

Gaza starves as USA focuses on Ukraine plan

by our Arab Affairs
correspondent

The Gaza conflict was pushed on to the back-burner this week as American diplomacy goes into top gear over Ukraine. Envoys of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin work on Washington's 28-point peace plan to end the war. Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, plans to travel to Moscow next week with other senior American officials for talks with the Russian leaders to end the nearly four-year-old war in Ukraine.

Behind the scenes the emissaries of British and Franco-German imperialism are making last-ditch efforts to scupper the American initiative that they fear will freeze them out of any final settlement of the Ukraine crisis. And Trump has sent his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, to back up Witkoff's efforts to make a deal with the Kremlin over Ukraine. Kushner has played a key role in Trump's past initiatives in the Middle East, including the ceasefire which has ended large-scale fighting in the Gaza Strip.

In the beleaguered Palestinian enclave Israel has repeatedly violated the ceasefire deal – more than 500 times in seven weeks – killing at least 347 Palestinians and injuring 889 people since the deal that was meant to end its genocidal war came into effect



on 10th October. At the same time Israel has permitted the entry of gold-plated mobile phones into Gaza while continuing to block crucial food, medicine, tents, construction materials and cooking gas. A move designed to create a false impression of normalcy and luxury in the Strip, despite ongoing widespread destruction and shortages.

The UN Security Council endorsed Trump's so-called "Gaza peace plan" with 13 votes in favour. Russia and China abstained but did not use their vetoes. Both Russia and China had initially opposed the proposed American draft resolution that gave the Zionists most, if not all, of what they wanted out of it. But the Americans made it clear that if either Russia or China vetoed the resolution, they would give the Zionists the green light to resume fighting.

This was something the feudal Arab oil princes, fearful of the rising temper of the Arab masses on the street, certainly didn't want to see. A cease-fire, no matter how flawed, was better

for them than the continuation of a conflict that exposed their one-sided dependence on US imperialism to prop up their thrones. The Arab and Muslim states on the UN Security Council inevitably followed their lead and went along with the American plan, which left the Russians and Chinese on their own with no alternative but to abstain.

Jeremy Corbyn has meanwhile held talks with a leading member of the Communist Party of Israel. The ex-Labour leader, who now heads the Independent Alliance bloc in the House of Commons, met Ofer Cassif, a

• **Corbyn and Cassif in London.** member of the communist-led Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash), in London last week.

"A pleasure to see my friend Ofer Cassif today," tweeted Corbyn, whose newly formed 'Your

Party' declared its "absolute opposition" to the occupation of the Palestinian territories. "Ofer has continued to speak out against Israel's war crimes and defend the right of Palestinians to live in dignity," Corbyn wrote. "I admire his fortitude, bravery and principles – whatever the political and personal costs."

Cassif said he urged his "dear friend" Corbyn to raise in parliament the issues of "settler violence and the violence of the occupation forces in the occupied West Bank" as well as "growing violence within Israel against opponents of the far-right government. When authorities in Israel refrain from addressing Kahanist [Zionist extremist] terrorism and even encourage it, I will turn to every relevant body in the world to save all of us – Israelis and Palestinians alike – from its menace," he said.

FUND

Contributions to the fighting fund went up by £705. Many thanks to all who rallied to the cause including the East Anglian comrade who sent in £200, the Devon supporter who gave us £55 and another from the West Country who donated a welcome £50. The running total for November now stands at £1,973. We need now to raise £1,527 by next weekend to hit our target for the month!

While the rich look forward to their usual round of parties and celebrations over the festive season workers struggle to make ends meet as another year of austerity comes to an end. Poverty, unemployment and homelessness, threats to our hallowed jury system, another miserable budget – this is Britain today. But there is a way out of the crisis! There is the socialist alternative!

The *New Worker* fights for peace and socialism in Britain and all over the world. Our voice must be heard. You can help by supporting the monthly fighting fund appeal. All donations, big or small, count in the struggle to keep our suppliers sweet and keep our electronic presses rolling. Please send yours to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

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

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Winter Break

The *New Worker* will soon be taking its traditional fortnightly winter break.

The last issue of the Old Year will be published on Friday 19th December.

The first issue of the New Year will come out on Friday 9th January.

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

Same old story...

The Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, says Labour is cutting NHS waiting lists, the cost of living and government debt while boosting productivity, investment and growth. But this week's budget contained few surprises, with spending plans that had largely already been floated in the media by Starmer aides eager to prepare the public for a mediocre financial review that does next to nothing to end austerity or reverse the decline in the living standards of working people.

Sure there were some sweeteners in the Reeves budget like the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap. The state pension will rise by 4.8 percent – £440 per year – and by £575 for people on the newer pension scheme. And the national living wage and national minimum wage will also be increased.

Starmer & Co call on everyone “to make a contribution” to protect public services and help people struggling with the cost of living. But in reality workers will continue to bear the burden of the capitalist crisis in higher taxes and further cuts to what's left of the public services.

A step too far...

“Trial by jury is a cornerstone of our democracy and an essential safeguard against authoritarianism” says Jeremy Corbyn. “It is truly frightening that such a fundamental freedom is now under attack. Once rights are lost, they are not easy to win back. We must resist this with all we've got.”

But, incredible it as it may seem, the Starmer Government is indeed thinking of scrapping jury trials in England and Wales for all but the most serious of cases. Starmer's deputy, the Justice Minister David Lammy, is proposing to massively restrict the ancient right to a jury trial by only guaranteeing it for defendants facing rape, murder, manslaughter or other cases passing a public interest test.

The plans, obtained by BBC News, are allegedly an attempt to end unprecedented delays and backlogs in the courts. But juries are founded on the principle of a fair hearing and a trial of one's peers. They are considered by many, including legal professionals, to be the cornerstone of our criminal justice system. Judges and barristers have joined in the chorus of opposition to this attack on jury trials forcing Lammy to think again. He now says that “no final decision” had been made amid rumours of a U-turn in favour of more modest plans for juryless super-magistrate courts to hear to cases likely to receive a maximum sentence of three years that was originally floated in the independent review by Sir Brian Leveson.

Abolishing jury trials would clearly dismantle a core constitutional safeguard that has existed for more than eight centuries. It is the first step towards a police-state. But, for the moment, it also seems to be a step too far for the bourgeoisie as whole to take if the response of the legal community is anything to go by.

Staring into the abyss

by Andrei Kortunov

With the American decision to resume nuclear testing, are we stepping into the nuclear abyss? It was recently announced by Washington that the USA would resume nuclear weapons testing for the first time since 1992, directing the Department of War to begin the necessary preparations as soon as possible. We still do not know exactly when and even if the USA will indeed resume full-fledged nuclear tests – not too many specific details on Washington's plans have been released by American officials over the last weeks.

Some experts believe that the USA is really committed only to testing new strategic delivery means rather than nuclear warheads themselves and that its militant statement is nothing but a reaction to recent successful tests of Russia's most advanced strategic systems, such as the Burevestnik missile and the Poseidon nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle. Others argue that restoring technical capabilities to conduct nuclear tests at the Nevada National Security Site would take time. There is also a comforting view that the USA referred to subcritical experiments and simulation validation that are conducted on a routine basis by all major nuclear powers and do not imply actual underground explosions.

The matter is too serious however, to whistle past the cemetery. Let us assume that the USA really means what it says and that the nuclear test site in Nevada will indeed be put back in operation as soon as it is technically doable. This is at least how they assess the worst-case scenario in Moscow. After Washington announced its plan to resume nuclear testing, Russia vowed to “act accordingly” if the USA went ahead with the plans. No doubt, the Russian side had concerns about future American intentions regarding nuclear tests and the Russian test site on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago has been kept ready for the potential resumption of testing.

