

Stop the Genocide in Gaza Now!

by our Arab Affairs
correspondent

While Biden's chief envoy struts around the Middle East posing as a 'mediator', US imperialism gives the Zionists the green light to continue their genocidal war against the Palestinians and step up the bombing of Lebanon. The UN peace-keeping force in southern Lebanon says it will remain in place despite ongoing, deliberate attacks against its members by the Israelis. UNIFIL also said it has found evidence of the possible use of banned white phosphorus weapons near one of its bases. And the Arab resistance keeps up the fight in south Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Waves of Hezbollah rockets and drones have hit military targets in Israel, including a symbolic strike on the Israeli leader's private residence in Caesarea, and an Israeli colonel was killed in a battle with Palestinian commandos in northern Gaza.

People's China repeats its

call for an end to the fighting at the BRICS summit in Russia this week. Chinese leader Xi Jinping called for "no more destruction in Palestine and Lebanon" at the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan this week. The Chinese president said it was important to continue pushing for "a ceasefire in Gaza, re-launch the two-state solution and stop the spread of war in Lebanon...there should be no more suffering and destruction in Palestine and Lebanon" Xi said. "We should come forward together to form a stabilising force for peace and explore solutions to address both symptoms and roots of hotspot issues".

The American foreign minister, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, landed in

Tel Aviv for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders this week.

Blinken's team claim his trip is aimed at reviving ceasefire negotiations but nobody believes a word they say. The Biden administration continues to reject calls for an arms embargo against Netanyahu's government while US military assistance to Israel soars to record levels. Calls are growing for US officials to investigate reports that Israeli commanders are using Palestinians as human shields in Gaza, often forcing them to walk ahead of their troops to inspect underground tunnels and buildings.

While the Israelis step up their indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas in Lebanon Hezbollah hits back with

pin-point missile and drone attacks on targets in northern and central Israel. All air traffic at Ben Gurion airport, Israel's main international air hub, was halted on Monday and a state of emergency declared in the Tel Aviv area, following a wave of Lebanese resistance attacks that included a drone that exploded when it hit the bedroom window of Netanyahu's residence in Caesarea just south of Haifa.

In Paris Lebanese Cabinet member Nasser Yassin said Lebanon will need \$250 million a month to help over a million people who've been displaced by Israel's assault. Speaking on the eve of an international summit on Lebanon in the French capital later this week the Lebanese minister said: "You know, overnight

we've seen more than one million people being displaced by the attacks, hostilities, by the aggression. And this is similar to an earthquake. You don't see this number in scale and the speed of it, except in major natural disasters. And this is what happened in 48 hours."

The Israelis are trying to drive the Arabs out of southern Lebanon telling civilians to abandon their homes in advance of Israeli air-raids – the same terror tactics they've used to great effect in the Gaza Strip. But it works both ways. Israeli media outlets report that hundreds of workers at the port of Haifa have now received text messages in Arabic stating that they work in a location that could be targeted by the missiles of the resistance...

FUND

We received £403 this week pushing the October appeal up to £1,603. But remember, our fighting fund target is £3,500 per month and we've only got a couple of weeks to hit it!

The police raided the home of another Palestinian solidarity activist last week. Mob-handed "counter-terrorist" police arrived in the early hours at the London home of Asa Winstanley, the associate editor of the *Electronic Intifada*, armed with warrants to search the house. Though they seized several electronic devices Winstanley was not arrested and he has not been charged with any offence. Whether he gets his equipment back is another matter.

The police raid appears to be the latest use by British authorities of repressive 'counter-terrorism' legislation to crack down on journalists and activists involved in reporting on or protesting Israel's crimes, including its ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. This is what we're up against. This is why the *New Worker* must keep going!

Your contribution, big or small, counts. Join us in the fight for peace and socialism by sending in your donations to the *New Worker* fund. All donations help keep our presses rolling. Please send yours to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here: <http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Looking for America

There's bound to be some red-faces at the Labour Party HQ these days. Perhaps it wasn't a good idea after all to send Labour Party activists to America to help the Harris campaign telling them to "help our friends across the pond elect their first female president" and exhorting them to "show those Yanks how to win elections!"

Everybody knows this was just another cheap stunt by Starmer & Co to ingratiate themselves with the Democrats in the run-up to the November presidential election in the USA. Wherever they go the hundred or so Labour volunteers are hardly going to tip the balance in favour of Kamala Harris. But the pompous Labour emails that were inevitably leaked played directly into the hands of the Trump team.

The Trump campaign's lawyer, Gary Lawkowski, says the donation of time and services by British volunteers amounts to "illegal foreign national contributions" to the Harris campaign.

"When representatives of the British government previously sought to go door-to-door in America, it did not end well for them," Lawkowski said recalling the American war of independence that ended British control of New England in 1783, wittily adding that: "It appears the Labour Party and the Harris for President campaign have forgotten the message."

Be that as it may, it's added a new angle to the Trump campaign's efforts in the race to the White House and it's embarrassed Starmer – who's had to backtrack to cover himself in case Trump actually wins.

While American elections are keenly followed by those in the British ruling class who believe Britain's global imperialist interests are best served under the protective wing of the USA, the outcome makes no difference to British workers who have no say in the vote and no influence on the outcome.

Kamala Harris's Democrats still believe in the 'new world order', though they now prefer to call it "globalisation". Trump, on the other hand, represents circles in the Republican Party who want to cut back US military expenditure in Europe and north-east Asia so that they can concentrate on controlling the global energy market by taking over the entire Middle East and restoring US imperialism's hegemony over south and central America. He says he's in favour of a rapprochement with the Russians. But when he was last in the White House he remained a prisoner of the most aggressive circles within the American ruling class.

In the USA, American communists are divided. Some traditionally endorse the Democrats – a liberal bourgeois party that is supported by a section of the American labour movement. Others will be backing protest candidates standing on anti-war or ecological platforms, while a tiny fraction even argue in support of Trump on the grounds that he's stated his willingness to end the war in Ukraine.

Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are neck and neck in the opinion polls. No-one can safely predict the outcome of the November poll. What is certain is that neither candidate poses any threat to the interests of America's ruling circles.

Pragmatism: a more realistic option

by Mark Blacklock

The Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, went Beijing for talks with the Chinese government last weekend.

Britain's top diplomat was not going to be able to reset his country's relations with China in a single, brief visit this past weekend, but, as the saying goes, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Foreign Secretary David Lammy seemed prepared to make that first move during his trip to Beijing. Only time will tell whether this tentative first step leads both countries to a welcome destination.

Lammy and his government stressed that Britain's critical attitudes toward China over policy issues like Russia and human rights have not changed. What appears to be different is the tone of engagement. While former prime minister Rishi Sunak had characterised China as an "epoch-defining" security challenge and the UK's "greatest state-based threat" economically, the new Labour government seems eager for positive interaction. Readouts after Lammy's meetings with Chinese officials conspicuously repeated the word "pragmatic".

During Lammy's trip, nobody expected London and Beijing to see eye-to-eye on every issue. In the past, Lammy had been frank in his criticisms of China, and he was never going to change his opinions just to ensure his trip run smoothly. But, he has also demonstrated pragmatism.

