

Israel bans UN agency as communists call for peace

by our Arab Affairs correspondent

Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas step up the fight while the imperialists launch another diplomatic charade in a feeble attempt to divert attention from America's key role in Israel's genocidal war against the Arabs. Israel continues its indiscriminate bombing of Beirut and other parts of Lebanon. An Israeli was killed and dozens more injured when a resistance fighter drove a lorry into a bus stop near an Israeli military base north of Tel Aviv. And the UN Security Council has expressed "grave concern" over Israel's ban on UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency), warning against the dismantling of the aid agency.

The Security Council sounded the alarm on Wednesday, two days after the Israeli parliament adopted a bill banning UNRWA that will take effect in three months' time. The ban also restricts UNRWA's delivery of critical support to the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

The Security Council called on Israel to "abide by its international obligations" and "respect



the privileges and immunities" of the agency. The 15-member body urged "all parties to enable UNRWA to carry out its mandate, as adopted by the General Assembly, in all areas of operation", saying the agency has been the "backbone" of humanitarian relief in war-torn Gaza. "No organisation can replace or substitute UNRWA's capacity and mandate to serve Palestinian refugees and civilians in urgent need of life-saving humanitarian assistance."

Founded in 1949, the agency provides services for over six million Palestinian refugees living across the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. In Gaza, it is the primary UN agency delivering healthcare and essential humanitarian support to the Palestinians trapped in the blockaded territory.

Meanwhile Ayman Odeh, the leader of the communist-led Hadash-Ta'al bloc in the Israeli parliament, told a conference held by the *Haaretz* (The Land) newspaper in north London that

the British government must "end all military, financial, and diplomatic support" to Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government.

The conference included speeches from former Israeli premier Ehud Olmert, *Haaretz* Editor-in-Chief Aluf Benn and a video address from former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. All speakers at the all-day event, including *Haaretz* publisher Amos Schocken, were openly critical of the Netanyahu government.

Speaking at Sunday's event, Odeh said: "It is beyond time that the United Kingdom joins the 146 nations officially recognising Palestine. The UK must make good on the government's promise to support an immediate ceasefire by ending all military, financial, and diplomatic support of the Netanyahu government's war crimes and working to broker a prisoner-hostage exchange deal. Not a single penny must be allowed to go to the government of Netanyahu, Smotrich and Ben-Gvir to recolonise Gaza and

annex all of Palestine.

"But this recognition must not be symbolic, nor seen as a reward to be withheld for another day. It must be implemented now, as a step toward creating the conditions for sincere negotiations that will finally bring about a two-state solution based on democracy, equality, and justice."

Odeh called for an end to the "horrific war" in Gaza and the removal of the "criminal" and "fascist" government of Netanyahu. "The war must end now. There must be a prisoner-hostage exchange deal immediately. And all nations of the world must do their part to end the atrocities and demand an immediate renewal of negotiations toward a final agreement. Let today be the last day of this criminal war, and let it be the first day of a new era in the history of our peoples."

FUND

We received £591 this week, pushing the October appeal up to £2,194 thanks to a Dagenham comrade who gave us £300 and another from north Wales who sent in £200, while a veteran Essex supporter donated £50 and another Dagenham supporter gave us £5.50. We now need £1,306 to hit our monthly target and we've only one more campaigning week to hit it!

Robbing the poor to help the rich is what the Tories are all about, although they usually try to cloak their bourgeois greed with the Union Jack and pious platitudes that come naturally to people of their class and education. Labour, on the other hand, talks about the mythical "hard-working families" they claim to serve while doing little or nothing to close the poverty gap or end homelessness!

But there is an answer to the crisis – and that is socialism. We've got to get that back on the working class agenda. This is why the *New Worker* must keep going!

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INSIDE

China-UK .. P5

GERMANY .. P6

DEFEATING
DRUG ADDICTION .. P7

AXIS OF TERROR ..P11

CUBA AT THE UN ..P12

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Labour means business

Communists should not be surprised at this week's Budget. Most of it had already been leaked in advance to the media to prepare the public for the Chancellor's economic plan for the new Labour government.

Starmer told us that the Budget had to deal with the Tory "black hole" of debt that Labour inherited while ensuring that only the "broadest shoulders" would bear the burden when the time came. But those shoulders are those of the workers – not of the rich who are barely touched in Chancellor Reeves' announcement this week.

There were some modest reforms – including windfall taxes on oil and gas and more funding for the health service – but they were more than off-set by the cuts that will pay for them. Some union grandees were pleased. Paul Nowak, the general secretary of the TUC, said: "Tax rises will ensure much-needed funds for our NHS, schools and the rest of our crumbling public services, with those who have the broadest shoulders paying a fairer share." But others disagreed. Sharon Graham, the leader of the biggest union in the country, said a one per cent tax on the richest one per cent would raise £25 billion, filling the so-called "black hole" in the budget at a stroke.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul is an old game and this week's Budget was, as usual, in the interests of the capitalists, bankers, industrialists and landowners who really run this country.

The British role

Years ago the old guard took umbrage when a former American foreign minister aptly noted that "Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role". The British ruling class thought they had found a new 'role' in the European Common Market while acting as the trans-Atlantic 'bridge' to play off the Americans and Europeans to their advantage. But it didn't work out that way.

Although we're thankfully out of the European Union, the Tories squandered the benefits of Brexit – curbing trade with People's China in pursuit of a phantom 'North Atlantic Trade Agreement' that had little support within America's ruling circles.

The Tories are split because the ruling class is still bitterly divided over Europe. Without a clear lead from his masters Starmer is left to scramble around trying to "reset" relations with Brussels and Beijing as best he can.

While ignoring the critical state of the British economy, the Starmer government continues to do the bidding of the USA with its sanctions regime against Russia and increased military spending. This is the policy that has brought the Germans to the brink of bankruptcy. Once the industrial and economic powerhouse of Western Europe, Germany is on a self-imposed road to de-industrialisation and economic collapse by following US diktat.

But a new world is emerging beyond the European Union and the American empire. The people of the Global South are sick and tired of the fact that the Americans and their minions in the West have economically dominated the world for decades.

The BRICS bloc, which includes People's China, is open to helping countries develop, as well as promoting investment and trade without strings or preconditions. BRICS is fighting against the concept of a new Cold War and opening the possibility of building a fairer and more equitable international economic order from which the world can benefit. The BRICS bloc is helping to build the multi-polar world that will put an end to the American dream of the "new world order" and world domination.

A new world is indeed possible but it's not the EU or the hell-hole of the USA. It's the world being built now in the new institutions of the Global South that offers an even playing field to all countries to trade and peacefully resolve disputes to build a better future for everyone on the planet.

Delusions of grandeur

by James Smith

Last week, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed to increase the UK's military deployment in the Pacific Ocean in the form of "joint fishing patrols" in order to improve "regional stability" arguing that the region, situated on the other side of the planet from London, was "important" to the country's "security". The pledge came as the prime minister effectively received the cold shoulder at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where controversy over reparations for British slavery dominated the headlines. Although the new government has significantly moderated its position on China and sought to open re-engagement with Beijing, the media nonetheless framed the deployment as an "anti-China move" aimed at "countering Beijing's influence in the Pacific".

First, one should not be naïve regarding the British government's foreign policy. While it is undeniably a huge improvement over the preceding administrations, which represents a low bar given their mismanagement of UK foreign affairs in modern political times, the fundamental centre ground has not changed, nor should we have expected it to.

The Starmer government has continued to emphasise the 'special relationship' with the USA and therefore strives to follow the strategic consensus Washington has set with its allies: to contain the rise of China by

emphasising the "Indo-Pacific", seeking to militarise the region and building partnerships aimed at isolating Beijing.