The most evident negative consequence of Washington and Moscow getting back to full-

scale tests of their nuclear arsenals would be the further decay of their strategic interaction, which has already been under severe pressure for at least the last 15 years. It looks highly unlikely that the two sides can continue their nuclear arms control business as usual in parallel to resuming nuclear testing. All the remaining trust between the two sides will be lost. The odds are that in this case, after the extended New START Treaty expires on 5th February next year, there will be nothing left of the once rich and diverse bilateral strategic arms control infrastructure.

Moreover, resumption of tests is likely to become a major catalyst for a new cycle of the US–Russian arms race. This does not mean that the two nuclear superpowers will hastily deploy many thousands of new nuclear warheads as they were doing back in the 1960s and '70s. Instead, they will likely continue to compete with each other in modernising their strategic arsenals, including both warheads and delivery means. In particular, resuming low-yield nuclear tests is going to further erode the red line between nuclear and conventional weapons and subsequently lower the so-called nuclear threshold. Considering other technological breakthroughs in the military field looming on the horizon, it is easy to predict that the likelihood of a nuclear war between the USA and Russia will grow higher.

The implications of resuming nuclear tests will not be limited to US–Russian relations only. The future of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will also be put into question. As a result, temptations to acquire nuclear

weapons might become irresistible for nations concerned about their security in many corners of the world – from North East and South East Asia to the Middle East and North Africa.

For instance, in south Korea, more than 70 per cent of the population supports the idea of building national nuclear weapons, according to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Sanae Takaichi, the new Japanese prime minister, recently hinted that the “three non-nuclear principles” that have been guiding Tokyo's approach to nuclear weapons (not to produce, not to deploy and not to host them) were not carved in stone. These days, nuclear options are also being discussed in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Under such circumstances, resumed American nuclear tests can become a catalyst, triggering a chain reaction of proliferation and undermining the 11th NPT Review Conference that is scheduled for the late spring of 2026.

Today, humanity can either step into the security abyss by accepting resumption of full-yield detonations of nuclear weapons as a part of the ‘new normal’, or step back from the abyss by strengthening treaties against the test and spread of nuclear weapons and by putting pressure on the US administration to reconsider its irresponsible and dangerous position on nuclear tests and to return to the strategic arms control negotiating table. It is still not too late to make the right decision.

The author is a member of the Russian International Affairs Council

Global Times



Workers' Notes

No arms for Nazis!

by New Worker correspondent

Protesters sent a message to Starmer last Saturday outside his official residence in Downing Street, demanding an end to the British government's support for the Banderite Nazi regime in Kiev.

Every day we see reports on social media of Ukrainian troops brutally murdering civilians who have refused orders to evacuate from settlements in Donbas where they've been chased out by the Russians and Donbas forces along with international volunteers.

For 11½ years the NATO puppet Kiev junta has rained death and terror on the people of Donbas and imposed a brutal dictatorship across the whole of Ukraine, and particularly in Kharkov, Dnipro, Zaporizhia and Kherson; and in the last three years deliberately targeted buses, trains and individual civilians and buildings in the Russian Federation.

The protesters, activists from the International Ukraine Anti-Fascist Solidarity campaign,

also called for the restoration of peace and freedom, and looked forward to the day when the fascist scourge is eliminated from the beautiful land of Ukraine.

Starmer to approve new Chinese embassy

by Feng Fan & Chen Qingqing

The Starmer government is reportedly preparing to approve China's long-delayed plan to build a new embassy in central London, seven years after Beijing purchased the Royal Mint Court site in 2018.

A Chinese expert said the move could inject fresh momentum into bilateral ties if finalised, but the years-long delays expose the contradictory nature of the UK's China policy.

According to the *Times* on Friday Keir Starmer is expected formally to approve the "super-sized" Chinese embassy next month after being given the green light by MI5 and MI6. The Home Office and Foreign Office will not raise any formal objections to the plan, providing that appropriate "mitigations" are put in place to protect national security, the report said.

Although a final decision has not been formally taken, the BBC reported that advice provided to ministers by intelligence agencies

"clears the path for the controversial project to be given the go ahead".

China has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the prolonged delays. A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in London earlier noted that the application complies with diplomatic practice and local regulations and procedures, and that the development scheme of the new Chinese Embassy is of high quality and has been highly recognised by local professional bodies. The UK's repeated delay in approving the application is groundless and unjustifiable.

It is an international obligation of the host country to provide support and facilitation for the construction of diplomatic premises. Both China and the UK have plans to build new embassies in each other's capitals, and both sides should facilitate each other's efforts. We once again urge the UK to demonstrate sincerity in resolving the issue and approve China's planning application at an early date, said the Embassy's spokesperson.

For a long time some British politicians and media outlets have stirred controversy around the project, claiming it could pose an "espionage risk". The BBC claimed that Conservative shadow foreign secretary Priti Patel warned the approval would "put Britain at risk". However, analysts note that such accusations are unsupported and often veer into the absurd.

Li Guanjie, a research fel-

low at the Shanghai Academy of Global Governance & Area Studies, said that if the embassy plan is approved and Starmer visits China next year as some British media reported, "new momentum" could emerge in China-UK relations.

The repeated delays reflect "deep-rooted contradictions" within Britain's China policy. "The UK asks to accelerate its own embassy project in China while indefinitely delaying China's lawful application in London – essentially politicising what should be a routine diplomatic facility issue," he said.

Recent disputes linked to spy allegations, Li added, demonstrate the intensity of British domestic political manoeuvring. While bilateral ties have warmed commercially, London remains cautious at the political level, seeking to maintain a "neither cold nor further deteriorating" equilibrium.

Global Times

Off the Rails

by New Worker correspondent

Once again it is the transport sector where most of the industrial action is taking place.

On east London's glorified tram system, the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), cleaners went on strike last Thursday in dispute over the lack of sick pay.

Transport union RMT points out that while other contractors on DLR offer company sick pay to its staff Bidvest Noonan, which employs the cleaners, refuses to do so. This is despite RMT raising the question six months ago.

Just before the cleaners walked out RMT General Secretary Eddie Dempsey said: "Bidvest Noonan on the DLR have behaved appallingly and not made any offer on company sick pay that is remotely acceptable. Their refusal to engage properly with the union shows the contempt local company representatives have for their staff who do a vital job on DLR."

This is yet another example of the need to bring in house outsourced workers and cut out parasitical private companies that do nothing but pass on the alleged savings to shareholders.

Another long-running railway

dispute is that on CrossCountry, the Birmingham-based rail company where RMT members are taking strike action on all four Saturdays in December.

The union states it has spent over four months in fruitless negotiations with CrossCountry over long-running issues on pay and staffing. Eddie Dempsey said: "CrossCountry has not dealt with the core issues in this dispute and has come back with a proposal that is worse than what was already on the table. The company must return with a serious offer that meets the commitments it has already made and treats our members with the fairness and respect they deserve."

Also on the railways, RMT is having to reopen its longstanding opposition to Driver Only Operation (DOO) trains. This time the battleground is Chiltern railways.

DOO is strictly when the only staff member on a train is the driver. In this case the driver is responsible for opening and closing doors. This works with centrally controlled doors and on-board cameras.

While RMT is firmly opposed to DOO, the drivers' union ASLEF was previously happy enough and did not support RMT's SWR struggle but is now more supportive. Last year ASLEF's Mick Whelan declared: "The train drivers who do it, hate it, feel it's unsafe. We believe it's inherently unsafe."

Since the 1980s it has been used on some routes and is the norm on 45 per cent of British train journeys and most of the shorter ones. The Office of Rail and Road claims that DOO "Fully meets legal requirements for safe operation".

In response to Chiltern's plans RMT refutes the notion that it is simply about who opens and closes doors. A second safety critical person performs on-board train services including, providing passenger assurance, deterring anti-social behaviour, co-ordinating responses to incidents, emergency evacuation and dealing with fires.