Ahead of Lammy's visit, there was somewhat an encouraging recognition of China's sensitivities regarding the key subject of the Taiwan question. His office in London had called for a journey to the UK by former Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen to be postponed. This small gesture made his job easier. Furthermore, this is a welcome acknowledgement of Beijing's position that the Taiwan question is a sensitive internal matter. It is

also encouraging that Britain has decided against joining its European Union and American allies in imposing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, which serves the interests of both China and Britain.

The UK's standpoint echoes former prime minister David Cameron's realistic approach which balanced differences with areas of agreement. This changed in 2020 when then prime minister Boris Johnson caved in to pressure from the USA and reversed decisions allowing the involvement of Huawei in the rollout of the UK's 5G network. Pretty soon, allegations of spying, human rights abuses and cyber-hacking were routinely aimed at China. Successive prime ministers engaged in ill-informed, clumsy anti-China rhetoric.

Britain's new Labour government seems to recognise that it's time for a course correction. In a political pamphlet Lammy wrote for the self-styled socialist organisation, the Fabian Society, in March last year, he observed that "we no longer live in a unipolar world defined by the UK's most important bilateral ally the United States. Instead, the world has become multipolar". In the document he was critical of China's policies, but he also talked of prioritizing diplomacy in Britain's engagement with the world.

He also said "our strategy will be based on 'three Cs': compete, challenge and, where we can, co-operate...we also

recognise it is important that the UK engages with China where it is in our interests to do so – whether on climate change, trade or global health". Now the Labour administration has commissioned a government-wide audit of the UK-China relationship.

Last week, Britain's Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds said the UK "needs more engagement with China". Rachel Reeves, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, is reportedly eyeing a trip to China early next year. China is one of the UK's largest trading partners, so it is hard to see how it can afford not to engage. The new UK government has spoken repeatedly about growth being the answer to Britain's current economic problems. This cannot be achieved without deeper engagement with China. If a diplomatic and political rapprochement leads to enhanced trade with China, it would be a welcome development for both countries.

During his meeting with Lammy, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, said "China-Britain relations... now stand at a new starting point". After some years of unpredictability, it's time for stability. The word "pragmatic" does not sound as glamorous as "golden" but perhaps it is more realistic.

Global Times



• Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi holds talks with David Lammy in Beijing.

Workers' Notes

Battle of the bureaucrats

by New Worker correspondent

In addition to fighting employers Unite is involved in a struggle with a former assistant general secretary. Howard Beckett has just lost an unfair dismissal claim against the union in the midst of an ongoing police investigation into claims of bribery, fraud and money-laundering at the union.

A Unite spokesman said Sharon Graham, who won the general secretaryship election in 2021 “has had to endure repeated attacks by those with much to lose since she launched these inquiries, from both inside and outside the union”. Unite added it that it had put safeguards in place to ensure “such things can never happen again”.

These allegations revolve around the £112 million of Unite’s money spent on a new combined regional HQ, a hotel and conference centre in Birmingham. This project was established under the previous general secretary Len McCluskey. The building is now said to be worth £29 million, so naturally questions have been asked about what happened to the other £83 million. The original cost was to be £7 million. Unite say costs rose due to changes as it was built and because they were strict in avoiding dodgy employment practices common in the construction industry.

The matter was a major issue in the 2021 general secretary election. Beckett had hoped to stand but his campaign faltered and he withdrew in favour of Steve Turner, the nominee from McCluskey’s United Left faction – another senior full-timer long tipped to be McCluskey’s successor. Sharon Graham, an independent senior full-time officer, won in a three-horse race beating Turner and the right-wing Starmerite candidate. She partly won by promising to get

to the bottom of the affair. The resulting report discovered that no less than £14 million did not feature “in the final accounts and it remaining a mystery as to how and when this figure had been assessed and then presumably paid” to a contractor.

Beckett (an ally of McCluskey), who was closely involved in the hotel project, dropped out of that contest in order to avoid splitting the (allegedly) left vote. Just before that contest this colourful character suggested that that Home Secretary Priti Patel should be deported.

Beckett was suspended from his union post in August 2022, four months after a police raid on his London flat, his Wirral home and Unite’s London HQ. During this period he had been off sick for almost 18 months before he resigned from Unite in January 2023.

Beckett was told his suspension was due to allegations of his “misleading” the union’s NEC in relation to the construction of the centre.

Unite welcomed the decision saying that: “The employment tribunal case involving the union’s former assistant general secretary Howard Beckett, which he lost on all counts, begins to allow the story to be told. We are also pursuing legal claims to recover money lost to the union and the general secretary has put safeguards in place to ensure that such things can never happen again.”

His lawyer is launching an appeal against the Employment Tribunal judgement and has started legal action against Unite, for breach of privacy, citing some critical remarks from the judge about Unite’s disciplinary procedures. On Monday Unite announced that the Serious Fraud Squad was investigating.

Whatever the final outcome, this more or less marks the end of what’s left of McCluskey’s old guard and the major beneficiaries will be Sharon Graham’s faction and the ‘moderate’ Starmerites who are most anxious to discuss the hotel affair.

The Housing Question

by New Worker correspondent

Two sets of housing workers are taking industrial action. In the Midlands, employees of West Midlands Citizen Housing association are up in arms over pay. Some 200 repair workers responsible for the maintenance of 30,000 homes are taking industrial action after rejecting a four per cent pay offer that would leave many of them still on the minimum wage.

Citizen Housing had a turnover of £192.6 million and an operating surplus of £48.3 million in 2023/24. At the same time its CEO, Kevin Rodgers, had to make to with a measly £16,000 rise that pushed his salary up to £280,000 a year – substantially above the average salary of £193,069 for UK housing association chiefs. (No wonder so many housing officials want to be out of council control). Unite also point out that the chief financial officer also earns over £200,000, far above the sector’s going rate.

Citizen Housing justifies keeping wages low because of a long overdue reward review scheme which began in May, but this is totally separate from annual pay negotiations.

The strike begins on Monday and continues on every Monday and Friday throughout November with the possibility of more if the issue is not resolved. Those areas most likely to be affected are Lee Bank and the Hillfields, Tile Hill, Spon End, Riley Square in Birmingham and Jadine Crescent in Coventry.

Sharon Harding, a Unite regional officer, says that: “The responsibility for the disruption caused to residents lies entirely at the door of Citizen Housing. It can easily afford to offer these workers a fair pay rise but is choosing not to.”

Further south, in the north London Borough of Haringey, maintenance and repair workers directly employed by the overwhelmingly Labour council walked out last Tuesday complaining that they haven’t had a pay rise in more than ten years despite the cost-of-living crisis and high inflation in recent years. Unite estimates that the lack of pay increases for productivity has left workers over £6,000 out of pocket.

In June 2022, when Haringey housing services came back in-

house, workers were told that there would be a pay review within the first six months. But that has not materialised. A brief strike took place earlier this year, to no effect, hence the continuous strike.

A ‘dodgy dossier’ of the department’s record has been compiled by Unite. It describes years of broken promises by the council to meaningfully negotiate with union members on pay, terms and conditions. The present dispute about pay and conditions could be easily solved with meaningful negotiations, say Unite. Instead “the council is wasting a huge amount of resources on poor quality sub-contractors and agency workers, who are potentially being used to break Unite’s strikes”.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham pointed out that: “This is a Labour run council behaving like Tories in disguise. It has decimated housing services and is now determined to treat our members – their key workers – with utter disdain.”

