

# Proletarian



*Workers must refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain's corporate media. It is the capitalists' job to try to stop us from taking power and building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!*



# Communists persecuted for telling the truth about Israel

# Industry



## Post Office scandal: Trouble on the Horizon

**The power of monopoly laid bare: evidence reveals a picture of tampering with witness statements, falsifying data and coercing would-be whistleblowers.**

Back in 1996, the Japanese company Fujitsu started providing the Post Office with Horizon, which it described as “the most advanced and secure electronic banking and retail network in Europe”.

Fujitsu bragged that Horizon provided a counter system in all 17,000 Post Office branches, claiming that the software “allowed Post Office branches to become more efficient and improve their services by reducing customers’ waiting time, simplifying procedures, and computerising traditional paperwork”.

So pleased was the government-owned Post Office with its decision to delegate some of its key responsibilities to outsourcing giant Fujitsu that in 2003 it awarded the company a contract extension for operations and maintenance. The Post Office thus deepened its dependence on Fujitsu, which also laid on a help desk and data centre staffed by about 400 of its own people. (See Fujitsu case study: Fujit-

su’s systems and operational services to UK Post Office and the worldwide trend of post offices)

Yet despite all the gung-ho assurances of a lean, mean computer system that would abolish “traditional paperwork” and pretty much run itself, only assisted where necessary by the IT wizards on the Horizon help desk, cracks soon began to appear in the system. Under the new regime, cash receipts failed to tally with what was being reported by Horizon; money seemed to be leaking away from tills without rhyme or reason.

And from the very first, sooner than get to the root cause of the cracks, the unerring management instinct was firstly to pretend that there was no real problem, and when that failed, to lay the blame on Post Office staff.

Now, having spent 20 or more years adding lie after lie, throwing hundreds of subpostmasters under the bus sooner than admit that Horizon

was actually getting its sums wrong, it seems that the day of reckoning might be arriving for Fujitsu, in the form of an official inquiry led by judge Sir Wyn Williams.

The inquiry, first initiated back in 2020, proceeded at a snail’s pace until the beginning of 2024. What in the end has put new vigour and purpose into the inquiry has been the cumulative effect of numerous forays into investigative journalism, which have doggedly chipped away at Fujitsu’s lies and the Post Office’s wilful credulity.

For many years, Fujitsu and Post Office senior managers all swore blind that there was no way that either Fujitsu or the Post Office could remotely access or tamper with Horizon, hoping thereby to put the blame exclusively on the till operators and to shrug off all responsibility. The growing scandal began to stink so badly that more than one journalist was drawn to challenge the official disclaimers.

In 2011, BBC reporter Nick Wallis interviewed a subpostmaster in Hampshire who claimed that the Horizon computer system had made money seem to vanish from the tills at

her village branch. Three years later, Wallis interviewed a subpostmaster who recounted having seen Fujitsu staff tampering with accounts. Former Fujitsu worker Richard Roll added further damaging testimony in 2015.

So when last year the scandal broke wide open to public view, with the sensational television drama *Mr Bates vs the Post Office*, the story could not be suppressed any longer.

Hot on the heels of the TV series came the government’s sudden decision to rush through a law to exonerate post office operators. Taken aback by the strength of public feeling aroused by the screening, the government has scurried into damage limitation mode.

Every day of the inquiry now throws up new sickening evidence of the moral bankruptcy of both Fujitsu and the Post Office – and the dreadful consequences this had upon the workforce between 1999 and 2015 in terms of redundancy, social ostracism, marriage breakdowns, bankruptcy, mental illness, jail terms and even suicide.

The inquiry has heard that as far back as 2008 Fujitsu knew about faults in the system that it used to extract data on Post Office transactions, yet the Post Office senior management went on to use these suspect data to justify the prosecution of hundreds of Post Office operators. Indeed, the inquiry has discovered that the same dodgy Fujitsu data are still being used to prosecute workers today.

Evidence now coming under scrutiny reveals a picture of tampering with witness statements, falsifying data and coercing would-be whistleblowers. According to the *Guardian*: “Emails shown to the inquiry between Fujitsu managers and the fraud and liti- **page 27** ▶

## Society



# Vape wars: Children in the sights of tobacco giants

**It seems unlikely that the British government has any real intention of stopping the corporate dope-pedlars in their tracks.**

Big Tobacco is spending millions to ensure it doesn't lose the British market for nicotine when the government introduces a planned ban that, by adding a year, every year, to the age at which an individual is able legally buy tobacco products, will effectively mean that nobody currently under the age of 14 will never be able to buy cigarettes legally.

The aim of the tobacco giants is to ensure that 'alternative nicotine products' (ANPs) won't be included in the ban, despite the fact that it is perfectly obvious that they are also very bad for people's health.

It seems probable that e-cigarettes (or vapes, as they are more commonly known) won't escape completely unscathed from plans to protect children (a result of public pressure, not a sudden moral fortitude on the part of the government).

Measures under discussion that could prevent kids from becoming vape users include restricting advertising, punishing retailers, and (most controversial of all) a ban on the sweet or fruity flavours that are added to e-liquids (vape juice).

### Lobbying by any other name

To combat this interference in their ability to extract profits at the cost of workers' health, the tobacco monopolies decades of experience in lying, tricking, bribing and intimidating in order to maintain the market for tobacco products despite all the evidence that cigarette smoking is deadly.

A recent Times investigation revealed that big tobacco companies have funded research papers that question the risks of youth vaping. These papers have then been cited as evi-

dence in government consultation responses by tobacco-funded campaign groups. (Revealed: how tobacco giants are bankrolling secret pro-vaping campaign by Billy Kenber, 14 December 2023)

Tobacco giant British American Tobacco (BAT), for example, runs a supposedly 'grass-roots' campaign that presents itself as the voice of ordinary vape users and which seeks to influence policy-makers, despite the terms of a global treaty that came into effect in 2005 which bans tobacco firms from interacting with government officials and from being involved in any health-related education.

This 'campaign group', the World Vapers Alliance (WVA), describes itself on its slick website as a group that "amplifies the voices of passionate vapers around the world and empowers them to make a difference in their communities" beneath the logo of a defiantly-raised fist clutching a vape. It may use high-flown expres-

sions and steal working-class symbols, but make no mistake; neither our nor our communities' interests are on the WVA's list of priorities.

The main focus of this corporate-backed 'campaign' is on keeping the various flavours of vapes – the sweet and fruity flavours that increase marketability, especially to children – under the pretext of 'freedom to choose'. *Freedom to sell, to any and all, regardless of harm* would be a more honest way of expressing the demand of the corporate executives directing the campaign's efforts.

Unsurprisingly, it turns out that the 'scientific papers' cited as evidence in WVA's efforts to support 'passionate vapers' are funded by another tobacco giant: Phillip Morris International (PMI).

The power of the lobby does not stop there. Every article on the Times website dealing with this issue at present is preceded by the caveat: "This article is the subject of a legal complaint by Philip Morris International Inc."

### Reinventing the wheel

This use of astroturfed (artificial grassroots) groups and movements is nothing new. Capitalism has a history of creating or co-opting apparently 'anti-corporate' and 'anti-capitalist' groups in order to mislead, divide and influence the working class against its own interests.

Another such group, 'Forest', describes itself as "Voice and friend of the smoker" and carries articles with titles like "Forest slams 'punitive' attack on working-class smokers" and "Banning sale of cigarettes to future generations 'obscene'". Knight of the realm Sir Ronald Harwood is a supporter of the campaign and says: "Tobacco is not an illegal substance, yet the government is **page 4** ▶

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## Vape wars

◀ **page 3** persecuting a minority. I think that's a disgrace in a social democracy."

Appeals to democracy and a sudden concern for 'minorities' (are we now to be classed by our bad habits?) aside, quite how protecting workers' health is an 'attack' and preventing today's children from getting hooked on provably fatal tobacco smoking is 'obscene' makes no sense until you scroll down to the bottom of the site and read: "Disclaimer: Forest is supported by Imperial Tobacco Limited and Gallaher Limited (a member of the Japan Tobacco Group of Companies)."

## The power of monopoly

The creators of 'Forest', Imperial Tobacco Limited (now renamed 'Imperial Brands') and Japan Tobacco Group (which purchased British-based Gallaher for £9.7bn in 2007), control between them nearly 90 percent of the British cigarette market and have extensive plans to diversify into alternative nicotine products (ANPs).

It may seem contradictory that tobacco companies are championing their replacements. But that is only the form; the content is consistent! Most of the industrial processes used in the manufacture of cigarettes (the growth, harvest and transport of tobacco leaf) remain the same when creating ANPs. The tobacco giants are really just trying to maintain business as usual, albeit wrapped in new, shiny eye-catching packaging, and surrounded by slogans of 'healthy alternatives' and a feigned concern for the consumers' wellbeing.

With smoking levels consistently reducing year on year in Britain, the cigarette market is disappearing. But with huge productive forces at their dis-

posable, and bound by the iron laws of capitalism (the need to continue using these means of production to create profits), the tobacco giants are bound to use every means at their disposal to safeguard and extend their market. Or, when that finally fails, to create new ones.

The tobacco lobby has long been one of the biggest and most influential groups manipulating governments and populations in the service of profit. So much so that a strategy has been named after its activities: the 'tobacco industry playbook'. This describes the approach devised by the tobacco industry in the 1950s to protect revenues in the face of mounting evidence showing the links between tobacco smoke and serious illnesses, primarily cancer.

This strategy called for the creation of rival scientific research that contradicted the overwhelming evidence of smoking being the cause of much illness and early death, extensive lobbying and intimidation of governments, and the creation of fronts to disguise industry messaging and present it as coming 'from the people'.

This playbook became less useful and less easy to use (openly at any rate) in the wake of the 2005 ban on tobacco advertising and influencing, but it has found new life, with a little tweaking, in the fast-growing ANPs market.

## An updated playbook

Donations are legal lobbying, and the latest Electoral Commission records shows that in May 2023 the governing Tory party accepted a £350,000 donation from Supreme 8 Ltd, a company that produces colourful vapes, despite government rhetoric about cracking down on e-cigarette products aimed at children.

Papers have been commissioned questioning the harm caused by vaping in general, and youth vaping in particular, by Phillip Morris International (PMI). PMI also set up a training and consultancy firm that has an NHS doctor on its board. She and her husband have been paid millions to provide 'training' to hundreds of other NHS doctors in a bid to brand vaping as a 'healthy alternative' to smoking.

Public Health England paid £40,000 for a series of YouTube videos co-produced by the New Nicotine Alliance (NNA) and held numerous meetings with the group, despite its ties to PMI. The NHS has been persuaded to embed vaping as a key tool in its campaign to combat smoking, up to and including giving out free vapes and even opening vape shops inside hospitals and larger clinics.

"Tobacco companies now present themselves as part of the solution to ending cigarette smoking, and hope this will allow them to reopen doors to influencing government policies, even as they continue to manufacture and sell billions of cigarettes.

"E-cigarette campaigners are particularly focused on the UK because authorities have enthusiastically adopted pro-vaping policies, viewing it as a key tool for smokers to quit. Smoking cessation clinics hand out free vapes and some hospitals have vaping shops on their premises.

"By contrast, other countries have banned flavours or made vapes a prescription-only product. The World Health Organisation opposes their use, saying they are 'undoubtedly harmful' and unproven as a method of giving up cigarettes.