The mass stabbing on the LNER service at Huntingdon reminds us of the importance of proper staffing. RMT states the lesson of that incident is clear: "There are DOO services that run on that line and if the incident had taken place on that type of

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service, it could not have been resolved as quickly, putting passengers further at risk,” warning that: “Our members will take industrial action, if necessary, to defend the role of the safety critical second person onboard trains.”

Further north on the Transpennine Express, Operations Managers belonging to the small Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) voted 100 per cent for industrial action. The issue is the stubborn refusal of a decent on-call, overtime and compensatory time off in lieu (TOIL) package to staff in the roles of Driver Managers, Operational Development Managers and Driver Operations Managers.

On announcing the action Maryam Eslamdoust, the union’s General Secretary, said: “The company must now move at pace to make an improved and reasonable offer which meets the aspirations of our members. Our members work extremely hard to keep rail services running safely and efficiently.” She added, not unreasonably: “They deserve fair recompense for the impact that their on-call duties have on their home lives. Multiple times a year, whilst on call, they are expected to be available 24 hours a day, responding to what are often traumatic situations.”

The action, which includes both strikes and action short of a strike, started on the last Tuesday will cover the next three Fridays to Mondays.

Living and Minimum Crumbs

by New Worker correspondent

Tuesday did not see mass out-breaks of rejoicing workers after it was announced that the hourly minimum wage will rise next April by 50p to £12.71 for workers aged over 21, those aged 18–20 will get a magnificent 85p increase to £10.85, with under-18s and apprentices making do with an extra 45p more to £8 per hour.

Instead, many business leaders shed crocodile tears, lamenting that it was bad for the workers because they will not be able to employ many at such extortionate rates. The Treasury reassured them that the rise merely balanced “the needs of workers, the affordability for businesses and the opportunities for employment”.

The Low Pay Commission, which recommended the rise, also said that the previous minimum wage rises for over-21s had “not had a significant negative impact on jobs”.

Katherine Chapman, boss of the Living Wage Foundation which advocates the higher Real Living Wage, declared however: “It will still fall short of the voluntary real living wage which is the only wage rate based solely

on the cost of living. The real living wage is currently £13.45 in the UK with a higher rate of £14.80 in London.”

The TUC also welcomed the increases. The TUC General Secretary doffed his cap to the Government by declaring: “With living costs stubbornly high, an above-inflation pay rise will make a real difference to the lowest-paid.”

In all too many sectors the minimum wage has become the maximum wage as the NCP predicted when it was introduced in the early days of the Blair Government in 1997. The solution lies in reversing recent decades of decline in trade union membership, rather than relying on Treasury bean-counters and

the Lady Bountiful of the Living Wage Foundation.

Arrested for supporting Palestine Action

by New Worker correspondent

The police arrested at least 47 supporters of the banned direct action group Palestine Action as they held a peaceful protest outside the Ministry of Justice in central London last week.

Police dragged away protesters for simply carrying signs

proclaiming “I support Palestine Action”. One protester screamed as she was dragged away by police: “Stop genocide in Palestine! We call on Keir Starmer to do the right thing. We want this Labour government to do the right thing.” They’re the latest of more than 2,000 arrests since Palestine Action was banned under the UK’s anti-terrorism laws, adding it to a list that includes ISIS and al-Qaeda.

Six members of Palestine Action are on trial on charges of aggravated burglary, criminal damage and violent disorder after they broke into a factory that produces hardware for the Israeli weapons maker Elbit Systems and used sledgehammers to destroy equipment.



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

2nd December 2005

PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair is looking more isolated and beleaguered than ever after clashing with Gordon Brown over future policy on pensions, clashing with the White House over the leak that Bush wanted to bomb the Aljazeera office in Qatar, and at odds with European leaders over the EU budget.

To add to his woes, the bereaved families of troops killed in Iraq are calling for a new inquiry into the decision to invade Iraq – which has growing support from MPs of all parties.

And, according to former welfare reform minister Frank

Field, Blair’s health “will not stand another feud with Brown”. Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett publicly urged Blair to step down “to give Gordon Brown time to settle in”.

The biggest clash has been with Brown over future policies on pensions. The long-awaited Adair Turner report on the pensions issue was published recommending raising the general retirement age in stages to 69 and restoring the link between average earnings and the level of the basic state pension.

The first rise of age eligibility, to 67, would come into force in 2020 – affecting everyone born after 1955, or aged up to 50 now.

The average length of life may be growing but even this rise will ensure that many workers never live to draw any of the pension they have been paying for all their lives. Countless others will only get a year or two for retirement after a lifetime of toil.

Lower-paid and manual workers will fare worst as recent

statistics confirm that income and class have a huge impact on general health and life expectancy.

But even before the Turner report was published, Brown had made it known the Treasury would not fund many of the recommendations in it – including restoring the link between the state pension and earnings. Brown prefers to continue with the clumsy means-tested pension credit system.

But Blair is backing the recommendations of the Turner report, as he announced to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) annual conference in Islington this week – after shifting from the main venue because of a Greenpeace protest.

The day before Brown had addressed the CBI conference, propitiating them by rejecting the agreement signed last month between the public sector unions and Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson, which defended the current age 60 retirement for public sector workers like nurses and teachers.

Greed and the Nord Stream explosion

by a Kiev observer

He who rules the deep seas rules all maritime trade. Imperialism has turned its greedy gaze on the depths of the sea to establish its dominion there. Our attention is also drawn to the vast depths of the sea and certain facts that can lead to not just the location of sunken treasure but the details of a notorious deep-sea terrorist attack.

In the autumn of 2022, the Nord Stream gas pipelines along the bottom of the Baltic Sea were blown up near the island of Bornholm. It immediately became clear that this was no accident, but carefully planned sabotage that required such extensive resources and preparation that it could only be carried out with very significant governmental support. Europe has lost its main source of clean fuel, amounting to 110 billion cubic metres per year. This pipeline was one of the strategic routes for supplying natural gas to Europe from Russia at very competitive prices. Following the 2022 terrorist attack, Nord-Stream was destroyed, causing damage across Europe.

Three years later, in August–September of 2025, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit was held in Tianjin, China. This 25th meeting was the largest in the history of the SCO: more than 25 heads of state took part, as well as representatives of 10 global organisations, including the United Nations. One of the main outcomes of this Asian summit was the signing of a legally binding document on the construction of another large-scale gas pipeline project, the ‘Power of Siberia-2’. As part of the new construction, 50 billion cubic metres of high-quality natural gas will be supplied from Russia to China annually. Asian economic leaders



• Nord Stream pipe and typical naval depth charges.

did not regret the opportunity to buy up the cheap portion of gas supplies that Europe was losing. The new deal will not cover all previously available gas volumes, and some fuel volumes will still be available on the Russian market. But they are no longer available to Europe. Therefore, Europe will continue to suffer from fuel shortages, companies will continue to miss out on affordable gas supply, and continue to overpay for main industrial expendable gas, losing product competitiveness and Europeans will continue to pay high utility bills.

At the same time, according to analysts, the new constructed gas pipeline will become an important factor in the sustainability, diversification, and enrichment of Russian exports. This should break another record for economic growth and turn Russia's profitable direction towards Asia. The Western reaction to this event was very nervous, demonstrating aggressiveness towards economic development and significant disappointment in the West about the loss of valuable business opportunities. This sparked a rivalry

that went so far that one *Fox News* anchor suggested that “...the new Power of Siberia-2 Russian pipeline should be bombed, the same way as a Nord Stream...”.

Every European should consider it a matter of honour to know the truth about what really happened to the supply of affordable fuel. Many European politicians continue to lie and spread dishonest, absurd and subversive talks about the terrorist attack on Nord Stream. Some are trying to assess the damage to the European economy, while others are falsely presenting “new evidence” that allegedly points to Ukrainian regime involvement in the gas pipeline explosion.