The new government thus continues to follow this established and provocative path but it does not, as Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak did, use anti-Chinese sentiment to cover up their domestic political failures.

This position is similar to that of Anthony Albanese in Australia. However, under the power of the USA, they cannot truly change their strategic objectives and instead seek to continue militarising in a 'quieter' way.

This leads to the next point, the UK, owing to its legacy of empire, has always believed that it has a political 'stake' in the South Pacific, even as it has been displaced by the rise of other powers. Britain may be obsolete as a player in the region in practice, owing to geographical factors. For the USA, its ultimate goal is to maintain its 20th Century dominance over the region and prevent China from gaining sway over the Pacific Island nations, some of which were once under British rule. The Solomon Islands, for example, is an effective member of the Commonwealth and still has the British Monarch as its head of state. However, the islands have chosen Beijing as a partner in recent years, which has set off hysteria in Anglophone capitals over their 'waning' influence in the Pacific, and their 'rightful domain'.

Therefore, it must be understood that "joint patrols" related to "illegal fishing" are conduits

for anti-China objectives. This has been an issue placed on the agenda and utilised by the USA, pushing a narrative that Chinese "illegal fishing" is a huge problem and proposing itself as the solution. By pushing this narrative, the USA seeks to weaponise anti-China sentiment in targeted countries, stifle their relationships with Beijing and thus increase military cooperation with their respective navies and coast guards, strengthening the political hands of those countries to oppose China. Thus, it is a proxy means to advancing containment of China, and we can only assume that by latching onto this issue, Britain is aligning itself with the American strategy.

One must question the feasibility of Britain's relevance in the Pacific: is Britain really significant in the Pacific anymore?

The answer is no. Yet, it has been a persistent shortcoming of British foreign policymakers to incorporate the sentiment of empire into their thinking.

The new British government faces a stagnating economy, growing social unrest and is about to distribute a hugely unpopular budget. The UK government would be wise to fix things at home before attempting to fight conflicts on the other side of the world, which are in fact far removed from 'British interests'. One just needs to consider the frosty reception Starmer received at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to understand why Britain isn't taken seriously anymore.

Global Times



Workers' Notes

On the Highland Buses

by New Worker correspondent

In the Scottish Highlands and Islands strike action is on the cards after 200 Stagecoach bus drivers overwhelmingly rejected a pay offer that would still leave the drivers among the poorest paid in Scotland.

Highland Country Buses Ltd offered a measly four per cent from July with a further 2.5 per cent increase from January 2025. Its last recorded profits after tax were £1.71 million in 2023, more than double the 2022 figure of £448,000.

Marc Jackson, a Unite industrial officer, said: "In a matter of weeks Stagecoach bus services across the Highlands, Skye and Orkney could come to a halt because of the company's greed. This dispute could be resolved by a fair and reasonable pay offer to our members. We would urge Stagecoach to see sense instead of continuing down a road which will lead to significant disruption for the travelling public."

It was in the southern part of the Highlands that Stagecoach was founded by Brain Souter and his sister whose married name was used in his first company, Gloagtroutter, founded in 1976 as a recreational vehicle and mini-bus hire business. In the 1980s, backed by the Royal Bank of Scotland, it was quick to take advantage of Tory deregulation of the express coach business. In urban areas it used predatory pricing to knock out competitors and promptly put up prices after the vanquished had departed. On the profitable Glasgow to Edinburgh route it triumphed by offering cheap fares and much speedier service than rivals who kept to the speed limit. At that time on Glasgow's Union Street there was so much competition among rival bus companies that a bus queue was literally a line of buses searching for a passenger...

London Transport Battles

by New Worker correspondent

On one of London's less essential transport routes workers on the Doppelmayr Cable Car (DCC) which crosses the Thames in Docklands have voted to accept an improved pay and conditions offer following the threat of strike action. This includes a 3.3 per cent rise, backdated to May 2024, with further inflation linked guarantees for the next two years. Hours have been reduced from 44 to 40.5 hours, with paid meal breaks included. The icing on the cake includes double-time for bank holidays, increased paternity leave; paternity leave with extra sick pay entitlement after two years of service and a reduced time required to qualify for late-shift transport has been secured.

RMT General Secretary Mick Lynch declared: "This is a significant win for our members at Doppelmayr Cable Car. They have shown great determination and unity, and as a result, they have secured a deal that not only gives them a well-deserved pay rise but also significant improvements to their working conditions. This victory shows the power of collective action."

Nearby on the Docklands Light Railway the same union is taking strike action on behalf of an unfairly sacked worker Mmaduka Josua Obi who was sacked by operator KeolisAmey Docklands despite his actual employer ISS saying he should continue in his role in security and revenue protection.

It is suspected that his sacking has something to do with him being an RMT representative for the past 15 years. The driverless line (a "train captain" makes sure all's well on board) saw two 24 hour strikes last month. Such "third party" sackings are becoming increasingly common in outsourced and subcontracted businesses. Mick Lynch said the "strike by security and revenue protection workers sends a strong

message that we will not allow management to victimise a trade union rep for standing up for our members rights".

Across the entire London Underground RMT members are taking strike action following their rejection of an inadequate pay offer. RMT said earlier negotiations had led to some progress, but "the current proposal leaves a large number of staff excluded from collective bargaining, which remains a core issue for the union". It left Management with full control over which grades workers would be in. "No trade union can accept any pay proposal where management decide which of our members gets a pay rise and those who do not" insist the union.

"We have repeatedly urged London Underground to offer a deal that ensures all staff are covered by collective bargaining, yet management remains fixated on imposing pay structures without our agreement," said Mike Lynch.

The other union involved, the much smaller Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA), has not been so determined. Its members voted 84 per cent in favour of strike action with 95 per cent in favour of supporting industrial action short of a strike, but did not reach the 50 per cent turnout threshold. As a result the unions reps and officials will decide whether or not to accept the offer. TSSA said it was still disappointing that most pay ranges will not be increased. At the same time the rail unions are trying to stir the Labour Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan into action concerning ticket office cuts and other chronic understaffing on the London Overground.

Arriva Rail London (ARL) who run the London Overground, have reduced ticket office hours and removed Oyster services – which means it is almost impossible for passengers to deal with a real human. This particularly affects vulnerable groups.

At present 70 per cent of stations are understaffed, with vacancies persistently unfilled. Of Overground staff, 94 per cent said cuts had worsened passenger service, with 89 per cent specifying reduced safety and security.

RMT has insisted that Khan "must demand the immediate restoration of ticket office hours and reinstate Oyster facilities to

ensure the Overground meets public needs".

The GP Crisis

by New Worker correspondent

The British Medical Association (BMA), one of Britain's grandest trade unions, has drawn attention to the fact that at a time of growing waiting lists in the NHS that there is also what Mark Steggles, a GP in the Buckinghamshire village of Burnham and BMA committee chair, calls an "absurd GP unemployment crisis, with thousands of GPs struggling to find work in NHS general practice" across England.

He complains that despite demand being at the highest levels ever there is increased competition for both salaried and partnership opportunities in the NHS, and that temporary locum posts have also been drastically reduced.

The union complains that a recent announcement by new Health Secretary of an extra £82 million for Primary Care Networks (PCNs, groups of GP practices working with community, mental health, social care, and pharmacies) to recruit more GPs, although welcome, is not enough. This injection of cash came through the Additional Roles Reimbursement (ARR) which was established in April 2019 and had previously explicitly excluded GPs, being used to finance extra allied health professionals such as radiologists and podiatrists.

