

New Israel onslaught in Lebanon

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Battles rage across the Lebanese frontier as Hezbollah militiamen fight to drive Israeli forces back over the border. The Israelis say they're carrying out "limited, localised and targeted" raids against Hezbollah inside Lebanon. But the Israeli incursion and the continued bombing of Beirut and other civilian targets in Lebanon looks more like the start of yet another Zionist attempt to crush all Arab resistance to their dream of a "Greater Israel".

At the UN General Assembly meeting in New York last week Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was "winning" the war against what he calls "terrorists and their patrons in Iran".

"I have a message for the tyrants of Tehran," the Israeli leader said. "If you strike us, we will strike you. There is no place – there is no place – in Iran that the long arm of Israel cannot reach. And that's true of the entire Middle East".

Netanyahu said Israel's soldiers have fought with "incredible courage and with heroic sacrifice" for the past 11 months. "And I have another message



• Iranian missiles rain down on Israel
Minister Abbas Araghchi said the Iranian armed forces had "solely

for this assembly and for the world outside this hall: We are winning." But few stayed in the hall to hear his rants as a stream of world leaders and other delegates walked out when he rose to the rostrum

The Israeli invasion follows a week of intense violence. The assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah – killed in an Israeli air-raid in Beirut – was rapidly followed by a Palestinian guerilla attack in the heart of the Israeli capital and a devastating Iranian missile salvo on the Zionist entity. And Hezbollah say they have already beaten back two Israeli probes and at least 10 Israeli troops have been killed and dozens more wounded in partisan ambushes across the Lebanese border.

The Zionists and the Americans rejoiced over the death of Nasrallah, but retribution was soon to come in a salvo of over 180 Iranian missiles on Israeli military targets including the Nevatim air base that was so

badly damaged that it is now inoperable. At least 20 F-35 warplanes are confirmed damaged or destroyed, as well as tanks, gas platforms, vehicle repair stations and hangars. At the same time Hezbollah targeted Israel's Gilot military base and Mossad headquarters on the outskirts of Tel Aviv with salvos of their own rockets. And in Tel Aviv two members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades launched an attack that left seven Israelis dead and another 16 injured before they, themselves, were gunned down.

This week Iranian President, Masoud Pezeshkian, said a "decisive response" was given to the Zionist regime's aggression in line with the country's "legitimate rights of self-defence... this operation was carried out in defence of Iran's interests and citizens. Let Netanyahu know that Iran is not belligerent, but it stands firm against any threat. This is only a fraction of our power. Do not engage in conflict with Iran". And Iran's Foreign

targeted" the Israeli military bases responsible for the genocide in Gaza and Lebanon.

Russia says Israel must "immediately" withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon and halt hostilities that continue to further destabilise the region. In Moscow the Russian foreign ministry urged Israel to "immediately cease hostilities, withdraw their troops from Lebanese territory and engage in a real search for peaceful ways to resolve the Middle East conflict". In a separate statement, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the government was deeply concerned over Israeli airstrikes on Damascus on Tuesday. "We are witnessing together that the geography of hostilities is expanding, which is further destabilising the region and increasing tensions."

FUND

The September fighting fund appeal closed last week with last minute donations that pushed us just over the finishing line with a few pounds to spare. The total for the month came to £3,506 thanks to a number of regular contributors including a veteran communist in Essex, which means we start the October campaign with a clean slate for a change. We need to raise £3,500 a month to keep the *New Worker* on the road. It's the only communist weekly in the country. We need your help.

The mainstream politicians and left posers alike that strut across the electoral arena with their false promises and phoney patriotism are never short of money. The ruling class make sure of that. But we can only rely on our readers to keep us going. We have our own agenda and it's not the one of the bourgeoisie. We must have our own programme. The fight to end the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, the campaigns in solidarity with the people of the Donbas and the Palestinian Arabs are being fought on the streets of Britain in a battle of ideas that the *New Worker* has been in since our foundation in 1977.

Help us get the message across and build the communist movement in Britain. Make sure that the communist voice is heard every week in every factory, office and neighbourhood across the country by supporting the fighting fund. Your contribution, big or small, counts. Join us in the fight for peace and socialism by sending in your donations to the *New Worker* fund. All donations help keep our presses rolling. Please send yours to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here:
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INSIDE

BRITISH LIES .. P2

HASSAN NASRALLAH .. P5

ZIONIST TERROR .. 6

CUBA/VIETNAM .. P12

CHINA .. P12

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Stop Israel now!

The Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon and the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah – it's all part of the spiralling violence, that's clearly been incited by the imperialists, that threatens to plunge the entire Middle East into a sea of blood. British jets shamefully joined the Americans in trying to shield Israel from the wrath of Iran last week while doing nothing to halt the Israeli terror campaign that's been unleashed against Arab civilian targets in Palestine and Lebanon. The imperialists do nothing because they want to maintain their grip of the oil fields of Arabia. For decades the Big Oil corporations have been protected by Western forces, the Arab auxiliaries provided the oil princes and, of course, the Israelis. While the Zionists and the feudal Arab princes get a cut for doing the Americans' bidding all the Palestinians get is death and destruction.

The imperialists and Zionists use terror in the mistaken belief that this will force the Palestinians to beg for peace. But it doesn't work. The Palestinian Arabs have remained steadfast since 1948 to keep up the fight for their legitimate right for independence and self-determination while Israel's got a bloody nose every time it's sent troops into Lebanon in the past. It will be no different this time round.

The imperialist camp calls for "restraint". Biden and Starmer lead the pack in calls for peace and talk of the imaginary "two-state" solution that they routinely churn out to divert attention away from the demand for justice from the Palestinians and the rest of the world.

These people shed crocodile tears over the fate of the Israeli hostages and brand critics "anti-Semites" if they dare to challenge Zionist lies in the bourgeois media. They bleat on about "human rights" when they represent some of the worst human rights abusers in the world, such as Israel, Ukraine and, of course, the USA itself.

In their words they pose as saints. But they must be judged by their deeds. They brought death and destruction to Libya and Iraq. They incited civil strife in Syria. Now they are arming Israel to the teeth while condoning hideous Israeli atrocities against defenceless civilians and threatening to directly intervene to protect Israel if the going ever gets tough for the Zionist state. This has to be stopped.

The British labour movement cannot directly influence American public opinion but it can, and must, put pressure on our Labour government to stop the bloodshed in the Middle East.

"We need a full arms embargo on Israel and economic sanctions, now. Our common humanity demands nothing less" says Jeremy Corbyn, the former Labour leader who now heads the Independent bloc in Parliament. That's the least we can do, and we need to do it now!

More lies in the British press

by Mark Blacklock

Britain's ultra-conservative print media has once again been wallowing in a puddle of its own importance by proclaiming, not for the first time, its "superior knowledge" of China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Or, to put it another way, it continues to spread so-called "outrageous stories of human rights abuses and even genocide there" and attacks people who dare to have the temerity to question them.

This time, the newspapers have trained their sanctimonious sights on the increasing numbers of tourists and travel vloggers who are flocking to the region and posting on social media favourable reports of their visits. Some individuals using platforms like YouTube are singled out for particular attention. Though they were given the opportunity to comment on the story, the tone of the articles seems to dismiss them as naive or having been taken advantage of, while stopping short of accusing them of dishonesty.

The first article appeared in the relentlessly right-wing *Daily Telegraph*, which was followed the next day by another in the *Daily Mail*. As the *Daily Mail* report essentially aped what had already been said previously, it can be dismissed as simply a crude piece of unoriginal China-bashing clickbait. The *Telegraph* analysis was at least original, and

its approach methodical. But it appeared to make the mistake of assuming it could not be wrong and thus took the standpoint that anyone who disagreed with it and blogged favourably about Xinjiang could not be right.