In particular, despite providing urgent and emergency repairs in residents properties during the pandemic, craft staff haven’t benefited from national pay increases since then.

Craft staff who are carrying out exactly the same work in 2024 as in 2014 will earn the same rates of pay as they did then.

Regional officer Danny Hogan also warned that: “Our members are at the end of their tether. They have taken strike action on and off since September 2023 to try and get the council to get their house in order. With no meaningful negotiations taking place our members have been left with little choice but to take continuous strike action that will see repairs and maintenance on council properties grind to a halt”.

A Targeted Strike

by New Worker correspondent

Perth & Kinross is better known for its grouse shooting than being the epicentre of the class struggle. However, Unison has changed that. All the county’s 50

primary schools, and two secondaries, have closed due to industrial action by janitors and classroom assistants who walked out on Monday and could remain so for a fortnight. Unison members rejected a pay offer of either 3.6 per cent or £1,292 in August which had been accepted by GMB and Unite.

The county has been targeted because it is the Holyrood constituency of Scotland’s First Minister, John Swinney.

Swinney moaned it was “totally unacceptable” for his constituents to be singled out for industrial action, claiming that “the pay deals being offered by CoSLA addressed the two issues that were put to local government by the three trade unions involved”. His further remark that “the finance secretary made clear that we’ve put more money into local government to help fund the deal and we have no more money to offer and that remains my position” suggests this will be a long dispute.

The council claimed it was not possible to complete risk assessments in advance because of the October holidays, so it had to close all primary schools and early years centres, and the situation will be reviewed daily.

Unison warns it will hold a national strike ballot if the dispute is not resolved. The value of their pay has fallen by 25 per cent over the last 14 years and reports of low pay means councils have faced problems recruiting staff for some roles.

One of the workers, Catherine MacIver, an early learning and childcare assistant at Riverside Primary School in Perth, informed *BBC Scotland News* that: “All of us are qualified, if not over-qualified. The teachers got their pay rise and we need to be valued. It’s about time we were recognised and paid more for what we’re doing.” She added: “We’re working with the youngest children in our society. We’re making sure they’re prepared for their next stage in learning and making sure they’re cared for and safe when they’re not with their parents – that’s a very big job we’ve got to do.”

Scottish teaching unions have used this tactic of targeting min-

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isterial constituencies with some success so hopefully Unison will force Swinney to see reason and have another look down the sides of the sofa. Other unions south of the border should have a look at this tactic.

Unison's Scottish local government committee chair Colette Hunter has accused Swinney of making "inflammatory accusations against hard-working council staff" and said he "has the power and the means to resolve this dispute and avoid school closures". She pointed out that: "This year, teachers got a pay rise of 4.6 per cent NHS staff received 5.5, MSPs received 6.7 and some councillors got a pay rise of 13.8."

All Vets Greedy and Small

by New Worker correspondent

Life as a vet is not entirely All Creatures Great and Small. In May of last year the British Veterinary Union (BVU), which is part of Unite, and Valley Vets in South Wales both announced that they signed a recognition agreement that was hailed as the first ever

in the UK with a private veterinary practice.

This agreement covered about 120 workers at sites in Cardiff, Caerphilly, Ystrad Mynach and Penttyrch. At the time BVU chair Suzanna Hudson-Cooke said "this agreement ... will serve as an inspiration to others in the veterinary industry who wish to do the same".

This optimism did not last. After recent industrial action Valley Vets have closed four of their sites affected by the strike.

In late June 94 per cent of Unite members at the practice voted on a 93 per cent turnout for strike action in protest against "poverty wages" while increasing charges for pet owners.

Valley Vets, which is owned by VetPartners, claimed it offered a 7.27 pay rise to its lowest paid staff, with less for those in better-remunerated roles. This, Unite said, was a "derisory real terms pay cut" with "80 per cent of support staff regularly having to borrow money to meet their basic living needs, and five per cent reporting use of food banks". These charges were rejected by Valley Vets, who claim their wages are the best in the business and they cannot afford to raise fees.

The strike began in mid-July initially for 15 days, which was later extended until the end of August. "Minimal staffing levels" were maintained throughout the strike to handle acute emergency

cases.

According to Unite, high fees are already causing clients to reject treatment and in some cases pets are being euthanised even when treatment is likely to be successful.

At the same time VetPartners is gobbling up practices across the UK. A Competition and Markets Authority investigation is presently underway into the sector which has seen many small private practices being bought up. Many respondents seem to confirm Unite's charges. The CMA's investigation is focusing on "multiple concerns" about the domination of the veterinary market by the big six. Among these concerns was that acquisition sprees and investment mean corporations have an incentive to "offer and promote highly sophisticated treatments".

Private equity firm VetPartners bought Valley Vets in April 2017 but kept the old name and staff. In 1999 the Blair Government changed the law that only qualified and licensed vets could own a veterinary practice, meaning that vets tended to be independent practices or in small local chains. In recent years the old model has been greatly reduced. In 2013, just 10 per cent of vet practices were owned by the "Big Six" – Pets at Home, CVS Group, IVC, Linnaeus, VetPartners and Medivet. Today it is 60 per cent. Laboratories,

referral centres, crematoriums and veterinary nursing schools are all being snapped up. VetPartners owns 650 sites in the UK and Europe and is in turn owned by the private equity firm BC Partners, which has assets of £138 billion. Vet Partners alone is worth three billion with a £553 million profit in 2023.

This commercialisation of the veterinary services means that animals can now get MRIs and cancer treatment from these big companies, but at a cost. Valley Vets staff report having to see new animals every 15 to 20 minutes for hours on end. This is stressful and increases the chances mistakes such as overdoses.

In the case of Valley Vets, the BVU say they have put fees up by a quarter. As a result, treatments often cost more than pets are insured for. An anonymous Valley Vets worker reported that BVU throws the book at vets who do not bill for the tiniest thing.

Another dodge by Valleys is referring pets for testing at another service owned by their parent company, a link so carefully disguised that even vets do not know about it.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic some 3.2 million more British households started keeping pets, resulting in 57 per cent having an animal to look after, so the market has grown considerably.

BVU's leader notes that

"when the practice is owned by a veterinary professional, decision-making is about the reinvestment of profit centres on clinical matters", Hudson-Cooke said. "When your company is owned by private equity, reinvestments are made on the basis of generating more profit."

However last week BVU closed four of the Valleys Vets surgeries. Unite accused bosses of doing so "pour encourage les autres", as Voltaire put it, to discourage workers at its other 400 sites in Britain from getting uppity – although VetPartners claimed the closures were necessary because of the long-term shortages of vets.

Despite the closure the union's regional officer, Paul Seppman, optimistically said that: "Valley Vets actions have strengthened the resolve of our members and disgusted Vets Partners staff across the country. The British Veterinary Union is one of Unite's fastest growing memberships. It is clear the fight against Vet Partners abhorrent business practices is not going to stop, it is going to spread."

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

22nd October 2004

TONY BLAIR is facing yet another backbench rebellion after 40 Labour MPs signed a motion calling for a full Commons debate and vote before he responds to US demands to redeploy up to 1,000 British troops from the south of Iraq to the more dangerous Baghdad area.

The USA claims the troops are needed to fill a gap temporarily as they divert their own troops to pound the resistance town of Fallujah yet again.