According to the BMA funding for employing GPs has fallen by 12 per cent since 2019. The extra funding will benefit some newly qualified GPs, but it only "presents yet another temporary sticking plaster fix, attempting to partially treat the symptom that is GP unemployment, without directly tackling the underlying causes".

This is due to inadequate ongoing training for young GPs who are often thrown into the deep end and have no time for career development unlike previous years.

Training a GP costs around half a million pounds, and without proper retention support,

this is likely to go down the pan if graduates emigrate or take up running pubs. The financial cost to the public purse for losing and replacing a single experienced NHS GP has been estimated at least £300,000.

This "unemployment crisis" comes at a time when English GPs have to care for 17 per cent more patients than in 2015. The average GP has more than 2,300 patients, a rise of nearly 350 since 2015. Despite a growing and ageing population, the number of permanent GPs, excluding locums and trainees, is over 1,557 lower now, at 27,193 full-time equivalents, in the same period.

All averages hide the best and the worst. Some GPs serve 3,000 patients, double the best served areas. Most of the country has between 2,000 and 2,500 patients per GP. This is not the normal north-south division. Clusters around London and the south east and in the north west and Lincolnshire have the worst ratios of up to 3,000. The most fortunate is The Wirral in the north-west with 1,818 and the highest is Thurrock in Essex at 3,431, with Leicester close behind on 3,262. Needless to say the poorest areas are worse served. The latest figures are very slightly better than last year, but you need a magnifying glass to notice the difference.

Government plans to train more doctors and relieve some of the pressure by giving pharmacists more responsibilities has not gone down well with the BMA. The BMA says a rapid expansion would come at the expense of quality. While pharmacists have already taken on responsibility for minor ailments such as sore throats and shingles, handing out pills tends not to involve a consultation about what might be a serious underlying condition.

The Royal College of General Practitioners' (RCGP) Chair Kamila Hawthorne has said that GP shortages are having a "devastating" impact on the health of local populations and the rise in the number of patients per GP has become unmanageable. Dr Becks Fisher, from the Nuffield Trust health think tank, has said funding needs to be targeted at those areas with the worst shortages.

The patient watchdog Healthwatch England points out that the difficulty of getting appointments is their most common complaint

continued on page 4...

...continued from page 3

from patients adding that “it’s often unpaid carers, disabled people, people on lower incomes and those whose first language isn’t English that face the biggest challenges”.

At present less than a tenth of the NHS budget is spent on GP services. The BMA’s GP leader Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer said that for years “GP practices have been expected to keep doing more for less. General practice is collapsing”.

Now that we have a Labour Government the Tory *Daily Express* has turned attention to the inadequate state of GP premises and digital infrastructure. While it has likely taken up the cause simply as another stick to beat the incumbent government while turning a blind eye to the previous decade and half, it makes some valid points about the dire state of health service IT equipment. In particular it notes that outdated IT equipment makes it impossible for GPs to handle large volumes of data or use new equipment. This also makes

speedy transfer of patient data from one GP practice to another or to hospitals difficult and often causes delays in treatment.

The RCGP also says the future is bleak and that the NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan to increase the number of GPs by four per cent by 2037 is inadequate, particularly when compared with a planned 49 per cent increase in hospital consultants. That figure alone suggests that plans for an increased focus on prevention have not been thought through.

The RCGP also reports that 40 per cent of GPs do not plan to remain in post by 2029. Many say this is due to stress and burnout. A few cynics have suggested that figure might be instead due to very comfortable pensions.

It also makes the valid point that if nothing is done, a further downward spiral is inevitable because “if more is not done to retain our current GP workforce, our already chronically understaffed general practice service will be woefully unprepared for the future. We’re in a vicious

cycle, with workload pressures rising to unsustainable levels, driving GPs out of the profession, and further putting the pressure on remaining staff.”

In Scotland the picture is much the same. Figures for the GP–patient ratio are harder to come by as practice size numbers are all that could be found. The ratio seems to be slightly better on paper, but the figures are ‘improved’ because of the larger number of small practices covering huge thinly-populated rural areas which presents different problems. However 17 practices now have more than 4,000 patients per GP. One has over 18,000 patients for just two GP partners, but it employs many locums.

One increasing solution is to go private. In 2019 there were only three private GP surgeries registered, there are now 11. In contrast the number of Scottish GP practices has fallen by almost 100 over the last decade to 897 with GP numbers falling from 4,514 in 2022 to 4,474 in 2023. Curiously more people are registered with GPs than live in Scotland. In 2023 eleven practices closed with doctors giving up in despair.

Some GPs say they are seeing 75 appointments per day, three times BMA’s guidelines. Some complain of 13-hour days. As former Labour leader Neil Kinnock once said: “I warn you not to be young, I warn you not to fall ill, and I warn you not to grow old.”

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

29th October 2004

Hundreds of funeral workers employed by Co-operative Funeral Care took strike action over pay and hours last Monday in an action organised jointly by the GMB general union and the Transport & General Workers Union. The picket lines were described as the most discreet ever, with a minimum of slogans and placards simply stating “TG&WU – Official Picket”.

“It’s a delicate situation,” said union activist Derek

Ormston. “We are not dealing with a factory that makes a can of beans but with human beings.”

“We do not want to upset members of the public during what is a stressful time for them anyway. We have stuck to the law and had six pickets at each site and we have concentrated on the main homes.”

The unions report that their members supported the strike well and that in some parts of the country other funeral workers have supported the strike by not crossing the picket lines.

The action saw strong support across Scotland as well as Bristol, Cardiff, Eastbourne, London and the south-east. Pickets were out at the largest funeral parlours in Bristol and Cardiff as well as across the major Scottish cities.

The one-day strike follows on from the start of a ban on overtime and standby which started last Friday.

Ian Crawford, TGWU regional organiser, said: “This

dispute is about pay and hours. The Co-op has failed to address the concerns we have raised about a decent basic wage and the reduction of the working week to 48 hours with no loss of pay.”

Phil Davis, GMB National Secretary, said: “Funeral workers want fair pay, but they also want respect from their employer and for the Co-op to recognise that funeral workers are committed professionals who do a very difficult job in unique circumstances”.

The funeral workers basic pay is £12,500 and take-home pay can be as low as £800 per month. For this, they are regularly expected to on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are dealing with sensitive and often very difficult situations. In order to take home a decent wage far too many workers having to work 60 or 70 hours a week.

Workers have rejected a pay rise of 3.5 per cent and are asking a substantial pay rise. The Co-op Group made £327.3 million profit last year.

New prospects for UK–China co-operation

by Ma Jingjing

Seventy years ago, a group of far-sighted British businessmen, represented by Jack Perry Senior, broke the ice and opened the door to developing China–UK trade, paving the way for enduring friendly exchanges. Over the decades, the “ice breaking” spirit carries on and contributes to fostering broad connections between the two countries. At the critical moment for China–UK relations, Global Times reporter **Ma Jingjing** interviewed **Jack Perry Junior**, the Chairman of the 48 Group Club and CEO of London Export Corp, to seek his insight on China’s economic development and improving China–UK relations.

China’s economy grew by 4.8 per cent year-on-year in the first three quarters this year. What’s your take on China’s growth prospects?

If you want to understand China, you need to go to China. I recently travelled to East China’s Anhui Province, which used to be a very poor province but its GDP is soaring now. I asked them how they achieved this, and they told me “We have kept solving problems.” To me, that’s the essence of the Chinese people. They are problem solvers.

Those who claim China’s economic growth rate has peaked do not know China, actually. China is one of the most long-term forward-thinking countries in the world.

