

Famine as an act of war – Zionist war-crimes in Gaza

by Ed Newman

The United Nations humanitarian aid chief told a meeting of the UN Security Council that “acts reminiscent of the gravest international crimes” are being committed in Gaza where Israel’s military continues to bombard, besiege and prevent aid from reaching the civilian population.

Addressing the UN Security Council in New York, Joyce Msuya, the interim chief of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), described Israel’s month-long ground offensive and ongoing siege of northern Gaza as an “intensified, extreme, and accelerated version of the horrors of the past year” in the Palestinian territory.

Palestinian civilians have been driven from their homes by Israel’s military and “forced to witness their family members killed, burned and buried alive” in Gaza, which Msuya described as “a wasteland of rubble”.

“We are witnessing acts reminiscent of the gravest international crimes” she warned the Council meeting. “The daily cruelty we see in Gaza seems to have no limits,” she said, firmly pointing the finger of blame at Israel for blocking aid from entering Gaza’s besieged north.

“As I brief you, Israeli author-



• What’s left of northern Gaza.

ities are blocking humanitarian assistance from entering North Gaza, where fighting continues and around 75,000 people remain with dwindling water and food supplies,” she said.

Msuya also called out the indiscriminate destruction of Gaza after more than a year of Israeli attacks. “What distinction was made and what precautions were taken, if more than 70 per cent of civilian housing is either damaged or destroyed?”

The meeting of the Security Council was called by Guyana, Switzerland, Algeria and Slovenia following a report by international food security experts who said the humanitarian situation in Gaza was “extremely grave and rapidly deteriorating” and warned of an imminent famine in parts of the north.

Israel’s UN Ambassador, Danny Danon, called the reports of possible famine in northern Gaza “baseless and slanderous”. He told reporters before the Security Council meeting that the situation in Gaza, including

the north, had improved since October.

Earlier, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said October saw the lowest amount of humanitarian aid enter Gaza this year, and that the war-torn enclave had received “nowhere near what we need to support more than two million Palestinians”.

Dujarric said that for a second month, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) was only able to reach half the people who rely on UN assistance in Gaza, and only with reduced rations.

A convoy of 14 trucks had planned to deliver humanitarian supplies to shelters for displaced people in north Gaza’s Beit Hanoun and the Indonesian Hospital in the Jabalia refugee camp on Monday, but only two trucks with ready-to-eat meals, wheat flour and one carrying water made it to two shelters.

The other trucks in the aid convoy were unable to make their deliveries because of delays in receiving authorisation from Israeli authorities as well as due

ceived any food assistance, he said. The WFP had planned another mission to Beit Hanoun to reach the rest of the shelters and the hospital on Tuesday, but he said that “those missions have been denied” by Israel.

“We continue to call for the immediate opening of more land routes into Gaza and for the lifting of administrative and physical restrictions within Gaza to efficiently reach the most vulnerable people and areas,” Dujarric said.

Palestine’s UN envoy, Riyad Mansour, told the Security Council meeting that Israel has chosen to perpetrate “famine as a method of war” in a process of ethnic cleansing in Gaza. “Everything we warned against, everything Israel denied, is happening before our eyes,” he said. “We are at the last stages of an orchestrated plan to empty wide areas of Gaza from its Palestinian population.”

Radio Havana Cuba

FUND

This month’s appeal has started with £502 in the bag and the usual mountain to climb to hit our £3,500 target. But November is the month when we remember all those who died in the imperialist wars of the 20th Century and those who fought to build and defend the world’s first socialist republic – the Soviet revolution that ended the First World War and the Soviet Union that ended the Second when the Red Army took Berlin in 1945. Their struggle and sacrifice is an inspiration to communists and freedom-fighters all over the world. In Britain communists are at the front in the campaign for peace and the fight-back against austerity and we play our part – as we have done since 1977. But we can only do so with your help.

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

People's China leads the way

The UN Climate Change Conference kicked off in Baku, the capital of the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, this week, amid hopes that the COP29 summit will bolster climate finance, carbon trading and the global transition from fossil fuels. Keir Starmer was there, pledging to reduce carbon emissions by 81 per cent relative to 1990 levels by 2035. But this did little to off-set the fear amongst the leaders of the Global South that the new Trump administration in the USA will seriously undermine international efforts to deal with the ecological crisis.

Donald Trump is a climate change denier who serves the interests of the big American oil and gas corporations. "We have more liquid gold than any country in the world," Trump said during his victory speech, a statement backed by the CEO of the American Petroleum Institute who said that "energy was on the ballot, and voters sent a clear signal that they want choices, not mandates".

During his first presidential term Trump withdrew from the Paris Agreement, the 2015 international climate accord which guides the actions of more than 195 countries, rolled back 100-plus environmental rules and opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. The Biden administration managed to undo some of these measures but Trump has pledged to reverse them during his second term. Climate change campaigners believe that this could lead to a rise of an additional four billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere – equalling the combined annual emissions of the EU and Japan.

But while the Trump Team turns its back on scientific opinion at home and abroad, People's China is leading the way with its carbon-peak and carbon-neutrality goals, accelerating the comprehensive green transformation of its economy and society.

China is now an indispensable nation for global climate efforts, says former UN Under-Secretary-General Erik Solheim, adding that it is essentially "impossible for the world to go green without China".

China plays an important role in the global green energy transition, accounting for 60 per cent or more of global production in key green sectors, including solar, wind and hydropower, as well as electric cars and batteries. The former UN official stressed the need for more investment to tackle climate challenges, saying multilateral platforms, such as BRICS, are increasingly significant for addressing climate change.

"BRICS has become very important since that's an avenue for the Global South to come together and lead the world," he said, adding that the initiative will move to countries of the Global South. "The 'Belt and Road Initiative' has recently turned into a major vehicle for green investment in the world, in solar, wind, hydropower and green corridors."

Whether COP29 can be a climate conference that upholds commitments and makes progress in climate institutional innovation remains to be seen. Time is of the essence. During the opening ceremony, COP29 President Mujtar Babaiev, the Azerbaijani Minister of Economy and Natural Resources, warned: "We are heading for ruin. And it's not about future problems. Climate change is already here, the moment of truth has arrived."

Still repeating the same old mistakes?

by Mark Blacklock

The British government announced on Wednesday that it is forcing a Chinese company to sell its 80.2 per cent stake in a Scottish microchip manufacturer. Even though it has broken no laws, rules, regulations or sanctions, it is somehow poses "risks to national security". An official statement claimed the Glasgow-based tech firm FTDI risked operating in a way "contrary to UK national security". Yet, instead of requiring FTDI to change its ways, the UK instead punished its largest shareholder, Beijing-based and China-registered Future Technology Devices International Holding Ltd.

If Britain is sincere in resetting relations with China, it must be consistent. Three years ago, Britain approved the same holding company's majority stake in FTDI, knowing it traded with Russia, legally and transparently. Now, however, after a single – legally sold – chip was allegedly found in a destroyed Russian tank, Britain has punished the firm, not by tightening up on its own sanctions regime but by ordering the Chinese owner to sell its stake. The fault seems

not to have been with the sale of any chips but with the nationality of ownership. It is just the latest example of the mixed messages emanating from Downing Street about its developing relationship with China. How is this different from the approach to China of this government's inconsistent predecessors? It's a tough question to answer.

Since winning July's General Election and coming to power, Sir Keir Starmer's administration has contradictorily pledged to reset China-UK relations, sent warships into the South China Sea and declared an intention to renew economic co-operation. Last week, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced a financial policy whose precise function is to target China's critical mineral sector, an unnecessarily confrontational action.

Other messages have seemed positive. Ahead of foreign secretary David Lammy's trip to Beijing and Shanghai in mid-October, Downing Street signalled that it was time to reset the China-UK relationship, following years of tension, anti-China sentiment and hyped allegations over human rights and spying. Starmer's official spokesman stated: "It's all about bringing a

consistent, long-term and strategic approach to managing the UK's position on China." So far, so good.