Steffen Kotre, a member of the Bundestag Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy from the largest opposition party in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), called on the German government to demand compensation from Kiev. “Compensations should be demanded from the guilty party” he said, adding that the current German authorities will not make such demands simply because they are “concerned about caus-

ing the maximum possible damage on Russia”. But the truth is that it was American intelligence that blew up the pipeline and this is supported by a large number of specific technical details of the case.

The USA is trying to expand its dominance not only over Europe but also over global maritime trade. Only a completely blind person cannot see that a few super-rich people who, living in Canada, the USA and the UK, want to spread the current inhuman living conditions created in the USA to Europe and other parts of the world, making conditions even worse. The cover-up of the truth about the Nord Stream explosion shows that anyone who lies about the nature of the attack is deceiving the people.

Deep water and Nord Stream

Deep-sea diving and explosions require high technology knowledge that is often classified information. Deep-water diving is primarily used by the military personnel for defensive purposes, but the Nord Stream explosions are evidence that it can also be used for

sabotage and terrorist attacks.

In June 2022, a major NATO exercise, BALTOPS, took place in the Baltic Sea, involving 45 warships, 75 aircraft and more than 7,000 military personnel. Unusually quickly and totally inexplicable just a month later, not counting the expense, NATO command ordered another small exercise – ‘Northern Costs 2022’. The small-scale exercise took place from 15–19 September 2022 and involved just a few warships and a submarine. Significantly, these exercises took place near the site of the Nord Stream explosion.

Nord Stream consists of pipes with a diameter of 1.22 metres and a length of 1,224 kilometres. The pipe wall thickness is over 160 millimetres (about 6¼ inches), consisting of a 40 mm thick steel pipe wall and, after a waterproofing layer, an additional 100 mm of protective concrete shell.

On 26th September 2022, three of the four gas pipelines were destroyed at a depth of 80 metres. Diving to depths greater than 80 metres requires special and complex deep-diving equipment, a number of expensive oxygen cylinders, an on-board pressure chamber and extensive specialised personnel training.

A sufficiently large ship is needed to take a team of deep-sea divers over the exact location of a designated point. Due to the vastness of the sea they have to know the exact location of the pipeline. Keeping a vessel precisely above the dive point is always a very difficult task, specifically given the strong winds and currents of the Baltic Sea. In order for a ship to remain at least somewhat stable in place, it must be anchored.

Deep-sea divers can't carry heavy weight loads because after 40 metres of depth, rapid uncontrolled sinking begins

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due to high water pressure. Due to the large weight of filled oxygen cylinders, they must first be submerged to the depth at which depleted ones need to be replaced. Divers must wear specially designed compensator vests that differ vastly from those used in recreational diving. On reaching a depth of 40 metres divers begin to experience a strong effect similar to alcohol intoxication known as decompression sickness or 'the bends'.

To protect divers from severe intoxication at depths of 40 metres and below, oxygen is replaced with special mixtures of nitrogen and helium gas placed in replaceable cylinders. Sometimes the gas mixture is changed twice more after approximately 60–70 metres of depth. The mixture replacement process is usually checked by a reserve diver who dives to the depth of the replacement.

Carrying out any work at the bottom of the sea, under the pressure of 80 metres of water, requires strong muscular power and is a very hard task even for a diving specialist. Most of the tools are brought to this depth separately and used by the diver as needed. A diver can perform tasks that are relatively easy for us but difficult in the depths, such as welding, cutting, lifting and securing light objects, taking photographs, adjusting locations of the not-so-heavy cables and so on. But at great depths it is impossible to lift a load weighing 10 kg or more, because the diver has little strength and there is always a high risk of sinking deeper, losing consciousness and dying.

After completing the work, the process

of exiting from great depths takes up most of the time, and a slow ascent from a depth of an 80 metres requires at least seven hours for the blood to return to normal levels. During ascent spare gas mixtures and oxygen cylinders are changed. Often the diver is met by an assistant who provides help and checks his condition. To ensure safe completion of the dive and full survival after such a journey, a deep-sea diver must spend an additional 8–12 hours in a decompression chamber. Large vessels equipped with a decompression chamber and all other necessities required are an important part of any deep-sea operation.

Likewise, a special and unusual explosive device is needed for an explosion at a depth of 80 metres. In the case of Nord Stream at least four devices are required – one for each pipe. Due to the heavy water pressure resistance to detonation, a large volume of explosive is required, especially for breaking thick steel pipes. To guarantee the destruction, a depth charge weighing at least 200 kg is required. This relatively large weight requires the use of either a ship to fire it from above, or a special submarine carrier to deliver and carefully place the charges on each pipe. The three exploded Nord Stream pipes indicate that the fourth device, for some reason, failed to explode or was set, moved or dropped incorrectly.

All the technical details presented demonstrate the complexity of the operation and exclude the possibility that the Ukrainians, located far from the Baltic Sea, would be able to carry out such an operation by themselves. American journalist Seymour Hersh also confirmed

in his investigation that Ukraine could not have carried out the explosion on its own.

All the details suggest that only several countries in the world are capable of carrying out this operation, and all of them are NATO members: the USA, Britain, France and Germany. These countries took part in the small-scale 'Northern Costs 2022' NATO exercise. The purpose of this exercise was specific: to monitor the safety of underwater facilities and communications. Several ships of all four countries gathered at the site for exercises involving surveillance vessels, minesweepers, warships and a submarine. All minesweepers are designed to fire deep-sea depth-charges. The Nord Stream pipe-line was blown-up a few days later.

As far as Ukraine's involvement in the explosion goes, this is a big lie specifically created for the public. A few sailors on a tiny yacht cannot covertly convey four bombs weighing 200 kg each and totalling over 800 kg of explosives, let alone plant and detonate them on the deep sea-bed. References to specially trained Ukrainian deep-sea divers are equally unfounded. Anyone who blames Ukraine for this attack is either trying to deceive the public or demonstrate complete stupidity or is simply very well paid to promote false ideas among uninformed people. In the current circumstances there are only two practical ways to carry out explosions:

One: use a small special mission submarine, which can also be hidden inside a large warship; or

Two: Drop depth charges from a warship with the explosion set for the required time.

All other ways to cause an explosion are simply impossible.

Seymour Hersh, who conducted an in-depth analysis of the case, excluded the Ukrainians as they don't have the capability to mount such an operation. He believes that either a submarine or an underwater vehicle was used to plant the bombs. Some sceptics still believe the bomb was dropped from the deck of a warship but most think that the charges were planted first and then detonated.

Everything indicates that NATO command has something to hide from the public. Ordinary honest working people always suffer from swindlers who come to power and instead of doing something good commit crimes and cause economic damage to many people, and NATO commanders are no exception.

An absurd investigation

Three years have passed since NATO member states launched their absurd investigation into the Nord Stream explosion. Many experts argue that NATO command is directly linked to this terrorist act. On the one hand NATO was engaged in naval exercises in the waters where the explosions took place and on the other they have started to prepare their alibi with what looks like 'fall-guy' criminal case proceedings.

Many people understand the real reason why the seemingly never-ending investigation is sinking into the legal depths to nowhere. Several leaks have become public knowledge adding to the picture of the case. Neither Britain, nor Germany, nor France are capable of ensuring an independent and

objective investigation into this crime. These so-called independent countries have lost their independence and can no longer exercise independent judgement.

Some try to follow the logic of the investigation citing the presence of traces of explosives from four heavy bombs on the deck of the yacht *Andromeda*. At the same time, no traces of explosives were found on the minesweepers, warships and submarine that participated in the preliminary NATO exercises. Really!?!

Germany is undertaking a massive investigative effort to convince the public that Ukrainians are solely responsible for the explosion and that German sailors simply cannot be blamed for this crime. At the same time, they are quite capable of placing on the seabed not just monitoring devices, as they claim, to protect pipelines, but timer bombs which would later be used to blow up pipelines – something similar to the well-known pager battery explosions in Lebanon.