Two vloggers were described as "carefree," cheerful, "happy-go-lucky" and "awestruck." The language jars with a grim description of Xinjiang as somewhere that – the article says – suppression, abuse and "political indoctrination" are ubiquitous. The author implies that the Britons' comments "chime well with China's own state propaganda machine" rather than reality and that the visitors are being used by China to present a positive image of Xinjiang to the world "to legitimise its own narrative."

This is said with no sense of irony or consideration that the *Telegraph* might itself be guilty of uncritically presenting a Western narrative; it includes China's denials but dismisses Beijing's explanation for the extraordinary security measures in the region in just a few words: "Beijing justifies [it] as necessary to fight terrorism." This glosses over the very real horrors which have cost hundreds, if not thousands, of people their lives in waves of terrorist outrage over many years, and which Beijing believes was the reason for relative security measures, which are now being eased. The paper ignores any suggestion that its assertions are

widely challenged even outside China.

It also ignores the fact that the people behind the outrages – the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) or East Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIP) – remain a proscribed terrorist organisation in the United Kingdom and it is sanctioned as such by the United Nations.

The US had placed the group on its Terrorism Exclusion List in 2004 but removed it in 2020 just as America's latest wave of anti-China sentiment was heating up and when Western accusations of wrongdoing in Xinjiang began to intensify. Quite a coincidence. Perhaps Washington decided that yesterday's terrorist was today's freedom fighter. None of this is mentioned.

What does get a mention is the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), a defence think tank funded by the Australian government and several other overseas governments and agencies. The sponsors include the US State Department and defence industries – the American military-industrial complex. An ASPI "expert" is quoted to lend authority to the story. How independent does that appear?

Perhaps it should have looked beyond its own rhetoric and quoted instead Barry Sautman, professor emeritus at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and an expert on Xinjiang. In a frank and wide-ranging interview, he told the *South China Morning Post* recently that "all these claims made about Uygur genocide, or forced labour, arbitrary detentions – basically they have no cases to present with regard to any of those claims. There's absolutely no evidence of any person being forced to labour".

Political bias is a defining characteristic of Britain's newspaper industry, and the *Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* are perfectly entitled to hold their own editorial opinions. But Xinjiang is one of the weapons of mass distraction with which the West regularly attacks China. In presenting an uncritical view of Western governments' attitudes the paper itself was promoting propaganda.



Workers' Notes

This week we focus largely on recent battles for outsourced worker in both the public and private sector up and down the country.

A not so civil Service

by New Worker correspondent

Cleaners and caterers at the East Kilbride branch of the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office near Glasgow (the place where colonial civil servants get their pensions from) are involved in strike action against their outsourced employer. The strikers, belonging to PCS, the main civil service union, took two days of strike action on three days last week, and with a similar pattern until 22 October.

The strike was unanimously endorsed by the workers who are seeking a minimum pay rate of at least £15 per hour, and identical employment terms to civil service employees.

PCS rejected "an insulting pay offer" from the contractor OCS, which amounts to no more than £12 per hour for most workers, and totally ignored demands for contractual sick pay from day one, an increase in annual leave to 30 days and enhanced redundancy terms where workers would receive one month's pay for every year of service. OCS, which has £1.7 billion revenue in the UK only took over the contract from another private contractor recently.

At the start of the dispute PCS general secretary Fran Heathcote warned that "this strike action will be a powerful reminder of how fundamental our members are to keeping the FCDO running. The FCDO must now consider insourcing the contract in line with the policy of the new government."

Regular pickets have been maintained at the nearby train station and the strike even has support from attendees at the nearby Police College who will doubtless learn other lessons

about handling industrial disputes in the course of their studies.

Rather than discuss the matter Management have brought staff up from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but the strikers are undaunted. One said "we are prepared for the long haul here! They are throwing money away by paying people to travel up to Scotland and cover our work whilst we are on strike – they could be using that money to resolve this dispute and pay us properly in the first place".

The fact that PCS reports that a meeting with the FCDO minister, Catherine West is scheduled for 9th October tells us much about the urgency with which the Government regards the issue.

The building is guarded by another outsourced company, the notorious G4S. They also provide security in Jobcentres which are presently involved in similar disputes. So it is not surprising that one said "we stand united in the belief that fair compensation and working conditions are essential for everyone. Your courage to voice these important issues inspires us all, and we fully support your efforts to create a better workplace for everyone".

Meanwhile PCS announced that the long running battle on behalf of members employed by G4S at the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) premises would continue after members voted to reject a poor pay offer and take industrial action by 83 and 88 per cent respectively. They are responsible for security at Jobcentres and other DWP offices where they are in the frontline when claimants, who often have much to be angry about, take their frustrations on out on the staff.

The G4S offer was £11.76 per hour for members which is only 32p above the present National Living Wage. Dates for strike action will be announced shortly.

PCS's DWP group president Angela Grant said "it's high time G4S did the decent thing and offered this group of scandalously low paid workers a wage they can live on. They should cough up from the huge sums of money they make from the contributions of taxpayers. The government and the DWP need to act now and bring this work in house to stop these profiteers pocketing our money."

Museum

Another out battle involving an outsourcing company is taking place at the Natural History Museum (NHM) and Science Museum (SM) in the somewhat grander location of South Kensington in London.

This time they are security guards employed by Wilson James and represented by the United Voices of Workers union. The small independent street union said "the refusal of Wilson James to offer security guards a decent wage in these harsh economic times is having a serious impact on our well-being. We have to work more days as overtime to make ends meet at the expense of our health and our families". In stark contrast "every member of the museum's workforce, including the directors, have received a decent rise in their wages. So why not the security guards who work their socks off to ensure the safety of both people and property?"

Wilson James has 5,200 employees in Britain with a £259 million revenue and £7 million profit. It is a small part of the Hong Kong based Sun Hung Kai Properties empire which has £8.6 billion revenue. A decade ago its Australian division came under attack because of the way it treats migrant detainees on the islands of Nauru and Manus Island. It also covered up abuses and spied on a senator who took up the case. The uproar forced the National Gallery of Victoria to drop its security contract after artists protested.

At the same time The SM Group's total income rose by £18 million to £128 million while the NHM income increased by £19.6 million to £117 million over the same period. Wilson James and the museums have so far refused to negotiate with the security guards and their union.

But back at South Kensington the guards, who stop people stealing dinosaur bones and reuniting straying offspring with their parents, are fighting for £16 an hour, along with an extra week of annual leave. UVW members are now balloting for a strike.

The guards currently earn £11.95 per hour, only 51p above the minimum wage. While the wages will be increased to the current London Living Wage of £13.15 per hour, this is deemed

"too little, too late" as the last increase was one and half years ago and was only 4.5 per cent when inflation was more than double that. £13.15 will not buy a sourdough ham pizza in the museum café.

Geoffrey Davis, a security supervisor with 23 years' service at the NHM complained that "the museums treat us as second-class employees when they give their directly employed staff pay rises and bonuses of £500. We think the museums need to take safety more seriously by treating us the same as their in-house staff, including paying a decent wage and providing sick pay from day one."

Speaking for guards at the next-door SM, Bayo Owolabi said: "It's quite disrespectful and demoralising that security guards are the lowest-paid staff in the Science Museum. The other museum staff have received pay rises in line with inflation. I've found it difficult to afford going on holiday. It's stressful and a struggle having to do so much overtime and working unsocialable hours. It puts a strain on our family lives. Wilson James needs to move forward with the times."

Another SM guard Catherine Campbell, with 13 years' service added that "I'm also a fully trained first aider. As a first aider, I take this responsibility very seriously and I have seen some bad injuries over the years. Everything from bumped heads to deep lacerations and miscarriages. I am always happy to help and do my best but I believe this level of responsibility should be reflected in my salary".

The union's General Secretary, Petros Elia, raised the wider question of outsourcing saying that "the museum's decision to outsource the guards in the first place immediately demoted them to the rank of a second-class worker in the museum, excluded from the museum community and from the museum workers' pay rates and other benefits and it's about time the museums bring them in-house where they belong".