"The UK's approach has been criticised by some public health experts who argued that

it minimised the risk of non-smokers, including young people, taking up e-cigarettes and becoming addicted to nicotine. They have warned of possible damaging health effects on vapers' lungs and cardiovascular systems and the unknown long-term consequences of vaping." (The Times, *ibid*)

According to Mark Hurley, a spokesman for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids: "Tobacco companies like Philip Morris and British American Tobacco have a long history of funding front groups to manipulate the public and advance their business interests at the expense of public health.

"Tobacco companies have funded 'research' that claimed the science was still out on the health impacts of smoking, among other ludicrous findings over the years. After decades of recycling this tactic, it's shameful that tobacco companies still think they can get away with it.

"Groups like the Philip Morris-funded 'Foundation for a Smoke-Free World' are used to undermine lifesaving public health laws around the world and to enable tobacco companies to insert themselves into public health policy.

"Far from being part of the solution, tobacco companies like British American Tobacco and Philip Morris are the main cause of the global tobacco epidemic that kills millions of people each year – full stop. If an organisation or research is being funded by a tobacco company, you can trust one thing only: that the aim is to further the interests of a deadly industry." (Cited in The Times, *ibid*)

## Targeting children

In the heyday of smoking, actors and actresses were recruited to promote the habit, conflating their beauty, suc-

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cess and charisma with the act of lighting up. Today, vaping and nicotine pouch advertising are being supported by the celebrities of our time: social media influencers.

Tobacco firms are giving big influencers cash, free products and channel-boosting help if they will promote vaping and nicotine pouch usage as cool, exciting and fun. This is despite rules banning the promotion of nicotine products via platforms where more than 75 percent of the userbase is under 18.

Of course, the watchdogs arrive late and bark unconvincingly – after the damage has been done.

Meanwhile, vapes are increasingly produced in a range of shiny colours, funky designs and sweet flavours to appeal to young people – the addicts of the future.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has said it is “deeply concerned” about the long-term health impact of e-cigarettes on “young lungs, hearts and brains”, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) has link vaping (unsurprisingly) to heart and lung diseases.

Disposable vapes (many of which are made and sold illegally in order to evade regulations around selling to children) tested after being confiscated in the classroom have been found to contain dangerous levels of heavy metals: lead – 2.4 times the stipulated safe exposure level, nickel – 9.6 times the safe level, and chromium – 6.6 times the safe level.

Vapes are becoming increasingly popular amongst secondary school students, with an estimated one in four 11 to 17 year olds vaping and some so addicted that they are skipping classes to meet their cravings. The Times investigation cites

the case of a 12-year-old asthmatic girl who ended up in a medically-induced coma after suffering a collapsed lung as a result of her vaping habit.

Public pressure has forced the government to make some effort to combat the rapid rise in childhood vaping by talking about restricting flavouring and bringing packaging in line with that currently used for cigarettes. Whether our ministers will ultimately be able to ignore the bags of money, incentives and pressure from big tobacco remains to be seen.

## Fear of effective action

The tobacco monopolies spend a large portion of their resources to try to avoid these very restrictions, and a recent case study vividly illustrates why that is.

RLX technology is a China-based company producing vaping products, which was growing stratospherically and hoping to take advantage of the enormous market of 308 million Chinese smokers.

Having captured only 2 percent of this market, the company's revenues catapulted from \$19m in 2018 to £585m in 2020. Within three years, RLX had become the biggest vaping brand in China, and four of its directors were billionaires. The prospects looked rosy for RLX's aim of making even more massive profits by hooking an ever-growing section of the population to its products.

But then in stepped the Chinese government. In March 2021, state regulators announced plans to bring vaping companies under the control of the State Tobacco Monopoly Authority, which would set prices and sales limits, ringfence profits to deal with any health issues arising from use, and introduce rules to limit flavours only to tobacco and to ban tank-based vapes (allowing au-

thorities to set nicotine dosage at the state level).

Within 55 hours of the measures being announced, RLX's shares fell by 55 percent. When the laws came into force a year later, the shares fell by another 20 percent. Companies in this sector around the world would not have missed this lesson; when the state steps in to curtail business in the interests of public health, profits suffer.

## Trading health for wealth

The latest campaigns around vaping, like the campaigns around tobacco and sugar in the past, once again make it clear that, while we live under the capitalist system of production for profit, we will continue to find that products which do real harm are promoted, will continue to be told by health services that such products are no problem, and continue to see our children targeted as a ‘market’, despite the particular vulnerability of their developing bodies and impressionable minds.

If the smoking rate fall were to continue as it has been (many decades later than should have been the case), we could very well live to see an essentially smoke-free Britain. Education on the health impacts of smoking, the banning of cigarettes from public spaces, and the ban on tobacco advertising had belatedly proven to be capable of freeing British workers from a harmful and expensive addiction.

A lucrative alternative wasn't and isn't required.

Without that alternative, hundreds of billions' worth of raw materials, machines and land – a huge amount of wealth – would stop being capital; would be forced to sit idle. But within the present economic system, the obvious answer of using the land to grow food and

transforming the factories to some useful purpose is simply not on the cards.

Like the combustion-powered car going electric, or the WW2 bomb-making equipment being remastered to stamp sweets for children or produce nitrates for farming, when forces of production become so huge, they acquire a power that cannot be denied. Through the avatars of capital, the capitalists, outmoded products are kept in production and markets are forcibly created – often at the expense of the consumers; the workers.

Those who wish to force this destructive economic system to run more logically are doomed to fail in their attempts – as they have done for 200 years and more. Production for profit has its own logic that human beings are powerless to change – a logic that demands endless expansion of production and the relentless acquisition and concentration of surplus labour (profit) by any means.

An alternative does exist, however, and it can be built in Britain. A socialist economy in which production is planned around human logic; *the logic that recognises real needs and works to fulfil them.*

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## British politics



**Victory to the  
Palestinian people  
in their just war for  
liberation!**



# British terrorist state persecutes communists on 'anti-terror' pretext

**It is the effectiveness of our message that has made our party the particular target of the Zionist lobby and British state machinery.**

The campaign of persecution of prominent and effective anti-Zionist campaigners in Britain appears to be stepping up a gear – a sure sign of the government's panic over their loss of control over the narrative regarding events in Gaza, and its consequent exposure as a backer and facilitator of genocide.

Back on 25 November, four comrades of the CPGB-ML had been arrested at the national Palestine solidarity demo for manning a stall containing a book about the history of Zionism (published nine years ago and well known to the police). They were told that the book (or possibly just its cover) *might* constitute an 'incitement to racial hatred', for which reason they were held in isolation for 24 hours before being released on bail pending further investigation.

While imprisoned, their families were subjected to 3.00am raids, during which police seized phones, laptops and party literature. When they were set free the following day, it was on the condition that they should not sell or distribute leaflets or pamphlets, deviate from the main routes of any march or "carry swastikas" (!) The cases are pending until February.

Then, on Saturday 13 January, while proceedings were being brought against Israel in the International Court of Justice on charges of genocide, and while British bombers attacked Yemen to try to subdue its active support for people of Gaza under attack, another huge London demonstration in solidarity with Palestine was again targeted – this time not in a hunt for 'antisemites' but for 'terrorist sympathisers'.

Comrades from the CPGB-ML were in attendance, along with around hundreds of thousands of British workers. The march, spirited and militant, was another determined demonstration of solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, and an expression of disgust at the complicity of the shameless and rapacious British government and ruling class.

Given the particular role of British imperialism in the present massacre, as well as in perpetrating and facilitating a century of colonial crimes in Palestine (which created and continues to use Zionism in order to subdue the people of the region and maintain imperialist control over its resources, especially oil), our comrades felt a moral obligation and duty to join the protest, despite previous persecution.

Addressing the crowd (see video above), Comrade Ranjeet explained that while his bail conditions prevented him from handing out leaflets or

other materials, he was nevertheless not going to stop showing his solidarity with Palestine. He pointed out that the powerful information that is contained in our party's analysis is the reason for our being singled out in the way we have been, and is what is needed to bring the solidarity movement to an understanding of its true role and potential.

Ranjeet explained that "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is not a message of hatred, but of peace. It sums up the viewpoint of all those who defend the universal human and national rights of the Palestinians, looking forward to the day when they are liberated from decades of illegal occupation, apartheid supremacy and genocidal butchery. It calls, not for the death of individuals, but for the death of the present Israeli system of institutionalised racism, ethnic cleansing and colonial terror.

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## Zionists working with the British state

Our message and our comrades were very well received by the marchers, but, unbeknown to us, a rabid zionist organisation, hiding behind an innocuous sounding website called 'Harry's Place' had 'spotters' at the event who were hand in glove with the government in wanting to fuel the false narrative that marching for Palestine is 'antisemitic' and 'pro terror'.

As with so many words in the political lexicon, these are terms that have been weaponised by western governments over the last two decades in an attempt to silence, de-platform and criminalise opposition to zionism and to the settler-colonial zionist state of Israel.

The connection between the British state and its zionist proxies in the middle east was clearly highlighted by the events of last Saturday, since the rabid zionists at Harry's Place clearly have a hotline to the Metropolitan police. Having located our party stall and seen the effectiveness of our intervention, they reported to the Met using Twitter – posting a picture of our leaflet, posting pictures of our comrades handing them out ... and even posting a map showing where our stall was to be found.

Their Twitter feed (@hurrypharry) is instructive as it reads like a set of orders – orders that were obediently carried out just as soon as the demonstration had finished passing along the Embankment and our party comrades were left alone to pack up their stall.

Once there was no one around to witness or interfere, some fifty officers descended on our comrades, surrounding them and confiscating their literature. The three chosen

for arrest from amongst those present were *the same three whose photos had been posted by Harry's Place on the Met's Twitter feed*. The leaflet that was seized (which we have given out at every Palestine demonstration since October) was *the one objected to by Harry's Place*. And the justification for our comrades' arrest was *on the grounds that Harry's Place had indicated*: that our leaflet was "supporting Hamas, a banned organisation" and we were therefore in breach of the Terrorism Act.

Three comrades were arrested, taken to Hammersmith police station and held for 28 hours, during which time their homes were raided by large squads of anti-terror police. The legislation used to justify our comrades' arrest (an extension of the 'anti-terror' law that was first enacted at the time of the Irish liberation war in the 1970s) gives the government very wide ranging and draconian powers to act against its own citizens – *if we allow them to establish the precedent of using it freely against us*.

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## Disproportionate and unreasonable state force to quell dissent

A group of our party comrades and friends, including family members, gathered outside Hammersmith police station the next day (Sunday) to demand the release of those detained. Standing peacefully outside the station with his young son, Comrade Ranjeet

was identified by another zionist spotter, who promptly informed the police that someone they should be talking to was outside.

So although Ranjeet had done nothing wrong the first time he was arrested (on grounds of 'inciting racial hatred' by standing near a book about zionism), and although he had not breached any of his bail conditions following that first arrest, after he had been pointed out to the police as a person of interest, a group of around ten officers swooped down the steps from

the station and violently grabbed him – as if in fear of what he was about to do – arresting and detaining him for another 24 hours, this time on terror charges.

Not only did they not allow him even to make

sure his five-year-old son was away from the roadside and safely in the charge of one of his comrades, but when he objected to this inhumanity, the police response was to refer him to social services for *putting his children at risk*. Thus are the workers intimidated with implied threats: the state has many means at its disposal to force its critics into silence; they can lock you up, close down your bank accounts, deprive you of housing; they might even confiscate your children!

While he was detained at Hammersmith, police once more raided Ranjeet's house, sending between ten and 20 armed officers, who insisted on all the occupants (his wife,

three children and a friend) standing outside for an hour while the house was 'made safe'. (By locating and demolishing the bomb factory that he, as a terrorist, was probably keeping there?)

