDWIN

Open Letter to the Born Again, 1979

and French colonialism's brutality, especially during the Algerian war, reinforced his understanding of international racism and state terror. This period included significant travel, writing, and a deepened interest in Islam and anti-colonial struggles.

His increasing activism and affiliation with Black internationalist currents in the 1960s culminated

in, perceiving this country as a pawn in the Middle East, created to serve Western imperialist interests. International events such as the Vietnam War and Israel's Six-Day War aligned Baldwin with SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) and the Black Panthers, seeing these conflicts as expressions of American imperialism and racism.

ilarities between the treatment of African Americans and colonial subjects.

By 1968, Baldwin had become closely affiliated with the Black Panther Party. He endorsed their community programmes and their stance against police violence, viewing them as a challenge to the repressive US state.

No Name in the Street articulates

and anti-imperialist struggle.

Between 1968 and 1972, Baldwin spent much of his time outside the USA, initially in Turkey and France after traumatic events such as the assassination of Martin Luther King. During this period, he ended his relationship with his lover Alain and, coupled with the 1971 Turkish military coup and his declining health, decided

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

In view of the continuous wall to wall propaganda of snide comments, lies and half-truths spread by the bourgeois western mass media, it is not surprising that many within the socialist movements remain largely ignorant of the phenomenal progress made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). They remain unaware of its achievements, in the face of decades of threats and sanctions, and blind to the lessons that the Korean experience could teach others in their struggle for freedom and justice.

The bombing of civilians, from Gaza to Belgrade and beyond, is an established and deliberate trait of American imperialism. During the Korean War 408,000 bombs were dropped on Pyongyang alone. More than one per inhabitant. The USA stations almost 30,000 military personnel in their puppet state of south Korea in addition to an enormous stockpile of conventional and nuclear weapons on their warships and nuclear submarines off the coast of the Korean peninsula. American imperialism stages regular provocative military drills with south Korea to threaten the DPRK. However, they fail to understand the heroism of a people who not only triumphed in their struggle against the Japanese but also won the Fatherland Liberation War. Neither have they appreciated the power of Korean-style socialism enriched with the Juche philosophy of self-reliance and indepen-

dence.

A comparison of the DPRK with Western nations reveals a stark contrast of economic, moral and social values. State monopoly capitalism is synonymous with exploitation and corruption. It is characterised by sleazy governance of a society based upon egoism and selfish individualism. Making money becomes the overwhelming objective of a bleak society of despair.

Matters are so different in the DPRK as its people struggle to build socialism. Their road has not been an easy one in the face of imperialist threats and sanctions, but with collective effort and unity of purpose rapid progress is being made. Free homes are becoming available to the workers in a planned economy without a profit motive, in which no-one will be left behind. As real socialism blossoms the whole people, not just a select few, are starting to enjoy the sweet scent of its success. The dynamic philosophy of Marx and Engels is the corner stone of their achievement.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Comrades

How can it be that a Labour government can contemplate robbing pensioners to pay the debts/shortfalls engineered by the previous Tory government? Surely that burden should fall on those that caused it and who can most afford it.

After 14 years of Tory government, Britain has not invested enough in schools, hospitals, social care, transport and other areas of the public sector. Labour's cuts will make it much harder for doctors, nurses, teachers and others to do their jobs whilst they work in crumbling buildings using unsupported computers and polluting vehicles.

The Chancellor's de-

cision, which I support, to accept the recommendations of public sector pay review bodies will result in better public services that benefits all. Does it go far enough? Probably not. Who should pay?

Not pensioners or those in social care who are already possibly burdened with enormous extra costs due to illness or age. The government has fallen into a Tory trap. Reeves should have reversed the Tory election gimmick of cuts in NI contributions, which was approximately the size of the £22 billion black hole. She's ruled out raising income tax, VAT, national insurance or corporation tax, but she could target capital gains and inheritance tax or curb pension tax relief for higher earners. The latter is estimated to cost the Government £48 billion in lost revenue.