Days later, however, Starmer went negative and announced plans to increase the Royal Navy's presence in the South China Sea, and to take part in more joint patrols in the region to counter what the West characterises as "China's influence". This is a curious choice of phrase as China is operating in its own backyard and the only evidence of anyone seeking to increase influence in the area is the growing presence of foreign warships in an ocean about 6,000 miles from London.

Then last week Britain flipped back to positive when Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said he was open to reviving the UK-China Joint Economic and Trade Commission, which was suspended in 2019 by the then prime minister Theresa May's government.

Changing back to negative within days, Reeves unveiled a budget with measures targeting Chinese interests by offering favourable state-backed loans to British companies that import lithium, cobalt and graphite into the UK for use in EV battery production, aerospace industries, electronic goods and other areas. Here, China is the major supplier of the world's critical minerals, and it is China against which this measure is aimed.

In international relations, there should always be room to accommodate disagreements between countries. It should be possible for two nations to have profound geopolitical differences but a healthy economic relationship. It is also crucial that there is consistency. Starmer himself has recognised that previous British governments had a track record of ambiguity and capriciousness. In what both sides hope is to be a new era of beneficial association, the new government in Downing Street should take care not to repeat the foreign policy mistakes of its predecessors.



Workers' Notes

NCP leader Andy Brooks joined protesters outside the BBC HQ in London on Tuesday calling for an end to the demonising of the DPR Korea by the state-owned broadcasting service. A letter of protest from the Korean Friendship Association (KFA) to the Director-General and Management board of the BBC was handed to a member of the BBC staff.

Dermot Hudson, the Chair of KFA, said: "We are here today to protest against the BBC's persistent demonisation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or People's Korea. No country – apart from maybe Russia and the former Soviet Union – has been lied about

Defend People's Korea!



more by the BBC than the DPRK. Recently, the BBC or British Brainwashing Corporation has tried to blame the DPRK over the conflict in Ukraine making false allegations and quoted unconfirmed rumours and misleading reports.

"The BBC is an official state broadcaster. It is not independent but run by the British government. It is closely linked to British imperialism and US imperialism..."

"The BBC promotes the ideology of market totalitarianism and liberal fascism. The BBC is a tool of the ruling elite and the big monopoly corporations. What is disgusting is that not only does the BBC lie about People's Korea but it expects us to pay for its lies in the form of the BBC licence fee which is £169 per year."

The Working Day and Working Week

by New Worker correspondent

One of the major objects of the trade union movement has been to secure reductions in the working day. This cause has sometimes been popular with the bourgeoisie as well as workers. When the industrial revolution brought about long hours in the dark satanic mills shortening the working day was a popular cause among Tory landlords, as long as it did not apply to their agricultural labourers. The bourgeoisie also took an interest. While they couldn't care less about the long hours in the cotton factories, they worried about the effect of railway workers falling asleep at the end of a 16-hour shift and causing death and injuries in the first-class carriages. Even some of the bigger cotton masters occasionally looked kindly on the cause if it could help put smaller rivals out of business.

Variants of the eight-hour day movement (sometimes the 40-hour week movement or the short-time movement) are

still needed for many workers despite the fact that Philip II of Spain ordered it in his American colonies in 1594, largely to keep them alive for longer.

Robert Owen introduced it at his factory at New Lanark under the slogan of "Eight hours' labour, Eight hours' recreation, Eight hours' rest", which he pinched from Alfred the Great. In 1889 it was the London gas workers who were the first to secure this right from a capitalist employer.

This was much to the approval of Karl Marx, who observed in *Das Kapital* that: "By extending the working day, therefore, capitalist production...not only produces a deterioration of human labour power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical conditions of development and activity, but also produces the premature exhaustion and death of this labour power itself." A statement as true today as it was first penned in 1867.

Reductions in hours do not always go down well with the unions. When in 1998 the fresh-faced Blair Government brought in Working Time Regulations limiting the working week to 48 hours, it was not just nose-grinding employers who objected, but some workers angry at losing overtime.

For reasons good or bad many workers see overtime as the only

way of securing a decent living. The Regulations have an opt-out clause that many workers take advantage of, which makes it something of a dead letter and allows bosses to pressurise workers against their will.

While some workers seek longer hours, such as Just Eat and Deliveroo drivers, a reduction in the working day and working week is now a major union demand.

The London Underground strikes that ASLEF and the RMT transport unions called off last week were cancelled due to the Mayor of London offering a four-day week for drivers.

Other unions are closely focusing on the hours question. PCS, the main civil service union, is also seeking a four-day week. In August it cautiously welcomed rumours that the Government was considering introducing a right for workers to request it. At the same time it warned that this was not to be confused with compressed hours, which involve longer working days, and its demands include a "shortened four-day week with no loss of pay".

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs had seen the union develop what it called "constructive engagements with management", indications that the Government is "taking seriously the idea of a four-day week, which has proved popular

with employers and workers where it has been trialled in the public and private sectors", in the words of General Secretary Fran Heathcote.

PCS has also voted to affiliate to the recently founded 4 Day Week Campaign, which helps run workplace four-day week trials. Some small businesses have taken part in these trials, but the Government is not so keen on transforming words into deeds. The Campaign claims 200 British businesses have adopted its policies. None are household names.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner was supportive of the idea last year – but that was before the general election. Civil servants are not always the most popular of workers so the idea gets very few mentions from ministers who will not be keen on raising an issue that the *Daily Mail* can be guaranteed to denounce.

Indeed, a recent PCS-backed petition at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for a four-day week was recently dismissed, with a formal reply saying the policy "is not government policy or something we are considering". However the Government has announced it is taking a "hands off" policy as regards the policy of local councils. It told South Cambridgeshire Council

that it would not oppose its decision to introduce a four-day week for its workers.

At the same time, the Cabinet Office is clamping down on working from home and has announced that civil servants must spend 60 per cent of their working time in the office, regardless of their work and personal circumstances.

Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg often grumbled about his staff working from home. Now Labour has followed suit. This demand comes despite a reduction in office space that means staff cannot be accommodated in Government offices without resorting to 'hot-desking', which means workers share desks.

Months ago PCS members in the Office for National Statistics voted for "action short of a strike" and have been working-to-rule in opposition to the directive but have not used their mandate to strike.

Last week the same union announced it was balloting civilian staff at the Metropolitan Police. Here again the issue is the imposition of a new hybrid working policy that demands an increase in the time staff have to attend the office, which will increase from 60 to 100 per cent for various staff, a move which PCS says is discriminatory against women and disabled workers.

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PCS complain that the existing policy on how many days members work from home or in the office has been in place for several years, with collective agreements in each area on blended working, and that the Met has not provided any good reasons for its change of policy.

Fran Heathcote observed that: "Yet again we are seeing an arbitrary figure chosen to decide how many days a week our members have to come into the office, when they are working perfectly well from home.

"There is no evidence people work better in the office. In fact, the opposite is true because workers are more productive when they have a better work-life balance, not having to commute and able to spend more time with their family at home before and after work. It's not too late for the Met to change their mind and

return to the blended working model that has been successful for many years."

Unions ought to be wary about working from home. Employers might embrace it in its entirety and provide exciting new opportunities for working from home to the workers in Bangalore and Manila. This has happened to many call centre workers.

Class War in Knightsbridge

by New Worker correspondent

Once again the class struggle has erupted in Knightsbridge, where workers at Harrods are balloting for industrial action that could take place just before the busy Christmas period.

In the recent past workers have taken or threatened strike action to secure decent wages for security personnel and kitchen staff. The latter deal set new standards across the catering sector. They also secured the right for workers in the store's many restaurants to keep all the tips handed over by satisfied customers. Most recently, the threat of a strike forced management to drop proposals to severely restrict the timing and length of holidays staff involved in night cleaning could take. This would have made it very difficult and

costly for the largely migrant staff to return to their home countries to visit their families.

This time it is the issue of the Christmas bonus that is being taken up by their street union, the United Voices of the World (UVW).