In the end, they confiscated more leaflets and a printer. Presumably as evidence of complicity in the terrible crime of producing a leaflet aimed at educating the public. Printers were confiscated from all the addresses raided by these brilliant detectives, who didn't seem to have noticed that the leaflet in question was printed in colour while all the printers they carted off were black and white.

Let us reiterate that, to date, although seven of our comrades have been arrested on spurious grounds of the need to investigate hate speech and support for terrorism, no charges of any sort have been brought. What's more there are no reasonable grounds for such charges. We are neither 'terrorism supporters' nor 'antisemites'. Quite the reverse.

*We oppose the state terrorism of our rulers* (and their proxies in Israel, Ukraine, Syria and elsewhere); and we oppose the antisemitism, islamophobia and every other type of racism that the British ruling class intentionally creates and stirs in order to divide the people and manipulate them into fighting one other. We oppose the barbaric crimes against the people that are daily being committed by the lords of finance capital, based in New York, London, Paris and Berlin. We want to replace their hellish rule with a world freed from exploitation, racism and war; one in which the masses of the people can live as complete and dignified human beings.

There are no grounds for charging us with any crime, either legally or **page 10 ▶**

## British politics



# Gaza: tipping point in western crisis of legitimacy for politicians

**Workers are turning away from mainstream media in droves, and they may not be coming back.**

In a recent television interview, Comrade Joti Brar spoke to RT News regarding a debate in Parliament that had centred on the question of British arms sales to Israel.

Introducing that debate, Labour MP Zarah Sultana asked Parliament to consider the need for arms export licences for weapons sales to Tel Aviv, pointing out that, while ‘oversight mechanisms’ do officially exist, the committee appointed by the House of Commons to fulfil this function has not actually met since March.

Making a further mockery of this charade of a ‘process’, Ms Sultana explained that while official sources cite £474m worth of arms being sold to Israel by British companies since 2015,

“the true figure is shrouded in secrecy. Under open export licences, arms companies can export an unlimited quantity of specified equipment with no further monitoring and no tracking of their total value.”

That is: not only is there no real monitoring via the official ‘oversight’ committee, most of the arms being sent out from Britain evade this august body anyway. Essentially, no one in government is keeping any record of what is going where. *Quel surprise.*

**Mounting public pressure demands political response**

The fact that this parliamentary debate was held at all is a sign of the growing pressure

that MPs are coming under from their outraged constituents, and Labour MPs in particular. The need to be *seen to be doing something* in response to the zionist regime’s brutal genocide of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, and to try to distance themselves from the British state’s blatant complicity, is becoming urgent for many.

Without really wanting to hold back the zionists in any meaningful way, MPs are aware that there is a mass and growing movement of workers in Britain who are watching developments closely, and are just as closely scrutinising the response of their so-called ‘elected representatives’.

Used to having full control of the narrative via the mass media, and confident in their ability to control official debate while covering over or brushing aside the real sentiments

of the British people (who they most emphatically do *not* represent), Britain’s mandarin class was taken entirely off guard by the visceral response to Israel’s intensive carpet bombing of Gaza. Neither in Parliament nor in the former Fleet Street editorial offices did those who set the parameters of public discourse see this one coming, and their panic is palpable.

**Lie machine exposed as never before**

Horrible lies were told by the zionist PR machine during the first 48 confused hours following the launch of the Al-Aqsa Flood resistance operation, and these were immediately taken up by western politicians and media with their habitual knee-jerk ‘create a hysterical atmosphere where reasoned discussion becomes endorsement of beheading babies’ arrogance.

Many even claimed, entirely mendaciously, to have independently verified the information, not least amongst them US president Joe Biden. Except in this instance, the lies being broadcast 24/7 by corporate media and imperialist politicians were debunked in record time.

Meanwhile, the zionist ‘response’ of all-out indiscriminate warfare against more than two million civilians penned into a tiny area with no air defences and nowhere to hide was being beamed into workers’ cellphones around the globe in real time ... as was the footage of Israeli leaders describing the entire Palestinian population as “human animals” who must be “erased” from the earth.

Unforgettable images, videos and testimonies circulated on WhatsApp groups, TikTok feeds and Telegram channels far beyond the reach of the corpo-



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rate media's control ... all while western politicians rushed to Tel Aviv to demonstrate their firm resolve to stand with the murderers.

And the streets of cities around the world erupted with protesting crowds.

Indeed, the flood of information has forced even such pro-zionist outfits as the BBC and the Guardian to moderate their positions, and occasionally to question some of the zionists' more blatant lies and genocidal positions. Not because they really do want to hold these fascist maniacs to account, but out of a growing fear that they are collectively losing the last vestiges of their credibility with large swathes of the British public.

A growing awareness of the lies, corruption and duplicity of British politicians and media was kick-started during the Iraq war 20 years ago. This crisis of legitimacy was exacerbated by the Brexit fiasco and accelerated still further as western governmental responses to the Covid pandemic unfolded. For years now, journalists and politicians have regularly been rated as our least-trusted professionals, earning more opprobrium from workers than estate agents (the profession whose name used to be widely used as a synonym for dishonest shystering in Britain).

Now the imperialist-backed war against Gaza has created a tipping point from which there may be no return. Ever larger numbers of Britons have turned away from corporate news sources, including the formerly revered 'Aunty Beeb', and all the indications are that they will not be coming back again.

### Labour's social justice credentials in the dust

Meanwhile, the Labour party in particular is haemorrhaging

support from its base. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, former specialist in 'human rights law' (don't laugh) capped a decade of careerist genuflecting before the zionist beast by refusing to judge from the mountain of available evidence whether war crimes just might be being committed by Israel in Gaza.

This was despite the fact that he had earlier had no hesitation in asserting to an LBC radio audience that the Palestinian resistance (' Hamas') had "obviously" committed terrorist atrocities during its operation. He went on to assure his stunned host that Israel "had the right" to collectively starve and freeze the civilians of Gaza by cutting off supplies of power, food, water and medicine to them all.

Starmer's refusal to condemn Israel, arriving in people's living rooms alongside gut-wrenching footage of babies being removed from cold incubators in the shells of devastated Palestinian hospitals, was the last straw for many formerly loyal Labour members and supporters.

Exact figures do not seem to have been collated anywhere, but judging by the separate reports that are available of various collective resignations, between 50 and 100 Labour councillors have so far resigned in protest at their party leader's position, many not only from their positions but from the party entirely. The party has lost control of three councils as a result (Oxford, Burnley and Norwich). More resignations have resulted from a head office edict to local Labour branches that they should refrain from discussing this divisive issue at all.

The mounting pressure on councillors from their constituents can be inferred from the Daily Mail's reporting that two separate council lead-

ers (Burnley and Pendle) had urged Starmer to resign following his refusal to call for a ceasefire. According to the paper, another poll found that *nearly a fifth* of Labour councillors have considered walking away from the party over its Gaza position.

Individual members are likewise tearing up their party cards, some after decades of clinging to the 'better than the Tories' branding peddled by the fake left.

Then on 14 November, Starmer capped his militant 'standing with' the genocidaires by whipping his MPs to abstain on a vote in Parliament which would have amended the King's speech to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The sheer weight of public pressure on this issue forced 56 Labour MPs to go against this voting prohibition, ten of them front benchers, who had to resign from their shadow cabinet roles (not, needless to say, from the Labour party) in order to cast their votes in favour.

Toothless as this rebellion by Labour MPs was, it would not have happened at all had those concerned not felt that their position before the electorate would be untenable if they meekly followed Starmer's instructions. Many of them are, after all, members of the entirely mis-named 'Socialist Campaign Group' of parliamentarians - MPs whose presence in the Commons and in Labour is supposed to provide proof that some scope for moving the party and the country 'in the direction of' socialism exists within the British parliamentary system.

As a result of this very public and blindly unconditional support for Israeli crimes, support for Sir Keir Starmer's Labour is in freefall, with a very real threat of boycott by significant

numbers of formerly loyal Labour voters. For those of us who have some knowledge of the Labour party's history, Starmer's positions can come as no surprise. But for the millions who remain unaware of the party's bloodstained history of loyal service to British imperialism, Starmer's barefaced hypocrisy and arrogant refusal to reflect reality has come as a shocking revelation.

### Gaza and Ukraine - spot the difference

During the RT News interview cited above, the presenter asked our comrade some very telling questions, and made some obvious comparisons that western corporate media have been avoiding like the plague.

Although many have been forced to acknowledge that some debate on the question of Israeli war crimes may be necessary (a debate our rulers are doing everything to kick into the long grass, even as they are accelerating the shipment of arms and other supplies to the zionist war machine), no such admission has been made in the case of Ukraine.

But if it might be a contravention of Britain's own laws for our government to provide weapons to a supremacist ethno-state for the purposes of collective punishment and genocide in Palestine, might that not also be the case in the Donbass? After all, there is more than a passing similarity between the two wars.

In both cases, proxy armies are doing the USA's bidding in service of its geopolitical aims.

In both cases, the whole of society has become militarised, and is motivated by a fascist ideology (both the Ukrainian and the Israeli governments include openly-avowed fascists, as do both their **page 10** ▶

## British politics

### Gaza tipping point

◀ **page 9** armed forces) and the racist goal of constructing an apartheid supremacist state in which one group of people (Russians, Palestinians) are kept in permanent subordination to another ('Ukrainians', 'Israelis').

In both cases, the aggressing power is ready to wipe the subject people out entirely if they are not prepared to accept their place as *untersmenschen* in a permanently stratified society.

The big difference in the debate around these two wars and the outrage against British complicity is that the narrative around Ukraine has been far more successfully curated by the imperialists. The mass of workers in Britain and the west are unaware of the extent of the lies they have been told about Ukraine and Russia in a way that millions no longer are about the lies surrounding Palestine.

And for this difference, the two biggest contributing factors have been *time* and the indomitable steadfastness of the Palestinian *resistance*. While most workers had no knowledge of anything that was going on in Ukraine before 24 February 2022, and were therefore open to the hysterical propaganda manipulations of western media when Russia launched its special military operation in defence of the Russian people, the Palestinian issue is one that has been punctuating our consciousness for 75 years. Over that time, the entire progressive world has long ago come down unanimously on the side of Palestine, and even the United Nations has had to admit that all rights are on the side of Palestinian resistance.

Added to these factors are: first, the deepening global

economic crisis, being felt by workers everywhere as the inflationary 'cost of living crisis'; second, Nato's total failure to defeat Russia in Ukraine, which has not only exposed many lies regarding that conflict and about Russia generally, but has also given a great boost to the forces of anti-imperialist resistance worldwide; and third, the shift in geopolitical balance following on directly from Russia's impending victory, which has, among other things, contributed towards the successful Chinese mediation of a rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the middle east.

Moreover, the popularisation in recent decades of the concept of a worldwide muslim community of faith, the 'Ummah', has led to a deep sense of connection with the cause of Palestinian freedom not only amongst anti-imperialist activists but amongst muslims all over the world. This sense of identification, combined with real communication networks, has created a powerful basis for organisation and information-sharing that is beyond the reach of corporate media control. And, since muslims live amongst non-muslims all over the world, the information they are sharing with each other is inevitably also reaching their other friends and contacts, and thus making its way into the wider social consciousness.

All of which is feeding into the phenomenon of the huge anti-zionist and pro-Palestine marches in the streets of western capitals that we are seeing today.

One thing seems certain. In their rush to 'stand with' Israel, western politicians and media have entirely underestimated the changed conditions – changed in no small part as a result of the imperialist failure in Ukraine.