It looks like the Government is aiming to please its Tory 'friends' in high places. Tell Labour to change direction and look after the many who are in low places, we don't want Labour to become a busted flush after their first few months in office.

Alex Kempshall
Bristol

This a slightly edited version of a message sent to heads of state this week

Your Excellencies

While you are waiting for there to be a comprehensive war in the Middle East and while you are looking at the genocide that Israel is waging against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, and watching on television stations and on social media the extent of Israeli crime, and you are still confused about how to stop the Israeli aggression, despite all the attempts that were made previously and failed, I will not demand of you anything that exceeds

your military capabilities or your legal powers.

In the past you called for the need to stop the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and there was a resolution from the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council calling for a ceasefire. But Israel continued its aggression, and increased its aggression and criminality.

It is time to move your planes and go to the Gaza Strip. Not in order to stand with the steadfast and patient Palestinian people for more than 300 days. Not in order to achieve any military or political goal but for humanitarian reasons, and with one goal, which is to immediately end the Israeli aggression and genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Based on the non-violent struggle that you demand, and which you claim to adhere to, we urgently call on you to visit the Gaza Strip and stay there until the cessation of genocide is declared, which will force Israel to stop the war completely, and you will thus enter the history books.

The Palestinian people do not want you to celebrate their victory with them if you do not do anything for them. We want you to actually participate in order to stop the aggression. Then you will be international leaders, transcending all countries and continents. Do not fear for your presidential position, because if you are not a human being, you cannot be a president.

This is the initiative that I hope will be approved. Do not be afraid of Israeli threats, because the true leader is the one who fulfils the demands of his people, and all the peoples of the world want to stop the Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip.

Fouad Baker
Affiliate member
International Criminal Court bar association

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 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.

TUE 3 SEPT–TUE 22 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Trade Unions, Class and Power. Online eight-week course. Book on MML website.

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.

SUN 15 SEPT

TUC Midlands: Women chain-makers' festival celebrating the 1910 strike. 11:00–17:30, Mary McArthur Gardens, Cradley Heath B64 5BA.

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-semitism seminar. 10:00–18:00, Birkbeck Clou 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 Trepid 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.

SAT 5–SUN 6 OCT

International Brigade Memorial Trust: AGM weekend. Weston-Super-Mare. Details TBA.

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 MML website.

SAT 12 OCT

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: public conference, London. Details TBA.

MON 17 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Reversing the Pro-War Narrative: the Role of Peace Movements in Britain. 19:00, Online and in person panel discussion. Book on MML website.

SAT 26 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Second-Hand Book Sale. 11:00, at Library.

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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Scottish
Political
News

by our Scottish political
affairs correspondent

Scotland has, so far, been spared the disorder that has swept some towns and cities in the north of England. But while the police battle to contain racist mobs there are growing fears that the shadowy organisers of the far-right violence are hoping to spread it to Scotland.

The “Patriotic Alternative” and the “Scottish Defence Group” are believed to be planning what they call “peaceful protests” next weekend.

Many in the Muslim community in Scotland fear that racist violence could soon spill over into Scotland. Former First Minister Humza Yousaf has even suggested he could leave Scotland in the future due to Islamophobia. The former Scottish nationalist leader says he now

“doesn’t know” if he and his family’s future lies in Scotland, the UK, Europe or even the West. “We are now seeing the culmination of not years actually, decades of anti-migrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric being normalised in our political discourse, now playing out in the most horrendous, violent way possible. And that genuinely makes me question whether or not my family has an existence here in the UK or not. I’m not the only one. I’ve had hundreds of messages from the Muslim community saying the exact same thing,” Yousaf said.

But the current First Minister has reassured Scottish Muslims that “the Government is on your side” at a meeting with community leaders at the Edinburgh Central Mosque this week. John Swinney said the police were engaged in “sophisticated” monitoring of social media posts to ensure a swift response to any planned disturbances north of the Border.