UVW points out that the dispute comes at a time when the store is handing out £180 million in dividends to its owner, the Qatar sovereign wealth fund, and pays £2.1 million annually in salary to its Managing Director. Hundreds of workers involved on the shop floor, restaurant, kitchen and cleaning departments are being balloted over the bonus, overwork due to staff shortages and stagnant wages.

A waitress said of her job: "It's very hard work. We have hundreds of covers each day and in the busier periods it's non-stop, we are running around most of the time and we've been struggling with staff shortages and working conditions. We really feel the standards have slipped in the last few years. The expectations of our employer have increased if anything – they always look for staff to make more money (for the business) and for that the service has to be exceptional – but when we are not given the tools to do that it can be very difficult."

She added that it is clear bosses are pocketing at least some of the tips money. Another grouse is that many benefits, such as a Christmas bonus and voluntary bank holiday work for cleaning

staff, have been whittled away. Bank holiday working is now mandatory. They also want a "meal allowance and a Xmas bonus to help us cope with the cost of living".

Across the River

The same union has also been active at another grand London institution. It has organised migrant cleaners at the massive Battersea Power Station complex, which is now occupied by posh flats and posher shops, to say nothing of an Ariel swimming pool between two buildings. In alliance with the GMB, UVW is attempting to force the owners to pay decent wages and conditions.

Two Colombian cleaners have organised the maintenance workers. They too complain about heavy workloads due to staff shortages. One said: "In just three years, there have been four managers and frequent changes in cleaning contracts. Throughout this period, staff shortages and unfilled vacancies have caused significant work overload. Holiday shifts went uncovered, forcing us to take on double or triple workloads within our contracted hours."

She added that: "Working at a prestigious place like Battersea Power Station, known for its luxury, we deserve better than sub-standard conditions. Alongside UVW and GMB unions, we're fighting for fair treatment and im-

proved rights for everyone. Since joining, things have improved because we are learning about our rights and our employers' obligations."

The workers are calling for an hourly wage of £15, well above the current London Living Wage of £13.15, which the union says is simply insufficient for the demands of life in central London. One of the organisers added that he works a minimum of 10 and a half hours daily, starting as early as 4:30, to support his family. In addition to fair pay, the cleaners are demanding a proper sick-pay scheme, as statutory sick pay means they receive nothing for the first four days and only £109 per week after.

Another demand is for a 30-minute paid breakfast break, essential for workers with long, exhausting shifts. At present over 100 people have to use a tiny kitchenette with just three microwaves.

At the same time, the cleaners' new employer OCS had a revenue of £1.7 billion in 2023 and hopes to double this within five years.

Already the mere presence of the unions has led to slight improvements with workers no longer afraid to ask for what's fair and they have officially submitted demands in writing. UVW reports that: "Pressure to overwork has eased, and we hope the new OCS management will recognise the union and address our concerns."

The NCP badge



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

12th November 2004

AROUND 200,000 civil servants belonging to the PCS union took strike action last Friday, in the biggest strike of its kind for more than a decade, in a protest at Government plans to cut 100,000 civil service jobs.

The strike was also notable for the tremendous support and solidarity given by other unions, especially those which also represent public sector workers.

Job centres and benefit offices were closed, nobody in

Nottingham took a driving test, the British Museum was closed along with the Science Museum and the British Library, and Government ministers had to clean their own cars for the day. The Royal Parks went unstaffed, and the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise offices had to cope with just skeleton staff.

After the strike PCS issued a statement: "Today has been a fantastic show of strength by our members, sending a very clear message to the Government that civil and public servants have had enough; the union and members will not stand by and see our jobs cut, our pensions and conditions attacked and public services decimated."

Among the many solidarity messages from other unions was this one from Kevin Curran, general secretary of GMB, speaking at strike rally in Manchester: "The GMB has over 260,000 members working across the public sector. We stand opposed to the 104,000 thousand job cuts that civil servants in the PCs are facing."

Dave Prentis, general secretary of giant public service

union Unison, also speaking at a strike rally, compared the Government's policy to a Dutch auction.

"There is something sickening about watching Labour and the Tories engaged in a Dutch auction over how many civil service jobs they can get rid of," he said.

"The PCS case against these cuts is cast iron. The civil service employs fewer people that used to. Central government provides essential services that enable us to deliver at local level. The cohesion of public service provision is in danger of being undermined by these cuts. The distinction between by front- and back-office staff is bizarre and anti-social."

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT transport union, told a London strike rally: "Our colleagues in PCS are fighting not only for their members jobs but also the defence of essential public services."

There was also international solidarity from Public Service International, a global federation representing 20 million workers.

For a genuine working-class party

Last month the NCP and the RCPB (ML) held a seminar to look at the challenges facing the communist movement following Labour's victory in the summer general election. Both parties believe this is a discussion that needs to be taken throughout the labour movement. At the seminar Ian Donovan spoke on behalf of the Consistent Democrats, a Trotskyist movement that takes its name from a famous phrase of Lenin's, and has, over the years, supported a number of NCP initiatives including the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign. This is Ian's contribution.

Starmer's Labour is the least popular new British government after 100 days in office than any in living memory. The Tory government it replaced was an absolute shambles, led initially by the public school right-wing populist Johnson, whose corruption and penchant for pathological lying were legendary. When he had to fall on his sword having been caught partying when the population at large was locked down during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, he was replaced by Liz Truss, the shortest-serving Prime Minister in British history, whose 2022 mini-budget with her Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng introduced massive, unfunded tax cuts for the very rich in such a way as to spook the capitalist market and cause a near-collapse of the British economy. When she was forced out after only 45 days, she was replaced by Rishi Sunak, the husband of an Indian IT heiress richer than the British monarch, who, like John Major at the end of his 1992–7 Tory

premiership, struggled and juggled for nearly two years with multiple crises in a government that had obviously completely run out of steam.

But after only 100 days in office, Starmer's approval ratings dipped below those of Sunak, who is still caretaker Tory leader while they tear themselves apart trying to elect his successor!

A key starting point of this was the government's refusal to abolish the Tories' brutal two-child benefit cap, which condemns millions of working-class children to dire poverty and even homelessness. Popular hostility to Starmer's government then exploded with his attack on poor and middle-class pensioners, subjecting their annual winter fuel payment, previously a universal payment, to draconian means testing so that nine million pensioners, whose income is just above the threshold for pension credit, will have their winter fuel payments of around £300 taken away. They lost the vote at Labour Party conference on this, but of course the government does not take any notice of things like

that – Starmer's regime is implacably hostile to the trade unions.

The new government abolished the Tories' brutal scheme to deport refugees to Rwanda, but only because it was considered an expensive failure, not for any reason of principle. In fact, Starmer has been off to Albania trying to arrange a cheaper replacement. The Blairite Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, ordered a massive series of immigration raids across the country in July, almost as soon as they took office. The anti-migrant, Islamophobic riots incited by far-right Zionist helpmates in August were seen as a 'law and order' problem, not a problem of racism, and the government had nothing to do with the mass mobilisations of socialists and anti-racists that stopped the wave of attempted pogroms. On the contrary, they instructed MPs and councillors not to go on anti-fascist demonstrations, and in some cases suspended those who did and were too outspoken against the far-right terrorists who were burning down mosques and refugee accommodation and vio-

lently attacking people for having the 'wrong' colour skin. They have also been instructing the cops to harass anti-racists and pro-Palestine protesters and arrest them, often on phoney charges of supporting 'terrorism' (resistance to genocide) and 'anti-Semitism', just as much as the Tory regime did.

Starmer and his neo-liberal clique are more worried about satisfying their Israel lobby donors and more general corporate sponsors than the working class, trade unions and oppressed minorities. This has manifested itself in the sleaze scandal, of Starmer and his ministers receiving gifts of luxury items from 'donors' who have nothing to do with the labour movement, which has discredited them the way similar scandals discredited the Tories. Though, like a classic bourgeois liberal party, which they aspire to project themselves as to the ruling class, they must make some gestures to the unions, they keep them as far away as possible from influencing policy. This has even upset Starmer's most virulent supporter

and apologist from the trade union bureaucracy, UNITE's pro-Zionist semi-syndicalist Sharon Graham. Her leadership has actively sought to suppress political opposition to Starmer within the union, echoing the fake 'anti-Semitism' witch-hunt against militants within UNITE sympathetic to Jeremy Corbyn, and banning the showing of films about the witch-hunt within the union. But even she was not able to endorse Starmer's General Election manifesto, and does not endorse his tepid softening of some Tory anti-union attacks, as they do not remotely meet the concerns even of the union bureaucracy.

