

CHINA URGES US TO WORK FOR PEACE AT G20

by New Worker correspondent

PEOPLE'S CHINA urged the Americans to work together with them for peace at the G20 conference in Indonesia this week. Though the Group of Twenty only deals with economic problems, climate change and sustainable development the Western powers nevertheless sought to raise Ukraine as another stick to blame Russia for the global economic crisis.

It reached hysterical levels following Polish and Ukrainian claims that a Russian missile had fallen on Poland killing two villagers and only subsided when the Americans confirmed that it was a Ukrainian air-defence rocket that had strayed during a Russian air-raid.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, standing in for President Putin, said there was "no need to go deep [into the Ukrainian issue] since this is not the business of the G20". But this didn't stop the imperialists from trying to use the forum as a platform to drum up more support for their Ukrainian pawns.

Vladimir Zelensky did his usual video act for conference outlining a "10-point peace plan" that called on Russia to withdraw from all Ukrainian territory including Crimea and the Donbas republics and

pay unspecified amounts of reparations as well as making his usual appeal for more Western military aid to keep up the fight that Ukrainians now think they are winning.

But the Russians sent back a message of their own with a barrage of missiles on Ukraine's power grid that left ten million Ukrainians without electricity this week.

Though this year's G20 ended with the usual platitudes on food, energy security and the digital economy the high spot of the two day conference was clearly the talks between the Chinese and American leaders.

red lines

Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden discussed their "red lines" over Taiwan and the trade war that began under Trump and continues under Biden.

The Chinese leader stressed the need to improve bilateral relations and put them on the path of stable and healthy development, at a time of unprecedented crises and challenges for humanity.

The current situation only adds more elements of instability in Asia and jeopardises peace on the entire planet. That is why, as China insisted, differences must be kept under control and beneficial cooperation must be promoted.

But both sides expressed their basic willingness to en-



• President Xi and President Biden exchange the customary handshake but can the US be trusted?

gage in dialogue rather than confrontation, and win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum competition. Nobody knows whether the summit will lead to a thaw in Sino-American relations but the fact that they were held and that they went on for over three hours are grounds for some optimism.

The same can't be said for the British team led by Rishi Sunak and struggling to overcome the ignominy of the last days of the Johnson administration and the shambles of Liz Truss' 49 days in office.

Sunak did manage to meet Biden and Indian leader Narendra Modi but his planned talks with Xi Jinping were cancelled at the last moment due to emergency meetings on the fringe of conference to discuss the alleged, and later proven false, claim that Russia had hit a Polish village.

Naturally enough the new British leader was his master's voice over Ukraine but he didn't get much out of Biden when they met and nothing at all on the free trade deal that

Johnson thought was in the bag when Trump was in the White House. Sunak told the media that they "didn't discuss the trade deal in particular" but "we did discuss our economic partnership...both of us

acknowledged the fact that, actually, the United States is our single largest trading partner and there's a range of economic co-operation that is happening, and can continue to happen in the future".

FUND

Readers responded to the call last week with donations that came to a bumper total of £1,305. Many thanks to all who helped us on the way to our £3,500 target including the Cardiff friend who donated £200 in memory of Paul Ambeliotis and an Aberdare supporter who gave us £20. A veteran Southall comrade sent in £200 and a Deal reader gave us £50. A long-standing supporter from Sheffield made a £250 contribution and a Chiswick reader sent in £150. A Dunstable comrade donated £15 and a Dagenham supporter gave us £30. The November fighting fund now stands at £1,856 and we now need £1,644 to hit the target for the month.

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

<http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

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THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

A Day of Shame

LAST SATURDAY Palestinian solidarity campaigners evaded security to gain access to the House of Commons Private Members Lobby in the Palace of Westminster in London. Once inside, they doused the statue of Lord Arthur Balfour in fake blood and unveiled the Palestinian flag, before gluing themselves to the plinth to state their intentions.

Lord Arthur Balfour was the architect of the declaration that sealed the fate of the Palestinian people in the 20th century.

On 2nd November 1917 the British government pledged its support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, which was then a province in the Turkish Ottoman empire, Germany’s chief ally in the Middle East.

Lord Balfour, the foreign secretary in Lloyd George’s war-time government, issued the declaration that authorised Zionist settlement in Palestine when it became part of the British Empire following the defeat of Germany and its allies in the first world war.

But in 1917 the outcome of the war was still in doubt. The Germans had knocked Russia out and they held the line along the Western Front. British imperialism was looking for new allies in a conflict with Germany that plunged Europe into war in 1914. Locked in a stalemate on the Western front they sought support from the influential Zionist lobby within the Jewish community in Britain and the United States. At the same time British agents had encouraged feudal Arab leaders to rebel against their Turkish masters with false promises of British support for an independent Arab kingdom when victory came.

What these Arabs didn’t know was that behind their backs Britain had already agreed to partition the Ottoman Empire – Britain would get Palestine and Iraq; the French got Syria and Lebanon and the Russians would get Constantinople. Even Italy and Greece were promised small slices of the take that would leave the Turks with just a rump state in Asia Minor. The Arabs would get nothing.

And that’s what largely happened after the defeat of Germany and its allies in 1918. Despite the Russian revolution and America’s entry into the war the Ottoman Empire was partitioned along the lines of an Anglo-French plan. A resurgent Turkish nationalist movement thwarted Italian ambitions and threw the Greeks out of Asia Minor but the Arabs were powerless to stop the recolonisation of their lands under Western rulers.

Britain’s feudal Arab allies became puppet rulers of Iraq and Jordan while France set up bogus sectarian statelets in Syria and Lebanon. Palestine came under direct British colonial rule.

Balfour promised the Zionists a “national home” in Palestine while stating “that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. But Palestine was not Balfour’s to give and the Arabs, the overwhelming majority of the population in the British “mandate” of Palestine, never consented to this and in any case they were never consulted.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 led to the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians from their homes. The war that began in 1948 continues to this day. The Palestinians fight on and they will continue the struggle until their legitimate rights are restored.

UN resolutions have provided the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. First of all Israel must totally withdraw from all the occupied territories seized in 1967, including Arab East Jerusalem and Syria’s Golan Heights. The Palestinians must be allowed to establish a state of their own on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian refugees whose homes are now in Israel must be allowed to return or, if they so wish, be paid appropriate compensation in exchange. And all states in the region, including Israel, should have internationally agreed and recognised frontiers guaranteed by all the Great Powers.

How the Americans stab their allies in the back

by Xin Ping

WHEN THE Native Indians greeted the white Americans’ forefathers with food and kindness, the latter reciprocated with guns and bullets. Times have changed but the tradition is passed on. The USA has time and again proven to be a wily and untrustworthy ‘friend’ to other nations.

When French President Macron complained about the astronomical price that the EU had to pay to the US energy industry, he might recall that it was his US and British friends that hijacked the French nuclear-powered submarines contract with Australia only one year ago, which was denounced as “a stab in the back” by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

France is not the only victim amongst America’s European partners. When it comes to the USA’s tactics to contain its foes and allies alike, the most preferred strategy is to stoke geopolitical conflict. History has demonstrated how perfectly this method works, from George Kennan’s “long telegram” to the ongoing Ukraine crisis. For the USA, the situation in Ukraine is actually a window of opportunity. The hot conflict has not only revitalised the old trans-Atlantic NATO pact but also narrowed co-operation and business choices for Europe.

By encouraging Ukraine to “fight Russia till the last Ukrainian”, the USA generated huge orders for its military industrial complex. According to a report from the *Hill* newspaper in March, since the start of the new year, Lockheed Martin’s stock had soared nearly 25 per cent, whilst Raytheon, General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman each saw their stock prices rise by around 12 per cent. As the conflict dragged on, the USA also drastically increased its military presence in Europe. On 29th

June the US Department of Defense confirmed that 20,000 additional forces had been deployed to Europe since the beginning of the conflict, ending a 30-year record of declining US force deployment in Europe.

At the strategic level, the USA has successfully resuscitated the ‘brain dead’ NATO and squashed the European dream of defence independence. Has the USA really fulfilled its promise that it “never left its allies alone”? Let’s not forget what happened to America’s Afghan allies last year.

European countries now find themselves trapped in not just one predicament.