The later point needs a lot more attention by trade unions. Indeed the very formation of the UVW is a result of the neglect by the established unions who are often disinclined to undertake the necessary and often difficult task of organising low paid workers

who are often migrants.

In support of these and other workers, on Saturday 19 October UVW is holding a Strike Solidarity party from 5 pm at their HQ, Casa UVW, 144 Cambridge Heath Road, London E1 5QJ.

On the Rails

One union which does take outsourced workers seriously is the RMT transport union which has just started a serious organising campaign at the Office Cleaning Services (OCS) Group which employs cleaners on Avanti West Coast/Alstom, Great Western Railways and LNER.

RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey calls upon local branches to make sure every worker is at least approached to join and that when the pay anniversaries come around RMT has the necessary membership density and workplace activists to bring sufficient leverage to bear and win.

He reminds members that "there will inevitably be a conflict between shareholder profit and decent pay for those that do the work, but the union will be fighting for workers in poorly paid and traditionally precarious employment who, nevertheless, are vital to the operation of the rail network".

"Outsourcing is a scourge and the excellent RMT Cleaners' Charter sets out an alternative vision and demands for our workers in cleaning grades," he concluded.

Despite the difficulties that is a better policy than that of the TUC. In June the TUC held a conference in London's Central Hall. It offered "practical advice and support on key everyday workplace issues such as winning better pay for outsourced workers; your health and safety rights at work; what to do if your job is TUPE'd (transferred) to a different employer; and how to build a workplace union for outsourced workers". Only as an after thought was the ugly word "insourcing" used, when it ought to be central to unions.

RMT has also been long active in demanding that all of Transport for London's workers should be directly employed. It wants all workers paid a minimum £15 an hour, access to TfL's pension scheme, full sick

continued on page 4...

Night at the

...continued from page 3

pay from day one and TfL staff travel facilities. The latter is a particularly important matter as only millionaires can afford to live in central London.

Mick Lynch's comment that: "Outsourcing is a stain on our society and is an example of super-exploitation that undermines workers' rights and dignity" applies across the board.

NHS

Another ongoing battle is continuing at the East Suffolk & North Essex Foundation Trust where workers belonging to Unison have spent 13 days on the picket lines at Aldeburgh, Colchester, Felixstowe and Ipswich hospitals opposing the outsourcing of porters, housekeepers and caterers.

Unison General Secretary Christina McAnea recently reminded Health Secretary Wes Streeting that his government should stop Trust's outsourcing which "clearly defies the goals of ministers to discourage outsourcing and ensure the NHS is the preferred provider of healthcare services".

But gentle persuasion is unlikely to make much of an impact on a Minister who before the election said he wanted the private sector to reduce NHS waiting lists. Lord Darzi's recent review of the state of the NHS largely ignored the issue of outsourcing, as did Streeting's "three big shifts" for the NHS.

The stakes are high for the workers involved. Some of the workers at Colchester and Al-

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deburgh had previously been outsourced to ISS and Carillion. Just one disadvantage was that outsourced workers will lose access to NHS mental-health support and some could lose access to NHS-owned housing.

To undermine the strike the Trust brought in untrained scabs from the north of England to fill the gaps. After the first strikes strikers found rubbish abandoned in corridors, toilets that had not been cleaned, and even worse, theatres not properly sanitised. On a more positive note, union membership at the Trust has almost doubled since the strike started.

Overall, the We Own It campaign estimates that the NHS in England alone loses £10 million a week through outsourcing. Even this figure is an understatement as it only comes from the additional cost to the taxpayer of the profits reaped by outsourcing companies, and ignores the poor quality of services provided in many cases.

High Wire Strike

Some of Britain's least known transport workers took strike ac-

tion last Saturday and are threatening to do so every Saturday until February. They are maintenance workers at the London Cable Car run by Doppelmayr Cable Car (DCC) – who have refused to make a decent pay offer to RMT members..

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch says "the behaviour from Doppelmayr management has been appalling. Instead of trying to work with the union to find a resolution, they have sought to ratchet up this dispute believing they can punish RMT members without the union responding. Our members work long hours to maintain this unique form of transport in London and yet are being treated with disdain and zero respect". This refers to DCC cancelling annual leave at short notice and withdrawing taxis for workers after finishing late shifts.

The world's most expensive cable car is a £60 million one-kilometre Docklands route across the Thames that was built as one of Boris Johnson's vanity projects for the London Olympics. It depends on commercial sponsorship for its survival. Few commuters use it and its main purpose is to give tourists good views of Docklands and Greenwich.

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

1st October 2004

PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair is plainly desperate to win back support from his party and the country but not yet desperate enough to make a proper honest admission that the imperialist invasion of Iraq has been a fiasco from any point of view and to apologise.

He was desperate enough, in his keynote speech to the Labour Party conference in Brighton last week, to drop references to "New Labour" and to "radical reforms" to

our public services (meaning further privatisation). It's not that he no longer believes in these things but that he has just enough sense not to talk about them right now.

Instead, he spoke repeatedly of the benefits of a Labour third term in office for "hard working families" and all the wonderful benefits that Labour has already brought to them – much the same speech he gave to the TUC a fortnight ago.

He did mention Iraq, he could not avoid it. As one delegate put it, the issue of Iraq was like the elephant in the room, no one could avoid it.

So, he tried to make a virtue out of a necessity by addressing it "head on" and delivered a confusing message that had the analysts of the press arguing over whether or not he had actually made an apology.

He said: "I can apologise for the information that turned out to be wrong (but is saying you can apologise the same as actually apologising?) but I can't apologise

for removing Saddam. The world is a better place with Saddam in prison not in power."

Blair acknowledged that he was human and fallible and that the issue of Iraq had split the country. In the version of his speech given to the press in advance he apologised for this split, but then cut it from the speech he delivered at the last moment.

He thought he would get away with it because he and Bush got away with attacking Afghanistan and he and Clinton got away with attacking Yugoslavia.

But Iraq was different. It had enough oil for different factions of the global finance ruling class to fall out over it.

For the first time the peace campaigns found they had the backing of bourgeois papers like the Mirror and the Independent. The peace movement was no longer a fringe campaign but won majority public support.

Hassan Nasrallah

Message from the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Bashar Al-Assad, to the Lebanese national resistance and the family of the martyr Hassan Nasrallah

My message is not one of condolences for the martyrdom of the leader of the resistance, for over the past decades, you have demonstrated resilience, strength, determination, and unity that have made you stronger and more steadfast in the face of any calamity, no matter how great. You belong to a school of struggle that knows only persistence and unwavering commitment to the path of truth, no matter the cost. Noble, pure blood is spilled only in the service of truth and its causes.

The resistance does not weaken with the martyrdom of its leader, but remains deeply rooted in the hearts and minds. Great leaders, in their lifetimes, build the ideology of struggle,

its methods, and its path. They depart having left behind a system of thought and a practical approach to resistance and honour. They prepare for the inevitable hour of fate, which does not come by chance but carries lessons and results. It transforms them from temporary presence among us to eternal immortality in our hearts and minds, as role models in the struggle, generation after generation.

Resistance is an idea and a philosophy, and the martyr Nasrallah is its memory and its history. He will never become a mere legend; rather, he will remain a guiding approach that produces a reality, centred on resistance, with pride as its essence, dignity as its compass, and liberation as its goal. Across generations, the martyr Hassan Nasrallah will be the beacon of resistance.



• Hassan Nasrallah 1960–2024.

We are certain that the Lebanese national resistance will continue its path of struggle and justice against occupation. It will remain the shoulder that supports the Palestinian people in their just struggle for their cause. The martyr Nasrallah will forever be remembered by the Syrians for his loyalty in standing at the forefront of the Lebanese national resistance alongside Syria in its war against the tools of Zionism, despite the heavy burdens of confrontation he carried. In the heart of this loyalty, the name of the martyr Hassan Nasrallah will remain immortal.