Starmer's government did not come to power on the back of a wave of working-class support and anger, and determination to sweep away the brutal Tories. Everyone with the slightest political consciousness in Britain knew Starmer as the political assassin of Jeremy Corbyn, whose main purpose was to smash the resurgent left that brought Corbyn to the labour leadership

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in 2015 and within a whisker of unseating Theresa May's Tories in the 2017 General Election. In 2017 Corbyn's Labour got 40 per cent of the vote, nearly 13 million votes (12.87 million to be exact). In 2019, Corbyn's Labour got 10.29 million votes, but a resurgent right-wing populist Tory party meant they got only 32.1 percent. In 2024 Starmer got only 9.7 million votes, which amounted to a higher percentage, 33.6 per cent, only because of a considerably lower turnout. This was not a class vote based on working-class enthusiasm for Labour, as was clearly the case in 2017. The vote was depressed because Starmer made it very clear (not that his war against the left did not already) that his government in power would just be another variant of anti-worker neoliberalism, fundamentally the same as the Tories with only secondary differences. Thus, there was no principled basis for socialists to support Labour in the General Election in July.

Starmer's government came to power nine months into post-7th October Israel's Western-backed genocidal onslaught against the Palestinians, and in a developing crisis caused by the USA/NATO slowly losing their Nazi-fuelled proxy war in Ukraine. It has proven utterly craven, supportive of these genocidal



• Corbyn still campaigning.

projects on a consistent basis, and as willing as the Tories to steal the remaining and threadbare social gains working class people depend upon, to funnel the proceeds to Netanyahu and Zelensky.

Supporting Israel's preservation as a transplanted settler-imperialist state in the Middle East is

a strategic priority of imperialist capitalism in the early 21st Century. This is the reason that the pretence of so-called 'international law' has collapsed, and why there is such huge resistance from the ruling classes of the major Western powers to doing anything to hinder, let alone stop, the

extermination of the people of Gaza and now the extension of similar monstrous crimes to Lebanon.

The same goes for the proxy war against Russia over Ukraine and the seemingly distant, but gradually nearing prospect of a similar proxy conflict with China over Taiwan. All these militarist projects re-

flect the class interest of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the over-arching project of the bulk of them to preserve Israel and maintain the political cult of Zionism that helps to hold them together as a cohesive world-dominating class-cartel. At the same time, they wage a parallel campaign for neo-lib-



• Starmer and Zelensky -- the unpopular front.

eral regime change and dismemberment of the anomalous bourgeois states of Russia and China, which embody elements of two social systems – capitalism and embryonic/invading socialism – in a unique manifestation of 'combined and uneven development'. These giant former workers' states are still too close to 'Communism' for the imperialists' liking.

Furthermore, they have put themselves at the head of a revolt by semi-colonial, oppressed countries around the world and thus threaten imperialist domination as it has existed since the late 19th Century. The aim of the proxy war and mooted extensions is to open them up fully to Western economic penetration and thus give the imperialists' declining system a new lease of life. The converse possibility, of a defeat for NATO in Ukraine and possibly defeat of Israel by the Arab masses, opens up an horrendous scenario for the imperialists, where militarism and 'sanctions' (imperialist economic blackmail) no longer work, and the so-called 'rules-based order' ("we make the 'rules', you do as you are told") ceases to function and hold any terror for oppressed countries around the world. The monopoly of world power of the Western imperialist countries, which lasted the whole of the 20th Century and

so far in the 21st Century, is within sight of its own mortality.

So Starmer's government represents the will of the bourgeoisie, pure and simple, and in no sense can be said to be even a deformed product of working-class resistance to capitalism and neoliberalism. The strategic task of Marxists is to build a party that can split the working-class base from Labour to a genuine working-class party, one that has the potential to generate a revolutionary programme and lead a proletarian revolution as part of an international revolutionary movement. This is a key strategic task for Marxists in Britain, but it finds expression in different ways depending on the concrete political configurations that dominate in Labour at a given time. In the period of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, from 2015 to 2020, the correct tactic for Marxists was to join the Labour Party and actively get involved in the struggles of its subjectively pro-socialist left wing against the neo-liberal Blairites, who despite Corbyn's election remained enormously powerful in their hold over the apparatus of the party. In the late 20-teens the Blairite and Zionist right-wing, the 'friends of Israel' etc, devoted huge amounts of energy to sabotaging Labour's chances of achieving government, both



• Marching down Whitehall -- a message to Starmer.

through the smears of so-called 'anti-Semitism' against the left, and though manipulating the issue of Brexit to try to mobilise backward workers influenced by right-wing populism against Corbyn and the Labour Party.

It is now very clear that the 'anti-Semitism' witch-hunt was political preparation for the Labour Party to support the genocide in Gaza, which was always on the cards. Indeed, Starmer's Labour has done so, quite openly, as when on Nick Ferrari's LBC Radio show in October 2023 Starmer clearly endorsed the measure announced by the genocidal monster and Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who denounced Gaza's Palestinians as "human animals", that Gaza was to be starved of fuel, energy, food and even water. Starmer, when

explicitly questioned by Ferrari about these measures, replies that "I do think that they [Israel] have the right to do this". A clear endorsement of monstrous, genocidal actions that should lead to Starmer being charged as a political accomplice of genocide.

More recently, under massive pressure of public opinion and the Palestine Solidarity movement, the Starmer regime has put an embargo on around 10 per cent of arms export licences to Israel. But Starmer's Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, who is a prominent supporter of Labour Friends of Israel, made clear at a meeting of that body that they did so reluctantly, that this was the minimum that they could get away with doing, and that if he had his way and his hands were not tied by popular pressure, even these minimal

measures would not have happened.

Likewise over Ukraine, the Starmer regime has made very clear its support for NATO's proxy war against the people of the Donbas, and Russia itself, and its support for the massive arming of Ukraine dominated politically by followers of the Nazi leader Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, who since the far-right, US-funded Maidan coup of 2014, have waged war against Russian-speaking Ukrainians and the people of Crimea, on a genocidal basis. They seek to crush the Russian-speaking population of the Donbas and openly use cluster bombs and depleted Uranium against them. They fire missiles at Crimea aimed to kill civilians and punish them for voting to rejoin Russia in 2014, as they do to the Donbas popula-

tion that voted to join Russia in 2022. The Starmer regime has stated that it would like to allow Ukraine to use long-range Storm Shadow missiles against Russia, which has drawn warnings from Russia that such actions would be regarded as an existential threat and likely to provoke a nuclear response. Because of these statements from Russia's President Vladimir Putin, the Biden administration backed off from such provocations, in fear of Russia's evident military capacity. But Starmer's government has made it clear that it abides by the US decision reluctantly – it would like to let Ukraine go ahead and attack Russia with long-range missiles.

Over the last few years, since the beginning of the Special Military Operation in February 2022, the Starmer regime has threatened

that any Labour MP who dares to endorse even pacifist opposition to what the West is doing in Ukraine would be thrown out of the party.

The tactical task of Marxists confronted with Labour at this point is to try to cohere a genuine (not bourgeois) workers party in opposition to Labour, and to give it as much coherence as possible in that regard. That is the point of our activity in the Socialist Labour Network. That does not mean that we cease to regard Labour as a bourgeois workers party. Our strategic aim is to split it along class lines. But a workers' party outside it could be a key means of doing so in a period like this when the bourgeois, imperialist pole has achieved unparalleled dominance. That may change, as it did from Blair/Brown via Miliband to Corbyn. If it does, which is not guaranteed, we would have to change our tactics. But at this time, for Marxists, these are the correct tactical positions to take.