Currently, the world economy is going through some troublesome times, not just China’s economy. However, the Chinese leadership possesses profound long-term strategies, embodied by the development of new quality productive forces, and I believe they will position China for remarkable success in the future.

China keeps expanding reform and opening-up in re-



• Booming China: downtown Shenzhen.

cent years, especially after the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China charted a blueprint for China’s high-quality development. How do you think of China’s opening-up efforts in recent years?

China has been opening up well for more than 40 years. China’s stability is the foundation of who they are. China closes the gap with other major economies in an amazing speed in certain areas such as pharmaceuticals and life sciences.

The 48 Group has established a partnership in Beijing to create a platform for sharing data on drugs that are being worked on so that a company can take the phases that have gone through in China back to the UK without having to starting through the phases again.

My grandfather came to China many years ago. It’s about breaking ice so that he could see the person the other side of the ice. It’s all about humanity, business and aligning with the forward-thinking Chinese people. For us, the

48 Group and our family, we align ourselves with China.

While some Western media outlets claimed that foreign capital has exited China, they are not telling the truth. People are not worried about investing into China in the medium to long-term because China is promoting high-quality development with an innovative and forward-thinking. The new quality productive forces are where tomorrow’s industries are going. The flow of capital is like a wave. Foreign capital will come to China.

Some politicians in the USA and Europe claim that there is so-called “overcapacity” in China’s new energy sector including the EVs and solar cells. What’s your view on this?

Such rhetoric reflects that China is ahead in the international competition in certain areas, especially the electric vehicle (EV) sector. As the world is moving into an era of green energy, there will be the case when people have to buy EVs, and so they won’t be sitting there for long.

China was a very poor country decades ago. Now China is an economic powerhouse and has evolved rapidly.

Instead of welcoming China and asking “how did you achieve that, and how can we collaborate?” some Western countries become concerned and opt to contain China. The additional tariffs imposed on Chinese EVs are really ridiculous. It’s just a game between who is bigger and who wants to stay on top.

Some countries, in recent years, have tried to seek economic “decoupling” from China. In your perspective, what risks will global trade fragmentation and this “decoupling” cause to the world? And how the major economies should work together to shore up global economic recovery?

The so-called “decoupling” would be detrimental to the world economy. It’s a very silly decision.

If some in the West try to “decouple” from China, their goods will be more expensive and their supply chains will be

affected. It will be a nightmare for the world economy. So “decoupling” from China is naïve, silly, and if I may so, very stupid.

We must concentrate on doing business. Business is the key to be able to have those forward-thinking conversations. If you look at China, China cares about building up a solid foundation in the country, and its people are kind, honest and hard-working. They are trying to work with other countries to enhance themselves and also be able to provide what they are good at for other countries. Countries should carry out dialogues to keep their relationships.

Could you briefly share with us the “Ice breaking Mission”. What insights can be drawn from the journey for today’s China–UK relations? In what areas can China and the UK deepen their relationship through common interests and collaboration opportunities?

In 1953, my grandfather led the delegation of British industrial and business leaders on the journey to China, which is now called the “Ice breaking Mission.”

The icebreakers brought down barriers politically and economically. Today, we must align with those courageous icebreakers to focus on business and dialogues between China and the UK. We must continue to break the ice together.

I think it’s a time now for the UK and China to be able to redefine what our relationship is. Let’s try and move forward together and on a deeper and more broadening relationship. China is developing new quality productive forces, with focus on sectors including green energy, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. The UK should align itself with that too. So, we can meet in the middle and work on those sectors, for example, smart city development and green energy.

Unemployment and deprivation: what the West German takeover meant in the East

by Jenny Farrell
and Karl Döring

This article is based on an interview with Karl Döring, a former public servant in the government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Written by Jenny Farrell, the story here is told from Döring's first-person point of view. Born in 1937, Döring studied and earned a PhD in metallurgy in Moscow, served as production director at the VEB Quality and Stainless Steel Plant in the GDR, was the country's deputy minister for mining (1979-85), and from 1985 onwards, was the general director of Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost (EKO), one of the GDR's biggest steelworks. From July to November 1990, he was the deputy chairman of the supervisory board of the Treuhandanstalt, the agency established by the West German government to oversee the privatisation of the public property belonging to the people of the GDR. The full interview was published in German in the Berliner Zeitung on 29th September 2024.

The unification of Germany in 1990 brought hope, but that hope quickly turned into chaos for many in the former GDR. As an East German who had an up-close view of the sweeping changes that followed, I experienced first-hand the transition from a planned economy to a market-driven system. My efforts to save the Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost (EKO, Iron and Steel Combine), an industrial giant, and my time with the Treuhandanstalt (Trust Authority), the



• The good old days – workers at the EKO plant in 1952.

agency responsible for privatising East German state enterprises, encapsulate the emotional and economic turmoil of that era.

The privatisation processes following the annexation of the GDR by the West German 'Federal Republic of Germany' form the core of my management experience in the "new world" of capitalism – with all its possibilities and impossibilities. Within our leadership team and the work's council, which was established in early 1990, there was a strong determination to preserve the Eisenhüttenstadt site.

It wasn't just about a steel plant, but a complex metallurgical enterprise with ore production, blast furnace operations, the steel mill itself, as well as areas of steel processing and refining. The plant was modern and new. When the end of the GDR came, there were 12,000 people working at EKO. The entire town of Eisenhüttenstadt, along with the local economy, including bakeries, dairies, and salons, all depended on the steel plant; so did the surrounding region. It was obvious: "If the plant dies, so does the town".

My role as an East German representative within the Treuhand was marred by conflict, as I was often seen as a troublemaker by my West German counterparts. The Treuhandanstalt's two governing bodies were the supervisory board, overseeing operations, and the executive board, managing daily affairs. The former was initially chaired by Detlev Rohwedder, a pragmatist, who recognised the importance of including "Ossis" (East Germans) in decision-making. He supported my appointment to the supervisory board in 1990. This unpaid position, allowed me a direct line of sight to the serious decisions shaping the future of the East.

My time in this role was short-lived. When Rohwedder moved to head the executive board, he was replaced by Jens Odenwald, a West German whose attitude towards East Germans was anything but inclusive. Odenwald viewed us as obstacles rather than partners. My colleagues and I were pushed out of decision-making processes. Meetings and committees were reorganised, with our names removed from the list of participants.

There were no confrontations, but a slow, insidious marginalisation. I was told by Odenwald to "focus on EKO" and not worry about the broader operations of the Treuhand, a thinly veiled dismissal. Despite having been formally appointed by the GDR's government, the West German authorities ignored our legal standing, offering no explanation for our exclusion. The Treuhand showed little regard for the expertise of East Germans, reflecting a general attitude of disrespect. Rohwedder, who was more conciliatory and less blatant, said: "Mr. Döring, give up, you have no chance – such is the current climate".

Today's political discontent in East Germany, seen in populist movements like the AfD, has roots in the post-unification years. The way East Germans were treated after 1990, particularly in economic terms, left many with deep feelings of humiliation and resentment.

I witnessed the devastation of mass unemployment; in Eisenhüttenstadt, it exceeded 20 per cent in the 1990s, with little hope for recovery. Many workers were offered severance

packages similar to those in the West, but for people who had spent their entire lives working full-time, being told to take a payout and retire at 55 was crushing. Entire social structures, from workplace communities to local sports clubs, collapsed. The disillusionment extended to the next generation, who grew up watching their parents struggle with unemployment and economic insecurity.