They should be well reminded that the USA would never hesitate to secure its national interests at the cost of others, including its allies. This is usually well-hidden and camouflaged with catchphrases such as “shared values” or “like-minded democracies”, but the Trump administration boldly unveiled America’s true intention by imposing tariffs on European steel and aluminium.

Now with deteriorating diplomatic relations with Russia, Europe has grown more dependent on American energy to muddle through the coming winter. The USA has viewed Germany as a major ‘troublemaker’ since Chancellor Angela Merkel started the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project with Russia. For years the USA has been attempting to sabotage this project, coercing the Germans to quit. The outbreak of the Ukraine conflict finally made Germany and most of the other European

countries give up ‘authoritarian support’ and turn to ‘democratic energy’.

According to the International Energy Agency, the US supply of gas surpassed Russia in June. A US cargo sold in Europe could bring in a profit of \$200 million. Laurent Segalen, an energy investment banker who hosts the Redefining Energy podcast, said that US companies can fill and send a ship across the Atlantic for some \$60 million, then return with \$275 million.

“That is not exactly the meaning of friendship,” complained Macron, pointing out that European countries are paying four times more than the price the USA sells domestically. Perhaps it is not about friendship in the first place. The USA is asking European countries to pay for the extra “democratic values” attached to American gas.

Whilst Europeans are struggling to fill up their petrol tanks before winter, the Federal Reserve paced up its strong dollar policy amidst global recession, raising interest rates by 75 basis points for the sixth time this year, its highest level since 2000. Thanks to the strong dollar, the Eurozone is really going to the wall. The Euro/dollar exchange rate even fell below the 99-cent mark in October, hitting a 20-year low. Dismissing the risks of a strong US dollar, the American president blamed anaemic growth and policy mis-steps in other parts of the world, including Europe, for dragging down the global economy. “Our economy is strong as hell,” says President Biden.

Ultimately, it’s a European call to decide Europe’s own future. Rather than relying on a ‘fatal friend’, the EU should take serious steps for strategic autonomy and find a friend indeed rather than a friend in greed.

Global Times

Workers' Notes

Salute the Red Army heroes

by *New Worker* correspondent

NCP LEADER Andy Brooks and NCP London organiser Theo Russell joined Italian comrades over the remembrance weekend to pay tribute to the Soviet people who fought and died to defeat the Nazis in the Second World War. Called by the supporters of the Communist Front of Italy in Britain, comrades laid flowers during the small ceremony at the Soviet War Memorial in the shadow of the Imperial War Museum in Southwark on Saturday.

In the past Russian diplomats and those from other former Soviet republics would have joined local dignitaries, members of the Russian community in London and representatives of the Armed Forces and veterans' associations in honouring the fallen at an annual Remembrance Day ceremony organised by the Soviet War Memorial Trust. This has now all ended because of the Ukraine war.

Soon after the fighting began Sir Simon Hughes, the former constituency Liberal-Democrat MP who was once a frequent attendee at these events, said that the Victory Day event at the Soviet War Memorial should not include Russia and Belarus unless Russian troops withdrew from Ukraine by 1st May. To avoid the memorial becoming a focus for protests and possible vandalism, the Trust has now sadly



• Holding high the Soviet victory banner.

suspended all commemorations at the monument. But individuals and small groups continue to pay their respects at the Soviet war memorial.

Fresh red carnations were already lying the foot of the sombre bronze statue when the London and Italian comrades arrived. They weren't the first. They certainly won't be the last...

'Tis the season to be jolly...

by *New Worker* correspondent

YES, IT'S beginning to look a lot like Christmas – but for many workers the season of goodwill counts for little on the pay front.

Biscuits, Pickles and Sauces

The risk to supplies of one particularly essential foodstuff was averted last Friday when 36 engineers at the Fox's biscuit factory in Batley, Yorkshire accepted an improved pay offer. They had planned to go on a strike just after Guy Fawkes night, but it was suspended at the last minute when

talks at the conciliation service ACAS saw Management come up with a new offer of 13.5 per cent, which has now been accepted.

The deal ensures that the workers will get a 13.5 per cent pay increase with 6.5 per cent pay increase backdated to 1 April for this year and a seven per cent increase for next year. The previous offer was less than half this.

Additionally, workers will see the number of days they have to wait before getting sick pay reduced from two days to one, and it is being extended from the present eight weeks to 10. As a minor bonus they get a £100 one off payment for accepting the offer.

strong sense

Chris Rawlinson, a Unite regional officer, said "the dispute has built a strong sense of solidarity among our members". He warned bosses that: "The union will be building on this victory in future pay negotiations and will also seek to secure formal recognition for our members at the company."

Unite announced on Monday that it had secured an 11 per cent pay rise for 150 workers at the Heinz factory at Telford in Shropshire. The rise, which was secured without any industrial action, is at a plant that produces condiments sachets.

Joe Clarke, one of the union's officers, said: "Our Telford Heinz members have been through a difficult couple

of years, with many being furloughed during the pandemic. Since then, they have made numerous efficiency improvements to the site and so sorely deserved a proper pay rise, which Unite has secured."

Earlier Unite secured a slightly larger rise of 11.5 per cent for 700 workers at Princes Group at Glasgow, Bradford, Cardiff and Long Sutton, Lincolnshire, again without recourse to industrial action. Hopefully this is a sign that bosses are worried about taking on their organised workforce, but it could also be a sign that they have so much money in the bank that they can easily afford to pay up. Princes Group is owned by the Japanese Mitsubishi Corporation, which includes traditional English foods Crosse & Blackwell and the Italian Napolina brand.

real deal

The details of the deal are that workers will get a seven per cent pay rise backdated to April 2022 and a £750 one-off payment; but Unite say the pay rise is worth 11 per cent because the company has also agreed to commence 2023's pay talks in January and to establish a national staff forum for future negotiations.

Joe Clarke said: "Unite leads the way in securing excellent pay awards for workers in food manufacturing and other sectors. This deal was achieved through the excellent solidarity of our Princes reps

and members. It is yet another example of why those looking to better their wages and working conditions should join Unite and get their colleagues to do the same."

Still to receive a decent offer despite twice taking strike action are those at the Mizkan Euro factory at Rochdale. Fifty workers there had three days of strike action in late October and again on 3–5 November. At present they are paid as little as £11.50 per hour.

The factory makes Branston Pickle, Sarsons Vinegar and Haywards Pickled Vegetables, and is part of the Mizkan Group, which is the largest sushi seasoning company in the world.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "Our members at Mizkan Euro are vital to the success of its brands such as Branston Pickle. The company can fully afford to pay its workers fairly but is avoiding doing so in order to boost its profits. It is totally unacceptable that Mizkan Euro thinks it can get away without paying its workers a decent pay increase. Our members will continue to receive Unite's unwavering support."

Unite regional officer Andrena Clarke added that: "The initial strike action caused a substantial reduction in the production of key brands and the fresh strike action will increase shortages on supermarket shelves. Mizkan Euro should stop prevaricating and make its workers a fair pay offer."

Completely Crackers

Aintree in Liverpool is best known for being the home of the sport of kings, but it is also the home of a Jacob's Cream Crackers factory where workers have walked out indefinitely over an ongoing pay dispute.

This drastic action began on Monday, but the dispute has been brewing for some time, with limited industrial action starting in September.

At the start of the present action, Eamon O'Hearn, GMB national officer, said: "These workers are rightly angry. They put themselves

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on the line to keep the company going during the pandemic. Now they need some help to get them through the cost-of-living crisis.”

The union accused owner Pladis of shifting the production of the Cream Crackers to Portugal in a bid to undermine the strike.

Of Pladis's refusal to make a decent offer simply to meet inflation, O'Hearn added: "This kind of naked corporate greed in the run up to Christmas is disgraceful. Jacob's workers will now be on strike 24 hours a day, seven days a week until the company comes back to the negotiating table."

Pladis, which also owns the United and McVitie's brands, and recently closed a factory in the east end of Glasgow, claimed they were open to talks.