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LETTERS

Dear Comrades

On the 7th November several confrontations took place in Amsterdam as Maccabi Tel Aviv fans clashed with local residents. The disturbances began after supporters chanted slogans such as “let the IDF [Israeli army] slaughter all the Arabs” and a minute of silence for the flood victims in Valencia was disrupted. These actions followed earlier incidents in which Maccabi supporters tore Palestinian flags off buildings, harassed people with Palestinian symbols in the streets and attacked taxi drivers.

As the night progressed, the confrontations in the streets escalated as residents of Amsterdam turned against the supporters’ behaviour. While the media and political circles tried to paint the situation as “anti-Semitism”, it is clear that this was a reaction to Zionist provocations that were allowed to proceed unhindered by the Amsterdam police. Video footage of the events shows Maccabi supporters defacing houses with Palestinian flags and attacking people of Arab appearance in the streets, while the police did nothing.

It is worth noting that a demonstration in solidarity with Palestine had already been banned in the context of the football match, while the police gave Maccabi supporters free rein to commit acts of destruction and provocation. This is not the first time that these football fans have acted violently against the local population. Last March, a man of

Iraqi descent was severely beaten and hospitalised in Athens because he was wearing a Palestinian scarf (keffiyeh).

The NCP of the Netherlands chapter in North Holland and the Communist Youth Movement (CJB) chapter in Amsterdam condemn the way in which the government, in the context of maintaining military, financial and political ties with Israel, allows provocative behaviour and portrays the in many cases understandable reaction of the Amsterdam population as “anti-Semitism”.

Editorial Board New Communist Party of the Netherlands Amsterdam

Dear Comrades

John Maryon in his article *The Future is Socialist* [NW:2274, 18 Oct 2024] refers to the achievements of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) but unfortunately says that there was a “famine” in the DPRK during the 1990s. This is one of the myths of the mainstream media used to demonise People’s Korea.

The so-called ‘north Korean famine’ along with the Ukrainian ‘Holodomor’ and the supposed ‘Chinese famine’ of the early 1960s are all myths invented by anti-communist propagandists.

Of course the 1990s were a difficult period for the DPRK, which is known as the ‘Arduous March’. During this period there were big losses in crop production due to consecutive years of flooding. The DPRK not only faced sanctions and blockade by the imperialists but a second blockade in the form of the collapse of the world socialist market with former trading partners demanding the settlement of foreign trade accounts in dollars!

I was in the DPRK in June 1996 when supposedly the “famine” was rag-

ing claiming “millions of lives”. South Korean puppet propaganda variously said that one or two million or even three million had “died from starvation”. In May 1996 the Western media claimed that the DPRK would undergo a massive famine and collapse!

Nothing of the sort happened. Whilst visiting the DPRK we saw no one starving or begging for food. When we asked DPRK officials about the so-called famine they replied “ours is a socialist country”. My experiences are re-told in the book *The Famine That Never Was – the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the ‘Arduous March’ period. The myth of famine in the DPRK exposed*, and *Travels in the Land of Juche Korea*.

As to the claims of millions dying in the DPRK during the 1990s, statistical data shows the following: the DPRK’s population was 20,194,354 in 1990, 21,763,670 in 1995 and 22,840,218 in 2000. So, the DPRK’s population actually increased by over a million between 1995 and 2000 and for the decade 1990 to 2000 it increased by 2,645,864! Therefore, it is impossible that “one million died”!

**Dermot Hudson
London**

Dear Comrades

Both the European Union and NATO serve US hegemony in Europe where most bourgeois political leaders have been eager to blindly follow and impress their masters in Washington. Scandinavian countries and Switzerland, which both pretended to be neutral for many years, now openly side with US imperialism. Germany, once a power-house in Europe, and a number of other Western nations now face serious recession.

They have lost the dynamic Russian market and risk losing the large

expanding Chinese one as well. They have also shot themselves in the foot by allowing part of Nord Stream to be blown up and now rely increasingly upon vastly overpriced US fuel, making their industries uncompetitive. Volkswagen, once the market leader with a well-deserved reputation for quality, now faces disaster with extensive plant closures and lay-offs.

All of this has been a great success for US imperialism, which now sees its position strengthened in relation to Franco-German imperialism. Imperialist rivalry exists between France and Germany themselves, with the French supporting tariffs on Chinese EVs against the wishes of German car-makers who now risk retaliation in China. The French have since been shocked by China’s response to examine the alleged dumping of brandy on the Chinese market.

Britain, now thankfully outside the EU, should be free to conduct its own trade with the rest of the world on a win-win basis. Co-operating with China’s Belt & Road Initiative could help provide the investment Britain so urgently needs. Britain has unfortunately left one sinking ship for another. The Labour Party, which once represented the working class and took its cue from the trade union movement, has now aligned itself closely with the neo-cons in Washington. We must campaign for and demand new progressive policies from the Labour Party. However, it will be a difficult struggle with the right-wing firmly entrenched and the so-called left in a state of ideological confusion.

Essential class struggle does not end with the election of a Labour government. It’s only the first step. We must be bold and demand real change. We need socialist policies now. Look around at 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 TUE 26 NOV

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Speaking Tour: Keith Bolender on What will the next US president mean for Cuba? Norwich, (20th) Liverpool (20th) and Kenilworth (26th). See CSC website for details.

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 JULY

Tate Britain: *Artists Against Fascism and War*. Exhibition. Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

SAT 16 NOV

Stand Up To Racism: Summit against racism and the far right. 11:00–17:00. Congress Centre, 28 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. Register on STWC website.

SAT 16 NOV

Climate Justice Coalition: Demonstration against reliance on fossil fuels and complicity in Israel’s genocide. Assemble 12:00, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.

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

Stop the War Coalition: Anti-war convention 12:00–17:00. The Atrium, 124 Cheshire Street, London E2 6EJ. Book on STWC 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.

TUE 19 NOV

Trades Union Congress: One Year of Milei: Workers’ struggle against the far-right in Argentina. 17:30–19:00, Congress House Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. Book via international@tuc.org.uk

SAT 23 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Two Palestinian Short Films by Fatima Helow, with panel discussion. 18:00–20:00. Brunel Lecture Centre, Brunel University Uxbridge UB8 3PH. Book on Eventbrite.

SAT 23 NOV

New Communist Party: Commemorate the Great October Russian Revolution. Reception, 18:30 Party Centre, Clapham

Junction, London SE11.

WED 27 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Lobby of Parliament 14:00–17:00. Register on PCS website.

THUR 28 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Workplace Day of Action. Organise events in your workplace.

THUR 28 NOV

Marx Memorial Library. Trade Union Strategies in Post-Tory Britain. 19:00, Online and in person panel discussion. Book on MML website.

SAT 30 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: National Demonstration for Palestine. 12:30–16:30, Central London. Details TBA.

SAT 30 NOV

Scottish TUC: Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism march. Assemble 10:30 at McLennan Arch for 12:00 indoor rally at Adelaide Place, 209 Bath St, Glasgow G2 4HZ.

SAT 30 NOV

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 1 DEC

Metropolitan New Worker Supporters Group: Screening of *Evita* and discussion on Peronism. 14:00 TBC, NCP Centre, Clapham Junction, London SE11.

THUR 5 DEC

Marx Memorial Library: Defending Local Services & Democracy: Popular Mobilisation and the Working-Class Movement. 19:00, Online and in-person panel discussion. Book on MML website.

5 DEC–25 JUL

Working Class Movement Library: Collectors, The Camera-man, The Poets and the Pits: Miners’ Strike 40th Anniversary Exhibition. Afternoons.

THUR 12 DEC

Marx Memorial Library: The Fenians and the 1867 Clerkenwell Explosion. 18:30, at Library.

SAT 1 FEB 2025

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: Annual General Meeting. 09:30–16:30, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1 4RL.

SAT 8 FEB

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Conference. 10:00, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BB. Details and tickets at latinamericaconference.co.uk.

MON 14 APRIL–FRI 25 APRIL

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: Camp protesting against US nuclear weapons returning to Britain. RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 9PS.

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

pot-holes, the failing public services, growing poverty and continuing austerity while the rich grow wealthier every day. It should be obvious to everyone that capitalism has had its day.