But many have already seen through the spin. Morale among the US troops is at rock

bottom. Twenty months after they thought they had subdued the Iraqi people, many major towns are now entirely in the hands of the Iraqi resistance. And the Americans are facing steadily mounting casualties with two or three deaths every day.

Last week the US military admitted that 17 soldiers were under investigation for refusing to operate a fuel convoy because of safety fears.

The soldiers, based north of Baghdad, told their family members they thought the convoy, bound for Taji, was a suicide mission. They cited the poor condition of their vehicles and the absence of ground and air support for the convoy. The US army claims this is the first major breakdown of discipline over safety issues.

But reports like this are having a bad impact on Bush's electoral hopes in the two weeks before the presidential election. It is becoming clearer and clearer that the majority of US troops in Iraq just want to

go home and that the Iraqis want them to go home.

One defence source said: "It was decided and virtually underway," and said the Government's claim that no decision had been made was "nonsense". "I think there is an issue over the extent to which they have misled Parliament," he added.

This will increase unease among the many back benchers who voted for the illegal invasion of Iraq in March 2003 on the basis of scares about weapons of mass destruction based, they now know, on lies and deception.

Paul Farrelly, the MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, is one of them. Last week he said: "There is no way we should give this dangerous American any sort of encouragement to inflict the sort of civilian casualties that we have already seen in Fallujah. We should instead be praying that he leaves office soon."

Which way forward for the communists following the election?

That was the question posed at a seminar in London this month. The 30th anniversary of the start of the dialogue between the NCP and the RCPB (ML) was appropriately marked by the opening of a discussion that both parties believe needs to be taken throughout the labour movement. NCP leader Andy Brooks, who chaired the meeting at the NCP Centre, welcomed everyone to the seminar at the Sid French library or by video link and the discussion was opened by Michael Chant, the RCPB (ML) leader. The theme was Tasks of the Communists in the Light of the July 2024 General Election, and this is Michael's contribution to the discussion.

We are taking up these themes as fraternal parties who see the need for the unity of the communist movement. It seems important to remind ourselves of this to set the context of such joint initiatives as this seminar, which is the communist equivalent of modern scientists presenting seminar papers and opening the way to sorting out the problems in their field so as to accord with reality.

We took up this cause in 1994, and so have 30 years of discussion between NCP and RCPB(ML) under our belt, and our first point of contact was between myself and Comrade Andy and we have kept our relations vital since that time. When I spoke at the funeral of Eric Trevett, who was General Secretary of NCP from 1979 to 1995, and subsequently its President until his passing in 2014, I mentioned on behalf of RCPB(ML) that "this work to build anew the communist movement which had its common roots in the anti-revisionist movement of the 1970s was our common aspiration, and our two Parties have made strenuous efforts to make this aspiration a reality". And in our message of condolence, we said "our two Parties continue to make headway



• Andy Brooks and Michael Chant speaking in solidarity with Ukrainian anti-fascists in 2014.

in developing our unity, discussing all the questions of the strategy and tactics which a communist party must adopt in the 21st Century, and beginning to pay attention together to the theoretical work without which the revolutionary movement cannot take full shape. To honour Eric's memory, let us continue to overcome the obstacles which the bourgeoisie places in the path of building the unity of the communist and workers' movement."

Besides giving messages on important anniversaries, such as those of the founding of the NCP, and attending each other's Con-

gresses and conferences, we have continued the efforts to make our aspirations a reality. We have even issued joint statements, such as on the Anglo-US aggression against Afghanistan, on Kashmir, against war on Iraq and in support of the Palestinian people, and in 2003 giving the call for an anti-war government. Particularly we have worked together in Friends of Korea in building friendship with the DPR Korea. Among the events which have taken place are the joint seminars On the Agenda for the Working Class in 2014, and What it means to be a communist—new and rev-

olutionary today in 2022.

In this last seminar, I opened by saying "taking the topic at face value, and giving an answer in a nutshell, one could say to be a communist means seeing the face of the New in the crisis of the Old, and working for the necessary change, for the transformation of the Old into the New, with revolutionary sweep.

"Further, one cannot conceive of being a communist without membership of a communist party, a modern type of party which mobilises and organises the people to defend their own interests, collective, individual and the general

interests of society.

"And, as both propositions imply, the communist party takes up the problems of the day, whether national or international, with the spirit of proletarian internationalism, in order to provide solutions and to advance the progress of society".

So this is all by way of introduction and setting the scene on the independent programme of the working class.

There are the overall tasks of the communists in this period of the past 30 years, and there is the experience of the communist and workers' movement in the light of the general election, which is not so decisive in itself. But we can use it to say, this is a confirmation of what are the tasks of the communists. We can use it to ask, what is the call of history that the communists must take up. This, in a word, is to leave the Old behind, renovate our thinking and continue to inspire, organise and set the line of march for the working class as the detachment in Britain of the international communist movement.

When the tasks of the communist and workers' movement was addressed in

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“Discussion”, in 1994, the document which began the discussions between our two parties, and which set the tone for this period of history, it was said:

On the role of communist parties: While the basic doctrine of communism remains the same, it is quite clear that the communist movement has a lot of work to do in terms of elaborating a theory and line based on the circumstances within which each party finds itself. It has to be understood that while the communist movement has historically been guided by the doctrine of communism of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in its general form, the working class has always had to work out the particularities based on the specifics of its own situation. The entire economic, political and philosophical basis for a new system has to be elaborated as an integral part of the workers’ movement. The modern proletariat needs its consciousness and the communist parties have to be in a position to provide it.

What kind of party is necessary at this time?

This question must be answered by keeping as a constant that it will be a communist party, it will be revolutionary and it will be based on democratic centralism. The modern feature which will be added in a demonstrative way is that it will not come to power itself or as the representative of the working class. It will be the instrument

of bringing the working class into power to lead the people to establish the broadest possible democracy.

The sharpest class struggle is taking place on the question of what kind of democracy and what kind of system should be established in various countries. Is there a party which can exploit this situation in favour of the working

tions, work extremely hard to extricate themselves from that narrow-mindedness, that myopia, which has been imposed as a way of life. They have to present themselves as having relevance to modern society. There is a space for communism.

At this time, unless minds like Marx, so to speak, exist who revo-

When I appeared at the Undercover Policing Inquiry, along with Kate Hudson and Lindsey German, I had to explain to the inquiry that a Marxist-Leninist party had its various fronts of work, that communism represents the modern high road of civilisation and enlightenment, and that it was not characterised by

and youth setting the example themselves. Ways and means must be facilitated so that the working class and people can speak in their own name, and, while emphasising that the warmongers and neo-liberals in this so-called “representative democracy” do not speak in their name, use this as the transformation to be-

of getting together with one’s peers to discuss the challenges the country faces and speaking out in one’s own name on all matters of concern. It has to be said that illusions about the Labour Party changing the situation in favour of the people have reduced drastically since the days of Tony Blair. For working people to get together and give solutions for changing the direction of the economy and society at all levels is the necessity at this stage of history.

All of the developments centring around the July general election show the untenable state of affairs in the Parliament and the urgent need for democratic renewal – that working people provide for themselves the occasions and the means to speak in their own name, make their views known, organise to see that their demands are met and by empowering themselves provide a pro-social alternative to cartel parties and the private and supranational interests they represent. In our view, the political situation has deteriorated so that these parties are appendages of the state, rather than mass parties where members set the policy and programme and de-



• Palestinian solidarity in London.

class and open the path to the progress of the society?