### CPGB-ML arrests

◀ **page 7** morally. Our leaflet does not support ' Hamas terrorism' but the right of the Palestinian people to resistance (a right explicitly recognised half a century ago by the United Nations). We do not choose the organisations through which the Palestinian people direct this resistance; that is not our job. Our job is to explain to the British people why resistance to colonial rule is both inevitable and necessary.

If a case is brought, it will not be because the gifted sleuths of His Majesty's constabulary have unearthed a smoking gun, but because of political decisions that are being taken regarding use of the law to feed a failing narrative. It will be further proof that the government is desperately seeking for ways to demobilise the Palestine solidarity movement, and in particular to separate the masses who are taking part in that movement from those who are trying to bring to it the knowledge that would give it direction and real power.

If a decision to prosecute is taken, we will prepare a vigorous defence on all fronts: legally, morally and politically – and we have no doubt that the mass of the Palestine solidarity movement will be with us.

Even without any charges being brought, we can see very clearly a pattern of state harassment against our party, no doubt dictated at the governmental level in accordance with the messages of the (sacked) former home secretary Suella Braverman, who sought from the outset to label the protests in support of Palestine and against the ongoing genocide as "hate marches", demanding that the police should be directed to crack down on them with a heavy hand.

### We will not back down

For the present, the four comrades arrested last Saturday have been released on bail 'pending investigation'. They will be informed at the end of March whether the Crown intends to bring any prosecution. Their bail conditions are that they should not attend or organise any demonstration, "planned or unplanned", and that they should not step foot in the borough of Westminster. Our solicitors will be seeking to have these sweeping and disproportionate conditions overturned, since they have no connection to any potential crime but are merely aimed at stopping us fulfilling our primary function of engaging with the movement and speaking in public.

While our comrades have been arrested merely for expressing their solidarity with a people under horrific and criminal attack, they have been arrested by a state that is fully complicit in these crimes: in the founding and ongoing genocide for 75 years of the Palestinian people; in creating the mythology of zionism; and in continually waging war against all the peoples of the middle east, the most recent of these being their illegal and barbaric attack on the resistance in Yemen.

So who are the real criminals here? Who are the real terrorists???

We invite all those who claim to be on the side of free speech in Britain and in support of the rights of Palestine, to make their voices heard. It is quite evident that this targeting of our message that "Palestine has the right to exist – and therefore the right to resist" is at the centre of the attempted criminalisation and dissipation of our mighty movement.

# Gaza genocide



## Heroic Yemenis capture Israeli ship, deal hefty economic blow to the Zionist entity

Footage of the ship's capture went viral and inspired resistance forces across the region.

Footage has emerged of a helicopter of Yemeni national army soldiers landing on a ship belonging to Israel and seizing it.

The ship is designed to carry vehicles and has a capacity of up to 1,500.

Reuters described the ship as British owned and Japanese operated, with the 25 crew members hailing from Bulgaria, Mexico, the Philippines and Ukraine with no Israeli citizens aboard. (Houthis seize ship in Red Sea with link to Israeli company, 19 November 2023)

The Yemen News Agency, on the other hand, has stated that "the ship controlled by the 'Houthis' belongs to Israeli businessman Rami Unger", who is close to Israel's secret services (Mossad). (Widespread echoes of Yemeni operation to seize Zionist ship in Red Sea, Saba.ye, 28 November 2023)

Unger is a veteran of the IDF's intelligence corps, and has a close personal and business relationship with Yossi Cohen, former director of Mossad and national security advisor to Israeli prime minister Benjamin

Netanyahu.

In 2019, Unger appeared on the Haaretz newspaper's 'Top 30 richest people in Israel' list, which assessed his net wealth at \$2.1bn.

### Striking a hefty blow at the Israeli economy

The ship is of little real value to Yemen's national army (persistently referred to in western media as 'the Houthis'). It was sailing without a cargo, and although on paper it is valued at \$50m, it is not something that could easily be resold (if at all).

Meanwhile, the true cost to the Zionists is not the monetary value of this one ship, but the general threat now posed to all its international shipping. In this area, the Yemenis have dealt a deadly blow to the Israeli regime.

The shortest shipping route from Israel/Palestine to Asia (used to carry 24 percent of the country's exports) is through the Suez canal. And everything going through the Suez canal has first to traverse the Red Sea, which the Yemenis have now demonstrated both the willingness and the ability to

strike and seize.

All Israeli companies have thus been forced to divert their shipping around the southern cape of Africa, adding 10,000 miles to the trip. The economic damage is likely to end up in the billions.

### USA will be wise to avoid a wider war

As US hegemony visibly declines in the middle east, the threat to Israeli shipping in the Red Sea, alongside Yemen's missile barrages targeting Israeli cities, may have the potential to draw Israel and its US backers into a wider regional war.

"And if the next attack sees fatalities – particularly of US or Israeli nationals – that raises the risk of a wider war breaking out on the seas.

"Significant Houthi interference with commercial shipping through the strait is almost certain to trigger US intervention due to the political and potentially economic implications," the New York-based Soufan Centre warned." (Iran-backed Yemen rebels' attack on Israel-linked ship raises risks in vital Red Sea, Times of Israel, 21 November 2023)

This may well be wishful

thinking from the Times of Israel, however. The Saudis, backed by the full might of the United States and Britain, have been unable to take over Yemen despite causing untold death and suffering to the Yemeni people, starving as many as seven million people.

It is precisely such growing weakness in the Nato camp that has led to the success of the Al-Aqsa Flood operation in Gaza.

The USA has failed to destroy Yemen through years of proxy war. Any ground assault would meet the same fate as has the Saudi invading army.

With the United States scrambling to find ammunition for both Israel and Ukraine, a further expansion of conflict across the middle east would only serve to bleed the imperialist economies still further, and ultimately end in a catastrophic defeat.

### Growing strength of the axis of resistance

After decades of punishment beatings by the USA and its regional enforcer, the resistance forces have not been sitting idle. Steadily, they have built up their arsenals, their military technology, their fighting capability and their coordination.

Thus it is that Nato and its Israeli proxy are waking up to the fact that the balance of forces in the middle east has shifted decisively against them.

For one thing, they have lost their former monopoly on long-range ballistic weaponry. Yemeni forces fired a barrage of missiles on 31 October, earning the accolade of having achieved the "first ever combat interception in space".

"They probably travelled further than any other ballistic missile fired as an act of aggression, having crossed at least 1,600km. **page 20** ▶

# Gaza genocide



## South Africa brings Israel to the ICJ: Genocide by no other name

Not only Israel, but its backers in the United States and the entire UN system are in the dock.

South Africa, mindful of its obligations as a signatory to the United Nations' genocide convention, made an application to the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) to establish Israel's responsibility for violations of the convention; to hold Israel fully accountable under international law for those violations; and to ask court to take urgent measures to ensure the urgent and fullest possible protection for Palestinians in Gaza, who remain at grave and immediate risk.

### The background

According to South Africa, the various acts and omissions that make up Israel's war on Gaza are genocidal in character because they are *intended* to bring about the destruction of a substantial part of the Palestinian national, racial and ethnical group. Intent is the most important element in proving that the crime of genocide has been committed.

In preparing its application, South Africa has placed the accelerating genocide that has horrified the world over the last

three months in the broader context of the ongoing *Nakba* against the Palestinian people. This began with the huge ethnic cleansing operation that accompanied the founding of the Israeli state, and has continued with the Zionist regime's conduct towards Palestinians during its 75-year apartheid rule, 56-year illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, and its brutal 16-year siege of Gaza.

Drawing on statements and reports from UN chiefs and bodies, NGOs, eye witnesses, and Israelis themselves, South Africa's legal team put together a comprehensive and compelling 84-page application. According to Judge Andrew Napolitano, the application is "a slam dunk for the plaintiffs, there is effectively no credible denying the nature of the allegations, which are hair-raising and horrific". Grayzone founder Max Blumenthal has pointed out: "The strongest point that the South African case has is that Israeli leaders have self-indicted by expressing their intent to commit genocide in a clearer way than any other

country has during an armed conflict." (Judging Freedom)

The facts presented establish that, against a background of apartheid, expulsion, ethnic cleansing, annexation, occupation, discrimination, and the ongoing denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, Israel has since 7 October 2023 failed to prevent genocide and has failed to prosecute those who call for it. Repeated statements by state representatives at the highest levels, including by the Israel's president, prime minister and defence minister, have expressed genocidal intent, and this has been reflected in the nature and conduct of Israel's military actions, as well as in its decision to cut off supplies of food, water, medicine, fuel, shelter and other humanitarian assistance for the besieged and blockaded people of Gaza, which is deliberately pushing them into dehydration, famine, disease ... and death.

South Africa and Israel are both members of the United Nations and are both parties to the genocide convention, which obliges them to take "all reasonable measures within their power to prevent

genocide".

Based in the Hague (Netherlands), the ICJ is the UN's highest court, officially tasked with settling disputes between states and giving advisory opinions on international legal issues. Of course, it has very rarely been given the chance or the power to fulfil these functions, since the imperialists only invoke the UN when it serves their interests and can be bent to their will, ignoring and bypassing it when it does not. Since a final verdict on whether Israel has really committed genocide could take years, what South Africa has filed for is an emergency order on *provisional measures* to stop the killing in Gaza.

The court is therefore being asked to establish whether such an order is necessary – in other words, whether at least some of the acts alleged to be taking place are *capable* of falling within the provisions of the genocide convention, and whether an order should therefore be made recommending that all such actions be stopped immediately.

The ICJ has no mechanism for implementing such a decision, and nor does the UN general assembly. In theory, the security council *does* have the power to organise action against Israel – but, as everyone knows, no action has ever been taken yet because Israel has always been shielded by the security council veto of its US imperialist patrons. Hence the extreme arrogance of Zionist politicians, who have grown up and come to power in this atmosphere of total impunity thanks to the unconditional backing of the all-powerful Uncle Sam.

*Whether the court is free to come to the conclusion that is obvious to the whole world, and whether the security council is free to demand action*

# Gaza genocide

from Israel are just as much in the dock at this moment as is the Zionist regime itself.

## Zionist response

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu angrily rejected the allegations when South Africa filed its lawsuit, declaring: “No, South Africa, it is not we who have come to perpetrate genocide, it is Hamas. It would murder all of us if it could. In contrast, the IDF [Israeli army] is acting as morally as possible.” President Isaac Herzog asserted that there is “nothing more atrocious and preposterous” than the lawsuit.

Despite the abundance of evidence, the Israeli government continues to deny its crimes, asserting on its official website: “The accusation of genocide against Israel is not only wholly unfounded as a matter of fact and law, it is morally repugnant ... antisemitic and deeply offensive to the memory of the victims of the holocaust.” The Israeli president called up memories of mediaeval Europe by calling the claim a “blood libel”, while his government declared South Africa’s case to be lacking in a factual and legal basis and to constitute a “despicable and contemptuous exploitation of the court”.

That great bastion of democracy the USA has made it equally clear it opposes the case. US national security spokesperson John Kirkby dismissed it as “meritless, counterproductive and completely without any basis in fact”. Britain’s sagacious foreign secretary Lord Cameron, meanwhile, admitted to being “worried” that Israel may have acted in breach of international law, but went on to declare that it is simply “not right” to “bandy round terms like genocide”.

British Tory MP and former attorney-general Sir Michael Ellis wrote in the Sunday Times:

“The loss of Palestinian civilian life is tragic. It would be heartless not to be dismayed by the rubble that now covers Gaza. But as a matter of law all war is not genocide. The evidence is that Israel tries to minimise civilian casualties, and this in itself disproves the very central charge of ‘intent’.”