Budget, CoSLA President Shona Morrison warned that: “The budget in its current form could result in service cuts, job losses and an inevitable shift to providing statutory services only. This means potentially losing libraries, leisure centres and all the things that improve our lives.”

CoSLA says councils are facing a revenue shortfall of £95 million and a capital shortfall of £99.5 million. To fully fund the Council Tax freeze could cost nearly £300 million, compared with the £140 million they got.

The waste dispute is shaping up to be a re-run of 2022, when after weeks of mounting rubbish the SNP Government suddenly found some extra money to settle the dispute. This time round CoSLA has a new alibi: the Chancellor’s announcement that she is not fully funding the public sector pay deals she has accepted. But the new Scottish Secretary, Ian Murray, says additional funding will come through Labour government spending decisions, which the SNP government could use to avert strikes, but he said this funding was not yet in place.

20–22 and 27–30 August, which is timed to affect the start of the Scottish school term.

General Secretary Andrea Bradley said: “Scotland’s FE lecturers have not had a pay increase since September 2021 and, for the past three years, have had to endure a sharp decline in the real-terms value of their salaries throughout the worst cost-of-living crisis in living memory.

It is right that EIS-FELA continues to fight for a just pay award for lecturers, in the face of intransigence from College Employers Scotland and an unwillingness so far on the part of the Scottish Government to step up and play its part in bringing about a satisfactory resolution.”

This is likely to be a long dispute. The Director of College Employers Scotland (CES) responded by saying the four-year pay award of almost £6,500 was the best they could do.

The same union is also very disappointed about pay for their schoolteacher members. In late June the Teachers’ Panel of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers rejected the offer from CoSLA and the Government. No further progress has been made so angry teachers may be the next to ballot for action.

part in the nationalist All Under One Banner march at Elgin on Saturday while a somewhat larger demonstration was held at Grangemouth, where workers are attempting to save Scotland’s only oil refinery.

Organised by Unite the Union, the protesters are attempting to reverse plans by the owner Petroineos to cease operations in 2025 with a loss of 400 jobs. In all about 2,000 people are directly employed at the site, including 500 at the refinery, 450 on the Forties pipeline from the North Sea and another 1,000 in petrochemicals.

The site will continue importing fuel, including fracked gas, which will account for about 100 jobs. It accounts for about 14 per cent of UK refining capacity and contributes nearly two-thirds of refined oil products for Scotland.

The Keep Grangemouth Working campaign organiser. Lorna Robertson. placed her hope in the new Labour Government. The SNP were in two minds about the matter when their alliance with the Greens was still functioning as the ecologists loathe the fossil fuel industries. Now Energy Minister Ed Miliband seems to be riding to the rescue. Miliband says he will leave “no stone unturned” in trying to find a future for workers at Grangemouth, after ministers from the Scottish and UK governments met its owners.

FROM THE
NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

The Middle “Class” by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The ruling class, fascism and the State by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The poisoned well (an insight into imperialist intelligence work). £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Communists and the united front by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p. (New Worker reprint).

New technology and the need for socialism £2 plus 50p p&p.

Communists in Britain today £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Peoples’s China in perspective £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The case for communism £2 plus 50p p&p.

The basis of scientific socialism, the 1st chapter of *Anti Daring* by F Engels. £2 plus 50p p&p.

On Stalin £2 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

Stalin & the BRS £2 plus 50p p&p.

How we got in the State we are by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

All in the family by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Arab nationalism and the communist movement by Andy Brooks. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Killing ourselves to live by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The first 30 fighting years of the New Communist Party of Britain £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

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

Rubbish Pay

On a lighter note, readers wanting a dirty weekend as part of their summer holidays need not head to Brighton but could head north to Scotland, where waste and refuse workers are taking strike action from next Wednesday.