Politicians in the West, then as now, have failed to grasp the magnitude of this devastation. They view unemployment as a manageable issue, unaware that in the GDR, joblessness was unimaginable. Overnight, millions find themselves out on the streets. Their collective bonds were gone – the company sports club and other places vanished. The sudden collapse of the GDR's economic and social structures left deep scars that remain visible to this day.

The key difference between a functional planning system and the rigid system of the GDR lies in scope and flexibility. In the GDR, everything was planned down to the smallest detail, with little room for local decision-making or

innovation.

A state-level planned economy can succeed if based on realistic policies, limited central planning, focused priorities, and autonomy for decision-makers. Economic subsidies should be rare, social subsidies kept reasonable, and prices should maintain their market-regulating role without central interference. With honest statistics and worker participation in the planning process, it could offer a viable alternative to today's profit-driven economy.

Today, capitalist interests prevail, increasingly so, as the current socio-political system resembles more of a "chaos system". There's no longer a significant force representing majority views, making consensus among parties essential. However, this ability has been lost, which is detrimental to Germany, as it prevents fair and forward-thinking policies.

Looking back on those years of upheaval, it is clear that the transition from socialism to capitalism was far more complex and painful than many anticipated. For those of us who fought to save industries like EKO Stahl, the battle was as much emotional as it was economic. We were not just trying to save a company; we were fighting for the dignity and future of an entire region, of an entire country. Today's discontent in the East underscores the need for economic decisions to consider human costs and for planning – both in government and business -- to respect those affected.

People's World (USA)

From despair to revolution: the Bronx's path to defeating addiction

The Bronx Anti-War Coalition hosted a film screening on 11th October of the documentary *Dope is Death* as part of their guerrilla cinema series. The widely attended event featured a Q&A session with former Young Lord [street social movement] and acupuncturist Walter Bosque, where community members engaged in a lively discussion about continuing and expanding the revolutionary movement of healing.

In recent years, the Bronx, a predominantly Black, Brown and working-class borough in one of the most densely populated areas of New York, has experienced a sharp rise in opioid use, including oxycodone, street fentanyl and heroin.

We recognise that drug use, particularly opioids, is not merely a personal struggle but a symptom of systemic issues rooted in capitalism and government neglect. This crisis profoundly harms our community. Those most affected by poverty, alienation and exploitation often turn to drugs for temporary relief from oppressive daily conditions. Addiction burdens those already suffering from state-imposed violence and capitalist exploitation.

Rather than supporting and uplifting working-class communities, capitalist society allows drugs like fentanyl, heroin and crack to infiltrate and erode social bonds, deteriorate health and stifle revolutionary potential. Addiction acts as a tool of oppression, weakening communities and diverting energy away from organising



• Walter Bosque speaks at the screening.

and resistance.

Yet history tells a different story – one of resilience and healing. Revolutionary movements, including those in the Bronx, demonstrate that communities can overcome addiction and reclaim their strength.

The documentary *Dope is Death* highlights the late Dr Mutulu Shakur's transformative work with the Young Lords and the Black Panther Party, who used acupuncture to combat drug dependency. Their efforts not only rescued individuals from addiction but also empowered the community to rebuild, laying the groundwork for revolutionary change.

This history reminds us that overcoming addiction involves more than personal recovery; it encompasses collective healing, restoring social solidarity and reviving the revolutionary spirit necessary to challenge the systems that breed inequality and despair.

China's revolutionary role

We would be remiss not to acknowledge China's pioneering role in this effort. The Opium Wars (1839–1860) illustrate how British imperialism, supported by the USA, exploited China by flooding it with opium to enforce unfavourable trade conditions. By the late 19th Century, nearly 10 per cent of China's population was addicted to opium, creating a national crisis.

After the 1949 revolution, the People's Republic of China swiftly eradicated opium production and consumption through revolutionary social reform. They treated 10 million addicts, executed drug dealers and replanted opium-growing regions with new crops. What had been a century-long scourge was resolved within four years.

Mao Zedong's landmark 1965 health-care

speech and his June 26th directive emphasised accessible health care in rural areas, leading to the "barefoot doctors" programme. This initiative trained community health workers to provide basic medical services in rural areas, blending modern and traditional medicine to meet the needs of underserved communities. By 1968, this programme became a key component of national health policy.

As we celebrate 75 years of the Chinese Revolution, China's achievements in eradicating addiction, reducing poverty and advancing public health testify to the transformative potential of revolutionary movements. Ultimately, China's rise as a global power signifies the rise of the Global South, as it extends a helping hand to nations historically oppressed by the US empire and sanctions.

The history of resistance and social healing in the Bronx and China

resonates with the experiences of Gaza. In the 1980s, under Israeli military occupation, the Gaza Strip faced significant social issues, including drug addiction, alcoholism and crime, exacerbated by Israeli policies designed to demoralise the Palestinian people and weaken resistance.

Hamas combats drugs

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Hamas, and his comrades recognised the destructive impact of these social challenges and took decisive action. They created Muslim youth associations, community clubs and Islamic social gatherings to combat drug trafficking, help individuals overcome addiction and strengthen social cohesion. Hamas' community-based approach improved health and social fabric, building respect and trust

among the Palestinian people.

Before becoming a political party with a military wing, Hamas focused on healing and uplifting the people of Gaza. By the time the First Intifada began in 1987, Hamas had earned the trust and support of many Palestinians through its efforts to address social needs.

These early initiatives laid the groundwork for Hamas's later influence as a leading force in Palestinian resistance against Zionist occupation. Hamas' uncompromising stance and willingness to resist by any means necessary threaten the occupation, prompting the USA to label it a terrorist organization.

When Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinian people in 2006, the USA and Israel responded with measures that undermined Palestinian self-determination. These included refusing to recognise the election results, splitting the Palestinian government into two – with Hamas as the governing body in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank – and initiating the brutal blockade on Gaza that has lasted 18 years.

Today, Hamas remains at the forefront of the Palestinian liberation struggle, co-ordinating with other resistance factions in the region in what has become the Palestinian revolution.

This history of social resilience and organised resistance across the Bronx, the People's Republic of China and Gaza highlights the power of community-led healing in the face of systemic oppression.

Workers World (USA)

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The visit of the British Foreign Secretary Lammy to the capitalist hell-hole that is south Korea or the “Republic of Korea” (ROK) recently was a serious provocation against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Lammy’s visit demonstrated that the British government is joining hands with the south Korean fascist puppets against People’s Korea and conspiring together to overthrow Juche-based socialism. This visit by the British Foreign Secretary to south Korea comes not long after the drone intrusion against the DPRK by the south Korean regime (and may have been deliberately timed to coincide with the recent provocative actions of south Korea) so the UK is basically condoning the actions of the south Korean puppets.

It is wrong for Britain to support south Korea which is a fascist puppet regime and a colony of US imperialism where people live in poverty and work the longest hours in the whole world. The “Republic of Korea” is occupied by US troops. We call upon Britain to end its support for south Korea. There should be no British aid for south Korea and no British troops in south Korea nor British naval ships in Korean waters.

As for the so-called “joint statement” issued by the ROK puppets and the British foreign secretary it is complete nonsense. British policy on the DPRK is based on lies and untruths such as this nonsense

about the DPRK sending a large number of troops to Ukraine and rubbish about “human rights violations”.

Although the government in the UK changed hands in the last few months, the new government’s policy towards the DPRK is the same as its predecessor and continues with hostile policies, backing both the US imperialists and the scum like ROK puppets.

The Starmer regime is not only cutting winter fuel payments and reducing living standards but it is supporting regime change attempts on the Korean peninsula.