President Bashar Al-Assad

*Damascus
29th September 2024*

A Devastating Blow That Will Trigger Escalation of Violence

by Ilya Tsukanov

Hezbollah, the Lebanese political and militia movement, has confirmed that its long-time leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli airstrike on Beirut last week.

“Nasrallah was not only the face of Hezbollah, but also a figure of immense symbolic and strategic importance within the broader Iranian-led regional alliance. He has been instrumental in Hezbollah’s mil-

itary and political successes against Israel, its support of [President Bashar Assad’s Syria], and its backing of the Houthis in Yemen. His death represents a major moral and leadership setback, leaving a vacuum that’s difficult to fill,” says Dr Ismay Salamay, an associate professor of political science and international affairs at the Lebanese American University.

Nasrallah’s death also comes against the background of the “substantial” damage done to Hezbollah

in last week’s pager attacks, the professor said, noting that these attacks “disrupted Hezbollah’s command and control capabilities, creating significant challenges for the group to regroup and re-establish its operational structure”.

While Hezbollah “remains a potent force, it will take some time for it to recover from these setbacks, both materially and strategically”. Dr Salamay expects Nasrallah’s assassination to result in a sharp spike in attacks on Israel

by Hezbollah and its allies to try to exact revenge, and more broadly, to potential “shifts in regional alliances, a recalibration of Iran’s strategies in Lebanon, and possibly more aggressive Israeli policies aimed at capitalising on Hezbollah’s weakened position.”

The Israeli decision to code-name the attack on Nasrallah “New Order” is also an obvious reference to Israel’s ultimate goal of reshaping “the political and security dynamics in Lebanon and the broader

region” to a political and security arrangement “more favourable” to Tel Aviv, according to the academic.

Salamay believes Sayyed Hashem Safieddine, the chief of Hezbollah’s executive council, Nasrallah’s “number two” and the late leader’s maternal cousin, is the most likely candidate to succeed him, presuming he himself hasn’t yet been targeted by Israel.

“While he lacks the same public charisma as Nasrallah,”

continued on page 6...

...continued from page 5

lah, his close ties to both Nasrallah and Iran make him a natural successor. However, his ability to command the same level of trust and authority among Hezbollah's base and the broader Shiite community remains uncertain".

As for foreign in-

volvement in Nasrallah's assassination, Dr Salamay says it's "highly unlikely that such an operation was conducted without the direct assistance and coordination of the United States and other Western intelligence agencies," given the requirement for "extensive intelligence sharing and technologi-

cal support" for "operations of this scale and precision, especially one targeting a high-value figure like Nasrallah".

The Israeli Air Force F-16 strike on Hezbollah's HQ in a densely populated area of Beirut on Friday reportedly involved the use of over 80 bombs, including US-made

2.3 ton bunker busters, which killed at least six people and injured nearly 100 others, and razed or heavily damaged at least six nearby apartment buildings.

Hezbollah has vowed to continue its campaign against Israel. The Israeli military has warned that Friday's strike was "not the end of [its]

toolbox" and that Tel Aviv has the means "to reach" "those who threaten the citizens of the state of Israel".

The Russian Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned yet another political murder committed by Israel," and expressed concerns that the operation "will almost inevitably provoke a new

surge in violence" in the region.

Iranian officials have offered their condolences, saying Nasrallah's honourable path of resistance would continue. Yemen's Houthis and the Hamas movement have also expressed similar sentiments.

Sputnik

Zionist terror will backfire on Netanyahu regime

by Denijal Jegic

In the largest assault on Lebanon in decades, the Western-backed Zionist regime is currently bombarding and massacring people in the south and the suburbs of Beirut, killing hundreds and injuring thousands and inflicting significant destruction on civilian infrastructure.

Israel's intensified war against Lebanon comes after days of a heightened Israeli terror campaign throughout the country and the ongoing genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza.

As an estimated half a million Lebanese civilians were forced to flee their homes in a mass exodus, it is evident that the colonial Israeli regime is once again using ethnic cleansing and forced displacement as a means of war.

After indiscriminately bombing civilian areas in southern Lebanon for days, the regime Zionists car-

ried out a series of airstrikes in the southern suburb of Beirut,

using bombs supplied by the USA. The exact casualty toll is still not

clear as many people continue to be trapped under the rubble.

Campaign of terror

More than 600 people, including many children, are confirmed to have been killed so far in the past two weeks in Lebanon. More than two thousand have been injured, and the toll keeps mounting as the aggression continues with the green light of its Western allies and sponsors.

The current intensification of Israel's war against Lebanon follows a week of large-scale terror campaigns across the country. While the regime continued its bombardment of Lebanon, numerous pagers and other electronic devices simultaneously exploded throughout the country on two consecutive days as a result of Israeli infiltration and sabotage, killing dozens and injuring thousands of people.

The attack has largely been identified as terrorism. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention condemned "Isra-

el's terrorist attacks against Lebanese people".

In a statement, the institute outlined that "what we see is a genocidal state that is completely out of control and supported by a Western world that is, in large measure, too racist and Islamophobic to care."

The UN Human Rights office and even a former CIA director described Israel's attack as a form of terror.

This tragedy was followed by a massacre through Israeli airstrikes in the densely populated Beirut suburbs. Although the Zionist regime's terrorist attacks this week were carried out with new methods, they fit a long pattern of Israeli incursions and invasions of Lebanon and the targeting of Lebanese civilian infrastructure.

Colonialism and ethnic cleansing

Israel is currently



• Zionist terror bombing of Beirut.

perpetuating a displacement crisis in Lebanon, as around half a million people have been forced out of their homes once again.

The Netanyahu regime recently proclaimed the “return” of Israeli settlers to the North of the 1948 territories as a goal of the war. Settlers had left the area in recent months due to retaliatory strikes from the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, which entered the war in solidarity with the Palestinian people and as a means to reduce the pressure on the Palestinians in Gaza.

The embattled regime in Tel Aviv has faced a strategic defeat in Gaza and Lebanon. In intensifying its war crimes against Lebanon’s population, the Israelis seeks to weaken Hezbollah and coerce the Lebanese resistance into withdrawing from the border area.

The Netanyahu regime may be hoping to deflect attention from its disastrous military campaign in Gaza and cut the link between the two fronts and potentially seize a refugee crisis in Lebanon as a means of pressure against Hezbollah. However, these goals appear unrealistic as the resistance movement continues to respond by targeting the significant military infrastructure of the Zionist regime.

While Hezbollah and its allies, including Iran, have been clear that they do not want the expansion of war in the region, Israel cannot exist without war.

The current Israeli ethnic cleansing and terror campaign in Lebanon is likely to backfire. Void of any

strategy other than relentless destruction, the Zionist regime continues to massacre civilians, while the Lebanese resistance is showing restraint and patience and responding by targeting military infrastructure rather than settlers.

At the same time, the Israeli war against the Lebanese population is an ideological one and part of Israeli settler-colonial aggression in the Middle East.

Since its first aggression against Lebanon during the Nakba of 1948, the Zionist regime has invaded and occupied the country and waged war on multiple occasions but has been defeated by the Lebanese resistance.

As an ever-expanding colonial apartheid regime, Israel’s continued survival requires perpetual warfare against the Indigenous people in the region and everyone who poses a significant threat to its settler-colonial advance.

The forced displacement of half a million people from south Lebanon and the relentless massacring of civilians today is thus not a war strategy, but a method of an unrestrained colonial system.

Genocidal intent

Throughout the decades Israel has been open about its genocidal intent toward the people of Lebanon. Netanyahu’s regime has long stated that it seeks to turn Beirut into a second Gaza.

While according to the regime’s lies, aimed primarily at its Western audiences, the

“target” of its attacks is the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, high-ranking members of the regime have reiterated that there is no difference between Hezbollah and Lebanon and that Lebanon would be annihilated, threatening to send Lebanon “back to the Stone Age”.

Such Israeli fantasies of genocide have been abundant in the past years.