On the question of modern definitions on the basis of which solutions to having fidelity to the relations between humans and humans, and humans and nature, are to be found: Today the struggle has to be directed against all the theories of the liberal bourgeoisie, all of whom are essentially Tories. It has to be directed against those who want to divert the communist movement and working-class movement away from its task. All parties have to, within their condi-

tionise social science within the present circumstances, who are travelling on the high road of civilisation, there will be no revolutionary movement. Such a role belongs at this time to political parties and not to individuals alone.

In Britain where the greatest crisis in political theory exists, the bourgeoisie will not want to see and will not respond to those who would want to establish a democratic society in modern terms. A communist party cannot remain aloof from waging the most vigorous struggle to isolate the bourgeoisie.

the violence and public disorder with which the capitalist state tries to blacken its name. It is characterised by the mass line, not the obsession with recruiting members. Following which the undercover officer who had tried to infiltrate our Party in the early 1980s was obliged to say that while undercover he had felt he was out of his depth and spoke as little as possible for fear he would blow his cover.

Now, the debasement of politics by the cartel parties puts the need to raise the level of political discourse on the agenda by workers, women

coming empowered.

Communists have a duty to call on workers to not permit the debasement of politics and nor should they drop out in disgust. Rather, the ruling class must not be given free rein to commit crimes. This is what happens when they manage to disorient the working class and people on matters related to the economy, sovereignty, war and peace or divide them on a racist basis by blaming immigrants for all the social ills plaguing the capitalist society and making them targets of attack. Communists emphasise and organise for the importance

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termine the conduct of their own affairs. This is the meaning of what we refer to as cartel parties, which are wedded to the arrangements in society whereby the people are marginalised from political life and institutions. This is the meaning of the battle of democracy, of fighting for democratic renewal.

It is true that the results of the July 2024 elections saw a move towards independent candidates and smaller parties. In this context, it is a moot point whether an official coalition of small parties or independent candidates would transform the Commons proceedings in favour of the people, or would confer an illusory legitimacy on the party system and not challenge the present party-centric approach to the conduct of political affairs. The issue is to encourage the electorate to find new forms in the battle of democracy and encourage



• Jeremy Corbyn with his supporters during the election campaign.

them to participate in setting the political and other agendas, based on their own experience, transforming the conception of a political party into one which truly links the electorate with governance, not simply as voting machines which resolve nothing. It is also true that the actions of the working class in fighting for their rights and

interests make a significant difference, and that forces the cartel parties, notably the Labour Party, to take notice to attempt to get the workers' movement onside. But it can also be looked at the other way, in that the Labour Party programme, historically of social democracy, but now of a cartel party arm of the state in its pro-war, pro-business,

anti-social outlook and programme, feeds its way into the workers' movement. Nevertheless, that same workers' movement is showing evidence of its independent working class stands, such as the TUC's stand for Palestine, and the rejection of the neo-liberal austerity measures.

In our way of thinking, as I stressed earlier, communists at this time have to heed the call of history and show imagination in envisioning the line of march, and calling the working class and people to leave the Old behind. This means bringing the organising work on a par with the political work that we take up.

What brings about wars of destruction, of genocide? What brings about droughts, climate crises, famines, mass migrations of people escaping untenable conditions? Who controls the decision-making and who the decisions benefit are of course key. But this means that it is the power structures which are characteristic of these crises, not right or wrong poli-

cies as such. It is the human factor/social consciousness that is decisive, the working people speaking out on their own behalf, and the task of the communists is to organise to bring this into play, in terms of the class struggle which is being waged, the battle for democracy and democratic rights. As we conclude our document, There Is A Way Out of the Crisis, which is included in the first issue of Discussion, we strive to unite all people in a storm against "the cuts", working togeth-

er with all for the empowerment of the people and for the creation of a socialist society!

Our conclusion is that the cutting edge of our work is the fight for an Anti-War Government. This has only been confirmed with the election of Starmer who is for further integration into the US/NATO war machine and virulently pro-Israel and against the resistance which the government labels as terrorism. This is not to say that we do not include Labour MPs in campaigns we engage in, particularly in the anti-war and pro-social movements. But the crucial issue is who makes the decisions on war and peace. In this respect, the conception of an Anti-War Government is not simply that within the status quo you have a government which takes an anti-war stand. It prepares the way for bringing about a society and state arrangements that embody a modern democratic personality.

We could sum up our strategic goal in this period as: For a Socialist Britain with an Anti-War Government!

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LETTERS

Dear Comrades

Now that the British security service MI5 (Military Intelligence 5) and MI6 (the overseas secret intelligence service) have been dragged out of the darkness into the light and many of their secrets exposed, the 'security' services can be analysed with a degree of confidence. It is an amazing tale, full of convoluted plots and intrigue, blunders and "triumphs", but it is also a story that poses a number of serious questions about the ultimate worth of these intelligence bureaucracies. For example, just how trustworthy is the intelligence they have provided over the years? And have they tended to pursue their own interests – and their own political line – independently of the government they are meant to serve? Could it be that their secrecy is a cloak for incompetence and illegality?

One thing is certain however, the truth is always glaringly elusive in their secretive world. They are the enemy within.

A McKerl
Fife

Dear Comrades

The People's Republic of China's aim of making it the world leader in the manufacture of semi-conductors under the 'Made in China 2025' plan, has largely been achieved despite far reaching US sanctions to try and prevent it. They can now produce memory chip density at a level that has never been done anywhere else before.

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

Processor chip development is currently on a par with what 'western' companies produce and will soon surpass it.

The first British Foreign Secretary to visit China in five years, David Lammy, will no doubt do the usual bidding for his US masters by criticising their stance in relation to not condemning Russia over Ukraine. He will also bang on about mythical human rights abuses and Hong Kong. However, the main purpose of his visit will be to try and restore relations which were strained under the last Tory administration. Developing closer economic ties is the only sensible approach especially as the European Union has taken the reckless decision to put up trade barriers to China over electric vehicles.

How the EU is supposed to encourage the transition away from fossil fuels to electrification by making EV's more expensive is baffling especially when many German auto-makers were against the tariffs. The accusation made that Chinese car manufacturers are unfairly subsidised by their government is utter nonsense. The price advantage comes from vertical integration of supply chains and economy of scale.

Thankfully the UK is no longer in the EU and the Labour government made a commitment to roll back the target date for stopping the sale of ICE (internal combustion engine) cars in the UK from 2035 to 2030, this will be made all the more easier if car purchasers are encouraged by affordability and a good charging infrastructure. China can help with that so let's encourage trade with them.

Mark Z Campey
North Yorkshire

Dear Comrades

Rich deposits of iron ore

located in the Kursk and Belgorod regions of Russia are responsible for what is known as the Kursk Magnetic Anomaly. Compass readings in the area are distorted by the large amount of magnetic minerals in the soil. In Soviet times abundant iron ore and coal in the Donets Basin ensured rapid industrial development for the important region.