## Proving intent

The people of the world are watching with interest as this unique battle unfolds. One party aims to stop a horrific genocide in Gaza that we have all been watching unfold in real time; the other party is perpetrating that genocide while proudly boasting of its achievements; and others still – the United States, Britain and the European imperialists – are actively supporting and shielding the perpetrator.

With the crimes continuing daily and hourly, every figure is out of date as soon as it is written down. At the time South Africa was drafting its application, Israel had been conducting a sustained bombardment of the Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated places in the world, for more than 11 weeks, forcing the evacuation of 1.9 million people (85 percent of the population) from their homes and herding them into ever smaller areas, without adequate shelter, in which they continue to be attacked and killed, injured, starved and traumatised.

Israel had at the time of writing killed in excess of 23,000 named Palestinians, including over 7,729 children, while at least 7,780 others were missing, presumed dead or slowly dying under the rubble. Its bombing had injured at least 55,243 people, causing them severe bodily and mental harm. Moreover, now that electricity and medicines have all run out, amputations and other operations are carried out

in unsanitary conditions, often simply on the floor, without anaesthetic or antibiotics.

During its blitzkrieg, Israel has laid waste to vast areas of Gaza, wiping out whole neighbourhoods. More than 355,000 Palestinian homes have been damaged or destroyed, as have extensive tracts of agricultural land, bakeries, schools, universities, businesses, places of worship, cemeteries, cultural and archaeological sites, municipal and court buildings, and critical infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities and electricity networks.

Most notorious has been the relentless assault on every part of the Palestinian medical and healthcare system, from hospitals and clinics to ambulances and the medics themselves. In just over two months, Israel’s military attacks had wreaked more havoc than the Allied bombing of Germany in World War 2. The destruction is so extreme that Gaza as seen from space has changed colour.

South Africa’s detailed, systematic and painstaking application makes for harrowing reading, but the conclusion anyone reading it will draw is that the case against Israel is indeed incontrovertible. We reproduce just a small sample of the facts it contains below.

### 1. Killing in large numbers.

Over 21,110 Palestinians are reported to have been killed since Israel began its military assault, at least 70 percent of whom are believed to be women and children. Nowhere is safe. Palestinians have been killed in their homes, in places where they sought shelter, in hospitals, in Unwra schools, in churches, in mosques, and as they tried to find food and water for their families.

They have been killed if they failed to evacuate, in the

places to which they fled, and even while they attempted to flee along Israeli declared ‘safe routes’. It is estimated that it will take years to recover the remains of people buried underneath the rubble.

An estimated 1,779 Palestinian families in Gaza have lost multiple family members, and hundreds of multigenerational families have been killed in their entirety, with no survivors – often all killed together. By 7 November 2023, 312 Palestinian families in Gaza had lost over ten members each. The level of mortality is such that medics have had to coin a new acronym: ‘WCNSF: wounded child, no surviving family’.

Israel is dropping ‘dumb’ (ie, unguided) bombs on Gaza, many of them weighing up to 2,000lb, which have a predicted lethal radius of up to 360m, and are expected to cause severe injury and damage as far as 800m from the point of impact. These bombs are being dropped close together in one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is inconceivable that such tactics can be employed with any other intention than that of killing and wounding the largest possible number of people.

Over 115 Palestinian children in Gaza are killed every day. More in the first three weeks alone (a total of 3,195) than the total number of children killed each year across the world’s conflict zones since 2019. The scale of Palestinian child killings in Gaza is such that the UN children’s organisation Unicef has described the strip as “a graveyard for children”.

Doctors, journalists, teachers, academics and other professionals are also being killed at wholly unprecedented rates. To date, Israel has killed over 311 doctors, nurses and other health workers and **page 14 ►**

# Gaza genocide

## ICJ genocide case

◀ **page 13** 103 journalists – more than 73 percent of the total number of journalists and media workers killed globally in 2023. It has also killed 40 civil defence workers – killed while trying to dig victims out of the rubble, at least 209 teachers and educational staff and 144 UN employees.

### 2. Causing serious bodily and mental harm and inflicting conditions of life intended to destroy the group.

Over 55,243 Palestinians have been wounded since 7 October 2023, the majority of them women and children. Burns and amputations are typical injuries, with an estimated 1,000 children having lost one or both legs. Israeli forces have used white phosphorus in densely populated areas in Gaza, causing deep burns so severe that they can penetrate bone and even reignite after initial treatment.

The extreme ferocity of bombardment and the lack of safe areas are also causing severe mental trauma. Even before this latest onslaught, Palestinians in Gaza suffered severe trauma from prior attacks: 80 percent of Palestinian children experienced higher levels of emotional distress, demonstrating bedwetting and reactive mutism, and engaging in self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Such deep-seated and population-wide damage will have ramifications for those who survive and for their descendants for generations.

### 3. Forcing mass expulsions and displacement; large-scale destruction of homes.

It is estimated that over 1.9 million Palestinians out of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been forced from their homes. As noted by the UN's special rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced

persons: "Gaza's housing and civilian infrastructure have been razed to the ground, frustrating any realistic prospects for displaced Gazans to return home, repeating a long history of mass forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel."

These displacements are calculated to bring about the physical destruction of all Palestinian presence in Gaza.

### 4. Cutting off food and water.

Israel has now pushed the Palestinian population in Gaza to the brink of famine. As the UN secretary-general has stated: "Four out of five of the hungriest people anywhere in the world are in Gaza," with the people there now facing the highest levels of acute food insecurity ever classified by the international food security monitors (IPC).

Water is also severely depleted. Israel continues to cut off piped water for the north of the strip, and damage from Israeli airstrikes and shelling has rendered most of the water system inoperable. The World Food Programme has reported that there are only 1.5 to 1.8 litres of clean water available per person per day for all uses (drinking, washing, food preparation, sanitation and hygiene), which is an order of magnitude below the 'emergency threshold' of 15 litres per day considered necessary for surviving in "war or famine-like conditions" and a mere *half* of the bare minimum 'survival threshold' of 3 litres per day.

Experts are now predicting that more Palestinians in Gaza may die from starvation and disease than from airstrikes, and yet Israel is intensifying its bombing campaign, precluding the delivery of any assistance.

### 5. Preventing medical care.

In a letter to the UN security council (UNSC) on 4 December 2023, the international presi-

dent of Médecins Sans Frontières wrote: "Israel has shown a blatant and total disregard for the protection of Gaza's medical facilities. These supposedly protected facilities are being bombed, are being shot at by tanks and guns, encircled and raided, killing patients and medical staff ..."

"There is no justification for the atrocious attacks on healthcare. The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes the situation as 'unconscionable' and 'beyond belief'."

### 6. Depriving the people of adequate shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation.

Shelters are shockingly overcrowded, creating a high risk of epidemic illness. In these overfull and unsanitary spaces, more than 700 people use a single toilet, women give birth (an average of 25 per day), and people nurse open wounds. Sewage is flowing into the streets where Palestinians are living, as it can no longer be managed. Every possible corner is congested with makeshift shelters. In all parts of Gaza, people are desperate, hungry and terrified.

### 7. Measures intended to prevent Palestinian births.

The WHO has warned that maternal deaths are expected to increase, including a rise in stress-induced miscarriages, stillbirths and premature births. The UN special rapporteur on violence against women and girls has expressly warned: "Israel's continued assault on the reproductive rights of Palestinian women and their newborns has been relentless and is particularly alarming ..."

"The reproductive violence inflicted by Israel on Palestinian women, newborn babies, infants and children could be qualified as ... acts of genocide."

### 8. Aiming at the destruction

### of Palestinian life in Gaza.

Israel has destroyed individual homes, entire streets and whole neighbourhoods. Shops, schools, vibrant marketplaces, doctors' clinics, historic streets, mosques; everything that once sustained Palestinian life has been damaged or destroyed. Bombers have targeted Gaza city's central archive building, containing thousands of historical documents and national records dating back over a century. It has besieged every one of Gaza's four universities and killed leading Palestinian academics.

The Israeli army, erecting the Israeli flag over the wreckage of devastated towns, and spurred on by calls from within the Israeli government to "flatten Gaza" and establish Israeli settlements on the rubble of Palestinian homes, is destroying the very fabric and basis of Palestinian life in Gaza.

## Genocidal rhetoric

Overt statements by prominent members of Israeli society, including state officials, parliamentarians and news anchors, constitute clear, direct and public incitement to genocide, with such sentiments seemingly widespread and mainstream in Israeli society. South Africa provides nearly 5,000 directly attributable words, of which we present but a small subset in illustration.

*Prime minister:* On 16 October 2023, Benjamin Netanyahu described the situation as "a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle". On 28 October, he said that Israelis were "committed to completely eliminating this evil from the world" and adding: "You must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our Holy Bible. And we do remember."

# Gaza genocide

The verse he referenced describes a call by God to the Biblical Israelites to wipe out every man, woman and child of a rival tribe; a verse that has for many decades been used by Zionists ultras to justify killing any and all Palestinians. Footage of IDF members dancing on the rubble in Gaza while singing a song to “wipe out the seeds of Amalek” shows that the genocidal content of the prime minister’s message has been clearly understood.

*President:* On 12 October, Isaac Herzog made clear that Israel was not distinguishing between militants and civilians in Gaza, stating in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, over one million of whom are children: “It’s an entire nation out there that is responsible. It’s not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware not involved. It’s absolutely not true ... and we will fight until we break their backbone.”

*Defence minister:* On 9 October, Yoav Gallant issued a ‘situation update’ in which he stated that Israel was “imposing a complete siege on Gaza. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. *We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.*” He informed troops on the Gaza border that he had “removed every restriction” on their behaviour.

*National security minister:* On 10 November, openly fascist minister Itamar Ben-Gvir clarified the government’s position: “To be clear, when we say that Hamas should be destroyed, it also means those who celebrate, those who support, and those who hand out candy – they’re all terrorists, and should also be destroyed.”

*Energy minister:* On 13 October, Israel Katz tweeted: “All the civilian population in Gaza is ordered to leave immediately. We will win. *They will not*

*receive a drop of water or a single battery until they leave the world.*”

*Heritage minister:* On 1 November, Amichai Eliyahu posted on Facebook: “The north of the Gaza Strip, more beautiful than ever. Everything is blown up and flattened, simply a pleasure for the eyes ... We must talk about the day after. In my mind, we will hand over lots to all those who fought for Gaza over the years ...”

*Agriculture minister:* On 11 November, Avi Dichter recalled the *Nakba* of 1948, in which over 80 percent of the Palestinian population of the new Israeli state was forced from or fled their homes, stating to a TV interviewer that: “We are now actually rolling out the Gaza *Nakba.*”

*Former head of the Israeli national security council:* On 7 October, Giora Eiland, discussing the order to cut off water and electricity to Gaza, wrote: “This is what Israel has begun to do ... But it’s not enough. In order to make the siege effective, we have to prevent others from giving assistance to Gaza ... *The people should be told that they have two choices: to stay and to starve, or to leave.*”

*Veteran reservist:* On 11 October, 95-year-old Israeli army reservist Ezra Yachin – a veteran of the notorious Deir Yassin massacre of 1948 – was reportedly called up for reserve duty to “boost morale” amongst Israeli troops ahead of the ground invasion. He was broadcast on social media being driven around in an Israeli army vehicle, dressed in Israeli army fatigues, and inciting the soldiers to genocide:

“Be triumphant and finish them off and don’t leave anyone behind. *Erase the memory of them. Erase them, their families, mothers and children. These animals can no longer live ...*

“Every Jew with a weapon should go out and kill them. *If you have an Arab neighbour, don’t wait, go to his home and shoot him ... We want to invade, not like before, we want to enter and destroy what’s in front of us, and destroy houses, then destroy the one after it. With all of our forces, complete destruction, enter and destroy.* As you can see, we will witness things we’ve never dreamed of. Let them drop bombs on them and erase them.”