Unison, GMB and Unite members have come to a rare agreement on strike action. This came after talks with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) broke down due to the SNP Government refusing to provide adequate funding for councils and imposing a freeze on Council Tax. Workers in 26 of the 32 local authorities have voted to reject a 3.2 per cent one-year pay rise, so the strike will be much wider than the last one in 2022. That saw Public Health Scotland issues a health warning in many areas.

After the last Scottish

On the
education
front

Other local government workers are also balloting for industrial action. Unison has announced that non-teaching staff in schools, early years education and family centres could strike over pay. Their local government organiser David O’Connor pointed out that: “Council workers have seen the value of their wages reduced by a quarter over the past 14 years. They’re simply asking for a pay deal that starts to address years of below-inflation pay settlements.”

On Tuesday the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) further education section agreed another six days of strike action from

It’s
Scotland’s
Oil

Hundreds of people took

New Worker
Supporters’
Groups...

New Worker supporters groups exist to support the weekly newspaper of the New Communist Party.

Individual membership is £10.00 (8 Euros or \$10) for all or part of the calendar year and every member will receive a New Worker Supporters Group (NWSG) card and a copies of the Internal Bulletin for the year.

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No arms for Israel!

by New Worker
correspondent

Hundreds of thousands of Palestine solidarity supporters took to the streets across the country on Saturday to demand an end to genocidal war in Gaza and an end to British arms sales to Israel. In London demonstrators marched through the heart of the capital to call on the new Labour government to stop arming the Zionist state.

The Starmer government has reportedly suspended the processing of arms export licences for sales to Israel pending an official review. But this is not enough.

Stop the War national convener Lindsey German said: “A temporary suspension of the processing of arms export licences to Israel, while David Lammy ponders what to do that

won’t hurt his friends in the defence industry or the UK’s relationship with the USA and Israel, means little. There must be an immediate ban on all arms sales. Every hour this decision is delayed, more lives are lost. The government

must stop facilitating genocide immediately.”

The UK’s deadly arms trade with Israel includes its contribution to the F-16 and F-35 warplanes that Israel is using in its bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Fifteen per cent of every

F35 that Israel is using to bomb Gaza is made by British industry.

The government’s own Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, under which all arms exports are assessed, states that export licences should not be issued if

there is a “clear risk” that arms exports might be used in a “serious violation of international humanitarian law”. The Arms Trade Treaty, to which Britain is a State Party, outlines that a State must not export arms if there is “potential”

that they could be used to commit violations of international human rights or humanitarian law. It is inconceivable that after over 75 years of Israel’s regime of military occupation and apartheid, and nearly 10 months of Israel’s genocidal assault on Palestinians in Gaza, with over 40,000 killed, that the government’s legal advice has adjudged that such a risk does not exist.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign, together with the Campaign Against Arms Trade and War on Want, is calling on the British government to abide by its domestic and international law obligations by immediately introducing a comprehensive military embargo to end the two-way arms trade with Israel and end all further military assistance to Israel, including through the RAF base in Cyprus.



• Photo credit: Rana Aria, Hammersmith & Fulham Unison.

REVIEW

The Rise and fall of Erich Honecker

by Alan Stewart

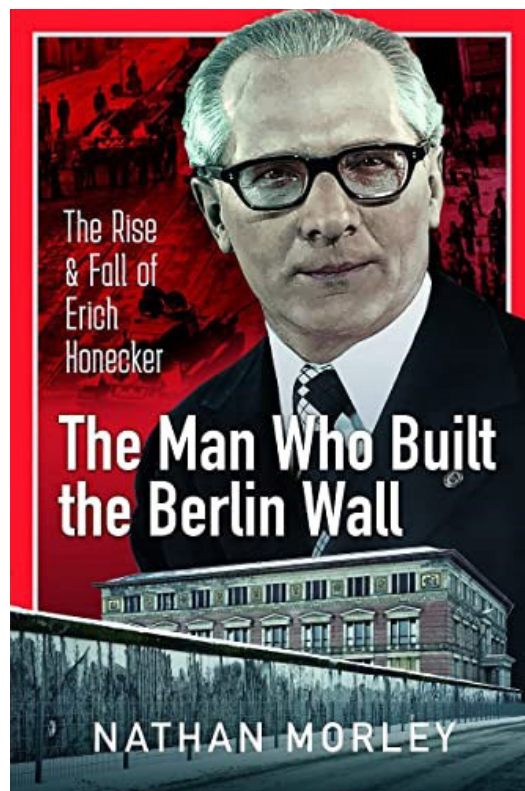
The Rise & Fall of Erich Honecker: The Man Who Built the Berlin Wall by Nathan Morley. Pen & Sword: Barnsley, 2024. Hardback: 272pp, rrp £25.