During the Second World War the area around Kursk witnessed the largest ever tank battle in history. In what would be their last blitzkrieg offensive, Nazi Germany launched Operation Citadel, a plan to finally wipe out the Red Army. It would be an attempt to regain the initiative following their crushing defeat at Stalingrad. Hitler's dreams of conquest however were shattered when the Soviets were able to win a great victory. The Battle of Kursk was won but with great sacrifice. Over 800,000 Soviet soldiers became casualties as they took part in the heroic feat to defeat the Nazis. Russia will never forget those brave men and women who gave their lives at Kursk.

Who could ever have imagined that 81 years later Russia would have to fight once again to liberate the Kursk region from fascist invaders in German tanks. Again they are resisting the last desperate efforts of a regime facing defeat. And once again they are winning the battle. Ukraine's main objective was to capture the Kursk Nuclear Power Station. Over an 11-week period the abortive incursion has seen Ukraine and its western mercenaries suffer 25,000 casualties, lose 170 tanks and 1,000 armoured fighting vehicles.

Imperialism's Project Ukraine has failed. Their strategy to expand NATO into the Volga basin and the Caucasus is being defeated. With a NATO base in Sevastopol Imperialism would have been able to

spread death and destruction to Russia and Central Asia and pose a serious threat to China. These are the real reasons behind the Ukraine tragedy. These are the facts that the fake left at the *Morning Star* wishes to keep from its readers.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Friends

After a year of genocide – the tapestry of which has been woven with the thread of countless massacres – many of us thought the limits of the barbarity being unleashed by Israel upon Palestinians had been reached. But in the past few days, Israel's renewed assault upon Palestinians in the north of Gaza, has, if it is conceivable, passed new thresholds of horror.

The footage of 20-year-old Shaaban Ahmed Al-Dalu burning alive whilst still attached to an IV unit, after Israel bombed Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital has filled all of us with renewed pain and rage. A rage also fuelled by the ongoing responses of our political leaders. Alongside its relentless and brutal military assault, Israel has again cut off aid supplies, continued to escalate its violence into Lebanon killing thousands, and in the past few days has launched attacks on UN bases. And still it is granted impunity by the British government.

This week, Keir Starmer, pressed in Parliament again to end all arms sales, stated he would not impede Israel's right to defend itself. The reality of course is that no state has the right to use force to impose a military occupation, sustain a system of apartheid, and unleash a genocide. David Lammy, whilst refusing to sanction Israel as it continues to commit grave violations of international law, instead imposed fresh sanctions upon Iran.

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

UNTIL APRIL 2025

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

SAT 26 OCT

Marx Memorial Library: Second-Hand Book Sale. 11:00, MML 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.

SAT 26 OCT

Working Class Movement Library: Open Archive Day – Black Radical History. 10:00–14:00 at WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

SAT 26 OCT

Stand Up to Racism: Stop Tommy Robinson, Stop the Far Right. National Demonstration. 11.30am in Piccadilly (between Regent Street and St James), London W1J 9LL. NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE.

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.

TUE 29 OCT

Socialist History Society: Nikolay Sarkisyan on Revolutionary museums in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union before and after 1917. 19:00, Online lecture, book on SHS website.

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.

THUR 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

Keep Our NHS Public: SOS NHS National conference. 10:00, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BB. Register on KONHSP website.

SAT 2 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Stop the Genocide in Gaza. National Demonstration, Central London. 12:00 details TBA.

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.

THUR 7 NOV

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

THUR 7 NOV

Korean Friendship Association: 'Defend People's Korea against imperialists threats and lies and threats!' 19:00, The Casa, 29 Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BQ.

SAT 9 NOV

International Brigade Memorial Trust: Discussion on 'Public support and governmental obstruction: differing British responses to the struggle of the Spanish Republic'. 14:00–15:30. MML in person and online. Book on IBMT website.

SAT 9 NOV

Society for the Study of Labour History: Natalie Thomlinson, Remembering the 1984–85 Miners Strike in popular memory. 14:00, Huddersfield. Register on SSLH website.

THUR 14 NOV

Palmusic UK: 10th Anniversary concert for young Palestinian musicians. 19:00, Southwark Cathedral, London Bridge, London SE1 9DA. Book on Palmusic website.

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

October saw five local by-elections in Scotland. On the first Thursday of the month two by-elections in the nationalist stronghold of Dundee saw the SNP maintain their control of the city council when they retained one seat and won another from Labour.

The SNP held on to the Starthmartine ward after the incumbent, who was Leader of the Council stood down at the ripe old age of 36. The 22.3 per turnout saw the SNP win after six rounds of counting despite them losing a huge chunk of their first preference votes while the Liberal Democrats pushed Labour into third place by a single vote. In line with SNP tradition the new Leader is the father of the

SNP's Westminster group leader.

In next-door Lochlee, the contest caused by the death of the Labour incumbent, saw the SNP secure an unexpected victory on a slightly smaller turnout and after seven counts to secure a majority. The local Labour Party blamed the results on the Winter Fuel Payment and Sir Keir Starmer's love of freebies. George Galloway, whose political career started on the banks of the beautiful silvery Tay, will, however, be disappointed. His latest party came last with 143 below the 178 for Alba.

The next week the reverse happened at two by-elections in North Lanarkshire, both caused by Labour councillors abandoning the delights of Motherwell Civic Centre for the Palace of Westminster. That must have been a difficult choice for them...

Labour held both seats on very low polls, (17.9 and 15.8) per cent, the Winter Fuel Payment issue seemingly forgotten. While North Lanarkshire was one of the four council areas to vote Yes in 2014, the activities of the local councillors have brought the nationalist cause into disrepute. Indeed, on the first round of voting in Forissat ward, Progressive Change North Lanarkshire, formed by eight dissent SNP councillors, pushed their old party into third place. True to the local Orange traditions, the British Unionist Party (which has its only councillor in the ward) secured nearly double the Tory vote and came a poor fourth.

In the other ward, Mosend & Holytown, Labour secured victory narrowly defeating the SNP, with second preferences securing victory. Reform came in a distant third with more than double the Tory vote.

Finally, Falkirk South saw a by-election triggered by the deputy leader of the Labour group becoming an MP. In a 24.9 per cent turnout Labour retained the seat on a reduced percentage, despite the SNP securing the most first preferences, before everyone else ganged up against them. The Tories lost almost half their vote, mostly to a new Reform candidate. All in all, Labour's performance in recent Scottish by-elections is much better than south of the border but is nothing to boast about in what ought to be a honeymoon period. November sees no fewer than 15 similar contests across Scotland which will give us more food for thought.

Revolving Doors

Another sign of confidence in the bright future of the SNP has been made by their CEO, Murray Foote, who resigned after just 14 months in post after the previous holder stood down under a £660,000 cloud. This was Foote's second departure from the SNP.

For four years from 2019 he was the SNP's head of communications and research. His March 2023 resignation was the result of him criticising the media for reporting stories about the SNP's 30,000 membership decline which turned out to be perfectly true, leaving him with egg on his face. This time he states that he "could not make the necessary personal commitment" to leading a reorganisation of the party after losing most of their MPs.

Although he promised to stay on until a successor was found, the SNP speedily found an interim

replacement: the former Leader of Falkirk Council who helpfully had just lost the Falkirk by-election, so it looks as though they changed the locks on the HQ doors.

Miscellanea

The Scottish Parliament is currently having one of its briefer recesses, which must come as a relief to SNP ministers facing any awkward questions about matters under their charge.