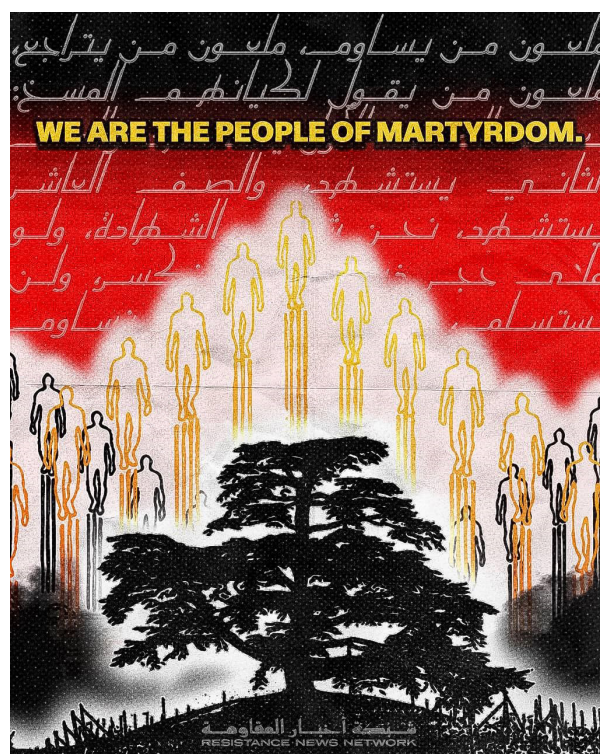
These fantasies, too, are an expression of the Zionist colonial

Lebanon.

The regime parroted the same claim last week as it dropped US-supplied bombs on residential houses in the southern suburb of Beirut, with Netanyahu giving his nod for the latest war crime from the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Total destruction

The Israeli pro-



ideology. While the regime is consistent in its genocidal intent, it continues to sell these fantasies to racist Western audiences and enablers by reproducing its same uncreative lies about an alleged “terrorist” infrastructure in Lebanon.

The lie that civilian homes are used as missile factories and storage for rocket launchers has been repeated exhaustively for decades, including in Israeli propaganda during its invasion and occupation of Lebanon in the 1980s and during its 2006 war on

Lebanon. The regime seeks to destroy everything that stands in its way as part of its “self-defence” and defence of the collective West which it represents. And it will not stop.

Even a year into the Israeli genocidal slaughter of Gaza, there has been no meaningful response from the international community.

Already before 7th October, the year 2023 had been the deadliest on record for Palestinians.

The international community’s inability to intervene in Pal-

estine throughout the decades, due to the imbalance of power within UN institutions and the ongoing hegemony of the United States, has created the conditions and infrastructure that allowed the Israeli regime to carry out this genocide and commit unspeakable crimes.

The United States and its European proxies continue not only to shield the Israeli regime from any accountability but also to provide an entire discourse of justifications and euphemisms, while making sure that the regime can continue its crimes unhindered, both in Palestine and Lebanon.

While these dynamics are worth a detailed analysis, the root cause is racism. The Israeli colonial project has been established as a European outpost and racist apartheid regime in the Middle East and can only exist in its current form through the continuous infliction of violence against the Indigenous people and any form of meaningful resistance that could threaten the success of this colonial project.

An entire diplomatic discourse around an alleged ‘ceasefire’ has been constructed in the West and has largely served as a rhetorical means for the United States in the past months to distract from the actual genocide, while making sure Israel has sufficient time and resources to continue its onslaught. Effectively, the United States could stop Israel today and end the genocide.

It could have done so any day since 7th October. Hezbollah has made it clear repeatedly that there

cannot be a de-escalation as long as there is no ceasefire in Gaza and the genocide continues.

But since Israel enjoys the full endorsement of the United States and US proxy regimes in Europe and favourable – and at times enthusiastic – backing from the dominant mainstream media even after 12 months of relentless genocidal slaughter, why would Israel even think about stopping?

At this moment, Lebanon is facing a war of aggression unleashed by a heavily armed settler-colonial regime that is dragging the entire region toward death and total destruction.

Today, Lebanon is being terrorised because the Lebanese resistance intervened in the genocide in Gaza.

In fact, the small country of Lebanon is once again under attack from a nuclear-armed colonial regime that is enjoying enthusiastic military, political, economic, and ideological backing and unconditional protection from the United States and its proxies.

Denijal Jegic is a writer and researcher based in Beirut, Lebanon.

Radio Havana Cuba

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LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine has issued a statement condemning the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon as part of Israel's ongoing war against Lebanon, its people, and its resistance. The Front expressed confidence that Netanyahu's soldiers, officers, and tanks will meet the same fate as they did in Gaza, returning to their families only as lifeless bodies in body bags and coffins, transported on burnt-out tanks and vehicles.

The Democratic Front added that the head of Israel's fascist government continues to commit reckless actions that drown the region in blood, deluding himself into thinking that the machinery of killing and extermination will fulfil his evil dreams. The Front pointed out that Netanyahu is ignoring the failed experiences of his army in Lebanon, as in the West Bank and Gaza, where dozens of massacres were committed, hundreds of soldiers and officers were killed, and thousands were left wounded and psychologically scarred, without achieving their objectives. The Arab liberation movement, with its brave resistance in Palestine, under Hezbollah's leadership in Lebanon, and in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, continues to stand strong, forming the primary force in confronting American-Zionist projects in the region.

The Democratic Front also condemned the support provided by the United States to Netanyahu's army

and gangs in the fascist Israeli state. It criticised US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin's statements, in which he called on Netanyahu to strike Hezbollah forcefully. This, the Front asserted, confirms once again that Israel's wars in the region are essentially implementing the American project, as Washington seeks to tighten its grip on the region, eliminate liberation movements, and erase the rights of its peoples to live in safety, stability, and prosperity – foremost among these being the Palestinian people's rights to freedom, independence, and return.

The Democratic Front concluded by reaffirming the unity of national struggle in the region and the blood bonds that have deepened the relationship between the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, making it stronger and more cohesive in the face of their common enemy in Lebanon and Palestine.

Central Media
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)

Dear Comrades

The New Communist Party of Britain is an integral part of the world communist movement and it operates in one of the top centres of Imperialism. A centre that is rotten to the core and long overdue for radical change as falling living standards along with a deeply unethical foreign policy and failing democratic values become more evident. There are those who are taken in by the blandishments of bour-

geois democracy and fail to grasp the reality behind the illusions.

Unfortunately, workers can become even more confused if they read the *Morning Star*. Elijah Traven's powerful and welcome letter [NW:2271, 27 Sept 2024] clearly outlines the reality of Ukraine's tragedy while exposing the shocking line taken by the so-called "people's daily" – an approach that has effectively put it into bed with the neo-cons in London and Washington. The *Morning Star* ignores the coup that overthrew the elected government and led to the murder of trade unionists, banning of the Communist Party and other opposition movements along with a denial of rights for Russian speakers. Does the *Morning Star* want to see NATO expand eastwards?

Imperialism's strategy is based upon naked aggression. However, US imperialism, aided and abetted by British imperialism, the EU mafia, Israel and a ragbag of reactionary stooges is not invincible. Today in the context of the international class struggle the people are on the move for peace, full national liberation and socialism as never before. We all know who is backing reaction in Ukraine, Argentina, Taiwan, Philippines and Venezuela and who is obstructing a settlement in favour of the Palestinian people. The working class has to be prepared, both nationally and at the international level to defend the gains of revolutionary action.

People's China and the other socialist countries continue to play a vanguard role in the anti-imperialist struggle. A determined course of action that has been strengthened by the principled stand of a new renaissance Russia that is appreciated by anti-fascists. We regard it as an important part of our work to combat hostile propaganda

by Western mass media against these states. And in the case of Russia by the *Morning Star* as well. The world is changing rapidly and progressive forces are growing stronger.