We also need to press the Labour Party for peace and justice. How can its leadership sleep at night when doctors and nurses in Palestine are being killed by Israeli bombing while the children that they care for have been burned alive still connected to their life support systems.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Dear Comrades

Kristen Ghodsee is Professor of Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She is widely respected as an expert on Bulgaria. She notes that there was a “natural home-grown affinity for socialism and communism in Bulgaria”.

Indeed, Bulgaria came “into communism much earlier and much stronger” than a lot of other European countries. This was due in part to the fact that “almost all the partisans in World War Two in Bulgaria were communists”.

After the Second World War Bulgaria was led in turn by Georgi Dimitrov, Valko Chervenkov and latterly by Todor Zhivkov.

Ghodsee points out that despite being in power for 35 years, Zhivkov “did not have any private property” or “any big hidden accounts” at the end. He did not enrich himself.

After the fall of the socialist republic, state-owned enterprises were privatised, Ghodsee reflects, in an “horrendously unfair and corrupt way”. The Bulgarian mafia and a few extremely rich oligarchs benefitted. Today *Transparency International* says Bulgaria is one of the most corrupt countries in Europe.

Alan Stewart
Wakefield

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

The Second Coming of the most Scottish ever President of the USA has had a mixed reception here.

The Donald makes much of his Scottish ancestry. He is the son of Mary Ann Macleod of Tong on Isle of Lewis who emigrated to the USA, aged 18, in 1930. That is better ancestry to have in American politics than that of his father who has a German background. Trump tends not to remind us that his father was arrested in 1927 for his association with an important Scottish-American institution, the Ku Klux Klan. Established to intimidate Blacks after the ending of slavery in the southern states, the KKK’s symbolism, from its very name and use of Scottish symbols such as the St Andrew’s Cross and the fiery cross (originally used to rouse Scottish clans into fighting one another), mark the Klan as Scottish as haggis and chips.

At one time Trump was the best friend of the late First Minister Alex Salmond. In 2006 Trump planned to build an “ex-

clusive” (for those willing to pay £195 for a single round in off-season November) golf course for £300 million at Menie on the Aberdeenshire coast. In this enterprise he was supported by the then Labour First Minister Jack McConnell and Salmond as the local constituency MSP. At the same time, Trump was appointed an honorary “Business Ambassador” for Scotland as reward for his promised investment.

At the time, Trump said: “As an international businessman I’ve enjoyed success over the years and I like to think that part of my achievement can be attributed to my Scottish roots.” That is absolutely true. He is a typical ruthless American businessman identical to those ruthless Scottish businessmen who for centuries exploited workers in Scotland and helped build the British Empire.

During Salmond’s reign opposition to the new golf course emerged from the locals who objected to their homes and small farms being compulsorily purchased. In addition, there was widespread opposition from nature lovers who decried the destruction of dunes at a Site of Scenic and Scientific Interest to make way for bunkers. These objections were supported by the local council. When Alex Sal-

mond ascended to power in a minority government he brusquely overrode the council’s objections and the golf course went ahead with the resulting environmental damage.

The promised grand hotel turned out to be a much more modest hostelry. Those who objected suffered from the Trump organisation blockading their homes and having their water supply cut off. Salmond’s silence about his constituents’ concerns told its own story. Trump International is presently planning a neighbouring course, which will open in the summer of next year.

In 2009 relations deteriorated when the still businessman Trump condemned Salmond’s support for releasing the wrongfully convicted Lockerbie bomber whom Trump considered guilty. This was somewhat unfair. While in theory the decision was the responsibility of the Scottish administration, it was obviously taken by the Westminster Government in the interest of improving relations with Libya.

In 2012 there was a further falling out. Then Trump objected to a nearby offshore wind-farm being built, colourfully telling Salmond that “with the reckless installation of these monsters, you will single-handedly have done more damage to Scotland than virtually any event in Scottish history”. A long legal action resulted in Trump suffering a rare defeat and the wind-farm went ahead.

This was only part of an amusing war of words. Before the 2016 presidential election his former golfing buddy said Trump was “a dangerous man-child” and a “real danger to US security”. Once the 2016 votes were counted Salmond, now the Westminster SNP foreign affairs spokesman, speedily expressed the view that Trump would improve relations with Russia.

Our former First Min-

ister, Nicola Sturgeon, lamented Trump’s victory, saying it was “profoundly concerning” and that there was now “an immediate need to get fully behind Ukraine” while Torcuil Crichton, the new Labour MP for Trump’s ancestral home on the Isle of Lewis & Harris, said “congratulations to another son of Lewis, though I’ve never wished more to have woken today in the Isle of Harris [the southern part of the island]”.

Our new First Minister, John Swinney, openly declared his support for Kamala Harris in the run-up to the election. This earned him a stern rebuke from Sarah Malone, the vice-president of Trump International Scotland, who claimed Swinney had “insulted” her master who employs around 600 people at his two golf courses in Scotland.

When the results were declared Swinney changed his tune, saying: “Scotland and the USA share many social, cultural and economic links. In that relationship, we will stand fast in support of our values of fairness, democracy and equality – ideals that America was built upon.” He clearly does not know much American history.

At a more practical level Swinney hopes that the teetotal Trump will not impose any further tariffs on single malt whisky, which the SNP say cost the Scottish industry £600 million in his earlier stay at the White House.

Ever eager for publicity, the Green co-leader Patrick Harvie denounced Swinney’s more diplomatic words in Holyrood saying: “Writing officially, on behalf of the Scottish Government, he wrote that he is sure Scotland’s cultural and social ties with the US will flourish during the presidency of a misogynist, a climate denier, a fraudster, a conspiracy monger, a racist, a far-right politician who tried to overturn an election result both by

covert threats and by inciting violence.” The Greens have several times unsuccessfully demanded that an “unexplained wealth” investigation be launched into Trump’s Scottish affairs.

Trump has, needless to say, ignored Harvie’s harsh remarks. They have, however, increased SNP hostility (at all levels) to the Greens. The fact that the SNP Government are in a costly court case about the abandoned recycling scheme mishandled by their former allies has resulted in the SNP putting out feelers to the Liberal Democrats to get their budget passed.

For what it’s worth, Labour leader Anas Sarwar publicly supported Ms Harris, while the Liberal-Democrat boss Alex Cole-Hamilton went further by actually campaigning in the States for Ms Harris. The new Tory leader wisely kept silent.

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Korea on the Mersey!

by New Worker correspondent

Korean solidarity campaigners returned to the Casa Bar in the heart of Liverpool's university district last week to hear a report from Dermot Hudson about what he saw in the DPR Korea when he was there in April.

Peter Hendy from the Liverpool NCP introduced the meeting, saying that: "Imperialist aggression towards the DPRK continues to

intensify with an escalation of lies and threats. A new propaganda offensive has been unleashed to justify US military aggression...for over six decades The DPRK has been subjected To US military intimidation, provocations, threats and extensive sanctions to politically isolate and destroy the DPRK economy. The US war-mongers want to destroy the DPRK."

Dermot Hudson then demolished false reports about the DPRK and Ukraine, saying: "It is also necessary to comment on the wild stories being floated in the mainstream media about



• Dermot Hudson and Peter Hendy.

the troops of the Korean People's Army being in Ukraine. Neither Russia nor the DPRK have officially confirmed the despatch of KPA soldiers to Ukraine. Indeed DPRK vice-foreign minister Kim Jong Gyu on the 25th October described it as a "rumour".

He also denounced the visit of the new British Foreign Secretary David Lammy to south Korea and the hostile policy of the British government towards People's Korea. Dermot Hudson explained that the British authorities are joining hands with the US imperialists and south Korean puppets to

overthrow the socialist system of the DPRK, and also detailed the threats to the DPRK from US imperialism and the Republic of Korea (ROK) puppet regime.