One of these is yet another problem with the famous ferries. The most advanced ship, the Glen Sannox, which has actually undergone sea trials has been found to need new cables and pipes due to rusting before it has taken a single paying passenger on board. The replacements are coming from its twin, which will obviously cause yet further delay. It is increasing unlikely that the second ship will ever see service, with some nautical experts suggesting the best use of it will be for Royal Navy target practice.

Meanwhile in death Alex Salmond continues to excite emotions from hagiography to pure hatred. As he died in North Macedonia, he has been compared with ancient local man Alexander the Great. The delays in getting him back to Scotland enraged his admirers who denounced the British state for not flying him back on an RAF jet, while the Scottish Parliament authorities were condemned for removing tributes to him on the grounds that gales were expected. It was front page news that his successor had allegedly been banned from his funeral.

It is sad to report that monopoly capitalism has scored a victory in north-west Scotland. Tesco have won the battle (reported on 11th October) to open their Stornoway store on the Lord's Day, the only branch in Britain not doing so already. Over 1,800 people, out of an island pop-

ulation of 20,000 signed a petition to no avail. We await further judgement from the islanders and Above before making any further comment.

A Tale of Two Cities

Scotland has some of the lowest life expectancy rates in Europe. In some parts of Glasgow people receive a congratulatory card from the King to anyone making it to pension age. On one side of the Glasgow railway tracks the life expectancy is 83 years, but next door it is a mere 65.4 years.

Being unable to afford a healthy diet, is of course one of the main reasons for this state of affairs, along with the failure of people to head the message of the long defunct temperance movement. Between 2018 and 2022 precisely 3,895 under 18-year-olds were admitted to hospital suffering from malnutrition in the Greater Glasgow health board area.

None of that will be a great worry to the residents of the posh Stockbridge area of Edinburgh. They can now pop into the trendy new Sip & Bark restaurant where a modest fixed-price supper comes in at £35 for humans (before drinks), but for an extra tenner their dog can be fed on "a starter of home-baked peanut biscuits, meatballs with green beans and heritage carrots, followed by a dessert of hand-made peanut butter and banana cupcake". This will doubtless bring great joy to those grateful for a tin of carrots from the foodbank.

This meal can be "washed down with a selection of doggy drinks, including an alcohol-free glass of Posh Pooch Tailwagger Creek White Wine, flavoured with elderflower, linden blossom and ginseng". That sounds far better than the popular sugar-laden beverages which are described as "juice" in takeaway menus for humans...

...continued from page 8

Our task is to channel the rage we all feel into escalated actions, as demanded this week by our core Palestinian partners within the BDS boycott movement. Over the next few weeks, we will be ramping up all of our campaigning.

On Saturday 2nd November, we will be marching again in London on the 21st National March since October 2023.

On Saturday 16th November we will be holding a national day of actions as part of our Boycott Barclays campaign with pickets and sit-ins organised in towns across Britain. This will be followed on 21st November by the next Barclays account closure day. To-date, over 4,000 people have closed accounts as part of these actions.

Finally on 28th November we have called the

latest workplace day of action, asking people to stage protests and walkouts in workplaces across the country.

The movement we have built here in the UK over the past year is of historical size and strength. Globally, Israel is becoming increasingly isolated, but it still retains the support of Western powers particularly the US and the British government. Our response has to be to escalate, to continue to build, and to use every lever of power at our disposal to bring an end to all of the complicity of the government, public bodies and companies in the depraved barbarity we are seeing livestreamed across all of our screens.

Ben Jamal
Director
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
London

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Stop the Genocide!

by Theo Russell

Tens of thousands of people across England, Wales and Scotland took to the streets last Saturday in support of the demands to Stop the Genocide, Hands Off Lebanon and Don't Attack Iran.

Over 30,000 people packed London's Trafalgar Square, carrying Palestinian and Lebanese flags. One of the speakers from the plinth beneath Nelson's Column pointed out that current opinion polls show that only five per cent of British citizens are opposed to an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, highlighting the huge gulf between



the British people and the government – or to be specific, between the British people, the Labour and Conservative parties and the Unionist parties in the north of Ireland. All the other parties with members

of the UK's four parliaments have been calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire for many months now.

This is how Britain's ruling class blatantly defies the overwhelming will of the British people

and makes a mockery of Britain's much vaunted 'democracy'.

People in Britain and around the world find it incredible that Israel has committed crimes under the Geneva Conventions – the indiscriminate tar-

geting and collective punishment of civilians – for over a year with impunity. Now we see Israel killing thousands of civilians throughout Lebanon, a country not able to defend itself, and issuing diktats to

residents ordering them to move or be bombed, with no condemnation from the leading Western countries.

More and more people are seeing the contradictions between Western outrage against actions by the Russian military in Ukraine and the free pass given to Israel to murder and starve civilians and bomb any country in the Middle East with no international mandate whatsoever.

And of course no politician or mainstream Western journalists is ever allowed to say a word about the Banderite Ukrainian junta's military deliberately targeting civilians with missile attacks.

A case for two wheels

by Alex Reeves

For some, the daily commute is nothing but a chore, for me it's a welcome start to the day, an opportunity to clear my head and switch off before the working day begins – as long as I beat the 7am rush. I don't have a chauffeur, no fancy SUV to boost my social status, not even a nicely air-conditioned car for that matter. In fact, if it were up to me I'd throw every single non-essential four-wheeled vehicle off Nhật Tân Bridge.

Of course, I'm talking about the thrill of a motorcycle. Be it an automatic scooter or a gas-guzzling adventure bike, the world moving beside me and the challenge of navigating the city is as connecting as a fresh bowl of noodles on

the side of the road. It's a quintessential part of life here, the city is built for it and with the right mindset it can be a truly freeing experience.

Navigating Hà Nội's heartbeat on two wheels has not only revolutionised my daily routine; it's boosted my confidence. Back home, the thought of owning a

vehicle never appealed to me. While my friends were getting their first cars and my petrol-head uncle was telling me about his latest project, I drifted out of the conversation. Partly scared by a childhood quad bike crash and mostly unimpressed by the experience of driving, even lessons did nothing to

increase my intrigue.

That was until Vietnam. Motorbikes were no longer 'two-wheeled death machines' but a ticket to freedom. Back home, my sense of direction was laughable. Any motorist pulling up to ask me for directions was destined only for disappointment. Now, I understand the feeling

of knowing somewhere like the back of your hand, it's empowering.

Venturing beyond the city on my bike has deepened my connection with Vietnam. From the winding mountain paths in the north and cool climates through the highlands to the sun-kissed southern coasts. Road trips where you pull into a town for an indefinite number of days and leave when you wish. They feel like they are the main characters in an unfolding adventure, far removed from the routine of the office.

The process of maintaining a bike, from tracking down parts to finding the right mechanic, has become part of the fun. Not to mention the feeling of being at one with the city as you move with the current of the traffic as though you are but one

in a school of mechanical fish.

For those still contemplating whether to ride, go for it. Start small, perhaps with a lesson or a quiet night ride. What seemed unattainable at best and financial suicide at worst back home, is surprisingly affordable, another privilege of life here that's not to be missed.

Converting a licence from home is relatively pain-free compared to other bureaucratic hurdles and leaves you fully insured in case of an accident. Follow the laws of the land and the rules of the road – immerse yourself in Vietnam. Riding a motorbike here isn't just about transportation; it's about discovering a deeper layer of this fascinating country.