Redundancy Battles

Relief, rather than celebration, would have been the mood of the workers at chicken firm Moy Park, whose plant near Ashbourne in Derbyshire has been under threat of closure. The plant, which manufactures chicken products for both Nando's and McDonalds, will now see another 175 jobs being created. Mick Coppin, a GMB Organiser, said of the announcement: "GMB has been negotiating and campaigning to save jobs at Moy Park for months. To



• Moy Park workers in northern Ireland taking action.

see management sit up and listen to our members' demands is fantastic. Potential job losses on the scale feared would have been catastrophic for the local community, and GMB union members should be proud that they have delivered this win."

close them

At two food plants owned by Icelandic company Bakkavor at Sutton Bridge in Lincolnshire and Leicester, 900 workers are facing redundancy because the owners plan to close them and consolidate production at their other UK sites due to a "challenging macro-economic backdrop".

Wiping away his crocodile tears, a company spokesperson said: "As a business that

invests in the development of its people, rewards long service and invests in the local communities in which we operate, it is with great sadness that this difficult but necessary business decision may impact a number of our colleagues."

Earlier this month 700 factory workers at another Lincolnshire Bakkavor site, this time in Spalding, walked out in protest over "poverty pay" that in many cases is a mere penny above the national minimum wage, and have rejected as inadequate a 6.5 per cent pay offer. They are demanding a rise that reflects rising living costs.

Noting that Bakkavor's reported adjusted operating profits for 2021 rose by 22 per cent to £102 million earlier this year, Unite general sec-

retary Sharon Graham said: "Bakkavor is a hugely profitable company but is happy to cut workers' wages during one of the worst economic crises in living memory. Our members are rightly angry that their employer, who can pay and should pay, is refusing to give them a fair slice of the pie."

monster profits

Regional officer Ravinder Assi added: "The company's refusal to provide a reasonable offer despite its monster profits should be a wake-up call for Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and M&S. Quite frankly, they should be ashamed that workers making products that bear their brands are being treated so disgracefully. Bakkavor must put forward an offer our members can accept and the supermarkets should be pressuring the company into doing so."

Spiritual Matters

Not all disputes in the food and drink sector are about rising wages. There is an ongoing struggle against a wages cut (in money terms and not just in real terms) at Diageo's bottling plant at Leven in Fife, where both Gordon's Gin and Smirnoff are poured into their green and transparent bottles.

Engineers have voted for strike action over imposed changes to shift patterns that will result in a cut in shifts for weekend

engineers and effectively lower their wages.

Unite say that weekend engineering support workers for the bottling plant based in Leven, Fife have already had their pay slashed by eight per cent for the last three years, getting less than others doing the same job.

Unite warns it would be dangerous to run the plant without any engineering support.

deny and admit

Diageo Management deny they are only cutting the number of night shifts for weekend staff at the plant but admit wages for new starters have been reduced.

Sharon Graham said: "It is totally unacceptable for Diageo, an employer who made £4.4 billion profit this year which equates to a profit of £156,377 per employee to try to cut our members pay by stealth, introducing a new pay scale without consulting unions. This behaviour is even more shocking given that our members are living through the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades."

hell bent

Regional officer Bob Macgregor added: "Diageo is hell bent on dragging down the wages of its workers. This is morally disgusting at any time but during a cost-of-living crisis with the lowest paid workers making a choice between heating their homes or feeding their families, it is contemptible."

He also pointed out that: "We have tried for years to get this reviewed. Workers have already lost out on a fair pay rate since 2019. ACAS requires disputes to be dealt with in a timely manner but after years, we are still fighting for fair pay, terms and conditions."

20 years ago this week in the New Worker

DEMONSTRATORS from the GMB general union assembled with placards outside the regular surgery of Tower Hamlets MP Oona King to check her memory.

They brought with them white coats and stethoscopes in order to check her memory cells after she failed to honour a pledge to help the union's campaign against sweatshops in London's East End.

They handed out copies of two letters from Ms King, one pledging support and the other saying she was too busy to help.

The action was just a couple of days before revelations in the London Evening Standard of sweatshops in the East End that supply good to big high-street clothing chains such as Top Shop but which pay workers as little as £3.75 per hour – well below the minimum wage.

The investigation found immigrant workers, underpaid and exploited, working in potentially dangerous conditions yet producing the latest fashions.

The conditions endured by the workers included freezing temperatures and a fire escape padlocked shut – and this less than a mile from the financial heart of the city.

One Whitechapel sweatshop was making a range of blue jackets to be sold at Top Shop for £50 each.

When the newspaper approached Top Shop millionaire owner Philip Green, he said he

was shocked and that the entire supply of garments would be burnt rather than go on sale after what he had been told.

One factory – similar to dozens in the area – could be accessed only through a series of back stairways and wooden doors. The four employees are paid £3.75 per hour, which is 45 pence less than the legal minimum.

In another nearby factory the floor was entirely covered with paper, clothes, dust and cotton. The ventilators were blocked and in one area the roof had collapsed.

Paul Kenny, regional director of GMB, said: "There is a good deal of evidence that many clothing factories are breaking the rules. We feel that enforcement is too weak and that action has to be taken to stop this."

After a three-year pandemic forced hiatus, the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties was held in Havana, Cuba, from 28 to 29 October 2022. The conference was deeply split over the war in Ukraine. Financial constraints prevented the New Communist Party of Britain from attending this conference but the Party did endorse the statement in support of the people of the Donbas published below. This is the report from the Russian Communist Workers Party.

THE MORNING of 28th October began with a solemn rally in memory of Comandante Camilo Cienfuegos, who died tragically in a plane crash in Cuba in 1959 at the age of 27. He was one of those who took part in the landing of the *Granma*, an associate of Fidel and Raúl Castro and of Che Guevara, the chief of staff of the Cuban army. During his short life he did much to build the new revolutionary army, to build the new, revolutionary Cuba. In accordance with a Cuban tradition, after a short rally the participants in the International Meeting and the representatives of Cuban public organisations threw flowers into the ocean, the last resting place of the comandante, in memory of this revolutionary.

The 22nd international meeting was attended by representatives of 77 parties from 60 countries from every continent. The schedule of the meeting was so intense that on the first day the delegates worked for over 14 hours and finished around midnight. Solidarity with the people of Cuba and condemnation of the blockade were expressed in every speech. All delegates expressed their solidarity with the people of Cuba and their condemnation of the embargo.

The opinions of the participants of the meeting differed considerably in their assessment of the events in Ukraine, however. There were two distinct and clear lines,

Communists meet in Havana



• CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov – most Russian communists support the Ukraine action.

which had some convergence in some respects, but also expressed differences in other respects.

Ukraine

The position that the Russian Communist Workers Party (RCWP) regards as a form of modern opportunism was defended by representatives

of the Greek Communist Party (KKE). The other position was defended by delegates from the RCWP, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU).

Stepan Malentsov, the First Secretary of the RCWP, called on delegates to distinguish dialectically between the interests of big capital and those

of the proletarian strata in the ongoing struggle of classes, nations and states in Ukraine, and not to mix everything into one pot as the supporters of the Greek Communists' views do.

The RCWP leader called on delegates to support the joint statement on Ukraine, which was prepared on the initiative of the RCWP and the CPRF and supported by the Commu-

nist Party of Ukraine as well as other communist and workers' movements of Ukraine and the Donbas. In conclusion, Malentsov conveyed a greeting to the participants at the international meeting from the Communist Workers of the Lugansk People's Republic, the Workers Front of Donbas, and the Workers Front of Ukraine. In his address, comrade Malentsov pointed out the anti-fascist and just nature of the armed struggle in Ukraine by the allied forces and stressed that they will not abandon their section of the class front!

The speech of the leader of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Petro Symonenko, was understandably very emotional. He openly and directly told the participants of the meeting that the current Kiev regime is fascist., which was a very helpful observation to many doubters. Not only did he criticise the "no-to-war" line imposed on the world communist movement, of which the Greek comrades are the main advocate, but he also admitted to being perplexed that this line had been drawn up by a narrow circle of parties behind "closed doors", without first taking into account the opinions and assessments of the communist parties of Ukraine and Russia. If they had consulted us, perhaps a number of wrong provisions could have been avoided.

This friendly criticism provoked a strong reaction from the representative of the KKE, who reacted sharply. He began demanding a repeat performance (a second speech) for himself in breach of the rules and regulations that have been in place for years.