"As to tales of 'human rights violations', the DPRK actually has a fairly minimal police presence compared with many other countries. The police only direct traffic. The situation seemed quite normal. That is the reality of People's Korea, an advanced socialist society with free housing, free health care and free education. We must redouble our efforts to defend People's Korea with No Ifs

REVIEW

The other Cromwell's story

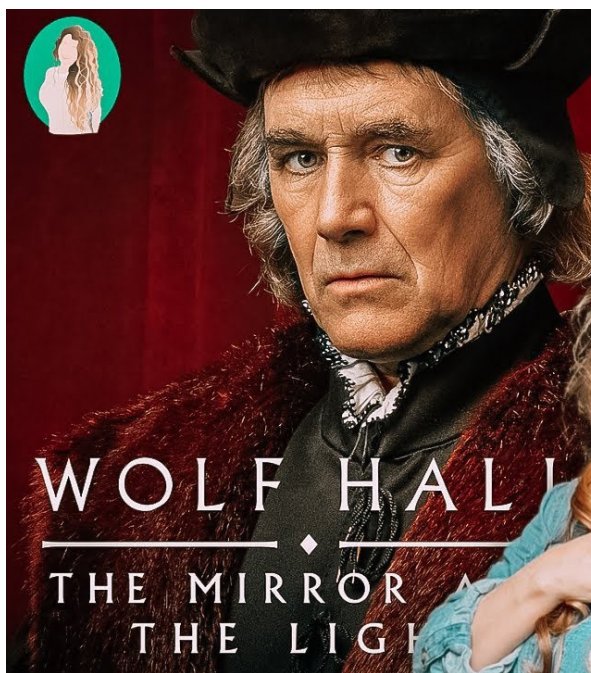
by Ben Soton

What do we know about Henry VIII? He had six wives: three called Catherine, two called Anne and one called Jane. Less widely known is that he spent much of his reign in the company of men called Thomas. Thomas Wolsey, who served as Lord Chancellor in the early part of his reign, Thomas Howard the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas More, who also served as Lord Chancellor, as well as the less well-known Thomas Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. The BBC's latest Sunday night drama, *Wolf Hall – The Mirror and the Light*, is the story of Thomas Cromwell.

Thomas Cromwell served as Henry VIII's Chief Minister from

1534 to 1540; ultimately a moderniser with strong Protestant sympathies who oversaw England's break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries. He played a role in modernising the English state, which saw an increased role for Parliament. Cromwell's origins were considerably humbler than those around him, which almost certainly played a part in his downfall.

The Mirror and the Light is the second TV adaptation of the novels of Hilary Mantel; in both adaptations Cromwell is played by Mark Rylance and Henry by Damian Lewis. Both the book where Cromwell is the narrator, and the television series, portray Cromwell in a sympathetic light. Rylance's Cromwell has both humanity and toughness; on the one hand he shows genuine kindness to Princess Mary when



it suits his interests and, in another scene, physically moves an opponent out of his way.

The Mirror and the Light starts where the first series ended, with the execution of Anne Boleyn and Henry's marriage to Jane Seymour. Both series show the intrigue that existed within the Tudor court.

Rival factions strive to push the King in their direction whilst avoiding his wrath. The most reactionary sections of the nobility oppose Henry's break with Rome and look to Princess Mary, his daughter by Catherine of Aragon. This faction gravitates around the De La Pole Family.

In episode one,

Wreckage, Cromwell is able to bring Mary into line leaving the De La Pole family weakened. This episode shows Cromwell gaining in self-confidence as he out-maneuvres his opponents whilst keeping the King onside. Cromwell is seen taking advice from his long-dead mentor, the late Cardinal Wolsey (played by Jonathan Pryce), who acts as his conscience and a sounding board for his thoughts.

If you think this sounds like a complex chess game you are not far from the truth, and evidence suggests that Cromwell was influenced by Niccolo Machiavelli and his famous book on statecraft *The Prince*. But Thomas Cromwell eventually fell afoul of his master. In 1540 he was brought down by a rival faction around issues related to Henry's marriage to the

German princess Anne of Cleves. Although Thomas Cromwell came to a sticky end at the hand of the King, the star of one of his in-laws was rising. A Welsh courtier in Henry's court had married Thomas's sister and, as was the custom of the day, assumed the name of his wife's more noble family. One of his descendants become this country's greatest moderniser – Oliver Cromwell – but that's another story!

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1917: Socialism is the answer, whatever the question

by Nikos Mottas

This month marks the 107th anniversary of the single most important event of modern history: the 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution. Its significance lies in the fact that it was historically the first conscious step in the transition from capitalism to socialism. Lenin's slogan "the ice was broken, the road was paved" summarises the passage of social development to its highest level, which is socialism, the ultimate perspective of which is the classless communist society.

Red October wasn't a "coup", as bourgeois historians and media try to portray the 1917 Revolution. On the contrary, it was the offspring of the organised political struggle of the working class and popular masses which, led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, ushered humanity into a new historical era. This is the era from the historically outdated capitalism to the new world, socialism.

The October Revolution confirmed in practice the indisputable fact that the driving force of history is class struggle. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles", Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*, about 70 years before the Revolution. The very history of social systems verifies the correctness of the Marxist concept. Slavery was replaced by feudalism which, in turn, was overthrown by the

bourgeoisie after major bourgeois revolutions with the most important being the 1789 French Revolution. The October Revolution in Russia, as well as the other socialist revolutions in a series of countries during the 20th Century, overthrew capitalism.

However, as it happened with any socio-economic system, socialism didn't prevail all at once. This should be taken into consideration by those who, in an anti-scientific and anti-historical way, talk about the "end of history" and the supposedly final and irreversible "dominance of capitalism". The setback that occurred with the counter-revolutionary overthrows in the end of the 1980s doesn't overturn the laws of the class struggle nor does it erase the necessity and relevance of socialism. On the contrary, the necessity of socialism is and will be strengthened as the contradictions of the capitalist system are deepening and intensifying.

The bourgeoisie and its mouthpieces are well aware of this. That is why they systematically spread incredible lies and inaccuracies about actually existing socialism in the Soviet Union and the other socialist states, in an effort to slander the Marxist-Leninist world-view. "Communism failed wherever it was implemented" is the biggest lie the bourgeois propaganda has ever expressed. Nonetheless, this false and unscientific argument hides the truth for two reasons:

First, because it con-

sciously conceals that 20th Century socialism – the socio-economic system established in the Soviet Union and the other socialist states – was the immature stage of communist society. The USSR and the other socialist societies never developed into fully formed communist societies. Bourgeois propaganda deliberately approaches 20th Century

existing weaknesses, the superiority of socialism as a socio-economic system was demonstrated in practice, bring to the fore a superior organisation of society, radically different from previous social systems. A distinctive difference is the abolition of the exploitation of "man by man".

Actually, those who talk about the "failure of socialism", should

ny funds?

What system, other than socialism, established legally – Article 119 of the Soviet Constitution – the right of working men and women to rest and leisure, with the provision of annual paid leave?

Under which system were the public goods of Health and Education universal, public and free? When and where was there a state health protection system that provided the entire population with free prevention and medical care? When and where was illiteracy eradicated so quickly and students enjoyed high-level education?

What was the system that transformed quickly a backward, largely peasants' country into a pioneering global superpower in the fields of technology and science? What socio-economic formation led, in just a few decades, a country dominated by outdated 19th century methods of production to space technology?

What system paved the way for the social emancipation of women by granting them full political rights and establishing special laws to protect the working mother?

"All right, but what about freedom in socialism?", the apologists of capitalism will respond. But, actually, about what "freedom" are they talking about? What is the essence of the "freedom" they refer to? It is the freedom of a handful of people, of a tiny minority, to exploit and reap the labour of the majority. In

a few words, it is the freedom of capitalist profit, to "competitive-ness" among monopoly groups, miserable wages and terrible labour conditions, lay-offs and mass unemployment. It is the kind of "freedom" that subjugates the needs of masses to the interests of the few; the "freedom" of capitalist ownership of the means of production and the perpetuation of social inequalities.

If that's the case then, indeed, this kind of "freedom" was violated by the 1917 October Revolution. And rightfully so. After all, the infringement of that freedom is a necessary condition for the working class and the people in order to take the wealth they produce in their hands and to become the masters of their own land.