## Significance

The ICJ is part of the United Nations, which as we know is dominated by western powers. That is why the ICJ has never before addressed itself to a single one of the terrible crimes committed by the imperial west. The court may have no real power to enforce any decision, but the very fact that it is being used in this way signals a sea change in the balance of power globally and in the sentiments of the watching masses.

Whilst South Africa has initiated the case, it is being supported by more than 150 nations. The sentiments of the Arab masses (and the decline of US power in the middle east) may be gauged from the fact that Saudi Arabia is one of the supporters. Even in the security council, the most recent motion demanding an immediate ceasefire was only stopped by the USA’s veto (while the perfidious British delegation abstained from voting at all).

South Africa’s case has demonstrated with depth and clarity Israel’s clear intent to destroy Gaza, making it uninhabitable, killing as many of its people as possible and forcing the rest to leave. Its actions and words in support of this aim, its bombing of core infrastructure and its coldblooded blocking of access to everything needed to sustain life are irrefutable. From Israel’s

highest officials, across its media and throughout its society, repeated and escalating rhetoric makes clear that Gaza is to be devastated; and that no distinction is to be drawn between resistance fighters and civilians.

For those following the case, the methodically presented evidence resonates with what they have been witnessing on social media feeds. This is the first time in history a genocide has been documented in real time by its victims in the bright glare of global publicity, and South Africa has reminded us that we all have a responsibility not to sit silently by. Each of us must choose: we can align ourselves with the victims of this genocide or we can stand up against those who perpetrate and facilitate it. This is especially important for we who live in imperialist countries whose governments are providing military and logistical support without which the blitzkrieg could simply not continue.

This is a pivotal moment in international relations. Can the UN’s actions ever be brought in line with the high-flown phrases of its official mission statement? Can the ICJ ever be used as a weapon of the oppressed rather than the oppressors? For the first time in its history, that most protected of all colonial projects, Israel, and its western backers are on trial. And the whole world will know what to think if the judges are unable to free themselves from US pressure and influence to come to an honest verdict. Or if the verdict comes but nothing is done to implement it.

If these august institutions are unable to deliver even a single step towards the real justice for Palestine that is so urgently demanded, it will be clear to the peoples of the world that they have no other option but to take matters into their own hands.

# World



## Imperialism, Brics and the 'global south'

**The rapid shift in the global balance of power looks set not only to continue but to accelerate.**

As part of the XV Brics summit in South Africa on 24 August 2023, the leaders of the bloc invited six countries: Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to join the group as of 1 January 2024. As a result of this decision, the countries in the group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have taken a major step in the development of a trading system capable of standing apart from and bypassing the hegemonic 'global market' dominated and controlled by US imperialism.

Since its first summit in St Petersburg (2005), the group has developed various mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration. The latest of these include a planned shift to trading in domestic and digital currencies instead of in the US dollar, the development of an alternative payment system to the US-controlled Swift, and the creation of the New Development Bank (NDB) to enable countries to obtain loans outside of the US-controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

Since Brics is not a formal alliance, but a group of countries looking for alternatives to existing worldwide economic and financial mechanisms, the initiative to expand the group was hailed by many commentators as a "giant step for multipolarity". The fact that interest in membership has been expressed by more than 40 countries, while 23 have formally applied, clearly demonstrates the growing economic and political significance of the independent course that the Brics group is charting.

### Brics beyond Brics

Laying out the reasons for Brics expansion, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa said that "the value of Brics extends beyond the interests of its current members", adding that an expanded Brics "will be able to better align the voices of those countries that seek a fairer global governance, financial, investment and trading system based on clear rules that apply equally to all countries". "Brics," he stated, "will be an important champion for the global south."

After all, Brics countries are leading members of the United Nations (UN), the G20, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, as well as of various continental and regional organisations, including the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), to name but a few.

In economic terms, the journey of the group has been one of steady development. As Brazilian president Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva summarised: "In 1995, G7 countries held 44.7 percent of the world's GDP by purchasing parity, and the countries that would later make up part of Brics represented only 16.9 percent. In 2010, the G7 had already fallen to 34.3 percent of GDP by purchasing parity, while Brics had risen to 26.6 percent. In 2023, the G7 has 29.9 percent and Brics, 32.1 percent ... with the entry of new countries, Brics will reach almost 37 percent."

Moreover, Brics countries represent more than 46 percent of the world's population. Analyst Pepe Escobar claimed recently that the expanded Brics "instantly becomes an oil and gas powerhouse, controlling 39 percent of global oil exports, 45.9 percent of proven reserves and 47.6 percent of all oil produced globally". (The Cradle, 25 August 2023)

Underlining this point, former Brazilian president and now president of the New Development Bank Dilma Rousseff

stressed at the summit: "The expansion of Brics is a force in the global south that can never be ignored."

In political terms, the main pillars of Brics's strategy are the creation of an economic and financial system not under the control of imperialist powers, a commitment to supporting sustainable development and inclusive growth, openness in developing countries, including the sharing of information and technologies, and consensus in decision-making.

As Russian president Vladimir Putin pointed out: "We are all united in our commitment to shaping a multipolar world order with genuine justice, based on international law and in keeping with the key principles set forth in the UN charter, including sovereignty and respecting the right of every nation to follow its own development model. We oppose hegemonies of any kind and the exceptional status that some countries aspire to, as well as the ... policy of continued neocolonialism."

*Shorn of all euphemism, this is an alliance aimed at bypassing the economic and technological mechanisms of imperialist hegemony.*

### New members, new challenges

With the exception of Iran, the countries invited to join Brics in this first round of expansion will prefer to maintain their existing trade relations with the main western powers rather than to confront them. The aim is not to cut off trade with the west, but rather to deny the imperialists the ability to stifle any country's economy by their unilateral actions.

Fyodor Lukyanov, chair of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy in Russia, explained: "The outcome of the Johannesburg summit should



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be considered not from the point of view of rivalry but in the context of objective international trends.

“The supporters of turning the Brics into an anti-western association could not prevail. Apart from Russia, the members are not interested in direct conflict with the west. As a result, the direction has been determined. The Brics will move toward the alter-west rather than the anti-west.

“The grouping will expand the space of interaction bypassing the western world and without the participation of western countries. Each of the Brics states is free to develop its relations with the United States and Europe, but these should not harm its relations with the Brics states.”

The countries invited to become Brics members are all major actors in their own regions. They all have strong existing trade relations with Brics countries and will benefit from the development of a multipolar world.

## Egypt and Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. With a GDP growth of 36 percent in the period 2017-21 and a population of 109 million people, it is Africa's second most populous country. Ethiopia's imports from Brics+ countries presently account for 51.8 percent of all its imports, with China (26.4 percent) and India (15.7 percent) being its two biggest trading partners.

China has helped with the construction of the biggest power plant in Africa, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Gerd), with a planned installed capacity of 5.15 gigawatts. This development has created tensions with neighbouring Egypt, but the inclusion of both countries in the Brics is expected to help provide a framework

in which these differences can be peacefully settled.

According to Ethiopian professor Mukerrim Miftah: “Ethiopia serves as a political anchor in east Africa and Africa as a whole, helping the Brics counter the dominance of the west on the African continent.” Egyptian imports from Brics+ countries account for 35.42 percent of its commerce, its main Brics trading partners being China (13.6 percent), Saudi Arabia (8.5 percent), India and Russia (3.4 percent).

For Egypt, considering that two other regional countries, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have joined the bloc, the immediate benefits will be the increase of trade using domestic currencies and the development of alternative supply chains.

## Saudi Arabia and UAE

These two middle-eastern sheikhdoms share enormous energy and financial resources, and both have historically been staunch proxies for US imperialist hegemony in the region. However, differences over levels of oil production and the war in Ukraine, combined with the growing influence of eastern trading partners China and India, have opened up new possibilities even for the most subservient of stooge regimes.

Most significant in this regard has been the Chinese diplomatic coup that opened up a new chapter in relations between former bitter antagonists Saudi Arabia and Iran – a move that was itself prepared by Saudi Arabia's abysmal failure in the US-backed war against Yemen.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia has become one of China's most important trade partners in the region in recent years, accounting for 25 percent of the \$432bn trade between China and all Arab countries

by 2022. At the same time, bilateral trade between the two countries hit \$87.3bn in 2021, and more than \$106bn in 2022, as compared with the \$55bn of US-Saudi trade.

Let it be noted in passing that while much of US trade with Saudi Arabia is carried out in overpriced arms deals for military toys the Saudis are unable to use without US supervision, Chinese trade brings commodities and technologies of real and immediate value to the country, enabling it to develop and diversify its economy.

The UAE is an important trade partner for Saudi Arabia, India and China. The kingdom has for some time supported Chinese foreign policy goals including the Belt and Road (BRI) initiative, south-south cooperation, and technological cooperation. As a result, the UAE's trade and investments with China have experienced rapid growth in the last five years, from \$38bn in 2018 to \$51.7bn in 2021. (World Bank)

## Iran

Iran is perhaps the most interesting of the countries invited to join Brics+. On the one hand, the cornerstone of the middle-eastern axis of resistance has been suffering from the imposition of harsh economic sanctions imposed by the USA and the European Union for many years. Until recently surpassed by Russia, it was the most sanctioned country in the world.

But despite the many difficulties created by this harsh sanctions regime, Iran has successfully diversified its economy, developed its technological and industrial base, deepened its economic ties with China, founded a military partnership with Russia (both countries have been allies to Syria in its war against the US-led invasion), and fostered successful relationships with other sanc-

tioned countries – as demonstrated by President Ebrahim Raisi's recent trip to the anti-imperialist Latin-American states of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba.

Furthermore, Iran has a strong strategic influence in the region. It is home to the world's second-largest gas reserves and a quarter of middle-eastern oil reserves, plays an important role in China's Belt and Road initiative, has been accepted into the Chinese-led Shanghai economic alliance (SCO), and is contributing to the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan and Turkmenistan-Iran corridors.

As Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has pointed out: “The era of unilateralism is ending, and coalitions like the SCO and Brics will have a significant role in future partnerships.”

During 2022, the new rail line carrying freight between China and Iran became operational and relations between the countries were upgraded to a “strategic partnership”. President Ebrahim Raisi greeting this development by describing Iran and China as “friends in difficult circumstances”.

## Argentina

Argentina would have been a natural Brics partner in Latin America, since Brazil, China and India are already its main trading partners. Expressing thanks for the invitation to join the bloc, President Anibal Fernandez said: “We are open to joining new markets, consolidating existing markets, raising investment coming in, creating jobs and raising imports.”

In addition to further trade with Brics+ countries, the main benefit to Argentina would have been the possibility of trading in local currencies – in particular using the Chinese Yuan and Brazilian **page 18 ▶**

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## Brics expansion

◀ **page 17** Real for bilateral trade in order to break Argentina's present dependency on the dollar. Exports to Brazil currently stand \$11.7bn and imports from Brazil at \$12.4bn, while exports to China stand at \$6.1bn and imports from China at \$13.5bn. (World Bank)

Sadly for the people of Argentina, however, the outcome of the recent presidential election has overturned all these possibilities. Instead of starting to break the stranglehold of the dollar, the fascistic new president Javier Milei has decided to abandon the Argentinean Real altogether and dollarise the economy, removing at a stroke any possibility of independent economic decision-making in Buenos Aires.