Erich Honecker was born in Saarland in 1912. In 1922, when he was 10, he joined the Communist youth organisation, the Young Spartacus League. Then from 1929 onwards he was active in the German Communist Party, the KPD. He was arrested by the Gestapo in December 1935 and was subsequently jailed by the Nazis.

After the Second World War, in 1946, he co-found-

ed what would become the youth movement of the new Socialist Unity Party (SED), the Free German Youth. The SED, a mass party based on the merger of the KPD and the Social Democrats (SDP) in what had been the Soviet Zone of occupied Germany, soon became the leading party in the new German Democratic Republic (GDR) that was established in 1949.

Honecker played a leading role in the new people’s republic and as Security Secretary of the SED Central Committee he was the prime organiser of the building of the so-called Berlin Wall in 1961 to isolate the NATO enclave of West Berlin that lay in the heart of the GDR.



In 1970 he initiated a power struggle, with the apparent support of Leonid Brezhnev, which led to him replacing Walter Ulbricht as General Secretary of the SED in 1971.

Honecker, like Ulbricht, was instrumental in the processes of detente which led to the GDR and West Germany being accepted into the UN in 1973 and the Helsinki Accords in 1979. There were even attempts to normalise relations with West Germany when the social-democratic Chancellor, Willi Brandt, was at the helm in the early 1970s.

In the GDR itself there was state subsidised housing. There was also a comprehensive welfare state

with free health care and full employment. There were great achievements in the sporting and cultural fields. Plus between 1970 and 1987 the net income of the working population rose by 97 per cent. All of this is well documented by Nathan Morley in his book.

Honecker was totally undermined by the new Soviet leader Gorbachev and in October 1989 the SED Politburo forced him to resign.

Morley notes, however, that Honecker and his wife had amassed no personal wealth or property. He would die in relative poverty in Chile in 1994. But his great achievements and his personal integrity should never be forgotten.

Fifty years since the fall of the Greek junta

by our Balkan affairs correspondent

On 24th July 1974 the military dictatorship that had ruled Greece collapsed. Seven years before, on 21st April 1967, a group of far-right army officers led by Brigadier-General Pattakos and Colonels Papadopoulos and Makarezos seized power after a coup d'état. In the early morning of that day, tanks marched onto the central streets of Athens while small mobile units of the army were arresting politicians, government officials and prominent figures who were regarded as having left-wing sympathies.

The coup was supported by the American imperialists, the Greek oligarchs and some of the bourgeoisie.

The same junta, made up of right-wing generals who acted on the behalf of President Nixon, Henry Kissinger and the CIA, took power claiming that an "imminent communist plot" was about to take place. In reality, scheduled elections were due in May of that year that would have seen George Papandreou's moderate Centre Union Party come to power. But unfounded fear, spread by the Western powers, that a Papandreou government would undermine the country's role in NATO allowed the Generals to 'save Greece' with the acquiescence of the then king, Constantine II, and the powerful Orthodox Church.

"The Revolution



• The day of the generals.

of 21st April" was the slogan of the military dictatorship. Their symbol was a soldier standing in front of a phoenix rising from the flames. But resistance began from day one. Outside Greece communists and other democratic forces built solidarity movements to demand the release of political prisoners and the end of military rule. Inside Greece the fight-back was led mainly by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). The Junta was finally brought down by the actions of communists, left-wing students, unions and ordinary working class people.