Today, 107 years after the October Revolution, in times of imperialist barbarism and capitalist crisis, socialism remains more relevant than ever before. Its timeliness and necessity can neither be exorcised nor buried, simply because it is reality herself that creates the conditions for a socialist transformation of modern societies.

The road opened by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in October 1917 will be walked again in the 21st Century, with new socialist revolutions. The red flag with the hammer and sickle, a symbol for millions of people across the globe, will rise again. In our era, socialism is the answer, whatever the question.

IDOC



socialism through the distorted prism of an "ideal communist society", in order to tarnish and undermine the perspective of communism by labelling it as a "failure" and a utopian chimera.

Secondly, the proven historical truth is that socialism didn't fail. On the contrary, it gave birth to unprecedented social conquests. Despite all

answer the following simple questions:

What system established permanent and stable labour for 41 hours per week – 36 hours per week for certain jobs?

Under which system was social security for workers universal, public and compulsory, with the contributions coming from the state budget and state compa-

Realism in the Zelensky camp?

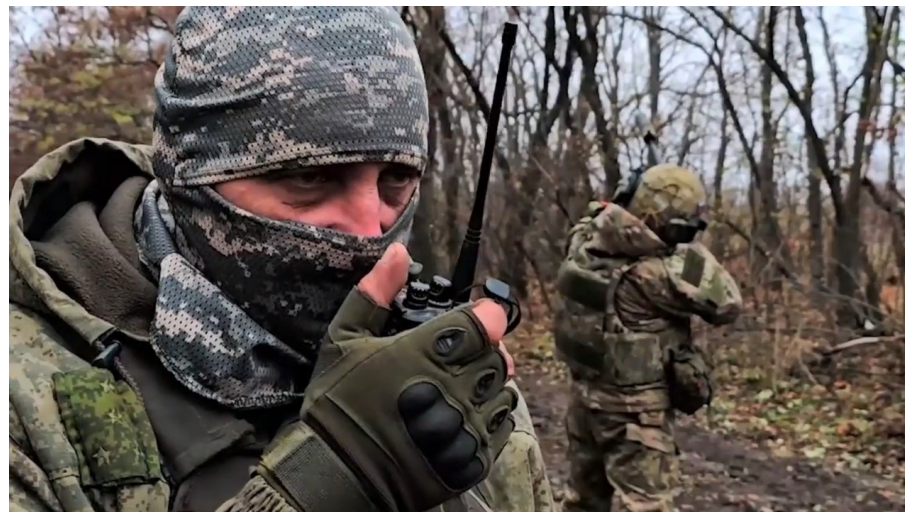
Kiev is stepping back from the hard-line ‘victory plan’ outlined by Vladimir Zelensky in mid-October and is now prepared to discuss the prioritisation of security over territory. Ukrainian officials are now hinting that land has become secondary to security guarantees in Kiev’s calculations on ending or at least freezing the conflict with Russia. “The territorial question is extremely important, but it’s still the second question. The first question is security guarantees,” an anonymous senior Ukrainian official told the *New York Times*.

“Talks should be based on guarantees. For Ukraine, nothing is more important,” another official said, hinting that Ukraine might recognise its territorial losses without formally renouncing its claims. This is a rollback from the Zelensky plan that called for NATO membership, the lifting of restrictions on strikes deep into Russia, and the firm refusal to accept losses of territory or sovereignty.

Following Donald Trump’s election the *Wall Street Journal* floated a possible “Trump peace plan” on the freezing of the Ukrainian conflict, including the creation of a de-militarised zone and deferring NATO membership prospects for two decades, in exchange for continued US arms support and the possible deployment of European “peace-keepers” along the cease-fire line.

“Zelensky is asking for security guarantees which in their scope correspond to the guarantees NATO provides its members” says military analyst Alexander Mikhailov. “In essence, Zelensky is asking to join NATO...but legally it would be necessary to provide the same assurances as those provided to NATO member states – something the alliance cannot do, because Ukraine has disputed territories, and, moreover, is involved in a conflict with a nuclear power.”

As far as concrete guarantees go, reports of “peace-keepers” from NATO countries stationed in Ukraine would be a ma-



jor no-go for Moscow, he stressed, because NATO “is a military bloc” and one that “doesn’t bring peace anywhere”.

But some sort of international monitoring to oversee Ukraine’s de-militarisation is a must-pass priority for Russia, Mikhailov points out that for Moscow Kiev’s de-militarisation, agreed under the March 2022 tentative peace deal, is second only to the liberation of the Donbas in terms of its strategic importance. Such measures would ensure the security of both the West and Russia and “as far as the 1991 borders are concerned”

recognising their loss to Russia simply constitutes “objective reality”.

“That is, no matter what Zelensky may think, there is the situation on the battlefield, and he’s not the only one analysing the situation on the map” Mikhailov said. “Zelensky will in any case have to recognise his defeat.”

In the two-and-a-half years since the breakdown of Russia-Ukraine peace talks in Istanbul, the situation at the front has changed and these “new realities” will undoubtedly have been accounted for in any new agreement. Furthermore, Moscow is unlikely to sign

any agreement without the liberation of the entire territory of its four new regions (Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporozhye). Ultimately “absolutely everything will depend” on the Trump administration’s next moves, given that Moscow is wary about any Minsk-style cease-fire agreement that could escalate into a new round of fighting at any moment.

“Trump is really intent on taking on the Chinese. And I think the focus of the Trump administration will be elsewhere. And that’s also an advantage to the Russians that they

can ultimately get a more favourable deal” says Jeremy Kuzmarov, the managing editor of *CovertAction* magazine. That said “the extent to which Trump is willing to accept” Russian gains remains to be seen.

“You know, he says he wants to make a deal, but at the same time, he’s not necessarily going to be pushing very sympathetic terms for the Russians,” Kuzmarov said, recalling the Trump White House’s hostility toward Moscow in the Republican’s first term, from pulling out of the INF Treaty to sending lethal weapons to Ukraine in the first place. “Don’t forget, Trump has a lot of supporters in the defence industry and Wall Street who profit off an ongoing war. So, you know, they may just want to drag this out, give the impression that he’s moving forward on peace talks, but not really offering Russia a deal that makes sense for Russia and that recognises what Russia has achieved on the battlefield.”

Sputnik

Why Trump won

by Guillermo Alvarado

Despite the fact that until the last moment the polls showed the Republican and Democratic candidates running neck-and-neck in the US presidential race, in the end Kamala Harris lost by a wide margin.

There are several factors that influenced this result, which will undoubtedly have repercussions in the international arena, and among them is the late

entry of the vice-president into the race, while Donald Trump had already established his campaign in the country.

The responsibility on this point falls entirely on President Joe Biden who, against all the opinions of friends and analysts, insisted on fighting for the Oval Office, knowing full well that he did not arouse sympathy or passion for his administration that was almost a continuation of Trump’s previous one.

Biden’s advanced age and the evident deterioration of his intellectual capacities kept him out of the fight, but he still forced his party to back him.

Analysts estimate that if he had resigned in January, instead of holding out until July, the story would have been different, although in my opinion this was not the most determining factor.

Kamala Harris arrived late, it is true, but she also arrived without innovative

ideas, without marking a radical difference with respect to the Biden administration that had clearly been rejected even within broad sectors of Democratic sympathisers.

For example, Trump won the most Hispanic county in the country, Starr County, which had voted overwhelmingly for Democratic candidates for more than a century.

Harris never connected with the Democrat’s core constituencies, including

young people, women, ethnic minorities and immigrants, because she had nothing new to offer them.

And there is a third very important factor here, and that is the total support of the Biden administration, of which she is vice president, for the brutal genocide being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip.

The Democratic candidate has never questioned the most brutal

mass violation of human rights since the Second World War, and this has cost them the votes of university students, young men and women, the large Arab-American community, and even non-Zionist Jewish groups.

If you want to make a symbolic figure of what happened in this election, I would say that Trump did not defeat Harris, she lost it on her own.

Radio Havana Cuba