Alongside a host of harsh austerity and anti-popular measures, President Milei has abandoned the country's projected entry into Brics – a decision that will certainly add to the troubles of the Argentinean masses in the coming period.

### A new imperialism?

Opening the Johannesburg summit, President Ramaphosa said: "When reflecting on the purpose and role of Brics in the world today, we recall the Bandung conference of 1955, where Asian and African nations demanded a greater voice for developing countries in world affairs. The conference called for the recognition of the equality of all nations, large and small. We still share that common vision of a fair and just world."

For decades now, countries in the oppressed world have tried to find ways to trade outside of the mechanisms dominated by the imperialist powers, creating regional associations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Brics

and Mercosur.

These genuine attempts to break the chains of neocolonial dependency have been characterised incorrectly by some in our movement, in particular by the theoretical leaders of the Greek communist party (KKE), as an expansion in the number of "imperialist centres", with one now notorious paper referring to "the alliance of Shanghai, the alliance of Brics, the alliance Mercosur etc" as 'proof' of the emergence of new 'interimperialist' rivalries.

But the proposers of this argument 'forget' that the oppressed countries have been prey to imperialist plundering (G7+EU) throughout modern history; that the world's major financial institutions are still controlled by the same imperialist powers that were running them in 1914; that the monopoly corporations which dominate the world today are based in the same imperialist countries as they were then; and that the US hegemon backs up its economic power by an extensive network of military bases around the world.

On the one hand, the financial institutions commonly described as 'international' – the IMF and World Bank – are completely controlled by imperialist powers. The G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA) control 41.25 percent of votes, rising to 54.42 percent with the addition of the EU's share. By contrast, countries belonging to members of the SCO account for 12.25 percent of votes, while those belonging to members of Brics have 14.15 percent and of the Latin-American Mercosur alliance only 4.42 percent.

The same picture is seen at the International Bank for Reconstruction, a subsidiary of the World Bank, in which G7

countries control 41.9 percent of the votes while Brics countries have 15.26 percent.

All over the world, it remains true that 'big corporations rule the waves'. As the Forbes 2000 biggest corporations (2022) report shows, 1,040 of the world's largest corporations are based in the handful of G7 countries, rising to 1,181 when the EU is included. Thus, the G7+EU countries are home to 59 percent of the world's biggest corporations, while the SCO hosts 18.85 percent, Brics has 20.55 percent (three quarters from China) and Mercosur only 1.25 percent.

Of the total sales of the world's largest corporations, the G7+EU countries account for 63.38 percent of the total, while SCO members account for 20.67 percent, Brics members for 21.92 percent and Mercosur members for 1.01 percent.

Looking at the military forces around the world, the USA is overwhelmingly dominant, with 800 overseas bases and 173,000 troops in 159 countries. Meanwhile, China has one small naval base in Djibouti, whose only role is to protect Chinese cargo ships from piracy in the Horn of Africa.

### Confrontation or cooperation?

The extension of invitations by Brics to countries that have longstanding disputes has surprised many. C Raja Mohan in Foreign Policy magazine, dismissed the decision, suggesting hopefully: "The growing geopolitical confrontation between China and India already casts a shadow over Brics and any attempt at creating a cohesive agenda. With new members come new conflicts: Egypt and Ethiopia are fiercely at loggerheads over Nile waters, while Iran and Saudi Arabia are regional foes."

Along the same lines, Professor Cogan from Kansai Gaidai university has suggested that, for India, "the decision to expand Brics is a major foreign policy blunder, one that puts additional power into the hands of its regional rival while restricting its own".

But others, like director of the global south programme at the Quincy Institute Sarang Shidore, have recognised that, while sharing "Brics membership alone will not solve the serious problems between these adversaries, it will create unique opportunities for direct, two-way conversations between states that dislike each other in a relatively safe multilateral environment.

"Washington has historically found advantage in exploiting divisions for its own ends, most notably in the middle east. By reducing the distrust between countries, Brics could help counter this unhealthy cycle."

Certainly, shared Brics membership will allow countries to deal with their differences in a more friendly environment, shrinking the ability of the USA to create and exploit regional divisions. As Brazil's President Lula has pointed out: "Many have claimed that we are too different to forge a common vision. Experience, however, has demonstrated that the opposite is true. Our diversity strengthens the struggle towards a new order that accommodates the economic, geographic and political plurality of the 21st century."

"Brics countries invariably advocate and practice independent foreign policies," says Chinese president Xi Jinping. "We always address major international issues based on their merits, making fair remarks and taking fair actions. We do not barter away principles, succumb to external pressure, or act as vassals.

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“We Brics countries share extensive consensus and common goals. No matter how the international situation changes, our commitment to cooperation since the very beginning and our common aspiration will not change.”

## Imperialist sanctions and the war in Ukraine

Fierce criticism was levelled at imperialist sanctions and other coercive policies at the Brics summit. The final declaration emphasised the participants’ “concern about the use of unilateral coercive measures, which are incompatible with the principles of the charter of the UN and produce negative effects notably in the developing world,” and stressed “the imperative of refraining from any coercive measures not based on international law and the UN charter”.

Moreover, by inviting Iran, one of the most sanctioned countries in the world, to join the alliance, a strong practical opposition to imperialist sanctions made clear that the Brics nations refuse any longer to be intimidated, either individually or collectively, by imperialist economic threats.

As Navdeep Suri from the Observer Research Foundation (India) argued: “The west’s proclivity to deploy unilateral financial sanctions, abuse international payments mechanisms, renege on climate finance commitments, and accord scant respect to the food security and health imperatives of the global south during the pandemic are only some of the elements responsible for the growing disenchantment with the prevailing international system.”

As a matter of principle, Brics countries reject the use of sanctions, and none of the countries in the group has imposed them against the Russian Federation despite

huge pressure from the imperialists to do so. Contrary to the US and EU efforts to prolong the war against Russia in Ukraine, the Brics nations have expressed their support for peaceful initiatives that are genuinely aimed at ending the conflict.

At an extended meeting of Brics leaders, President Putin explained the rationale for Russia’s military operations in Ukraine, pointing out: “It was the attempts by some countries to preserve their global hegemony that paved the way for the deep crisis in Ukraine. It started when an anti-constitutional government coup took place in the country with the help of the western countries.

“This was followed by the unleashing of a war against people who refused to accept this coup. It was a cruel war, a war of extermination, which lasted for eight years. Russia decided to side with people who are fighting for their culture, their traditions, language and future. Stopping the war unleashed by the west and its satellites in Ukraine against the people of Donbass is the only thing that defines our actions in Ukraine.”

In the final summit declaration, the members stressed concern “about ongoing conflicts in many parts of the world. We stress our commitment to the peaceful resolution of differences and disputes through dialogue and inclusive consultations in a coordinated and cooperative manner and support all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of crises.”

## Africa and the New Development Bank

Another important Brics initiative has been the creation of the first development bank by and for emerging economies, the New Development Bank (NDB). Since 2014, the bank has financed 100 infrastruc-

ture and sustainable development projects in developing countries and has helped many countries in need of alternative credit sources, challenging the hegemony of the imperialist-controlled World Bank and IMF.

As Dilma Rousseff pointed out: “The world is going through a very difficult time. We are living through a crisis of multiple dimensions. The combination of a serious climate crisis, a brutal increase in inequality, low growth, protectionism with the fracturing of global value chains and geopolitical conflicts of all kinds. Not to mention sanctions and geopolitical fragmentation ...

“Insecurity and instability have become the rule rather than the exception, creating enormous difficulties, but also opportunities for growth and development in the global south if we know how to face up to these challenges.”

Regarding the development of Africa, Ms Rousseff acknowledged: “The development of the African continent is strategically important for the global south. Africa is a continent that has been hurt by and bears the wounds of colonialism, unbridled exploitation and shameful slavery. Africa is where we come from, and the 21st century is the time to rescue it once for all.”

During the last ten years, Brics countries have considerably expanded their economic involvement in Africa. “In 2010, the Brics share of foreign direct investment (FDI) on the African continent was 4.9 percent of the world total. In 2021, the Brics share reached 8.8 percent. As for international trade, between 2010 and 2022, the buying and selling of goods between the Brics countries and Africa increased from \$280bn to \$473bn.”

Amongst future plans, Dilma Rousseff pointed out that the

projected Grand Inga Dam provided “the largest untapped hydroelectric potential on the planet, which can guarantee renewable, continuous, basic, safe and affordable energy for the entire [African] continent”.

## Brics support for UN democratisation

Brics members have demanded a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including greater representation in the security council for developing countries. As President Ramaphosa pointed out: “Countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, including Brazil, India and South Africa, can play a greater role in international affairs. This was a most significant decision in view of the fact that it was supported by two Brics members who are permanent members of the UN security council”.

Indian prime minister Narendra Modi called for “further cooperation to strengthen a multipolar world” and emphasised the need to reform the global institutions to keep them “representative and relevant”, while President Putin stressed: “Brics has been following a forward-looking strategic course which meets the aspirations of a significant portion of the international community, the so-called global majority.”

As Russia prepares to assume the Brics chairmanship in 2024 under the motto ‘Strengthening multilateralism for justice in global development and security’, the country is planning to hold more than 200 events on political, economic and social matters in more than ten Russian cities.

It is clear that, from humble beginnings, the Brics alliance has become a decisive factor in the economic and political life of the world, and will continue to affect the rapidly shifting balance of power in 2024.

# World

## Who are the imperialists to accuse others of 'terrorism'?

### Thoughts on the barefaced hypocrisy and doublespeak of the real mass-murdering terrorists.

It is always ironic – in the sense of blatant gaslighting – when the imperialists, and our governments, accuse their victims of 'terrorism'. Notably, of late, the Palestinian resistance. But every country that is singled out for invasion gets the same treatment, does it not?

And, of course, our governments send their 'counter-terrorist police' to raid the houses of British workers who call them out.

If the 'civilised west' – Anglo-American and European imperialism – wants to talk about 'terrorism', let's do it in the language of numbers ... The language of numbers doesn't lie!

Let's take a tour through just some highlights of past four centuries. Come and see:

- 100 million native Americans! Who killed them? The 'civilised west'. Anglo-American and European imperialism.
- 750,000 indigenous Australians! Who killed them? The 'civilised west'. British imperialism.
- Forty million deaths in World War 1! The 'civilised west'. Anglo-American and European imperialism, German and Japanese imperialism.
- Sixty million deaths in World War 2! That's right, the victims of the 'civilised west'. Anglo-American and European imperialism. German and Japanese imperialism.
- Eighty million deaths in colonial India due to engineered famine, the consequence of rent-racking and drought with-

out famine relief. "I hate Indians. They're a disgusting people with a disgusting religion. They breed like rabbits. Famine relief will not help them." (Winston Churchill, God bless him!)

- Five million Koreans! Yes, the 'civilised west' again! Anglo-American and European imperialism.
- Five million Algerians! Who killed them? The 'civilised west'. French imperialists.
- One million Indonesians, victims of the 'cold war' of the 'civilised west'. Anglo-American and European imperialism.
- Three million Vietnamese! Who killed them? The 'civilised west'. Anglo-American and European imperialism.
- One million Iraqis! No one but them, the 'civilised west'! Anglo-American and European imperialism.

And that's all before we get into the untold millions killed as a result of the African slave trade. Or the widespread poverty that results from global superexploitation by the Anglo-American imperialist financial system. Which arguably takes 40 million victims a year.