The German navy submarine *U-32* which took part in the exercises was equipped with six torpedo tubes. Each tube could easily be loaded with secret "sea monitoring devices" but in reality, they are depth charges. Only six charges, one for each torpedo tube, two for each of the four pipes. There was no room for the two additional bombs needed to blow up all four pipelines. This shows that the Germans could do it. But German investigators say it's all down to the Ukrainians.

NATO's greed and its eagerness to dominate and monopolise maritime trade overcomes any possible fear of the consequences of their actions, while the

Ukrainians are ideal fall-guys to provide a convenient 'foreign flag' alibi to cover the hidden hand of Western intelligence agencies.

The German investigation is stalling largely due to the intervention of NATO and other Western officials. Sweden and Denmark have closed their own inquiries under the pretext of "lack of jurisdiction". The case only emerged from the depths after the sudden arrest in Italy of Sergei Kuznetsov, one of the Ukrainians involved in covering up the operation.

Bin Laden was accused of bombing the Twin Towers in New York and then killed to bury the evidence of crime. Likewise, the Ukrainian 'sabotage squad' is also being used as a scapegoat for the bombing in the Baltic Sea. The West is very interested in putting the Ukrainian divers in jail for a long time and hiding all the evidence in order to cover up its crime.

The entire structure of the German 'investigation' was originally constructed in such a way that any progress would inevitably lead only to the 'Ukrainian cover group'. This was done to conceal NATO's involvement and keep its personnel secret. Ukrainian sailors earning a meagre wage of just over \$250 per week were considered a cheap labour force, greatly capable to cover up any menial tasks in the murky depths of the Baltic Sea. The desire to cut labour costs in the covert operation led to the exploitation of poor Ukrainians.

Nord Stream and the workers

The loss of a great part of the economy always

hits ordinary citizens, causing harm to workers, specialists, small clerks, policemen, doctors, military staff, local officials, small business and even the bourgeoisie. The Nord Stream explosion is proof of this. Many Europeans have lost their jobs, products have become less competitive, and factories and business are closing due to rising fuel prices. The super-rich used NATO to blow up pipelines to make more money off Europeans.

The crucial questions

of who organised the crime and why Germany is so actively covering up this terrorist attack are being left out in every possible way. It appears that Danish, German and Swedish investigators were on the right track with their investigation but stopped when they identified Western culprits.

The competent authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany apparently have many more details about what exactly happened, and these details differ great-

ly from the false information they regularly report in the media. The German government continues to pretend that it is trying to catch those involved in this crime. At the same time, by treating the legal matter very superficially, they help to cover up the organiser's real tracks and try to save participants.

Today, Berlin has number of crucial facts about who organised, supplied, planted and carried out these explosions, but they cannot publicly state that be-

cause it was NATO commanders who carried out the attack.

The main beneficiaries of that operation were the Democrats and the Biden administration in the USA. Now the USA can sell their much more expensive Liquefied Natural Gas to Europe at an inflated price and undermine European competitiveness. The British bourgeoisie is deceiving itself into thinking they will be spared regardless of the fact that their own workers will be hit the hard-

est. In France, which is also suffering from high fuel prices, politicians continue to speculate not about Russian, but about German "gas hegemony".

Today, as peace talks in Ukraine become a reality, the West is actively exploiting the Nord Stream case for malicious purposes. The American imperialists have destroyed the foundations of European energy security. They are trying to make more money by extending their domi-

nance of global maritime trade. But the truth is out now and the question of compensation for financial damages inflicted on many people should be assessed against the Western crooks who caused such huge trouble. The Nord Stream explosion gives a fresh lesson to all citizens: that they will continue to pay high utility bills and line the pockets of the super-rich due to deliberate negligence of traitors in government.

Justice for Epstein's victims!

President Donald Trump signed the Epstein Files Transparency Act on 19th November. The House of Representatives had passed the bill with only one vote against; the Senate vote was unanimous.

The Act orders US Attorney General Pam Bondi to release all files pertaining to Jeffrey Epstein within 30 days of the signing. It limits what items can be withheld, but the Trump administration may find a loophole and redact – block out – some of the text. While what can be legally withheld is limited, no one should be surprised if Trump or Bondi act as if they are above the law. So far nothing has been released.

Prior to the bill being signed, victims of the horrific sexual abuse perpetrated by finance capitalist Epstein publicly demanded that all the related documents be released. If these courageous survivors – many under 18 when the abuse began – had not spoken up, this bill would not have become law. The bill mandating the release of the Epstein files is a victory for the



• Protest in Washington DC.

survivors.

If a substantial portion of the massive trove of emails, texts, letters, legal transcripts and more is made public, that will include names of numerous abusers who colluded with Epstein: high-ranking political figures in the USA and other countries, prominent academics and high-ranking finance capitalists. Previously released materials have tied JP Morgan Chase & Co, former Harvard University President Lawrence Summers and many others to Epstein.

Who among these perpetrators will be

charged with a crime? Will they all get away with having a role in what Epstein subjected these girls and young women to? The bill does not address the need to bring criminal charges against them.

Both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party seek to gain a political advantage based on relationships their opponents had with Epstein. Trump's hypocrisy is glaring. As a candidate he attacked the Democratic Party for not releasing the files. Then, as president he labelled the files a "Democratic hoax". Now he wants

to be seen as a hero for signing the Act.

Those who endured the abuse, not the big shots with unscrupulous Epstein connections, should be the centre of any discussion about the files and what they reveal. But, as novelist Jennifer Weiner wrote in an opinion piece "though we've heard endless details about the predators and the men in their social circle, we have heard far too little about – and from – the victims... they are the ones that should have been front and centre through all of this, starting in 2005 when [Epstein's] predations

began to come to light, through to the present, when they dominate the national conversation, and onward for the rest of the story's no doubt very long life".

Weiner cites from the memoir of survivor Virginia Giuffre, who took her own life this year: "They lent me out to scores of wealthy, powerful people. I was habitually used and humiliated – and in some instances choked, beaten and bloodied, or the passage in which she describes being trafficked to a man she calls 'a well-known prime minister' who she said abused her so badly that 'for days, it hurt to breathe and to swallow'."

Survivors have been re-victimised by the capitalist media by Epstein apologists. The right-wing podcaster Megyn Kelly challenged the characterisation of him as a paedophile, saying "he was into the barely legal type, like, he liked 15-year-old girls," not younger children.

The nightmare is by no means over for the victims and their loved ones. Many reported receiving death threats prior to the bill's passage.

Weiner rightly noted that "the world has never been kind to women who accuse powerful men of sex crimes".

Why are the rich and powerful able to sexually abuse women, girls and gender-oppressed people with impunity?

Dorothy Ballan, a founder of the Workers World Party, in her groundbreaking 1971 work *Feminism and Marxism*, asked: "Is it not plain, even to the most naive, that sexism is a 'commodity' in a general system of commodity production based on exchange where profit is the very essence of all that exists?"

Ballan traces the roots of patriarchy to the development of private property and ties the oppression of women to the existence of class exploitation. Her work drew on Engels's classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. To put an end to systematic misogynistic abuse, such as that endured by Epstein's victims, we have to put an end to the patriarchal capitalist system altogether. Justice for Epstein's victims! Smash the patriarchy!

LETTERS

Dave Sherry's book, *Empire and Revolution – A Socialist history of the First World War*, is a very interesting read.

In the introduction to his book Sherry says that "Britain in 1919 came closer to socialist revolution than at anytime before or since. Its empire plunged into crises as British military authority crumbled in the face of rebellion in Ireland, Egypt, Iraq, India, China and the West Indies".

Also, in his introduction Sherry makes the important point that against the present attempt to whitewash militarism and empire by the ruling class stands the working class resistance as it did in 1919.