The KKE not only violated the rules of procedure adopted over many years, but also showed disrespect for the presiding officer by engaging in a public row with him as the representative of the RCWP, who was scheduled to follow, had already been announced to speak and was standing on the podium.

The representative of the KKE did, however, get to the rostrum again. Speaking at the end of the plenary session, this comrade recalled that Ukrainian authorities had put the leaders of the Communist Party of Greece on the notorious Myrotvorets "death list" because of their position. But



• Remembering Camilo Cienfuegos in Havana.

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he forgot to mention that this list also includes the leaders of the parties that he opposed whilst the members of the Communist Party of Ukraine are subjected to torture and death.

He called the criticism of the position of the KKE “unacceptable”. In the opinion of this comrade, it appears that there are those who have the ultimate truth and whose verdict cannot be criticised.

It is a pity that a party that we respect and which has undoubted merit, has not only been politically short-sighted in its assessment of the events in Ukraine but has also taken the path of banning public criticism of its position. We believe that it has made erroneous assessments.

An alternative draft statement on Ukraine had also been prepared by supporters of the other line. It was put forward by representatives of the Union of Ukrainian Communists (UUC), the very organisation which had once strongly demanded military aid from the Russian Federation to the Donbas miners and tractor drivers fighting the Nazis. After the death of Tamila Yasbrova, the leader of the UUC and formerly a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, however, this organisation has apparently lost its orthodox Marxist character. It is now experiencing internal differences and following the leadership of the KKE, has shifted to opportunistic positions in assessing current events in Ukraine.

Although there was general support for the final declaration of the conference, delegates were divided into three groups in their assessment of events in Ukraine.

The first is the line of the RCWP and its allies. The second is the so-called ‘Committee of Four’ – the Communist Parties of Greece, Turkey, Spain (workers) and Mexico, and the other



• Mass support for Russia's actions in Moscow.

parties who have joined them. The third group consists of the hesitant or the undecided.

The collection of signatures for two opposing statements on Ukraine continues on both sides. It has to be noted that our opponents sometimes use methods that can't exactly be called ‘correct’.

In March 2022 the ‘Committee of Four’ prepared a statement on Ukraine that was signed on behalf of the youth movement of the RCWP by provocateurs and political crooks who are waging war against our party. Unfortunately they are getting continued support from the KKE, which even blocks the posting of information from the RCWP on this situation on the Solidnet website.

Returning to the international meeting, there were also some awkward moments occurring due to difficulties in translation and the reproduction of documents. After a speech by the representative of the Communist Party of South Africa, who announced that he unequivocally supported the position of the RCWP, the CPRF and the CPU, he was approached by RCWP delegates and invited to sign the statement. The comrade replied that he had already

signed the statement on Ukraine!

It turned out that this, apparently, was a statement hastily prepared, introduced by the Union of Ukrainian Communists, which been quickly circulated for signatures.

Support of the RCWP line at the conference mostly came from communist and workers' parties in countries that the Russian authorities classify as “friendly”. One obvious exception, however, was the Communist Party of Germany (DKP), whose representative stated in her speech that “the war is being waged on a military and economic level with the aim of destroying Russia”. This comrade recalled that the war

in Ukraine began not on 24th February 2022 but in 2014. NATO's target remains Ukraine as a bridgehead against Russia. In the context of the emergence of energy costs, comrades are supporting the emerging movement in Europe against the impoverishment of workers, to fight against the transfer of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people, against NATO. They plan to carry out this work together with a youth organisation.

Another speaker, a comrade from the Communist Party of Brazil, showed a keen understanding of the situation in Donbas. This comrade supported the statement, saying: “Imperialism is the cause of the cur-

rent tragedy in Ukraine, where a fascist regime is now established, which is a danger to all. The actions of the Russian Federation to suppress fascism should be supported.”

The comrades also reported on their participation in the election campaign for the Brazilian presidential elections and support for the left-wing candidate Lula. The first round of that election has already taken place, the second round was scheduled for the day after the meeting of our parties.

The Syrian Communist Party (United) representative correctly pointed out the threat of the world sinking into darkness in the event of the defeat of bourgeois

Russia. The delegate of the Communists of Catalonia pointed out that NATO was waging war on behalf of Ukraine. Although some Russian nationalists have superpower ambitions, in the example of Donbas we see, in the highest degree, the hypocrisy about “European values”. NATO is the main enemy in the current situation.

Support for the Russian actions in Ukraine and against global imperialism were heard in the speeches of other comrades. For example, a representative of the CP of Ireland condemned the expansion of NATO around Russia. He also condemned the Israeli occupation of Palestine and emphasised that they would continue to fight the British, European and American imperialism on their shores.

Now onto the parties that were sceptical about supporting action to suppress fascism in Ukraine. The speaker of the CP of Austria said that they were not going to choose sides an “imperialist war”. A comrade from the CP of Belgium even spoke out against the thesis that the USA was the chief imperialist. Although the comrade from the Belgian Workers Party (PTB) said that the EU had transferred over 500 million euros in support of the war in Ukraine and that the USA remains enemy number one, he immediately called Russia's actions an “annexation of Ukraine's territories” that was unacceptable under international law.

Representatives of the Chinese and Korean communist and workers parties were also in attendance. In their speeches, the comrades expressed their support for the people of Cuba, and described the successes achieved in their own countries in solving the tasks of socialist construction, but these comrades shied away from assessing the events in Ukraine.

At the end of the speeches made by the representatives of the



• Australian delegates to the meeting.

parties, the stage began for the adoption of the documents prepared by the working group. It is noteworthy that at this stage the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, Comrade Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel y Bermúdez, participated in our work. The adoption of the documents was quite democratic, and the representatives of the Communist Parties of Cuba, Turkey and South Africa came to the rostrum and read out the draft documents. After which the moderator, having ascertained that there were no comments, put them to a vote. Thus, the following drafts were adopted:

- The Final Statement of the XXII International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties;
- The statement of solidarity with the Cuban people and Cuba; and
- The Plan of Action and draft activities for the next period (2023-2024).

The new composition of the Working group was approved as was the venue for the next meeting – Turkey.

Comrade Miguel Díaz-Canel gave the closing address. He spoke of the difficulties faced by his country in the construction of socialism, of the machinations of the enemies of the Cuban people, of the results of the party congress of April 2022, and he stressed that the Party and the people are continuing the Cuban revolution. At the conclusion of the speech and the closing of the XXII International Meeting, the hall sang the *Internationale*.

At the closing of the conference, comrades from our Party presented Comrade Miguel Díaz-Canel a badge of Lenin.

The delegation of the RCWP expresses its gratitude to the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban people for their hospitality, for their organising work in the face of the difficulties the country is



• Cuban leader Miguel Diaz-Canel addresses the conference.

experiencing due to the ongoing US embargo, as well as the negative effects of the devastating hurricane. Although the organisers weren't able to foresee every single thing (there have been rough edges and limitations in the reproduction of printed material), it was more than made up for by the warmth of the Cuban people and the friendliness of the organisers.

So, the meeting has concluded. The positions have become somewhat clearer but the confusion in the international communist movement over Ukraine persists. Events in Ukraine are leading the world into turmoil. Whether the proletariat will be able to fulfil its historic mission, depends on all of us.

Joint statement



• A comrade from Vietnam speaks to conference.

moved by the Russian Communist Workers' Party and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation at the international meeting of communist and workers' parties in Havana:

The struggle against US and NATO imperialism which seek world hegemony is the key task of the progressive forces.

THE PEOPLES of the world are witnessing a rapid sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism. Unable to cope with the growing contradictions, imperialism is becoming ever more dangerous for humankind. It resorts ever more often

to provocations and conflicts. Its actions threaten a new world war and the use of nuclear weapons.

In fact the war, as armed struggle of classes, nations or states, has been waged since 2014 when the Kiev Nazis launched a punitive operation against the population of Donbas. People were being killed for wanting to speak their native Russian tongue, refusing to recognise collaborators with Hitler's Nazism as heroes, to destroy Soviet monuments and sever their links with Russia.

Today more than 50 predator-countries, organised and directed by US-led NATO, are using Ukrainian followers of Banderaites, allies of Hitler, to pursue a policy of Fascist expansion

vis-à-vis Russia. Combined political, financial, economic and military resources of world capital, including the human resources of mercenaries, have been committed to the suppression and dismemberment of Russia. The objective is characteristic of big capital: eliminating competition and re-dividing spheres of influence. Above all in Europe. The aim is to establish world hegemony of the USA in the 21st Century with active and overt use of fascism.