**Dermot Hudson
London**

Dear Comrades

For most people in the world the most significant political event of the year will not be the bizarre spectacle of the American presidential election in which money counts and democracy remains an illusion. Real and important history has been made in Kazan, the ancient home of the Tatars located in Russia on the banks of the mighty Volga river. A gathering of top world leaders attended the BRICS summit to draft measures aimed at achieving a new multipolar world order. It certainly was the most important political and economic gathering since the Bretton Woods conference held way back in 1944.

The bourgeois Western media, including the British Brainwashing Corporation, appear to be in a state of shock. The disrespectful narrative of their support for US hegemony and the “Rules Based World Order” (American rules and American orders) is being challenged by a growing number of independent countries which want to be free of US hegemony. The Kazan events have been largely ignored or played down by the western media – only being

mentioned in the context of making snide remarks about Vladimir Putin. In fact the conference was a diplomatic triumph for the Russian leader whom the Western powers demonise and hate.

BRICS continues to grow and has become a major political force seeking to counter-balance western influence in global institutions. The Kazan meeting concluded with a pledge to include 13 additional countries including Turkey, Cuba, Indonesia and Vietnam. The rapidly expanding alliance already represents half of the world’s population. Members do not see the grouping as being anti-Western but condemn the unfair sanctions, trade restrictions and open aggression that reinforces US hegemony.

BRICS called for an enhanced role for the Global South. A chance to recover from huge debt burdens and to resist US protectionism and unfair competition. The Final Declaration agreed to accelerate the establishment of an independent global financial system in addition to reforming both the IMF and World Trade Organisation. Calls were also made to seek reform of the United Nations to include a greater representation for Global South nations.

Unprecedented changes are taking place on the global stage. Imperialist domination will soon be just a bad dream. Bring it on.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Dear Comrades

A guerrilla war has finally begun in Ukraine, and because of the departure of young people schools are closing. Ukrainian military commissars who kidnap people to be sent to the front were expelled from the market in Odessa. Russian troops have taken the small towns of Katerinovka and Izmailovka, cleared

the cities of Gornyak and Alexandropol from the Ukrainian Nazis, and raised the red banner over Gornyak. In Sumy, after the Russian missile attack, the lights went out, and an air alert was announced in Kiev. Two-thousand Ukrainian Nazis are surrounded in the Kursk region, and they will soon be destroyed. Soon Russian troops will clear cities such as Seversk, Pokrovsk, Chas and Kupyansk from the Ukrainian Nazis.

Boris Ikhlov

Dear Comrades

The past few months have been enormously consequential for the anti-imperialist resistance. Beginning with the telecommunications sabotage, the Zionist regime unleashed a brutal war on the people of Lebanon, first by air and sea, followed by an ongoing ground invasion. After a year of genocide, the Zionist regime shows no sign of stopping their war on the Palestinian people. There has only been an intensification of the war coupled with a denial of the most basic humanitarian assistance for the people in Gaza.

The recent assassinations of Ismail Haniyeh, Hassan Nasrallah and Yahya Sinwar have shown the depth of the struggle against Zionism and the sacrifice needed to confront it. In response to the assassinations of Haniyeh, Nasrallah and Iranian General Abbas Nilforoushan, the Islamic Republic of Iran unleashed nearly 200 ballistic missiles on the Zionist state, targeting military and intelligence sites including the headquarters of Mossad. The strike was successful, showing the weakness of the so-called “Iron Dome”.

In Eastern Europe, Ukrainian forces invaded the Kursk region of the Russian Federation, escalating and intensifying the

continued on page 9...

Diary

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

UNTIL 30 DEC

People’s History Museum: Banner Exhibition, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER.

UNTIL APRIL 2025

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

UNTIL 15 NOV

PCS: 40th anniversary of the ban on trade unions at GCHQ Cheltenham. Exhibition 09:00–16:00 weekdays. PCS headquarters, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN.

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.

SUN 3 NOV

River Action UK: March for Clean Water. Assemble 11:00, Albert Embankment, Lambeth, London SE1 for march to Parliament.

MON 4 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: British Labour History 1780–1990: Labour, Race & Empire. Six online weekly classes on Mondays 19:00. Book on MML website.

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.

THUR 14 NOV

Musicians for Peace and Disarmament’s Concert for Peace. 19:30–21:00, St James’s Piccadilly, 197 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9LL. Details and booking on CND website.

THUR 14–TUE 26 NOV

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Speaking Tour: Keith Bolender on What will the next US president mean for Cuba? London, Norwich, Liverpool and Kenilworth. See CSC website for details.

FRI 15–SAT 16 NOV 2024

Havana Glasgow Film Festival. CCA, 350 Sauchihall Street, Glasgow G2 2JD.

SAT 16 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Boycott Barclays – Day of Action. Nationwide events. See PSC for local actions.

SAT 16 NOV

Liberation (formerly Movement for Colonial Freedom) 70th Anniversary commemoration. Cypriot Community Centre, Earlam Grove, London N22 5HJ. Register on Liberation website.

SUN 17 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: Marj Mayo on Engels as Popular Educator: Making Marx Accessible. 19:00, In person and online. Book on MML website.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday.

You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@NCP.clara.net

...continued from page 8

conflict. Cheered on by the West, Ukrainian forces pushed into the Russian Federation before being beaten back. In the meantime, Russia has made significant gains in the Donbas. The Ukrainians continue to seek permission to use more advanced missiles to target deep within Russian territory. Most recently, Zelensky spoke of the Ukrainian desire to acquire nuclear weapons. This was a red line and was immediately condemned by Russian officials. The possibility of confrontation between NATO and Russia continues to grow.

In our own countries, our movements face growing repression and McCarthyism, often dismantling historic democratic constitutional rights. The governments aligned with imperialism use fear and division as tools to silence dissent and undermine movements in solidarity with Palestine and advocating peace with Russia. The same forces that seek to crush the rights of the Palestinian people also aim to stifle revolutionary voices at home, labelling them as threats to public order and national security.

We stand resolutely in solidarity with those fighting against imperialism and for self-determination. This violence is not an isolated act but part of a broader system of oppression targeting those who resist genocide, Zionist colonial domination, and military occupation. We understand that the struggles of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples are intrinsically linked to our fight. It is our duty to stand against the criminalisation of those who advocate for peace, justice and an end to imperialism. We reject the narrative that equates dissent with treason. Only united can we confront both the violence abroad and the repression at home.

Anti-imperialist Camp Berlin

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

At a time when workers at the Grangemouth refinery are facing up to redundancy, 160 jobs at bus manufacturer Alexander Dennis jobs in Scotland are at risk and 440 people may lose their jobs at the Mitsubishi factory in West Lothian, it is good to report on one growth area in the Scottish economy. This is in the field of Scottish Government “communications staff” – which we called press or public relations officers in days gone by.

The SNP Government spends £4.2 million on 50 of these essential workers. They boast that the latest figure is a mere one per cent increase from last year; but it is 47 per cent above the pre-COVID level in 2019–20, when more people were needed to tell people to stay at home and wash their hands. This comes at a time when Finance Secretary Shona Robison moans that she does not get enough money from Westminster.

Chris Murray, the new Labour MP for Edinburgh

East and Musselburgh, complained that: “Everywhere I turn in the community there are brutal cuts being made,” claiming that: “Brilliant organisations are losing their funding for amazing projects. But the Scottish government spends £4 million on its own press officers.”

He also pointed out that: “These millions do not even paint the full picture given the SNP also shell out money on external companies to help try and spin them in a positive light.” Instead: “This is money that would have been better off spent supporting our overwhelmed public services which the SNP have cut to the bone... The SNP should be focused on the bread-and-butter issues that matter to Scots, rather than letting spin-doctor spending hit record highs.”