The explosion of working class revolt during the First World War was brought to prominence by James Connolly and John MacLean, both of them Marxists. They led the opposition to the war about re-partitioning the world between the great powers and that it would lead to further imperialist conflict. Like Lenin in Russia, they anticipated the importance of national liberation struggles in the colonies and how they could weaken the British Empire and imperialism in general.

Imperialism was no longer just about having colonies, although colonies remained important. It was how a world system, in which no single capitalism could survive without trying to expand at the expense of the others; a system whose logic was militarisation and war.

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

War, of course, is an almost inevitable and recurring feature of the capitalist system in which much of the world today still lives under a world system whose driving force is profit. It is the bloodiest, most belligerent form of society in human history, and as it grows older, its capacity for barbarism only increases. It is only revolutionary socialism that will eradicate it.

A McKerl Fife

Does anyone remember Harold Wilson's resignation Honours List nearly 50 years ago?

Wilson had announced on 16th March 1976 that he would be resigning. The resignation would take effect on 5th April, the day that Jim Callaghan beat Michael Foot 176 to 137 on the third ballot and became his successor as Prime Minister.

Joe Haines, Wilson's Press Secretary, was shocked when he first got sight of the list. It was on a sheet of lavender notepaper and the handwriting was that of Wilson's Political Secretary Marcia Williams. Wilson had merely added the requisite ticks alongside each name.

Then on 27th May the list was finally made public. Forty-two people were set to walk off with honours. Tony Benn, the dedicated diarist, wrote that Wilson had picked "inadequate, buccaneering sharp shysters".

On the list was the property tycoon Eric Miller, who later took his own life when on the point of being declared bankrupt and shortly before a critical Department of Trade & Industry report into his business dealings, and two "corporate raiders" – James Goldsmith and James Hanson (both Tory donors). And they were joined by Gannex tycoon Joseph Kagan.

It was alleged that Goldsmith had offered to make Williams a director of Caversham Foods. And he was also said to have paid the school fees for one of her sons. As for Kagan, he was simply a cheat and a crook. He went to jail for 10 months after being found guilty of tax evasion.

Marcia Williams later claimed the list was "Wilson's list" and "his alone" – however Wilson himself said "I have barely met half of them". But it was generally agreed that he had brought the honours system into utter disrepute!

Alan Stewart Wakefield

Despite grand ambitions and a barrage of flashy renders, progress on the new development region of Neom in Saudi Arabia has been slow. Eight years after the project was announced there is little to show for the reported \$50 billion Saudi Arabia has already spent across the region's 10 huge developments. Following a slew of delays and controversies, reports now suggest that the money has dried up. "We rushed at 100 miles an hour," a Saudi official is reported as saying last week in the *Times*. "We are now running deficits. We need to re prioritise."

The centrepiece of Neom, the proposed 170-kilometre-long city called 'The Line', is little more than a scratch

across the desert – albeit a very long one. Originally planned to house over a million people by 2030, this projection has been greatly scaled back to 300,000 – although even this seems over-ambitious. Austrian architect Wolf Prix's prediction that a stunted Line will become a high-end hotel appears to be moving closer to reality.

Neom and leading civil engineering and construction firms have been accused of fostering an "environment of alarming dehumanisation" of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia in a report from the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. The report *Migrant workers powering Saudi Arabia's energy transition* was published last month and features testimony from 34 workers, including some from Nepal and Bangladesh, employed at nine renewable energy projects in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It said that "migrant workers interviewed for this report allege a range of severe and unacceptable labour rights violations on renewable projects in Saudi Arabia. These abuses create conditions of alarming dehumanisation, where workers are treated as 'machines', not humans, and are denied basic human rights."

John Hughes Bahrain Freedom Movement London



Diary

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

SAT 6 DEC
Korean Friendship Association KFA UK: Picket of the BBC. 14:00. Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1A 1AA.

MON 8 DEC
Prince Charles Cinema: *Solaris* (1972 film by Soviet director Andrei Tarkovsky 1932–86.) PCC, 7 Leicester Place, London WC2H 7BY. Details and tickets on PCC website.

THURS 11 DEC
Liberation: UN Human Rights Day meeting. 18:00–20:00. Committee Room 10, House of Commons, London SW1. Must book via Liberation website.

SUN 14 DEC
Visible Women UK: Unveiling of communist writer Sylvia Townsend Warner's statue. 13:00. Goulds, South Street, Dorchester DT1 1BS.

THURS 29 JAN 2026
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Mary McArthur and the National Federation of Working Women. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 31 JAN
Lakenheath Alliance for Peace: monthly vigil opposing US nuclear weapons in Britain. 12:00–14:00. RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 9PS.

SAT 7 FEB
Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Latin America Conference. 10:00–17:00. Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD.

FRI 13 FEB
Ipswich New Worker Group: Eyewitness account of life in the DPRK by Dermot Hudson. 19:30. Friends Meeting

House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich IP1 3JH.

THURS 26 FEB
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The 1918 Equal Pay Strike. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 28 FEB
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop British Nuke Jets – national demonstration. Assemble at RAF Marham, Upper Marham, King's Lynn PE33 9NP.

THURS 26 MARCH
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The General Strike in its Aftermath. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

1–6 APRIL
Lakenheath Action for Peace: Peace camp. Details TBA.

THURS 30 APRIL
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Day Nurseries & 'British Restaurants': Women Workers in WW2. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

SAT 23 MAY
Red Book Fairs Collective: Merseyside Marxist Book Fair. 10:00–16:00. The Casa, 29 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BQ.

THURS 28 MAY
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: Part-Time Work in the Post-War Years Day Nurseries. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

THURS 25 JUNE
General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust: The Ford Dagenham Strike. 19:00. Online talk. Book on GFTUET website.

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

It is not looking good for Alba, the party founded by Alex Salmond. Their early momentum has been lost.

The vast majority of recruits were disgruntled SNP members, united only in their hatred of Nicola Sturgeon and adoration of their old leader, Alex Salmond. Opposition to Sturgeon’s gender reforms was about the only policy to unite Alba’s membership. At the time some senior SNP figures privately welcomed Alba’s formation as it got rid of the more vocal critics of Sturgeon. Even after Sturgeon’s departure, this seems to be its main legacy. Founded in early 2021 it contested the 2021 Holyrood elections winning

only 44,000 or an average of 1.7 per cent of the regional list vote. In the 2022 local elections Alba put up 111 candidates, securing only 0.7 per cent of first preference votes, and more disappointingly, all the 13 incumbent defected councillors were wiped out. At present it has two councillors, again defectors from the SNP, who crossed the floor more recently. In the aftermath of 2022’s votes Alex Salmond got out his crystal ball and declared that the planned 2023 independence referendum would need to take place, but “if it didn’t then there would be huge political change in Scotland in which Alba would play a strong part”. Hmm... The last Westminster election saw its two MPs suffer humiliating defeats; it secured only 11,784 votes across 11 constituencies, their best result being 2.8 per cent for a sitting MP. Their sole MSP, Ash Regan, joined after she was the distant loser in the 2023 SNP leadership contest. Failing more narrowly (47.7 Per cent) in this year’s Alba leadership election, she soon defected again to sit as an Independent to promote a Bill on prostitution. As can be seen below, its recent by-election showing is not terribly impressive. Needless to say, it is a nationalist party, but fellow nationalists such as the Greens and SNP dismiss it as “fundamentalist”. Claiming to be social democratic, Alba does have other policies such as promoting Gaelic, joining the European Free Trade Association and deploring child poverty, but its most distinctive and prominent one is defending the oil and gas industry. In contrast, it opposes onshore windfarms. Thus, it takes up the decades old “It’s Scotland’s Oil” slogan that the SNP was forced to abandon by its Green Party then allies.