The Communist and Workers' Parties support the just anti-fascist struggle of the working people of Donbas backed by the Russian Armed Forces. We come out against US imperialism which is using fascist methods in its foreign policy and, with direct participation of NATO, is in fact waging a war aimed at defeating Russia with the hands of the puppet bourgeois-nationalist Ukrainian regime.

We declare that we will do all we can to prevent Russia from repeating the fate of Yugoslavia, Iraq or Libya, which is starkly at odds with the interests of the world workers' movement. Reaction seeks to establish its new order firmly and for long. Russia cannot afford to lose the war against Nazism.

We voice our categorical protest against

the policy of fascism, anti-Sovietism and Russophobia in all the EU and NATO countries. We protest against the aggression unleashed against Russia by the USA and NATO with the hands of Ukraine's Nazis. We express our resolute solidarity with the communists and all the working people of Ukraine and Russia.

We declare our determination to fight the resurgent brown plague firmly and aggressively. The communist position is invariable: it is only by putting an end to capitalism that an end can be put to fascism and the threat of a world nuclear war. We will dedicate our activity and our lives to this struggle.

Proletarians of all lands, unite!

Solidnet Parties signing:

- Communist Party of Azerbaijan
- Communist Party of Brazil
- New Communist Party of Britain
- Socialist Workers' Party of Croatia
- German Communist Party
- Communist Party (Italy)
- Hungarian Workers' Party
- Communist Party of Malta
- Socialist Party of Latvia
- Lebanese Communist Party
- Palestinian Communist Party
- Romanian Socialist Party
- Communist Party of the Russian Federation
- Russian Communist Workers' Party
- Party of Communists of Serbia
- Syrian Communist Party (Unified)
- Communist Party of Ukraine

Havana, 28–29 October 2022

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

The Shadow Cabinet has urged Sir Keir Starmer to expel Jeremy Corbyn from the Labour Party. They are afraid that Starmer's past support for Corbyn will damage Labour's election prospects.

It certainly is something of a mystery how Starmer's attitude to Corbyn changed so radically after the 2019 election. He had said Corbyn would make a great Prime Minister and also said at one point that: "The attacks on Jeremy Corbyn were terrible, they vilified him, and they knew what they were doing and why they were doing it."

Whatever was going on in Starmer's mind, it is inconceivable that he believed that Corbyn was a racist anti-Semite or enabler of anti-Semitism when he spoke those words.

**Brendan O'Brien
London**

Dear Comrades

China, following the 20th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party that took place on 16th October 2022, has established foreign policy principles that will define international relations in the 21st Century. Those who do not understand today's China miss the meeting with the history of the future.

The fact that it does not want hegemony nor does it accept it from other states is a basic element not only in its foreign policy but also as a defining principle of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and peace at the global level.

In November 1989 Pope John Paul II stat-

ed that "the world must breathe through both lungs for a long time", and President Nicolae Ceaușescu said "giving up ideological security is the swan song that will destabilise the world balance in the future".

For these reasons, China is currently asking the West to give up economic conditions based on political criteria and not to be blinded by so-called ideological prejudices that motivate them to continue imposing neo-liberal capitalism, by force and dictate, throughout the world, and to act for the promotion of peace and mutually beneficial co-operation worldwide.

PCR-XXI (Romanian Communist Party-21st Century), as a promoter of the Romanian people's traditions of peace, friendship and mutually beneficial co-operation with all the countries of the world, regardless of their social system, is campaigning socially for a Mixed Market Economy, a Participatory State capable of making a balance based on efficiency between private and public ownership, to be able to capitalise in the interest of the people, the material resources of the country, and to create a New Public Space capable of providing free education and health, jobs and decent living conditions, for the return to the country of those who went to work abroad as well as adequate working and living conditions for the maintenance of the young qualified labour force in the country, which the country needs so much at present.

A main objective of PCR-XXI is to obtain for the country the status of

Active Neutrality, in order to avoid the involvement of our country in destructive conflicts, the de-colonisation of the country, the regaining of national independence and sovereignty, the right to exploit material resources in the interest of the people and to stop the waste of raw materials. We want to stop the sale of the country's arable land to foreigners whilst promoting solidarity with all the countries of the world that promote peace and mutually beneficial co-operation, through the prism of the national interest!

**Constantin Cretu
Executive Bureau
Romanian
Communist Party-21**

Dear Comrades

Attempts to place the financial burden of the capitalist crisis on workers' shoulders is now meeting stronger resistance. A new wave of militancy is sweeping Britain.

The crisis has been made more acute by a combination of government incompetence, an inadequate response to the Covid pandemic and the inevitable effects of the craven acceptance of US hegemony.

Following decades of austerity that have resulted in massive cuts to the real value of wages, voices are being raised to protest that enough is enough.

A number of small, genuine left-wing parties, including the New Communist Party, are calling for public and political support for workers' struggles and in particular the nurses' brave stand. Their union, the over 300,000-strong Royal College of Nursing (RCN), has voted in a landmark ballot for strike action in selected hospitals.

Campaigners point out that the Tories are doing nothing but increasing the burden that has led to people, especially some nurses, having to decide whether to heat or eat this winter.

The response of the Labour Party has been pathetic.

There are calls for Keir

Starmer and the party to start doing the job that they were elected for, by standing up for workers' rights, especially now.

They should be given the nurses their unequivocal support. They should be campaigning, calling for justice and preparing to join the picket lines where it is still legal to do so.

Any Labour MPs who stand up for workers' rights may find themselves facing bans and de-selection by a right wing leadership more interested in a safe, comfortable seat with all the privileges in the House of Lords.

Our efforts to support working class struggles are not confined to Britain. The NCP is a national party and an integral part of a larger entity, the 'World Communist Movement'.

Operating as we do, in one of the main centres of imperialism, our international dimension gives us a strength of purpose and an understanding of the need for Proletarian Internationalism. The ideology of reformism has been embraced by much of our own labour movement and also revisionist parties throughout the world pretending to be Communist. Imperialism operates on a world-wide scale and the struggles of all working people are our concern. All workers must unite and not allow one section to be played off against another.

Our party fully supports the nurses and workers everywhere. Our party is with those who seek to protect nature and our fragile environment. Our party demands an end to political repression and NATO aggression and calls for the release of all political prisoners both at home and abroad. Julian Assange in Britain and the Kononovich brothers in Ukraine are of immediate concern.

Unlike the Labour Party and its history of betrayal, the NCP is a Marxist party led by open and honest debate under the discipline of democratic centralism.

**John Maryon
Suffolk**

Diary

UNTIL 23 DEC

We Shall All Be Brothers and Sisters: the Communist Party in Britain 1920-2020: Exhibition at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX

FRI 18 NOV

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: Soy Cuba (I am Cuba) 1964 Soviet-Cuban film 19:00. Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon, CR0 1BD £5.80

SAT 19 NOV

Merseyside Marxist Book Fair: 11:30-16:30, The Casa, Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BP. Including an NCP speaker on Ukraine.

SAT 19 NOV

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop US nukes coming to Lakenheath. Demonstration 13:00, RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Lakenheath IP27. See CND website for details of coach from London.

MON 21 NOV

Barry Amiel & Norman Melburn Trust: Vijay Prashad on Viewing decolonisation through a Marxist lens. 19:00. Hybrid meeting at Marx Memorial Library 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU and Online. Book on MML website.

WED 23 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: Science as Work. Online seminar. 19:00 Book on MML website

SAT 26 NOV

Palestine Solidarity Campaign Barclays: don't bank on apartheid. Nationwide day of action outside Barclays Bank branches in protest against its ties with arms companies selling to Israel.

MON 28 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: On the Evolving Significance of the Chinese Revolution, dialogue between Andrew Murray

and Ken Hammond. 19:00 at MML and online. Book on MML website.

WED 30 NOV

Marx Memorial Library: John Bellamy Foster on Engels and the Second Foundation of Marxism. 19:00 Online lecture. book on MML website.