Despite the large number of press officers the SNP are not always keen on communicating information about certain matters. One of these is to do with the expenses involved in the large numbers of ministers and advisors who found it necessary to fly off to Germany this summer to watch the Scottish football team face their inevitable defeat in the German hosted UEFA Euros.

It has been discovered that the First Minister was accompanied by six offi-

cials. Culture Minister Angus Robertson and Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sports Minister Maree Todd also had accompanying officials, giving rise to the quip that the officials alone could have formed a full team on the pitch. All this cost the taxpayers £24,233.70 with the three ministers watching a single match each. To be fair this would have been a distressing experience for them, as watching the Scottish football team does little for mental well-being.

Swinney alone needed a special adviser, a private secretary, a communications officer, two policy officers and an events officer simply to help him perform his duties of watching a single match and opening a “football zone” in Munich which was a collection of video screens and bars in a park.

This gallivanting was justified by claims that ministers advanced “Scottish and Baden-Württemberg relations”, although this correspondent was not aware that they needed repairing or were of any importance whatsoever. At least Sir Keir Starmer confines his football freebies to his local ground (though it is Arsenal after all).

Legal Wars

Another, and a more important, matter the SNP were keen to keep under wraps until the very last minute was the release of legal documents relating to a probe into whether or not Nicola Sturgeon breached the Ministerial Code while First Minister. The issue in question was that she had misled Holyrood MSPs about the mishandled investigation of harassment complaints against her predecessor, the late Alex Salmond. The documents were eventually released last Saturday when people were otherwise occupied.

The Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) has denounced ministers for spending two-and-a-

half-years and £30,000 in lawyers’ fees to prevent the publication of legal advice about the case. The main finding was that the lawyers told the SNP they had virtually no case, but they carried on with delaying tactics regardless. John Swinney was one of those anxious to continue fighting a lost cause. The SIC also complains that ministers gave him false information.

The Commissioner, David Hamilton, said: “We have now learnt that Scottish ministers were advised that prospects of winning this appeal were ‘not strong’ and indeed diminished as advice developed,” adding that the applicant’s request for information to which this appeal related was delayed for two-and-a-half years, which is wholly unacceptable and as a result the substantive information initially requested still remains under investigation.

When the documents were grudgingly released demands were made for yet another inquiry into Madame Sturgeon’s actions because the present inquiry has actually involved the very same civil servants who were involved in the original investigation into sex claims against Alex Salmond that saw him in court.

Alba Party leader Kenny MacAskill, who was sacked as Justice Secretary at the beginning of Nicola Sturgeon’s reign, got his revenge by saying: “They have gone to great lengths to avoid publishing this information. Now we know why. They were warned by their own lawyers there was insufficient distance between the government and what was meant to be an independent inquiry.”

He also complained that: “This casts a long shadow over its findings, some of which remain redacted. There is surely a prima facie case for the inquiry to be re-run, as this undermines public confidence in both the inquiry

process and its conclusions.”

Two of Sturgeon’s old enemies, Fergus Ewing and Joanna Cherry KC, teamed up to put the boot in saying that the revelations raised important questions over whom the present SNP Government was “trying to protect”. That is not a difficult one to work out...

Greens at War

Meanwhile the Scottish Greens are plotting their revenge from being ejected from the ministerial perks earlier this year by former First Minister Humza Yousaf. They are threatening to withdraw support for the minority SNP Government unless they are allowed to veto the forthcoming Scottish Budget that will be presented in early December. Given the party balance at Holyrood this is a distinct possibility and could even lead to early Holyrood elections. They want the nationalists to reverse the broken promises made by the SNP government since the end of the Bute House [power-sharing] Agreement.

Spitting blood, Green Co-leader Patrick Harvie reminded John Swinney that as the minority Greens are “the only party that ever brought down an SNP budget, as John Swinney knows to his cost, we need to be clear that they cannot take our votes for granted”.

THE NEW WORKER

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Stopping the racists in London

by New Worker correspondent

Over 20,000 activists turned out in London last Saturday to confront the “Unite the Kingdom” protest by supporters of Tommy Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, the third major far-right gathering in London since just before the riots in June.

The protest, part of a nationwide day of action, was called by Stand Up to Racism with the slogans “Stop Tommy Robinson – Stop the Far Right, unite against racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism”.

The march was backed by the TUC, 14 major trade



unions and many other organisations. ASLEF leader Mick Whelan told the pro-

testors at the start of the march in Piccadilly Circus: “This is my London. This is

who we are, what we stand for. Those people down the road do not speak for us.”

Originally billed as a triumphal appearance by Robinson in Trafal-

gar Square, the massively promoted and mis-named “Unite the Kingdom” march from Victoria to Parliament Square turned out to be a flop after he handed himself in at a police station in Folkestone last Friday. He had fled the UK the day before a High Court appearance in June and faces several charges.

His supporters waved Israeli flags and “Make America Great” banners, but their hour of glory completely failed to get off the ground. As the mass protests against the far right rioters in June showed, the anti-racist movement will always dwarf the far-right, which is only supported by a tiny minority of Britain’s people.

The other Russian revolutionaries

REVIEW

by Ben Soton

Felix Volkhovskii – A Revolutionary Life by Michael Hughes; Open Book Publishers, 356pp, rrp: £22.95.

When it comes to the Russian Revolution this paper tends to give wholehearted backing to Lenin and his group, the Majority Faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), more commonly known as the Bolsheviks. This is not to say there were no other grouping and individuals working to bring about the end of Absolutism in Czarist Russia. One such individual was Felix Volkhovskii, the subject of Michael

Hughes’ book.

Volkhovskii was born in 1846, in what is now Ukraine; his parents were from a minor aristocratic family and he led a privileged life. He became involved in opposition politics whilst studying in St Petersburg and was eventually exiled to Siberia. In 1890 he left Russia first to the USA and then to Britain where, despite a brief return to his homeland around the time of the 1905 revolution, he spent the rest of his life. Whilst in exile he was heavily involved with the Society for Friends of Russia Freedom and edited its publication *Free Russia*. He died in 1914, three years before the overthrow of the Czar.

The book gives a detailed study of the various organisations in opposition to the Czarist autocracy. These included Liberals who favoured reform but

opposed any significant social change and the various revolutionary groups

who supported social and political change through revolution. Meanwhile the



FELIKS VOLKHOVSKII
A REVOLUTIONARY LIFE

MICHAEL HUGHES

book also explains the shift in emphasis away from the rural peasantry to the urban working class as the main revolutionary force. The strategy was ultimately taken up by the Lenin and the Bolsheviks who carried out the world’s first socialist revolution.

Volkhovskii, who later joined the Social Revolutionary Party, often referred to as SRs, favoured a broad front which include both Revolutionaries and Liberals. History later proved this to be a pipe dream, with Russian Liberals being more fearful of the working class than the Czar. Indeed many Russian capitalists who upheld the liberal ideology had close connections with the Czarist state and the imperial court. It took the crisis brought about by the First World War to bring an end to both the Czar and Russian capitalism, at least

for a few decades.

The book is in many ways an odyssey through the complex myriads of Russian opposition politics from the 1870s to the outbreak of the First World War as well as what could be described as the Russian solidarity movement in Britain. However it gives little mention to either faction of the RSDLP and leaders such as Lenin and Stalin, or for that matter Trotsky. Instead it features less well-known figures from the Social Revolutionary Party. The book may be an attempt on the part of certain sections of academia, motivated by either anti-communism or Russophobia to create a narrative that the Russian Revolution was essentially high-jacked by authoritarians whilst true revolutionaries, such as Volkhovskii, have been overlooked. We know better!