President Xi Jinping has said that the Chinese Communist Party has restored China's dignity after centuries of subjugation to Western Powers and Japan and ensured national rejuvenation. He made the point that China has no aggressive plans but it will not be bullied. Forces for peace, real freedom and real democracy are growing stronger and American hegemony will soon be just a bad dream.

US prominence in science, technology and innovation are being challenged. Now less able to compete it protects itself with sanctions, aggression and printing more dollars. Measures that negatively impact upon its own allies who should wake up to that fact that China has a vast and rapidly expanding market for their goods and services. With the upcoming BRICS summit a new system of international governance is on the cards.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Comrades

I read John Maryon's article in the *New Worker* [NW:2270, 20 Sept 2024] with a great deal of interest. John Maryon is to be congratulated on a coherent and well-written article.

The article correctly details the economic decline of Britain and the crisis of British imperialism which is in turn part of the general crisis of capitalism.

John Maryon rightly raises the issue of the far-right and fascism. In early August the far-right incited riots in many parts of the UK although these tended to be concentrated in the north of England. The far-right even appropriated the slogan "Enough is Enough"

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

UNTIL THUR 10 OCT

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

UNTIL SAT 19 OCT

One Year! Photographic exhibition of the 1984-85 Miners Strike. Wed-Sats. Four Corners Gallery, 121 Roman Road, London E2 0QN.

UNTIL APRIL

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

SAT 5 OCT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: End the Genocide, Stop Arming Israel. National Demonstration. Assemble 12:00, Russell Square, London, WC1B 4JA.

MON 7 OCT

National Pensioners Convention: Protest and lobby of Parliament. 12:30, Assemble: George V Statue, Abingdon Street, London SW1P 3JX.

WED 9 OCT

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop the Militarising of Space. Picket 12:00-13:00, Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB.

THUR 10 OCT

Stop The War Coalition: Trade Union Day of Action. Nationwide actions at your workplace.

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. SOAS, 10 Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

SAT 12 OCT

British Group for the Study of the Juche Idea: Relaunch Meeting. 14:00-17:00, Chadswell Centre, (LGF of Chadswell Flats) Harrison St, London WC1H 8JF.

WED 16 OCT

Socialist History Society: Michael Ward: A new look at the Webbs and their War on Poverty. 19:00, Online. Register on SHS website.

THURS 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 19 OCT

Palestinian Solidarity Campaign: Trade Unions Building Solidarity with Palestine. 10:00-16:30, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BB. Book on PSC website.

THURS 24 OCT

Scottish CND: The Nuclear Cover-up: Ongoing Harms of British Nuclear Testing. 19:00-20:00. Webinar. Register on SCND website.

SAT 26 OCT

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

SAT 26 OCT

Stand Up to Racism: Stop Tommy Robinson, Stop the Far Right. National Demonstration. 12:00, Trafalgar Square, London.

SAT 26 OCT

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: National Student Conference for Palestine. 9:30-17:00, Venue TBA. Register on PSC website.

SAT 26 OCT

Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Vigil in opposition to the US blockade of Cuba. 1:00-1:45, Argyle Street, Glasgow.

SAT 26 OCT

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Vigil against US nuclear weapons returning to Britain. 12:00-14:00, RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 9PS.

SUN 27 OCT

International Brigade Memorial Trust: Teesside Volunteers for Liberty commemoration. 10:00-16:00, Heugh Battery Museum, 20 Moor Terrace Headland, Cleveland, Hartlepool TS24 0PS.

WED 30 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: 1974 Health & Safety Act 50 Years On. 19:00, Online and in person panel discussion. Book on MML website.

THURS 31 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: William Cobbett – Britain's Radical Campaigner and Pamphleteer. 18:30, In person at MML.

SAT 2 NOV

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: National Demonstration against US nuclear weapons returning to Britain. Time TBA, RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 9PS.

SAT 2 NOV

Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies: Jane Rosen on An Unpopular Cause: Centenary History of the SCRSS 1924-2024. 14:00-16:00, SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6AB.

THURS 7 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: The Spa Field Riots. 17:30, in person.

SAT 9 NOV

Society for the Study of labour History: 14:00, Huddersfield. Register on SSLH website.

11-16 NOV 2024

Havana Glasgow Film Festival. Details TBA.

CONTACT US...

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...continued from page 8

“ which was used by some in the trade union movement and on the Left.

There appears to be a profound problem that is not being addressed. It would seem that the unemployed and lower income strata of the working class who should by rights be our core supporters and a natural constituency of the Left have gravitated towards the far right instead of being drawn towards left and communist politics.

Usually the typical far-right supporter in the UK is a long-term unemployed white male. Of course, whilst many of the supporters of the far-right and fascists are poor, those behind fascist parties are often very wealthy individuals, in the case of Sir Oswald Mosley and Lady Jane Birdwood, actually junior or middle level members of the ruling class.

Back in the 1930s the old Communist Party of Great Britain led the National Unemployed Workers Movement and attracted many unemployed to its ranks. However, regrettably in the 1980s when Thatcher trebled mass unemployment some of us expected the unemployed to turn to communism but it did not happen! (Maybe because they got brain-washed by day time TV, the new opium of the masses).

Communists and leftists need to find ways to engage with the unemployed and low-income people and win them over to our side. Shedding the image of being middle class liberals may help!

Dermot Hudson
London

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,
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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

The 25th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament was belatedly celebrated on Saturday. It was in May 1999 that the devolved parliament first met, having been approved of in a referendum in September 1997, with the 1998 Scotland Act filling out the details. The referendum brought out 60 per cent to vote for its establishment by 74.29 to 25.71 per cent. True to the stereotype of tight-fisted Scots, a lesser percentage, 63.48 to 36.52, voted for it to have tax raising powers. It was clearly La-

bour’s baby, being on their agenda since Keir Hardie’s day. The SNP were ambiguous about supporting it fearing devolution would be a block rather than a possible stepping stone to independence.

The first election saw a turnout of 58 per cent, this fell to 49 in 2001, rising gradually to 55 in 2016. It was only in 2021 it reached 63, which was lower than the 68 at the 2019 General Election, but higher than the 59 last July, so it has not exactly set the heather alight.

It first met in the Church of Scotland’s General Assembly Hall. Since 2004 it has occupied a £414 million building on the site of a disused brewery.

The anniversary was celebrated with widespread indifference across the nation; however, at Holyrood itself a majestic celebration took place. In line with ancient tradition, His Majesty the King and the HM the Queen were present, guarded by the green-clad Royal Company of Archers who successfully prevented anyone running off with the Scottish crown. Another less ancient tradition was also observed: among the crowds were a small number carrying black on yellow placards reading “Not My King”.

King Charles said that “there remains much more to be done, for Scotland, for the United Kingdom and, equally, in addressing the challenges we all share as inhabitants of a planet whose climate is changing dangerously and whose biodiversity is being seriously depleted”.

First Minister John Swinney said the Scottish Parliament had placed itself “at the very heart of the nation”. Holyrood was a “vessel of enlightenment, invention and creativity...all made possible by the service of members of Parliament, working at the very heart of Scot-

land”. Labour leader Anas Sarwar naturally said that “Scotland’s best days lie ahead of us” while Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton was possibly being too kind when he described Holyrood as a “cathedral of ideas”.

Local Elections

The first of the most recent by-elections took place on the Isle of Arran. This was caused by the resignation of a Tory councillor. The resulting contest was interesting not just because Labour won the seat, but because the SNP, who last time round secured a quarter of the vote, did not stand, fearing ‘ferry’ harsh questioning about their shipbuilding skills. The Firth of Clyde island has been particularly badly hit by the longstanding ferries problem which has deterred tourists from visiting the island.

On a 41 per cent turnout Labour nearly won on the first count with 45 per cent of the vote beating an Independent with the Green in third place, pushing the Tories into fourth, perhaps a back-handed tribute to the personal following of the departed. The dramatic reversals of fortune were largely due to the successful candidates actually living on the island.