SAT 3 DEC

Campaign for Trade Union Freedom: From Pentonville to P&O: union rights and Tory wrongs. National Conference. 11:00-16:00, Mander Hall, Mabledon Place London WC1H 9BD. Register on www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk

MON 5 DEC

Barry Amiel & Norman Melburn Trust: Peter Nolan and Jenny Clegg on Understanding China in the new world order 19:00. Hybrid meeting at Marx Memorial Library and Online. Book on MML website.

FRI 9- SUN 11 DEC

Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp: Paices Hill, Aldermaston, RG7 4PW.

SAT 10 DEC

Arise: Solidarity, struggle, socialism: Rally. 10:00 Conway Hall 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL. Register at www.mstar.link/arise22.

FRI 12 JAN

Marx Memorial Library: Screening of Barry Gardiner's film on fire and re-hire. Details TBA.

FRI 19 JAN

Marx Memorial Library: Alexander Buzgalin and guests on his new book on Marx's Capital in the 21st Century. Details TBA.

FRI 27 JAN

Soviet War Memorial Trust: Holocaust Memorial Day, Act of Remembrance 10:45 for 11:00 Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park (Imperial War Museum), London SE1 6HZ

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Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

THE long-running equal-pay dispute at Glasgow City Council finally seems to be coming to an end, although we have heard that one before.

The dispute was about the male-female differential between the wages of the women council workers such as home helps and male workers in outdoor jobs such as school janitors and refuse collectors. Before the local elections in 2017, the SNP promised they would speedily resolve the matter. It was claimed that this was one of the issues that enabled them to defeat the long-incumbent Labour rulers. Since then, the ball has been in their court.

The matter is indeed a difficult one. While in theory the concept of equal pay sounds good, there is plenty of scope for querying whether or not different jobs are comparable. To give just one example, there is a long-running legal battle at Asda over the question of jobs in supermarkets being truly comparable with those in draughty warehouses. Lawyers have grown rich comparing an office cleaner with a gravedigger.

In Glasgow many women workers were not impressed with what they saw as the inaction of unions and signed up with a dodgy no win, no fee firm of lawyers, who in some cases are a major beneficiary.

Last Thursday, the city council finally agreed to pay about £770 million to settle by the end of 2023 the equal-pay claims made by 19,000 current and former workers.

This covers a "gap period" between a first agreement in 2018 and a new pay and grading system, which was originally scheduled to be introduced in 2024 but in accordance with SNP tradition is now well behind schedule.

Unions had accused the Council of "unnecessary delays" in the process of settling the claims and balloated for industrial action.

Speaking for Unite, industrial officer Wendy Dunsmore said: "Settlements can now be made before 2024 which was

the timeframe originally proposed by Glasgow City Council. There is a cost-of-living crisis with inflation soaring and this agreement will provide immediate and much needed assistance to families."

GMB Scotland Branch Convener Shona Thomson added: "The agreement reached between unions and Glasgow City Council is a hard fought victory for working class women who have fought for years to secure equal pay."

She warned that: "There still remains the outstanding matter of council-wide job evaluations. GMB Scotland's focus and efforts will now be on delivering a new, fair pay system which will secure equal pay for the years ahead."

Finally, Mandy McDowall, Unison Regional Organiser, said that whilst: "This is another important transfer of monies due to the women of Glasgow ... We now move on to the final stage of eliminating pay inequality in the future through the introduction of an equality proofed new pay and grading scheme. That will require further significant spending by the council in the years ahead.

The council has already sold off its prestigious art gallery to pay for the settlement.

...as one dispute comes to an end, a nationwide NHS strike looks more likely with the announcement by Unison on Tuesday that 61 per cent of its members have voted against a pay rise of £2,205, or an average of seven per cent.

Unison Scotland's health committee Chair, Wilma Brown, warned the SNP government that: "They need to come back to the negotiating table with an improved offer or prepare themselves for the first strikes in the NHS since devolution."

The Unison vote means that paramedics and ambulance crew members could be lining up with nurses who have already voted to strike.

Matt McLaughlin, the union's head of health, said: "Nobody wants to take strike action but without an improved pay offer, our members will be left with no choice."

Just a few days earlier health secretary Humza Yousaf said there was no money to meet the claim and he has been talking contingency plans, including what he called the "extremist measure" of calling for support from the army.

An SNP Triumph

Once again, the worthy Benedictine monks of Buckfast Abbey in Devon will be raising a glass to toast their good fortune thanks to a controversial SNP flagship policy.

The fortified tonic wine, unflatteringly known as "wreck the hoose juice", and whose discarded green bottles are the most dependable crops from this correspondent's front garden, has enjoyed a 40 per boost to sales under the Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) law.

This law was introduced to discourage problem drinkers by imposing a minimum price of 50p per unit on the very cheap high-strength ciders and fortified wines, which have never been near an apple or grape.

After the law was passed by Holyrood it was challenged in the courts, all the way up to the Supreme Court, by amongst others the Scotch Whisky Association.

This did not affect the malt whisky or craft beers favoured by Scotland's better-off alcoholics. It also did not affect Buckfast, which sells most of its eight-million annual bottles in the west of Scotland, as it was not amongst the cheapest bevies selling at around £7-8 for a bottle, meaning it was always above the 50 pence MUP level.

Higher prices for the very cheapest drinks simply made Buckfast a more agreeable alternative. The monks are not the only beneficiary of the SNP law. Strong lagers and cheaper vodkas have also shown an increase in sales volume, just as critics of the measure warned.

Public Health Scotland (PHS) statistics report that the unit cost of Buckfast has actually fallen slightly from 67p to 65p per unit, meaning the gap between it and its rivals narrowed.

PHS says that the measure is still a success as smaller container-size bottles were bought and overall alcohol sales declined slightly.

Alison Douglas, CEO of Alcohol Focus Scotland, defended MUP saying: "Increasing the price of alcohol is one of the most effective and cost-effective policy measures to reduce alcohol consumption and harm. This research shows that people in Scotland respond to price."

She also claims that: "The overall effect of these changes has been a reduction of 3.5 per cent in total off-sales of alcohol." How much of that is due to increased drug consumption or pensioners using their free bus passes to visit Berwick and Carlisle?

Tailpiece

We conclude with an amusing storm in a teacup that is worth recording because it demonstrates what a stupid set of numpties run the Scottish Parliament.

On Tuesday two members of the public were kicked out of the public gallery overlooking the Equality, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (they must lead pitifully dull lives if they find attending a Holyrood committee interesting). Their 'crime' was to wear scarfs in the suffragette colours of green, white and purple, which apparently broke the rules banning political symbols in the building. As a result, the committee was suspended to discuss the matter in private.

Ironically, MSPs have their name passes dangling from rainbow lanyards to support LGBT etc causes, and the Holyrood gift shop sells tourist tat in the suffragette colours.

An apology for the action was later issued by the Presiding Officer – but not before the institution was made to look absurd once again.

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Talking about communism in Salisbury

by *New Worker*
correspondent

SALISBURY is best known as the location of a bungled attack on a Russian turncoat spy by alleged agents of Russian intelligence and for a famous cathedral whose spire is the tallest in Britain. But it is also the home of two historic Church of England schools and last week NCP leader Andy Brooks went down to one of them to talk to sixth-form students about the communist cause.

Making the case for communism kicked off a lively discussion at the meeting of the Politics Society at Bishop Wordsworth's School in the heart of town.

This Anglican gram-

mar school lies within the grounds of Salisbury cathedral and next door to the Cathedral School that was founded by St Osmund, the Bishop of Old Sarum, in 1091. The Bishop's school, however, only goes back to 1889 – an initiative of John Wordsworth, the Bishop of Salisbury or 'New Sarum' as it was still officially called until 2009.

On one of its walls there is a blue plaque dedicated to William Golding, the novelist and Nobel prize winner, who taught at the school from 1945–1962. The ship-wrecked schoolboys who descend into savagery in his first book *Lord of the Flies* are believed to have been based on some of Golding's pupils!

Needless to say, the



• Andy Brooks at the school.

50 or so sixth-form students who turned up to hear Andy open a discussion on the communist ideal bore no resemblance to the pupils marooned on Golding's nightmare desert island.