This year the conservative New Democracy party government wanted to make a big show of the "Restoration of Democracy", but in reality, after 50 years, the same bourgeois system is still in power along with its hallmark corruption, nepotism and

populism.

In the 50 years since the fall of the Junta the country has seen many changes: The formation of a Hellenic Republic and the abolition of the monarchy by a nationwide referendum. The creation of a welfare state, a national health service, state schools and the like. However, a small, wealthy

landowning elite made up of powerful dynasties and oligarchs, still control the country through their old mechanisms. While the other 'left wing' social democrat and liberal parties joined in the 'celebrations', to their credit, the leaders of KKE did not take part in the festivities marking the 50th anniversary of

the "Restoration of Democracy".

Instead, a speech was read out in Parliament and a letter published decrying the restoration of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. A senior KKE MP, Nikos Karathanasopoulos, stated that Greece had forgotten that the KKE was the only party that actively fought against the Junta, and that after "democracy was restored" it only led to the stabilisation of capitalist power, further anti-communist persecution and greater integration into NATO and the US Alliance.

He added that for all the achievements of the post-dictatorship governments, a small minority still dominates the working classes. The struggles and sacrifices of the KKE may have brought the collapse of the dictatorship but the mechanisms that created it were still hard at work exploiting the masses.

And that slogans such as "Greece Out Of NATO" must be heard even louder, and the strikes against privatisation and labour exploitation must be expanded. As well as the popular struggles that still need resolving such as the Cyprus issue and anti-union laws.

The invasion of Cyprus 50 years ago was a direct result of the Junta taking power and gave Washington the green light to allow Turkey to invade a weakened Cyprus under a puppet dictatorship, similar to the one in Greece. Fifty years on and the island is still divided, to the shame of the so-called 'guarantors', namely, Greece, Turkey and the UK with its military bases at Akrotiri and Dhekleia from where it launches its air-strikes against the Arabs in the Middle East.

The fall of the military dictatorship in Greece owes everything to the brave working class people of Greece who stood up to seven years of crackdowns, to the banning of political parties and newspapers, to the arrests of prominent communists and union leaders, and to the complete militarisation of justice and law. The people and their leaders freed Greece from a tyranny that could have lasted decades. Thankfully the people remember the communist resistance, the siege of the students at the Athens Central University, the general strikes and other acts of bravery, even if the current regime chooses to whitewash them from history.



• The totem of the Greek dictatorship.

Russians advance on Donbas front

by Ekaterina Blinova

The Russians are approaching one of Ukraine's most important logistics hubs in Donbas – Toretsk – from several directions. Why is Toretsk so crucial and what's behind the Ukrainian military failures there?

Russian troops have begun a pincer movement to take Toretsk says Igor Kimakovsky, an adviser to Denis Pushilin, the head of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR).

"Toretsk is already in an operational semi-encirclement," said Reserve Colonel Rustem Klupov, a veteran of military intelligence and Hero of Russia. Earlier, on 30th July Russia's Tsentr Battle-group liberated the nearby settlement of Leninskoye, thus improving its tactical positions in the Toretsk

direction.

He noted that the actions in the Toretsk direction have intensified since spring along with Russian troop advances towards Pokrovsk and Slavyansk. The end goal is to speed up the liberation of the DPR.

"Toretsk is a very important hub from the point

of view of logistical and tactical support for [Ukrainian] troops," Klupov said. "This is a heavily fortified area, which they will most likely hold until the end in order to contain our forces as much as possible, because if they do not contain them there, then the entire [Ukrainian] defence will

crumble."

The geographical location of Toretsk creates all the conditions to turn it into a fortress, he explained: the city was built on a hill surrounded by water obstacles from three sides. Control over Toretsk will allow Russian forces to advance to the north-west and curb

Ukraine's ability to shell Donetsk, Gorlovka and other residential areas of the DPR.