It has also been following the SNP in having internal financial irregularities. Nevertheless, latest official membership is a precise 5,002, which is a respectable figure and only slightly down on the near 7,000 claimed in the initial burst of enthusiasm. Its sacked and expelled general secretary, Chris McEleny, is still haunting the party however. As a result of a legal anomaly he remained the party’s nominating officer until the party had a word with the Electoral Commission. But the party still seems to be registered at his home address. He is taking Alba to an employment tribunal about his sacking, supported by Unite, which will doubtless be a drawn-out affair and costly for Alba. Alba dreams of securing a ‘supermajority’ for independence at Holyrood (SNP in constituencies and Alba in the regional lists) is far off and not just because Alba, the Greens and SNP loath each other so much. The Greens make clear their distaste for socially conservative Alba, while the SNP simply ignore requests for co-operation. Opinion polls put Alba at about five to seven per cent at best, but that is not enough to get into the Scottish parliament and in the real-world by-election voters have been giving it much less. Its appeal is largely to disgruntled SNP voters who also have the alternative of the trendier Scottish Greens. While opinion polls put support for independence at similar levels to 2014, the same polls show it is not an urgent question for most nationalists who think NHS waiting lists and the cost-of-living crisis are more important. Holyrood magazine quotes one of McEleny’s allies as saying Alba has “turned into a 1970s tribute act that nobody wants to see”. It is difficult to come up with a better summary.

On The Road

A curious dispute is brewing in Edinburgh City Council. About 100 workers in the Housing Services department have overwhelmingly voted for strike action in protest at the extension of “telematics” into more of the council’s fleet of vehicles. This means that all the council’s 1,200 vehicles will be monitored to ensure that they are only used for council business and travelling to and from home. Two years ago Unite complained about the Council extending the “spy-in-the-cab” beyond to waste collection trucks. The new devices will include “exception reports” recording vehicle use for more than an hour before or after a shift. Unite reps say the information can be used against workers in disciplinary cases. Local convenor Graeme Smith wants “iron-clad protection against misuse” by “rogue managers”. The council claim that telematics will reduce accidents, and “high-risk driving situations”. Smith added that “unions previously negotiated a telematics policy with the council so that it was based on the system improving driving standards and ensuring safety. It had protections against using the technology to intrude on members’ privacy”. Now “the council is now trying to breach its own policy”.

At the Parish Pump

Once again we take the political temperature by a look at recent council-by-elections. The SNP will be cheered by the fact that it easily won the splendidly named Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages ward of Fife, albeit after six counts. This is unsurprising

as the contest was caused by an incumbent Labour councillor getting the boot after being convicted of sex offences relating to minors, and the ward already had two other SNP councillors. The turnout was 27.3 per cent, with the SNP gaining 42.6 per cent of first preference votes, Reform came second with 28.9 and Labour unsurprisingly slumped to 20.8. The Liberal Democrat picked up 2.6 beating Alba on 2.2, but Alba trounced the Tories on 1.7, while the even crankier nationalist Sovereignty candidate collected 1.2. A more astonishing by-election has taken place in Stranraer & Rhins. The Tories gained a seat on Dumfries & Galloway Council in a contest caused by an aged Labour, and latterly Independent councillor standing down after 37 years of service. On a 34 per cent turnout victory was secured after seven counts. In the first count Reform came top with 35.2 per cent of the first preference votes, just ahead of the Tory on 33.1 per cent. The result depended on supporters of the also rans (SNP 13.1 and Labour 6.1) gritting their teeth and voting Tory, but the decline in the also rans vote from last time suggests that Reform is not merely gaining support from disaffected Tories. This was its best Scottish result so far. The Tories are going to have much greater difficulty in January’s forthcoming contest in the Bearsden South ward of East Dunbartonshire Council because their incumbent and former Leader has been jailed for defrauding his lady friend. It is also worth noting the previously reported victory by the SNP in the October Stirling East by-election has finally led to the SNP entering into a coalition deal that has secured it control of Stirling Council, shoving out previous the Labour–Tory coalition.

FROM THE

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NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

(cheques to New Worker)

Chinese ambassador visits Yehudi Menuhin school

by New Worker correspondent

On 14th November, the Chinese Ambassador and his wife visited the Yehudi Menuhin School to meet the school's governors and teachers as well as the Chinese students who are preparing for a life in music at this famous centre of learning in Surrey.

Founded in 1963 by the celebrated violinist Yehudi Menuhin the school manifests his pioneering vision for a stimulating academic environment in which musically-gifted children, of all nationalities and socio-economic



backgrounds, can hone their talents.

Zheng Zeguang was warmly received by the school's leader-

ship, including David Buckley the Chair of Governors, and Head of the school Dr Robin Harskin, who provided

a detailed introduction to the school's history, educational philosophy and its co-operation with China.

Ambassador Zheng noted that the School is renowned for its world-class teaching and rich humanistic tradi-

tion, and that it has nurtured many outstanding Chinese artists and made significant contributions to cultural and artistic exchanges between China and the UK.

Since the establishment of the Yehudi Menuhin School Qingdao in China in 2022, the two schools have used music as a bridge to play a unique role in promoting youth exchanges and mutual cultural learning between the two countries. The Chinese side welcomes the Yehudi Menuhin School's deepening engagement and co-operation with China in music education, youth exchanges and talent development.

Requiem for a War-Criminal

by Ben Soton

What's it like to sit down and talk to a mass murderer? To have a chat with Harry Truman, Benjamin Netanyahu or in the case of the film *Nuremberg*, Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring.

The film is based on the book *The Nazi and the Psychiatrist* by Jack El-Hai and its main focus is the relationship between the US Army Psychiatrist Dr Douglas M Kelly, played by Rami Malek and Hermann Göring, played by Russell Crowe.

When reviewing this film it is worth comparing it to a previous incarnation; the two-part mini-series *Nuremberg* released in 2000. In the earlier version all 22

defendants were mentioned. In this film there was only mention of five: the lead defendant Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess, Julius Streicher, Admiral Karl Dönitz and the head of the German Labour Front, Robert Ley.

At the Nuremberg Nazi war-crimes trial the prosecution team was drawn from all four members of the victorious Grand Alliance – the USA, the Soviet Union, Britain and France. In this film only two of the prosecutors are depicted – Justice Jackson from the USA, played by Michael Shannon and Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, played by Richard E Grant, from Great Britain.

Russell Crowe gives an excellent depiction of



Herman Göring as a vanquished foe who has lost none of his arrogance emanating from being

Hitler's deputy.

But this is more than just a court-room drama. The film includes a

scene where footage of the atrocities committed in the concentration camps is screened as evidence in the trial of the top Nazis to remind the audience, now far-removed from the dark days of the 1940s, of what the Allies were up against in the Second World War.

The psychiatrist Dr Kelly tries to get inside Goring's head and is asked to use his understanding to aid the prosecution. He initially argues against this on the grounds of doctor-patient confidentiality. He then goes on to give information about his interviews to a not unattractive British journalist played by Lydia Peckham however, while planning to use the information to write

a book.

But Kelly's views on the Nazis were not popular with the US military establishment.

He was sidelined and later replaced by Dr Gustave Gilbert, played by Colin Hanks. Although he later became the head of the Department of Psychology at Berkeley, his book *22 Cells in Nuremberg* did not give him the fame he had hoped for. Although this did not affect his post-war career he had a drink problem and committed suicide in 1958.

In the final analysis, Kelly claimed the Nazis were not unique and that there are people like them in every country, including the USA. On this point he has been proved right more times than I can count.

Dramatic Developments in People's China

by John Maryon

China's plan to double Per Capita GDP and reach the personal income level of a moderately developed nation in 10 years is a remarkable ambition. The success of the current 14th Five Year Plan has raised technical excellence to a level that will lay the basis for China's progress. Currently the average people's income is equivalent to approximately £13,500. A direct comparison is difficult however, because prices for most things are much lower in the Asian nation. In meeting its goals China has had to face difficult challenges that have included COVID and trade wars imposed by the USA. It has however, managed to exceed a yearly five per cent target. Under the wise leadership of the Communist Party of China the people can look forward with confidence to the future.