A forest of hands shot up to question or comment on the role of the communist movement from 1917 onwards. The usual questions about the gulags came up, which sadly reflects the biased orientation of the bourgeois education system that caricatures communism as a failed Soviet system and ignores the outstanding achievements of People's China and the other people's democracies in Asia and the Caribbean. But the discussion later broadened to look at the Chinese experience and

the role of the world communist movement in the 21st Century.

Back in the 1960s and '70s the spirit of rebellion swept the younger generation. Inspired by the student uprisings in Latin America and Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution in China, young workers and students took to the streets around the world in the struggle for a better tomorrow.

Although those days are long gone, a new generation is once again beginning to question the essentially exploitative values of bourgeois society in the age of conflict and austerity. And the only answer to capitalism in crisis that serves the interests of the working class is socialism.

REVIEW

by Ben Soton

***Hampshire Heroes: Volunteer Fighters in the Spanish Civil War* by Alan Lloyd. Clapton Press, London 2022. Paperback: 170pp, rrp: £11.**

ALAN LLOYD, a prominent member of the International Brigades Memorial Trust, played a prominent role the establishing a memorial to the men from Southampton who gave their lives in the Spanish Civil War on the side of freedom. He is also a former Labour councillor, recently expelled from the Labour Party for advocating views at odds with the party's new hard-right leadership.

Alan has now turned for his hand to historical

Fighting for Freedom



writing. His first book, *Hampshire Heroes: Volunteer Fighters in*

the Spanish Civil War, charts the lives of the men and women from

Hampshire who volunteered to fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

Hampshire is a country of great contrast. It includes the two large cities of Southampton and Portsmouth on its southern coast, whilst it can also count smaller towns such as Gosport, Fareham, Eastleigh and Basingstoke, and like all Shire Counties it contains an array of leafy villages scattered throughout the New Forest, Test and Meon Valleys. Hampshire is a county where you can find deprived housing estates and a few miles away find leafy suburbs with properties worth millions. The county has produced an array of backgrounds from which many of the International Brigaders came.

This is a very well researched book that charts the lives of those who took up arms as part of the International

Brigade, as well as the medical volunteers and those pilots who flew in the Republican air force. There is also a section on the Basque children who arrived in Southampton on the SS *Habana*. Meanwhile, the book also exposes the British Government's policy of "Non-Intervention", which hindered military aid to the Spanish Republic whilst giving Hitler and Mussolini a free rein in assisting Franco. It should be pointed out that the British Government could have assisted the Spanish Republic with little effort, whereas in 1939 this country went to war to assist the reactionary Polish regime whom it had little means of helping.

Hampshire Heroes is a useful source for anyone wishing to learn about the Spanish Civil War. The chronology of the book covers the mayor battles of the conflict such as Ebro and Jarama, Teruel and the final retreat through Aragon. In charting the lives of the volunteers,

the book covers those who gave their lives in the fight against the evil of fascism but also gives an insight into the lives of those who survived the conflict, some of whom lived on into the early 2000s.

A useful history book and a fitting tribute to the volunteers who gave fought and, in many cases, gave their lives in the fight against fascism. Particular reference should go to the four men from Southampton who gave their lives in that conflict: Raymond Artur Cox, Ivor Hickman, David Haden Guest and Harold Laws.

The NCP badge



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Our place in an amazing universe

by John Maryon

LOOKING OUT into space it is possible to see back in time some 13 billion years and study the pattern of cosmic microwave radiation that resulted from the creation of the universe. Light travels at 186,282 miles per second, which makes it almost impossible to grasp the vast size of the universe. We can observe the remnants of cataclysmic explosions, see giant red stars near the end of their life and the birth of new stars forming within vast nursery clouds of dust and gas as they collapse under gravity. Large black holes lurk ominously at the centres of billions of galaxies each containing billions of star systems.

We must also examine events at the other extreme of size. The greek philosopher Democritus believed that what he called atoms were the smallest parts of matter but he was not in a position to vary his idea. With a typical radius of 0.1 nano metres over five-million could be placed on a pinhead. Democritus would have been reassured by the work of the Russian chemist Demitri Mendeleev who created the Periodic table in 1869. The modern table lists 118 naturally occurring elements in order of atomic number related to their make up in terms of electrons, protons and neutrons. Hydrogen being the lightest and uranium the heaviest.

It is now known that the electron is an elementary particle, but protons and neutrons are themselves made up of elementary particles known as quarks. The Large Hadron Collider in Geneva has recently identified a particle called the Higgs boson, which had been predicted mathematically and was linked to a field that created matter. It is now believed that all forces, waves and matter, including atoms, are the result of the interaction of various forms of wave energy and fields at a sub-atomic level. For example, magnetic and electrostatic fields combine to produce light.

apparent chaos

Within the apparent chaos of the universe, life has evolved on earth and almost certainly in other places as well. The earliest forms on earth were microscopic organisms whose presence was identified by specific carbon molecules found in rocks 3.8 million years old. Life arose from chemical reactions in non-living matter consisting of carbon, water and amino acids that formed in the earth's early atmosphere. Sunshine, hot water and carbohydrates provided the energy to drive the process. In a star system there exists a zone of tolerance where the temperature is just right for water to form and for life to develop (known as the Goldilocks Zone). Also, some small cold moons in

close proximity to much larger bodies could be heated by gravity stresses in their rocky cores.

The big question, however, is why did the process start and continue? Sir Isaac Newton believed that all the conditions for life were created by God. In the early 1970s John Conway, a young mathematician at Cambridge, examined the probability of pattern replication using an infinite grid of squares. By imposing a simple set of rules of contact between identified random squares, Conway and his students, were able to demonstrate that eventually complex patterns could automatically be repeated. This revolutionary principle of order from apparent chaos applied to the primeval soup could make life inevitable.

Today life on Earth has evolved to fill every possible niche for its existence. It is estimated that the total number of species exceeds 8.7 million. The one that I wish to examine in more detail is our own.

variety developed

First, simple life forms consisted of single cells formed from organic molecules. They possessed no consciousness and just survived in a fixed environment. As conditions changed, those that had mutated were better able to flourish. Variety developed and the natural laws of evolution took over. Cells that combined with others were more successful, and

Broken treaties and Indigenous sovereignty



• Kimberly Teehee, proposed to serve but not recognised.

by Will Hodgkinson

THE Cherokee Nation has renewed its long-standing demands that the US Congress honour its treaty obligations by seating a non-voting delegate from the Nation in the House of Representatives.

The right of the Cherokee Nation to have a Congressional representative was a key concession in the 1835 Treaty of New Echota. Flunkies of President Andrew Jackson's administration coerced a minority of the Cherokee leadership into signing the treaty, thus forcing the Nation to surrender its sovereign territory. This

gave the sham of 'legality' to the genocidal Trail of Tears death-march to land in present-day Oklahoma. Over a quarter of the Cherokee population died on the Trail of Tears.

Now, 187 years later, the US settler-colonial government continues to flout even the lopsided terms of the New Echota Treaty by refusing to seat a representative of the Cherokee Nation in Congress. "For two centuries, Congress has failed to honour that promise," said Chuck Hoskin Jr, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. "However, the Treaty of New Echota has no expiration date."

Although Hoskin and the Council of the

Cherokee Nation proposed Kimberly Teehee to serve as representative in 2019, the US Congress has so far declined to recognise her nomination. Increasing pressure by the Cherokee Nation and Indigenous activists, however, has forced the House Rules Committee to plan hearings on the Cherokee representative for mid-November.

The refusal by Congress to honour its treaty obligations to the Cherokee Nation is not an isolated case. The USA has violated every one of the over 400 treaties it has made with Indigenous nations.

Workers World (USA)

more complex organisms emerged that were able to sense their environment and react accordingly. This marked the beginning of a conscious existence for life that would now develop intelligence.

The ability to observe and respond rewarded those creatures that were to exploit their situation and predators also evolved. Life became more advanced and eventually Homo sapiens became the dominant species.

Humans are social creatures that even in their early development existed in small family groups with a lifestyle based upon hunter-gathering. Those that formed into larger tribal groupings were more successful in meeting danger

and facing competition. For a brief period, a form of primitive communism existed for their mutual benefit. Ultimately the 'division of labour' with the emergence of specialist skills and crafts led to the creation of wealth and privilege.