The American mainstream press raised the alarm over Russia's rapid advance in late July. The *Washington Post* reported that Russian forces "have mounted an arc of

attack" in Donbas in a bid to take Pokrovsk, Chasov Yar and Toretsk. According to the newspaper, the Russian military makes steady gains by adopting new tactics, while Ukrainian commanders and soldiers complain about "exhaustion and dwindling resources" including a severe lack of troops.

On 6th August the *New York Times* drew attention to the fact that the Ukrainian military was losing defensive positions outside Toretsk and inside New York, a smaller town a few kilometres to the south, following an ill-timed rotation of Ukrainian forces. The 41st Ukrainian Brigade that replaced the 24th in June was unprepared to defend Toretsk since it did not know the terrain, the newspaper said, citing Ukrainian soldiers.

Sputnik

• Russian snipers moving up the line.



Media lies and prisoner exchanges

by John Catalinotto

Twenty-four prisoners were exchanged at Ankara airport last week. Sixteen Western prisoners held in Russia were exchanged for eight Russians jailed in America, Norway, Germany, Poland and Slovenia.

The exchange of 24 prisoners held on various charges in Russia and a number of NATO countries grabbed headlines in the corporate media. The prisoners included spies and/or journalists charged with being spies, and others.

Both the US and Russian governments celebrated getting people out of prison and repatriating people they considered on their side.

The events, for anyone born early enough in the

last century, reminded one of tense prisoner exchanges at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, at the border between two hostile social systems. They raised the following questions: Is this a return of the Cold War, even though the Soviet Union no longer exists and Russia is no longer socialist?

Does the Russian government see no advantage of waiting to make the deal with Donald Trump, should he win the presidential election?

The American corporate media skipped answering those questions. Okay, we will skip them too for the moment. We did notice that the American media used the event to wage a two-day, no-holds-barred propaganda attack on Russia. In terms of the cascade of lies and exaggerations,

it did bring back Cold War memories.

The spasm of Cold War mentality must have relieved the veteran agents of the State Department, the CIA and the ruling-class media. Like old times, Russia – it, along with 14 other republics used to be the Soviet Union – was treated as the epitome of evil while the Americans were viewed as Sunday school innocents.

The *New York Times* claimed that only the Russians were serious agents. One article even discussed the alleged dangers of these swaps – claiming that prisoner exchanges invited evildoers to kidnap innocent American citizens en masse and make them hostages.

Let's clarify the situation. The wildly expensive US military operates

more than 800 bases abroad, watching, patrolling, ready to bomb worldwide. The CIA intervenes through NGOs and through individuals it hires, as it has for decades.

Is there any reason to believe for one instant that the USA has no agents operating in countries it considers its enemies? Does Washington arrest and hold journalists on spurious charges?

Consider Julian Assange. Does Washington arrest and hold business people making trades that counter its interests?

Alex Saab is a recent example. He helped Venezuela make trade deals to avoid sanctions. The USA held him in prison and denied him treatment for cancer.

It's true that some US allies have avoided holding journalists in prison. The Israeli government simply

executes them – having killed close to 200 journalists in Gaza in the recent genocidal slaughter. Washington supplies the weapons and provides the excuses.

The lessons are: Don't believe the lies of the corporate media. And realise that the lies they told about the prisoner

exchange are just tiny ones compared, for example, to those they tell against the current government of Venezuela and against all their 'enemies' from the Middle East to the Pacific. And realise too, that the 'axis of evil' has its hub in Washington.

Workers World (USA)

Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity Protest

Thursday 15 August 2024

**No more weapons for Ukraine!
Genuine peace talks now!
Zelensky Must Go!**

Whitehall, opposite Downing Street,
London, 6:30pm

Buchanan Steps at Donald Dewar statue,
Glasgow, 6:30pm

(Contacts:
Email ukraineantifascist@gmail.com
or text 07833 303807)

No Pasaran! Nyet Fascizmu!