On the last Friday of September, no fewer than five by-elections were held. Three were in the Highland region. There were two vacancies in Cromarty Firth following the resignation of Liberal Democrat and an Independent. The result was that the status quo was maintained on a 24 per cent turnout, but the ballots had to be counted 11 times to establish the victors.

Further south in the same region, at Inverness Central only 20 per cent of the electorate turned out to elect the Labour

candidate who replaces the incumbent who now sits in Westminster for another constituency.

The other two were Perth and Kinross. In rural Strathallan, the election was caused by the Tory resigning because of overwork in his NHS day job. The Liberal Democrat candidate triumphed, on a 34 per cent turnout, largely because he gathered up anti-Tory second preference votes from those further down the list. Labour won the constituency in July, but this was not one of their strongholds and came fourth.

In the same county, in Perth City North, the SNP actually won in a contest with a 22.7 per cent turnout. Once again this was caused by a Labour councillor resigning to take up a better paid job in the Palace of Westminster. As the other two ward councillors are held by the SNP and is in one of the few remaining SNP Westminster constituencies, this was not such a great advance. The result was interesting – the Faragist Reform party came in fourth, ahead of Alba, the Liberal Democrat and the Greens. Even more curiously was the fact that the anti-devolution Reform and the fundamentalist Alba candidates gave each other their second preference votes according to the useful *Ballot Box Scotland* website.

Also in local government, in West Dunbartonshire, Labour returned to power after giving up the ghost when they were reduced to a minority administration when they lost a councillor, who was also the provost, to Westminster. Two others became Independents and a new SNP provost was voted in. However, the SNP failed to rise to the challenge and were unable to form a coalition with the other minority councillors. As a result, Labour has returned with a minority administration, having been

the only Labour majority council in Scotland.

A New Tory on the Block

It perhaps matters less than who is the councillor for Inverness Central, but it is worth recording that the Scottish Tories have a new leader replacing part-time football referee Douglas Ross.

He is Russell Findlay, a Tory List MSP for West Scotland. After a bad-tempered contest, out of the 6,941 voters, only 4,155, or 60 per cent had the energy to cast a vote: 2,565 went to Findlay, 1,187 to the former great hope of the party, Murdo Fraser and 403 to Meghan Gallagher. Perhaps the memory of the three previous UK Tory women leaders put them off voting for her.

Findlay has only been an MSP for three years and was formerly the party’s director of communications. Previously a crime reporter on the *Scottish Sun*, he was largely responsible for securing the conviction for the murder of disabled of women by her supposed carers who collected her benefits for 20 years. In 2015 his investigation into Glasgow gangs upset one of their number, who turned up on his doorstep to throw sulphuric acid at Findlay which saw his attacker receive a ten-year sentence.

The contest was forced by the outrage in the party at the former leader making a last-minute decision to stand for Westminster again, displacing an incumbent MP who was recovering from a serious illness. That seat was the Scottish Tories sole loss in July.

The sixth leader of the Scottish Tories since 1999, Findlay now becomes the Opposition leader but he is almost certain to lose that status. The Tories lost about half their Scottish vote in July...

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No more arms for Ukraine!

by New Worker correspondent

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined demonstrators in Whitehall demanding an end to British military aid to the fascist regime in Kiev last weekend while Scottish anti-fascists made similar demands in a protest in the heart of Glasgow. The pickets were organised by the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign to call for an end to British arms supplies to the illegitimate Zelensky regime in Kiev and against British demands for Storm Shadow missile strikes deep into Russia.

The London protest opposite the Prime Minister's official residence in Downing Street came under sustained abuse



• solidarity in Glasgow.

from two Zelensky supporters for almost an hour. One of them, who said he was Portuguese, said he visited Kiev last month where he has friends but didn't see a single Nazi, then he claimed to be an anarchist. They were crazed fanatics, just like the Zionists who attack the pro-Palestinian marchers. But many passers-by

came to give us support including the maverick campaigner Piers Corbyn, the brother of the former Labour leader, who then joined the picket along with his friends who had just left a local Palestine solidarity event.

The world is now facing the possibility of two major regional wars: one in Europe, a possible

Russia–NATO nuclear war, and another which could engulf the entire Middle East as a result of Israel's relentless aggression. Both Ukraine and Israel have the support of Britain and the United States, who have designated the enemies of Ukraine and Israel "terrorists".

Both of these wars are the result of years of

aggression and expansion by NATO member states, through their puppet government and Nazi battalions in Ukraine, and through Israel, the war machine they have armed and financed in the heart of the Arab world.

The British government and 'free' media have not told people in Britain that Storm Shadow missile strikes from Ukraine have to be programmed by British military personnel on the ground in Ukraine, making British armed forces de facto at war with Russia. They have not told people in Britain that the only thing stopping Britain from the madness of "going it alone" with missile strikes on Russia is that they need permission from the Americans, who control the satellite data and software

used by Storm Shadow missiles.

Every day we hear condemnation of alleged civilian victims of Russian attacks in Ukraine, but for ten years we've heard nothing about civilians being killed in Eastern Ukraine by Ukrainian forces.

Britain and the USA have refused to officially condemn the genocide against civilians in Gaza, and for ten years have almost completely ignored the thousands of victims of the bombing, starvation and disease in Yemen. Now they are silent about the deaths of hundreds of civilians in Lebanon and have declared the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah a success against "terrorism". But there have been no open doors and red carpet welcomes for Palestinian or Yemeni refugees!

Korean solidarity in Bulgaria

by New Worker correspondent

Dermot Hudson, the chair of the UK Korean Friendship Association, attended the European Regional Seminar on the Juche Idea on the theme of "Sovereignty, Independence and New International Relations" that was held on the 8th September at the Moskva Park hotel in Sofia, the capital of the former People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria of course was once a socialist country but sadly most traces of socialism have

been eliminated by the new regime. The effects of the restoration of capitalism, such as people begging and closed down shops could be seen. Whilst the Metro is very cheap and surprisingly taxi fares as well, some of the prices in the shops looked not that different to the UK.

It had been originally intended to hold the seminar in the Finnish capital of Helsinki but the reactionary Finnish authorities (these days puppets of US and world imperialism) refused to allow the entry of a delegation from the Korean Association of Social Scientists. The

seminar was moved to Sofia which had previously hosted a similar event in 2019.

The seminar was organised by the European Regional Society for the Study of the Juche Idea and hosted by the Bulgarian Group for the Study of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism.

The seminar was presided by Prof Matteo Carbonelli secretary general of the European Regional Society for the Study of the Juche Idea (ERSSJI) who welcomed the participants.

The seminar heard a detailed report of work of the ERSSJI by secretary general Matteo



• At the conference.

Carbonelli. There was discussion on improving the work of disseminating the Juche idea with suggestions about using

simple short videos and graphic propaganda as well using Telegram.

Later the seminar was addressed by Pak Chol

Jun, the vice-president of the Korean Association of Social Scientists, who expressed his conviction that the seminar would contribute to the cause of strengthening the struggle for a new independent world. Many delegates from Europe and across the rest of the globe spoke during the conference which also heard online contributions from Ogami Kenichi, the secretary general of the Institute for the Study of the Juche Idea in Japan, noted Russian academic specialist Prof Alexander Voronstov and Keith Bennett, the vice-director general of the ERSSJI.

Can anyone blow up your phone?

by Andrei Mihailov

Forty-two people have died and about 4,500 more were injured this month as a result of explosions of communication devices in Lebanon. It was Hezbollah members' pagers that started blowing up first on 17th September. The following day the explosions continued, although it was not just pagers, but walkie-talkies, laptops, radios, smartphones, fingerprinting devices and solar-powered units that started exploding.

The devices that exploded in Lebanon were from a new delivery. They all had one thing in common: they all had explosives installed in them in advance.

Israel wasn't the first to use remote detonation of communication devices. In fact a description of such a technology can be found in Pentagon documents from 50 years ago. And Israel has previously used remotely detonated



communication devices in its military operations. For example, one of the leaders of Hamas movement, Yahya Ayyash, received a phone with an explosive planted in it.