Lenin's Nature Reserves – a great Soviet achievement

by Graham Holton

The Soviet Union was a cradle of environmentalism, a global pioneer in nature conservation. Two days after taking power in the October 1917 Revolution Lenin's government issued the decree On Land, declaring all forests, waters, and sub-soil minerals to be the property of the state. On 14th May 1918 the government enacted the On Forests law that created a Central Administration of Forests of the Republic to manage the forests on the basis of planned reforestation and sustained yield. Forests were divided into an exploitable sector and a protected sector, which included erosion control, protection of water basins, and the preservation of “mon-



• The great Soviet plan for nature.

uments of nature”. In January 1919, after listening to conservationists, Lenin proposed that the ecologists should draw up a general decree on conservation to be applied throughout the USSR. Nikolai Podyapolski discussed with Lenin the creation

of a new zapovednik (nature sanctuary), which Lenin agreed was of “urgent value”. In 1920 the first national zapovednik was created, the first protected territory created by a government exclusively for the scientific study of nature. In 1921 Lenin signed into law, On the Protection of Monuments of Nature, Gardens and Parks. Under Lenin significant areas of nature were protected across the continent and the USSR began the most audacious programme in nature conservation in the 20th Century.

In 1921 Lenin argued that “in order to protect the sources of our resources, we must act in accordance with scientific-technical laws. For example, if the subject is the renting out of forests we must see to it that the forestry industry conducts itself properly. If we are talking about oil, then we must organise against spillage. This, it is necessary to enforce adherence to scientific-technical laws and to the principle of rational

exploitation”. The zapovedniks were far more ambitious than comparable acts signed in the USA, to create the National

the areas throughout the 1920s under Joseph Stalin. By late 1934 the zapovedniks had achieved what Lenin had envisioned. Comrade S Veitsman said before the Committee for Zapovedniki that a “zapovedniki of a new type” would serve as “models of what the creative will of man can do with nature under socialism ... [ahead beckoned] the questions of the restoration and development of climate and of the hydrological regime, especially in resort areas, questions of drought control, flood control, and of combating sukhovei and other phenomena that imperil the harvest”, In 1948 the ambitious programme

the world's highest level of protection, under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's designation of “strict nature reserves.” Visitors are refused entry to avoid human impact. During the Cold War the achievements of the USSR were ignored or criticised. What the Soviet Union achieved was to provide conditions to preserve intact natural ecosystems. The zapovedniks are the only large system of protected areas created primarily for this purpose. The long-term monitoring of nature in zapovedniks has provided a datum point for assessing the impact of climate change and anthropogenic pressures on natural ecosystems.



• A walk on the wild side – an Amur Tiger in Siberia.

Park Service in the Department of the Interior, responsible for the protection of thirty-five national parks and monuments. After Lenin's death, there was pressure to remove the protected status of the zapovedniks and adapt a capitalist system to produce profit rather than serve human needs. The Soviet agencies withstood these pressures and extended

was named the Stalin Plan for the Great Transformation of Nature. By the 1950s, 121,406 square kilometres from the Caucasus mountains to the volcanoes of Kamchatka were set aside in 128 reserves. The Barguzinsky nature reserve consists of 103 zapovedniks that protect 275,186 sq km of Russia. Soviet zapovedniks provided

More recently, Russia has suggested a well-funded global network of zapovedniks would allow a far better understanding of anthropogenic pressures on the world's ecosystems, such as the global collapse of many bird populations. So far few have listened. Guardian Australian communist weekly



• The Declaration on Land.

Deepening ties for a Multipolar World Order

The XVI BRICS Summit kicked off in Kazan, Russia on Tuesday with the arrival of global leaders, and President Putin's high-level meetings with several of them.

Before the summit's formal kick-off, Putin welcomed UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in the Kremlin, where they reaffirmed the "historical and strategic" nature of their relationship. And on the opening day Putin held discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The co-operation between Moscow and Beijing is at its peak, with both leaders consistently referring to each other as "dear friends" in their talks.

Putin stressed that the multi-faceted co-operation between Russia and China is based on equality, is mutually beneficial and free from opportunism, serving as a model in today's world. Both countries are successfully implementing joint projects in energy, industry, high technology, transport and agriculture.

Notably, despite negative external factors, trade



• Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin at the summit.

turnover increased by 4.5 per cent from January to August, maintaining its positive upward trend. Putin highlighted that Moscow and Beijing's collaboration on international issues acts as a stabilizing factor on the global stage.

"We intend to continue enhancing co-ordination on all multilateral platforms to ensure global security and a just world order," he asserted.

Putin also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasizing that Russian-Indian relations represent a "particularly privileged strategic partnership" that continues to actively evolve.

Putin and Modi's discussions focused on legislative cooperation, growing trade and major projects, including India's decision to open a consulate in Kazan.

Prime Minister Modi reiterated the importance of resolving the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine through peaceful means, expressing India's commitment to establishing stability.

The relationship with South Africa remains strong, with President Cyril Ramaphosa noting in talks with the Russian leader on Tuesday that trade has begun to grow again, increasing by

three percent from January to August.

Putin acknowledged the need for collaborative work in further enhancing and diversifying trade and investments, particularly in energy, industry, agriculture, science and innovation.

The two nations expressed readiness to co-ordinate efforts on the international stage to establish a fair multipolar

world order. Ramaphosa expressed gratitude for Russia's support dating back to South Africa's anti-Apartheid struggle.

Meeting with Dilma Rousseff, the head of BRICS's New Development Bank (NDB), Putin commended her leadership of the institution, which has financed around 100 projects totalling 33 billion dollars since its inception.

Putin remarked that increasing transactions in local currencies would lower debt servicing costs, enhance the financial independence of BRICS nations and reduce geopolitical risks.

Rousseff emphasized the Global South's urgent need for funding and the importance of providing assistance in national currencies, a principle the NDB adheres to.

Bilateral negotiations continued throughout the summit, with numerous additional high-level meetings planned, reflecting the ongoing commitment to strengthen international collaboration among BRICS members.

Sputnik

BRICS – a necessary bridge

by Elson
Concepción Pérez

"The world needs BRICS because it would free it from the dollar, from blackmail, from dependence and from the economic blockade," says a report on the Sputnik website. This truth is the result of the analysis of

specialists who follow the subject, on the occasion of the BRICS Summit that took place in the Russian city of Kazan this week.

In the most varied analyses published in the international press prior to the meeting, divergent criteria can be read. Some of the Western media have

accused the BRICS group of being a danger to those who believe they are decision makers of the world we live in.

Others, with truthfulness, quote the words of Russian President Vladimir Putin, when he stated that "the international system needs a new form in the BRICS".

Russia, which chaired this year's BRICS summit, has set as its premise "strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security".

High-level delegations from 32 countries, including the ten countries that today make up the Group: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, United

Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, attended the 16th Summit of this alliance. Leaders of nations that have expressed their desire to join the Group have also been invited.

The issue of the defence of the Palestinian people, who are being massacred by Israel, was also part of the agenda of

this Summit. In this regard, President Putin affirmed that "we occupy a traditional position since the times of the Soviet Union, which consists in what, I repeat again, the main way to solve the Palestinian problem is to create the full State of Palestine".

Granma