USA and Israel: an axis of terror

by William Briggs

An 'axis of terror' is operating in Gaza, in Lebanon, in the West Bank, in Syria. It's the Israeli military, backed by the USA.

Israel is seeking to break the Palestinian people's will by brutality and terror. Terrorism, as a weapon is nothing new but its perpetrators rarely learn from the past. Israel, a terror state, is proving this on a daily basis.

Israel bombs a hospital tent camp in Deir al-Balah in Gaza. People are burned alive. The Palestinian people do not surrender. Images of Israeli soldiers are shown celebrating the destruction of the Lebanese village of Mhaibib. The Lebanese are not cowed. These are just two of the many acts of mass terror perpetrated by Israel.

Every atrocity committed by Israel simply stiffens the resolve to resist aggression and occupation. The people of Lebanon are not about to succumb to state terror.

There are acts of mass terrorism and there are acts of individual terrorism. An attack on an individual, an assassination, a targeted killing, is always a sign of political weakness. Israel has chosen to murder individual leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah as if that will somehow destroy a movement that is deeply connected to and exists among the people.

The most recent

assassination is that of Hamas leader, Yahya Sinwar. The killing was praised by Western leaders and Israel. News reports showed Israeli beach-goers cheering loudly. Graphic footage of his death has been posted.

The imagery was designed, as is any other video posted by any other terrorist group, to instil fear. It has already had

died". In 2024, Biden has called Sinwar's death a "moment of justice".

Biden publicly urged his Israeli ally to "make this moment an opportunity" – to end the attacks in Gaza and to find a way to a ceasefire.

It is highly unlikely that anyone hearing those words would believe them. The American leader has made the same

12 months. Northern Gaza has been blockaded and life has become impossible.

Israel has effectively blocked the entry of food and water into the area. September and October have seen the lowest volume of humanitarian aid entering Gaza since March.

If there was even a glimmer of reality behind Biden's words, there might be

done it, as required by law ... after 30 days they'll thank Israel for easing some restrictions (which still won't meet the legal requirement) and keep the ammunition flowing".

The fact that the USA chose to take this moment to send advanced anti-missile systems and troops to Israel makes an absolute mockery of any talk

sassination, Netanyahu said that the "task before us is not yet complete".

After calling Israel "the forces of good", the Israeli leader said that the war "is still ongoing." It was a chilling speech. The terror that Israel will continue.

While raining death and destruction upon the heads of Palestinians and now the Lebanese, he portrayed his regime as fighting for safety, security, and Israel's very existence. Then, just on the off-chance that anyone was unsure of his intent, he added that "we will not stop the war. We will go into Rafah".

None of this could be said, considered, let alone carried out without the assurance of support from Washington. Netanyahu's words are not the words of a madman. His every move is calculated to achieve political success and longevity for himself. That is certain. It also plays to a constituency that is calling for a 'Greater Israel'. That too is clear. There is another dark note to his words and deeds. Israel does not act alone. It works in tandem with the USA for control of the region. This must mean the stifling of Palestinian aspirations to statehood and the subjugation of any state in the region that opposes US domination. An axis of terror is enveloping the Middle East.



• October rally for Palestine in London's Trafalgar Square

the opposite reaction from the opponents of Israeli occupation, even as the leaders of the world's 'democracies' gloat.

A few years ago when Muammar Gaddafi, the legitimate leader of Libya, was brutally murdered, the then US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton laughed saying "We came. We saw. He

speech time and time again.

Just as convincing, Biden has 'threatened' that he might order a cut to the arms shipments that allow the attacks to go ahead if Israel denies access to more humanitarian aid. He gave Israel 30 days to do something in response to some of the worst excesses thus far seen in the last

room for optimism.

The blockade and Israel's refusal to allow sufficient aid to enter Gaza is a violation of US law. This should make Israel ineligible to receive armaments or other security assistance. Matt Duss, from the US Centre for International Policy has remarked that "if [Biden] was serious he would've already

of restraining Netanyahu.

The talk of using the murder of Yahya Sinwar as an 'opportunity' to press forward and end the conflict has similarly been proven to be a sham.

The Israeli prime minister has made his strategy clear. In a media conference that celebrated the Hamas leader's as-

Another victory for Cuba at the United Nations

by María Josefina Arce

It was another historic day at the UN headquarters in New York. Once again, the world has overwhelmingly condemned the genocidal blockade that the USA has maintained against the Cuban people for more than six decades, in clear violation of international law.

One hundred and eighty-seven countries voted in favour

of the draft resolution presented by Cuba on the need to put an end to this hostile policy, which has caused the Caribbean nation more than five billion dollars in damages between March 2023 and February 2024.

The isolation of the USA was once again evident, supported as usual only by its unconditional ally, Israel, while Moldova abstained.

This is the 32nd time since 1992 that the UN General Assem-

bly has expressed its rejection of the economic siege, which was intensified during the Trump administration (2017–2021) with more than 240 measures and maintained under the presidency of Joe Biden.

From March 2023 to February 2024, Cuba denounced the US actions that were aimed at identifying and persecuting the main sources of income of the Cuban economy.

The interventions

by representatives of various countries and regional organisations once again showed that the world rejects Washington's blockade of Cuba, the longest and most comprehensive system of unilateral coercive measures ever imposed on a nation.

CARICOM, the Caribbean Community, reaffirmed that there is no legitimate justification for the coercive measures against the largest island in the Antilles, while CELAC, the Community of Latin

American and Caribbean States, pointed out that the application of sanctions that are not supported by international law, nor by the letter, spirit or purposes and principles of the UN Charter, is incongruous.

The vote was preceded by numerous demonstrations of solidarity with Cuba in recent months in various countries around the world and in many cities in the USA.

The resounding

victory at the UN is a sign of immense solidarity with the Cuban people, who, as many affirm, have the right to live without a blockade and to travel in peace along their chosen path.

This was stressed by the Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, who said that the dignity of the Cuban people and universal solidarity had once again defeated the USA.

Radio Havana Cuba

Gazan paramedic finds his own mother's body

by Ed Newman

A Palestinian paramedic has gone through a heart-wrenching experience after discovering that the body he was carrying on a stretcher following an Israeli airstrike on central Gaza was none other than his own mother.

Abed Bardini was in one of the two ambulances dispatched to the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, which was targeted by the Israeli occupation regime on Wednesday. Palestinian health officials said three people had been killed and at

least 10 wounded in the attack.

"Oh God, I swear – she's my mother! I didn't know it was her!" Bardini sobbed as he leaned over his mother, Samira, cradling her head in his arms as fellow Red Crescent medics tried to console him.

Bardini had unknowingly sat in the ambulance beside her body wrapped in a blood-stained white sheet as the vehicle bounced across broken roads to reach al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

Having arrived at the medical facility, he unloaded the stretch-



er, squinting into the late afternoon sun as he wheeled the body across the hospital courtyard.

The hospital staff pulled back the blanket to check Samira for signs of life and Bardini's strength collapsed. He later sat in the morgue beside her mother's body with his head in his hands.

Bardini's Red Crescent colleagues held a funeral prayer over her body in the parking lot, and then Bardini personally helped carry the body into an ambulance for burial.

Israel began a

genocidal onslaught on Gaza on 7th October 2023, after Hamas-led resistance groups carried out a historic operation against the Zionist entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the Israeli aggressors have killed at least 43,163 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 101,510 others in the besieged Gaza.

In its brutal aggression, Israel has committed war crimes and deliberately targeted buildings and tents sheltering displaced Palestinians.

Radio Havana Cuba