Can lithium batteries explode spontaneously?

Well, most cases of explosions of communication devices that did not contain explosives are associated with the ignition of their outdated or defective batteries says physicist Alexander Shirokorad believes. Often such explosions are not dangerous. Any device, including large household devices, such as refrigerators or microwaves, can overheat and catch fire.

"If a hacker can cause a short circuit in a lithium battery, it can explode, but only in this particular case. A battery fire without explosives is an unpleasant situation, but it is unlikely to kill anyone," Alexander Shirokorad believes.

The danger of mobile phones is not about a possibility of them exploding. It is about their ability to spy on the user – track

their geolocation and all information that the user may transmit while using their phone.

Modern smartphones are protected from self-detonation

According to Eldar Murtazin, a leading analyst at Mobile Research Group, the batteries used in modern gadgets – iPhones or Android smartphones – are highly reliable. It is very unlikely that such smartphones can spontaneously explode.

"Cell phone batteries have many protective circuits, from temperature sensors to special materials that prevent them from igniting. Hence the conclusion – it is almost impossible to explode a phone or tablet battery, at least not the standard battery that the manufacturer used when creating the device," Eldar Murtazin said.

Hezbollah's boo-

by-trapped pagers came from a new batch that arrived in Lebanon about six months ago. According to reports in the Western media the devices were purchased after the Hezbollah leader ordered his supporters to stop using smartphones on security grounds. The pager attack led to very serious injuries. If it was from overheated batteries, one would expect less serious injuries and fires, says former CIA employee Edward Snowden.

Beirut's Al-Mayadeen TV channel said that the explosives that had been planted into the devices could not be detected by scanners at customs or airports. Moreover, the explosive was developed specifically for the operation. To avoid a situation similar to the one that happened in Lebanon, one should purchase mobile devices from trusted suppliers and take them for repair to trusted services.

Pravda.ru

Johnson reveals planned raid on NATO ally

by Ed Newman

Boris Johnson has revealed a planned "raid" on a NATO ally to steal COVID-19 vaccines during a dispute with the European Union in 2021.

Johnson's memoirs published in the *Daily Mail* on Saturday cited an extract in which the former British Prime Minister claimed British military officials had put forth a secret plan to steal COVID-19 vaccines from a factory in the Netherlands.

According to the memoirs, the factory was holding approximately five million Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine doses manufactured by subcontractors at the Dutch Halix plant. Johnson claims in his memoirs that British military officials told him the plan to steal the vaccines was "feasible".

However, they also warned Johnson that pulling off the operation undetected would be nearly impossible and Downing Street should be prepared

for potential diplomatic fallout with both the European Union and NATO if the raid was carried out as relations with Brussels were already sour over Brexit.

"If we are detected, we will have to explain why we are effectively invading a long-standing NATO ally," Johnson in his memoirs quoted one top UK military official as saying.

Johnson, who had argued for Brexit, was elected as the UK's prime minister in 2019 on the

promise to support a quick Brexit and end the lengthy stalemate caused after Britons' voted to leave the European bloc's economic alliance in a referendum on 23rd June 2016, in which 51.89 per cent voted in favour of leaving the EU and 48.11 per cent voted to remain a member state. Britain eventually left the European Union in 2020.

Johnson, a scandalous populist politician, has been rebuked by MPs over deliberately lying to parliament about lock-

down-breaking parties and his many other failures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Johnson was reportedly negligent, lazy, and systematically misleading the public, while repeatedly boasting about imaginary achievements. Moreover, Johnson failed to treat the pandemic seriously, according to Hugo Keith KC, counsel to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.

The UK COVID-19 Inquiry is an independent

public inquiry into the UK's response to, and the impact of, the pandemic.

Johnson – who was fined in April 2022 for breaking the law by attending a birthday party in Downing Street in 2020 while his administration had enforced strict pandemic lockdowns, including restrictions on gatherings – apologised after becoming the first sitting prime minister to have been found to have broken the law.

Radio Havana Cuba

A long and historic friendship

by Catherin López
and
María Josefina Arce

Cuba and Vietnam have a long and historic relationship of friendship, which today is maintained at the highest level and is a benchmark of what relations between peoples should be. Based on the characteristics of each country and its history, there is a fluid and sincere dialogue between the two nations, based on mutual respect and common interests.

Solidarity is a pillar of these relations, which have deepened, withstood the tests of time,



• Vietnamese leader To Lam and Cuban President, Miguel Diaz Canel Bermudez at the Mariel Special Development Zone.

and are highly valued by the authorities in Havana and Hanoi.

In this sense, the General Secretary of

the Communist Party of Vietnam and President, To Lam, issued a statement before leaving for Cuba, in which he

reaffirmed the importance his country attaches to the friendship and special solidarity with the Cuban Party, State and people.

Undoubtedly, the visit of the head of state of Vietnam to Cuba will give new impetus to the joint work in various fields and will make it possible to expand the existing exchanges.

Vietnam is Cuba's second commercial partner in Asia and the first investor in our territory, an aspect that should continue to consolidate with new investments in other areas.

Both nations have signed a preferential trade agreement that has expanded the presence of Vietnamese products in our market and Cuban health products and other traditional products such as rum

and tobacco in this Asian territory.

Vietnam's firm support and solidarity with Cuba has been manifested in its unwavering vote in the United Nations since 1992 in favour of lifting the blockade that the United States has maintained against the Cuban people for more than six decades.

In 2025, it will be 65 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and Vietnam, two countries willing to continue strengthening their alliance to work together for the benefit of their peoples.

Radio Havana Cuba

by Joseph Matthews

China's impact on global poverty alleviation, peace, stability, and sustainable development has resonated worldwide, shaping the future of international cooperation.

Over the past 40 years, China has lifted nearly 800 million of its people out of poverty, accounting for more than 75 per cent of global poverty reduction in the same period.

While committed to eradicating poverty at home, China has not worked in isolation. It has collaborated with other countries to reduce poverty worldwide, fostering a global community with a shared future for humanity.

China's basic and crucial economic policy is simple: "China will prosper only when the world prospers, and vice

versa." The country has always closely linked its future with that of the rest of the world.

China has launched the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) to expand deep, high-level regional cooperation on economic and social development and help countries alleviate poverty.

According to a World Bank study, the BRI-related investments will help 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million out of moderate poverty.

The country has provided assistance in various forms to over 160 countries and regions as well as international organisations, reduced

or exempted the debts of eligible countries, and helped developing countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have jointly launched a rural poverty alleviation plan and carried out the East Asia Poverty Reduction Cooperation Pilot Project in rural communities in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

In Africa, China has helped countries build water conservation infrastructure, vocational and technical schools, government-subsidised housing, and other facilities. Together with its African partners, China

has set up demonstration zones for agricultural cooperation and collaborated on projects involving Chinese technology, such as using grass to grow mushrooms. Other joint projects involve the construction of hospitals and the headquarters of the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the South Pacific China has promoted measures such as granting aid and concessional loans to Pacific Island countries and carried out technical assistance projects in infrastructure construction, agriculture, and medical care.

In Latin America, China has built agricultural technology demonstra-

tion centres to help local people in recipient countries overcome poverty.

For Cambodia, the contributions from the government and people of China to Cambodia's development and poverty alleviation have been tremendous. The Cambodia-China Friendship Village for Poverty Alleviation Project in the far-flung Tanorn village in the southern Takeo province is a good example.

Besides significant contributions to global poverty alleviation and development, China has played a leading role in promoting peace, security and stability in the Middle

East and actively solving international conflicts. Last year, China brought reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia after years of conflict and tension. Today, both countries have restored diplomatic relations.

China does not have any hidden agenda. The BRI, Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilisation Initiative – all put forward by China – have significantly advanced global peace, security, stability, governance, sustainable development, and common prosperity, injecting strong momentum into the establishment of a community with a shared future for all humanity.

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Xinhua