China has the second largest world economy in terms of GDP but in reality when measured in real industrial output it is way ahead. China has comprehensive trading relations with over 150 countries. It has developed its infrastructure and is able to employ advanced logistics to achieve great efficiency. To avoid threats by imperialists to contain China the People's Republic has started seasonal operations on the Arctic sea route and each year thousands of cargo trains transverse between Asia and Europe. Stable development with

its partners and friends is enhanced through the Belt & Road Initiative. Education continues to play an important role in China's development with the number of university graduates exceeding 12 million each year. The number of engineers trained each year exceeds that of Germany, Japan and the USA combined.

China takes a long-term approach to in-

embark upon joint development projects or talk constructively about co-operation. It has been one of aggressive attempts to cripple and destroy China – or anyone else who in their panic mode they may regard as a threat. The new Comac 919 Chinese commercial aircraft has been a major target in the West's trade war against competition from Asia. The aeroplane is seen

are doomed to failure as China is responding by developing its own engines and control systems and is already selling to non-Western markets. Development work on an advanced larger long-range aircraft, such as the Comac 929, which will have Chinese engines and avoid Western supply chain threats, is well underway.

On 23rd October recommendation docu-

ognise the demographic challenges that lie ahead and make provision for health care and social support for an ageing population with increased investment. The impact of artificial intelligence and further automation upon the job market is taken into account. In the early stages of building socialism the basic needs include more tons of steel and greater elec-

growth are increasing every day. Under American pressure the craven politicians of many leading Western nations, without thought, respect or accountability, rush to find favour with their masters in Washington. They replace mutually beneficial trade, diplomacy and co-operation with insulting, ill-conceived and often illegal actions that harm trade, destroy trust and make the world a more dangerous place. I can imagine future history students being shocked as they learn how Europe's second-rate imperialist states collapsed from self-inflicted stupidity. The banning of quality and trusted Huawei equipment and its replacement with more expensive Western alternatives is justified by claiming, without convincing evidence, that it is a security risk. The very recent debacle in Holland in which the Dutch government was forced to hand back Xperia to its Chinese owner shows how nasty little schemes can come unstuck.

People's China has grown from being a poverty-stricken country humiliated by colonial forces to become a powerful modern socialist state. This has been made possible by the leadership of its Communist Party. With the aid of its successful Belt & Road Initiative it is now helping others to throw off their own colonial legacy and advance forward. The lies of the Western media are shown for what they are with every success that is achieved.



vestments by supporting projects that will achieve great potential in the future rather than a short-term get rich quick project of little lasting value. No wonder they are able to play such a major role in Green and sustainable development. In the USA today companies are more likely to use their profits to buy back share stock rather than to invest in the future.

The American response to China's rise has not been to invest,

as a direct competitor to Boeing and Airbus. Currently the plane uses Western LEAP 1C engines but with threats to restrict supplies Chinese engineers are now developing their own alternatives. The biggest obstacle to its success however, is the refusal by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency to certify in a timely fashion the aircraft to fly on important international routes. Attempts to hold back progress

ments for the 15th Five Year Plan were adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The proposals focus on high quality development, rather than just economic expansion, as a step towards achieving a leading position in modernisation by 2035. Particular emphasis will be given to sustainability, green growth and technological innovation.

The documents rec-

tricity generation. As the economy develops and industry expands, the new phase of socialist progress demands quality development with limited carbon emissions and full respect for the environment. Progressive evolving social policies that reinforce a true socialist ethos are also absolutely essential for society to advance.

Efforts by the imperialist states to stifle China's economic, technical and industrial

Iranians vow revenge for slain Hezbollah chief

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has called for revenge for the assassination of Hezbollah's military chief of staff Haytham Ali Tabatabai, increasing the chances of a new war with Israel. The commander was killed last weekend in an Israeli strike that targeted the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

Tabatabai was the most senior member of Hezbollah to be killed by the Israelis since a ceasefire in Lebanon brokered by the USA entered into effect nearly a year ago. In the group's command and control chain, he was considered second only to Secretary-General Naim Qassem.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said that the assassination was a response to "Hezbollah's repeated violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the 2024 ceasefire understandings, as well as the threat he posed



to Israel and to regional stability".

Hezbollah mourned Tabatabai, eulogising him as a "great Jihadist commander" in an official statement, but stopped short from vowing to respond to the killing. But the Islamic Revolutionary Guards appear to be willing to take action, likely because of the Iranian origins of Tabatabai. The commander was born in 1968 in Beirut to a south Lebanese mother and an

Iranian father.

"The right of the Axis of Resistance and Lebanese Hezbollah to avenge the blood of the brave fighters of Islam is unquestionable," the guards said in a statement, referring to the network of Iran-backed resistance groups.

On the very same day, it was reported that the Israelis geared up for a potential response for the assassination of Tabatabai.

The Israeli Air Force

bolstered air defences in the north for possible rocket fire by Hezbollah from Lebanon, and also raised its level of alert, *The Times of Israel* reported, citing military sources, which noted that the Israeli military had no specific information indicating that Hezbollah is planning a rocket barrage.

The assassination appears to be a part of a multi-stage escalation plan meant to set the tone for a new war on Lebanon, with the pretext

being Hezbollah's attempts to rebuild.

A report released by the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) on 25th November said that Tabatabai was a key part of the movement's efforts to rebuild. He helped the group largely replace its thousands of lost fighters, ensure commanders trained capable replacements lest they be killed, and transition to fighting in smaller cells to better survive another war with Israel,

according to the report.

Previous WSJ reporting said that Arab and Israeli intelligence indicates Hezbollah is restocking rockets, anti-tank missiles and artillery via Syria. These reports and others from the Israeli and Arab media echo the exact same accusations Israel has been making for weeks now.

Hezbollah has so far refused to disarm, despite the Lebanese government launching a plan to achieve this under pressure from Israel and the USA in September.

Everything indicates that a war with Israel is nearing. The IRGC never vow to respond without taking action, and both Hezbollah and Iran understand that the Israelis will likely escalate even if no response was carried out. Of course, Israel, from its side, will use any retaliation as an excuse to attack Lebanon, and possibly even Iran itself.

South Front

Maduro calls on the people to resist

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has urged the peoples [of the Americas] to rebel "against imperialism" and "its attempt to bring war" to the Latin American and Caribbean region.

"We must cultivate the consciousness and permanent rebellion of the peoples. And of everyone. If we all rebel against the empire of evil and the Nazis, who

can stand against us? ...

"As a revolutionary, I say: If all the conscious peoples of our America rebel against imperialism and its attempt to bring war, who can stand against us? No one. Never, never, never," the president said during his participation in a meeting of legal experts in international law held in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas on 14th November.

In the context of a historical reflection on the emergence of international law and the need to scrupulously respect it, at the risk of otherwise causing serious damage, the Venezuelan leader recalled that Nazi Germany systematically attacked the international order that emerged after the First World War in order to impose its supremacy over other nations.

"The first thing Nazism did when it emerged in Europe, the first thing Hitler did, was to begin to flout the founding pacts of international law and to begin to believe in and postulate the pre-eminence of his power above international law," he said, invoking a supposed "international legal exceptionalism".

Thus, he said: "The first thing Nazism and Fascism did was to dis-

regard the borders of countries, the right of peoples to peace... prepare their powerful weapons to bomb the cities of Spain, support the coup d'état by Franco – another criminal fascist – to... demonstrate, as has happened in Gaza, that a country could be destroyed and that all others had to retreat in the face of the intimidating military power of Nazism and

Fascism."

In the same vein, he recounted that, after the crushing of Republican Spain, "the weakness of the powerful capitals of Europe at the time, London and Paris", which chose to back down in the face of Nazi-fascism, contributed decisively to the horror of the Second World War.

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