Human development still continues and I believe can be divided into two phases of progress. Barbarian and Socialist. Today, both exist simultaneously and human civilisation has reached a major turning point.

Capitalism and its extreme nationalistic forms represent the final stages of barbarism. Socialism is the beginning of a new progressive social advance that will change society

and human relations forever. The changes take time to mature and develop and must embrace the experiences of individual nations and peoples.

Marx and Engels examined the social and production relations of capitalist society and outlined the scientific principles for building a new form of society that would be able to create a beautiful new world. One in which true freedom would exist without exploitation and class repression. We live in a physical world within which we may shape our own destiny. On this basis of fraternity and respect we can explore and study the universe and reach a deeper understanding of everything.

STANDARD MODEL OF ELEMENTARY PARTICLES

Q U A R K S	UP mass 2.3 MeV/c ² charge 2/3 spin 1/2 u	CHARM 1,275 GeV/c ² 2/3 c	TOP 173,07 GeV/c ² 2/3 t	G L U O N	HIGGS BOSON 126 GeV/c ² 0 0 0 H
	DOWN 4.8 MeV/c ² -1/3 d	STRANGE 95 MeV/c ² -1/3 s	BOTTOM 4.18 GeV/c ² -1/3 b		PHOTON 0 0 1 γ
	ELECTRON 0.511 MeV/c ² -1 1/2 e	MUON 105.7 MeV/c ² -1 1/2 μ	TAU 1,777 GeV/c ² -1 1/2 τ		Z BOSON 91.2 GeV/c ² 0 1 Z
L E P T O N S	ELECTRON NEUTRINO <2.2 eV/c ² 0 1/2 ν _e	MUON NEUTRINO <0.17 MeV/c ² 0 1/2 ν _μ	TAU NEUTRINO <15.5 MeV/c ² 0 1/2 ν _τ	W BOSON 80.4 GeV/c ² ±1 1 W	G A U G E B O S O N S

French workers on the march!

by Otis Grotewohl

PROTESTERS clashed with the police in numerous French cities, as 300,000 workers participated in a partial general strike on 18th October and courageously took to the streets throughout the country.

Most of the striking workers were from the transportation, education and energy industries. The action was organised by the left-wing General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and General Confederation of Labour-Workers Force (CGT-FO), who were joined by other unions.

Picketers carried signs addressing inflation, climate change and the proposed reduction of benefits and increase in contributions workers have to pay for their pensions. Workers

in France are facing a cost-of-living crisis and soaring inflation; at the same time, energy firms are raking in record profits. This has caused widespread anger and has led to calls for a windfall tax on energy companies.

Several socialist movements participated in the events. The revolutionary Pole of Communist Revival in France said: “The mobilisation on 18th October 2022, for this day of strike for wages and the defence of the right to strike at the call of a broad inter-union united front was important. It was unquestionably stronger than the action last 29th September, which was already successful. It benefited from the impetus provided by the heroic mobilisation of the refinery workers who, through their powerful strike, have re-



imposed the general wage increase as the number-one political and trade union issue on the agenda.”

The one-day general strike occurred just as oil refinery workers at several depots owned by the corporate oil giants Exxon-Mobil and TotalEnergies had been on strike for over

a month. Many of the striking oil workers, who have been conducting militant blockades, belong to CGT and voted in early October to continue the stoppage, despite government threats of criminal charges if they refuse orders to go back to work.

The CGT is demanding a

10 per cent wage increase for oil workers, pointing out that the corporations are making windfall profits whilst workers struggle to pay bills as prices rise.

The secretary general of the CGT, Philippe Martinez, told the French Marxist publication *L'Humanité* that: “The CGT

has been calling for negotiations on wages for several weeks, and neither Total's management nor the government have seen fit to respond. It took an outbreak of conflict, whose impact the administration minimised at first, claiming that there was no supply problem – and finally it woke up.”

Workers at all but two of the TotalEnergies facilities settled and went back to work on 20th October – two days after the general strike.

Despite the capitalist bosses, their government and their media attempting to blame striking workers for transportation delays and rising energy costs, the working and oppressed people of France are flexing their muscles through collective action.

Workers World (USA)

Madrid stands up for public health!

HUNDREDS of thousands of demonstrators rallied in Madrid on Sunday to defend the region's primary care services. The protesters warned the government that plans to overhaul the system would “destroy” local healthcare.

Huge crowds rallied at four points across the Spanish capital and marched on city hall in a mass protest under the slogan: “Madrid rallies in support of public healthcare and against the plan to destroy primary care services.”

Primary care services in the Madrid area have been under huge pressure for years due to a lack of resources and staff. According to unions, the situation got even worse as a result of poor regional management.

A regional government spokesperson said there were 200,000 people present at the Sunday rally. “Healthcare for all, your health should never depend on your wallet,” read one huge green banner as thou-

sands of voices chanted: “Public healthcare!”

The protest was called by local associations and municipalities and took aim at the health policies of the regional government of right-wing leader Isabel Diaz Ayuso – including a push for public-private healthcare partnerships and its restructuring of primary care.

The protest came ahead of a planned strike by nearly 5,000 regional family doctors and paediatricians scheduled for 21st November, due to “the overload of work, endless appointments and lack of time with patients”. They will join an earlier strike by Spain's medical staff over the new model for non-hospital emergency centres, which have seen some offering only video consultations due to a lack of staff.

Speaking to reporters at the rally, Monica Garcia of the green-left Mas Madrid party said the health policy of the regional government, which is run by the right-wing Popular Party (PP), was destroying the public health system.

“What they are doing is an unprecedented disaster,” she said, adding: “Ayuso needs to step up, listen to this demonstration and take political responsibility: either her health minister goes or she goes, or the whole Popular Party government goes.”

“There is a very simple way to retain professionals and that is to treat them well: give them contracts that are not just for a month, a week, a weekend. When a government is incapable of doing this, it is because there are political interests at work.”

Radio Havana Cuba

Trump launches new presidential bid

DONALD TRUMP has announced he will run for US president again in 2024, despite facing multiple criminal investigations and the poor performance of the candidates he backed in last week's midterm elections.

Trump launched the bid – his third for the presidency – on Tuesday evening at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, a week after elections in which Republicans failed to win as many seats in Congress as they had hoped. In a

speech broadcast live on US television, Trump spoke to a few hundred supporters in a ballroom decorated with several chandeliers and lined with dozens of US flags.

“In order to make America great again, I am tonight announcing my candidacy for president of the United States,” Trump told the cheering crowd of donors and long-time supporters. “I am running because I believe the world has not yet seen the true glory of what this nation can be,” he said. “We will again put America first.”

Earlier in the day, aides filed paperwork with the US Federal Election Commission setting up a committee called “Donald J Trump for President 2024”. There is a long road ahead before the Republican presidential nominee is formally selected in the summer of 2024, with the first state-level contests more than a year away. Analysts believe Trump's unusually early launch may well be aimed at fending off potential challengers for the party's nomination in 2024, including rising star

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and Trump's former vice president, Mike Pence.

But Trump, who was twice impeached during his last term as president, enters the race at a moment of political vulnerability. He had hoped to launch his campaign in the wake of resounding Republican midterm victories, fuelled by candidates he elevated during this year's primaries. Instead, many of those candidates lost, allowing Democrats to keep the Senate and leaving the Republicans with a path to only a bare majority in the House of Representatives.

The losses have prompted some prominent Republicans openly to blame Trump for promoting weak candidates whom they say derailed the party's hopes of taking control of Congress.

Trump's bid to seek his party's nomination also comes amidst a series of escalating criminal investigations, including several that could lead to indictments. They include

the probe into dozens of documents with classified markings that were seized by the FBI from Mar-a-Lago, and ongoing state and federal inquiries into his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

He is also facing a Congressional subpoena related to his role in the 6th January 2021 attack on the Capitol by his supporters.

Trump, a property tycoon and former reality TV star, has called the various investigations he faces politically motivated and has denied wrongdoing.

The former president's stint at the White House – between 2017 and 2021 – was one of the most tumultuous in modern US history. As well as the unprecedented impeachments, he deployed harsh rhetoric that critics say often veered into explicit bigotry and deeply polarised the country. Despite his loss to President Joe Biden and the Republicans' poor showing in the midterms, however, he remains the most powerful force in his party.

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