Meanwhile, the imperialist 'environmentalist' eugenicists content themselves with implying that the problem is that there are "just far too many people".

We wonder why they think that?!

Josep Borrell's "European garden" is positively blooming.

*We've counted nearly 300 million victims in four centuries, just via a quick memory tour.*

Can we comprehend what that means? It means an average of 750,000 victims of violence and famine per year (not counting the ongoing holocaust caused by preventable malnutrition and related diseases), 2,054 deaths per day, 86 lives per hour, and approximately 1.5 beautiful human beings every minute, no stop, for 400 years! And this is undoubtedly an underestimation.

This far surpasses the victims of mosquitoes and malaria. And we didn't even need to open a book or dig into records, nor to mention what's happening right now in Palestine and Gaza.

The result? An astronomical number that separates the modern global capitalist-imperialist system from all the crimes of 'extremist' organisations and groups of whatever affiliation by an astronomical order of magnitude. They are light years apart, in fact.

The European imperialists, of course, do not consider themselves 'extremist terrorists', or describe their system of global slavery as such. They prefer the epithets 'civilisation' and 'democracy'. These people have the audacity to talk about 'humanitarian' motivations as they classify other nations and countries as acceptable or not, and as they add those they disapprove of onto their terrorism lists (the "axis of evil", no less).

The current capitalist, imperialist economic order of the world is profoundly unjust, and therefore profoundly unstable.

Capitalism, as Marx noted in the Communist Manifesto in 1848, creates above all its own gravediggers. *The British working class must lend a hand in this world-historic mission.*

## Yemeni ship op

◀ **page 11** They were intercepted by Israel's Arrow missile-defence system above the Negev desert. It was the first time that Arrow, deployed for 23 years, had taken out a surface-to-surface missile. It was also the first ever combat interception in space, according to two Israeli officials." (Ibid)

Iran, in its turn, now possesses the Fatah-2, a newly developed missile "reportedly loaded with a warhead capable of hypersonic gliding and able to strike a target within a range of 1,400km". (Iran makes public newly developed hypersonic ballistic missile, Pyongyang Times, 23 November 2023)

We are reminded of the case of former US national security advisor Stuart Seldowitz, recently arrested for repeated and very public harassment of an Egyptian food vendor in New York city.

Caught on video, Seldowitz (who has been an advisor to many presidential regimes over the last three decades, overseen the implementation of middle-eastern policy and been awarded with the state department's 'honour award' three times) gloated that "four thousand dead Palestinians wasn't enough", before asking the food seller if he "raped his daughter like Mohammed".

Finally arrested when his behaviour got too blatant to be ignored (and hastily disavowed by his state department friends), Seldowitz in fact reflects the state of his masters, having fallen from a state of supreme and apparently untouchable power and swaggering, racist arrogance to one of increasingly impotent rage.

The dogs can bark, but the caravan moves on.

# Americas



## Remembering Joan Jara – dancer, activist and heroine of Chile

**The wife of murdered folk singer Víctor Jara kept her husband's legacy alive and never gave up the fight for justice for Chile's disappeared.**

*"If you tremble with indignation at every injustice, then you are a comrade of mine."*

– Che Guevara

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Joan Alison Turner, wife of the legendary Chilean folk singer Víctor Jara, was born on 20 July 1927 in north London.

A dancer, choreographer, lecturer, political activist, and later head of the Jara Foundation, Joan came from a left-leaning social-democratic family and would later become internationally known as a vocal and indefatigable defender of human rights.

Born between two world wars and growing up in a north London in which bombings by the Nazi *Luftwaffe* were daily occurrences, Joan spend her childhood between school, home and bomb shelters. Her older brothers were recruited into the British army during the war, which left an indelible mark on them, and her own

memories of the time were underscored by the drone of warplanes and the sound of falling missiles.

From early childhood, Joan had been inclined towards dance – a form of artistic expression that she went on to develop to a high level. Graduating from the Sigurd Leerder dance school in her early twenties, she travelled across Europe as a solo ballerina with the German Ballet Jooss, before arriving in Chile in the mid-1950s.

Joan performed in the Chilean National Ballet and in the Santiago Ballet Company alongside her Chilean dancer husband Patricio Bunster, with whom she had one child and founded the Ballet Popular, taking modern dance to deprived urban and rural areas of Chile. The Bunsters' marriage did not last long, however, and the couple were divorced three years later, having separated before the birth of their only

daughter.

Joan met folk singer and theatre director Víctor Jara at the University of Chile in 1961, just one year after her separation from Patricio. She was giving dance classes in the department where Víctor was pursuing his theatre studies. They had another daughter together, and set up a home that became known in artist circles for its musical get-togethers and revolutionary atmosphere.

On 16 September 1973, five days after a brutal CIA-inspired fascist coup, Víctor was murdered by the new military junta, rounded up with thousands of other leftists as a result of his long-term membership of the Communist Party of Chile, his vocal and active support for the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende, and his renown as a revolutionary folk singer.

Tipped off regarding the location of her dead husband, Joan went with a friend to identify his body in a Santiago morgue, one of only a few relatives of the disappeared to ever find out what had happened to

their loved ones and to accord them a decent burial.

Just days after Víctor's funeral, Joan fled with her two daughters to her native England, where she remained until her return to Chile in 1985.

Two years before the family's return to Santiago, Joan founded the Víctor Jara Foundation, dedicating it "to Víctor's artistic legacy and the effort to recover collective memory so that new generations of Chileans can access and enjoy the artistic, social and political work that he contributed to his country".

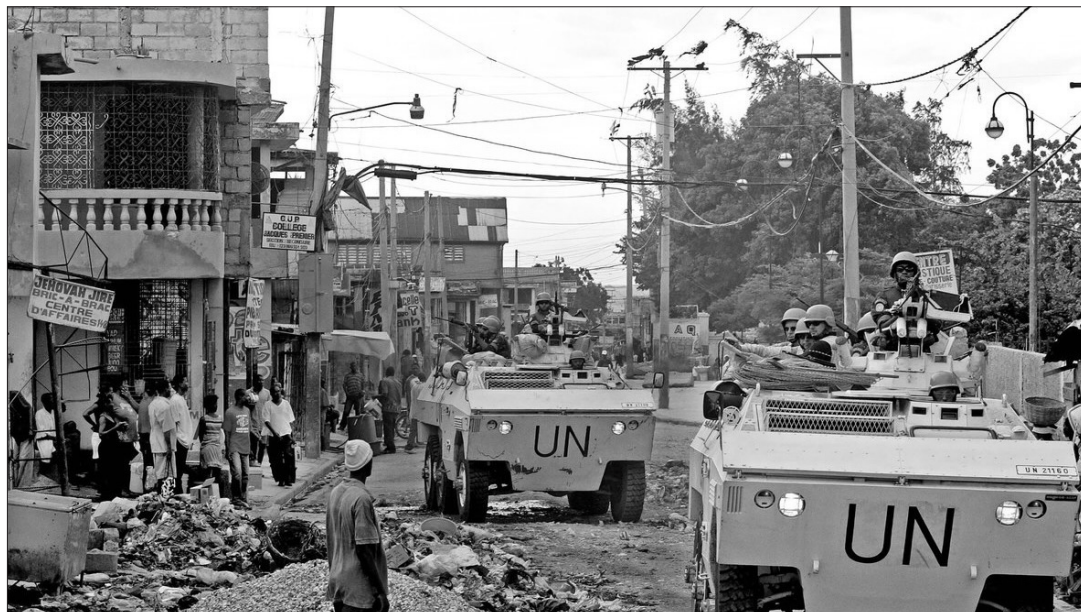
She fought tirelessly for her husband's murderers to be brought to trial and for the truth to be revealed regarding all those who had been disappeared, tortured and murdered by the military fascist regime of General Augusto Pinochet.

While in exile in Britain, Joan played a crucial role in raising international awareness of the horrors that were unfolding in Chile under Pinochet's bloody rule. In 2016, she was a key witness in a civil trial against former army officer Pedro Pablo Barrientos, who was found liable by the court for Víctor's death.

On 1 December 2023, Barrientos was finally extradited to Chile to face trial for kidnapping, torture and murder – half a century after committing his vile crimes in service of the US-backed junta. He touched down in Santiago just weeks after Joan's death, following five decades of campaigning that had finally borne fruit. The US-based masterminds behind the Chilean criminals remain at large, of course.

A recipient of many art and dance awards in the country, Joan was naturalised as a Chilean by the government of Michelle Bachellet in 2009 in recognition of her contribution to the arts and her

## Americas



# Another US mission to subdue and subjugate Haiti

**This endlessly targeted island nation has become a playground for US bioweaponry in recent years.**

Imperialism's rise in the late 19th and early 20th century contained a certain progressive component. For the oppressing nations to efficiently exploit their colonies, they needed to build infrastructure (primarily for the purposes of looting and shipping natural resources and wealth back to the imperialist heartlands).

With the building of industrial and transport infrastructure, a local intelligentsia was developed, while members of the dispersed peasantry were drawn into the ranks of a new proletarian class. As a result, a new national-liberation consciousness arose, and began to organise itself into the ranks of the world proletarian and anti-imperialist movements.

Imperialism in its dying days has moved beyond this point: it seems that the imperialists no longer wish for any development to take place.

Who can forget former US president Barack Obama telling Africans that they will never be able to have refrigerators or cars because the "planet will boil over"? The entire NGO-delivered strategy of the United States across the oppressed world can be summed up as: "Don't develop otherwise you'll hurt the environment."

It is against the background of the doom cult propagated by moribund western imperialism that the United Nations' latest authorisation of a 'mission' to Haiti is taking place.

### Ransacking Haiti's human and natural resources

Back in 2011, an opinion piece by Mark Weisbrot in the Guardian acknowledged the true nature of the USA's relationship with Haiti – and the UN's role in facilitating and disguising that relationship.

"Make no mistake about it: the UN occupation of Haiti is really a US occupation – it is no more a multilateral force than George W Bush's 'coalition of the willing' that invaded Iraq. And it is hardly more legitimate, either: it was sent there in 2004 after a US-led effort toppled Haiti's democratically elected government.

"Far from providing security for Haitians in the aftermath of the coup, Minustah [UN mission forces] stood by while thousands of Haitians who had supported the elected government were killed, and officials of the constitutional government jailed. Recent WikiLeaks cables also confirm that the US government sees Minustah as an instrument of its policy there." (3 September 2011)

This US-controlled occupation under a UN flag is holding back Haitian development and treating its people as so-much disposable chaff. It aims to suppress the national-liberation strivings of the Haitian people, who have a fiercely

revolutionary spirit and history, and use them as fuel for its profit-taking machine.

The dollar signs hanging over the heads of the humans in Haiti for the testing of pharmaceutical products, for example, are enormous. As are the profits to be made from seizing Haiti's natural resources with little or no payment.

Haiti has the world's second-largest deposits of iridium in the world, a metal worth more than gold or bitcoin today. Its resistance to high temperatures and corrosion makes it perfect for manufacturing a plethora of hard-wearing devices, including aircraft engines, automotive catalytic converters, deep water pipelines, medical and electronic devices, spark plugs, watches and compasses.

In order to try to keep control of all this loot, the USA has been mustering a new proxy force for deployment to the Caribbean island, this time made up principally of Kenyan soldiers. Presumably because the Kenyan state has obediently towed the line on US foreign policy at the UN for decades, its neocolonial police are considered to be reliable, and its comprador rulers are quite prepared to take Uncle Sam's money in return for services to the empire.

Kenya has promised up to 1,000 troops (for which it expects to be well paid), with other countries contributing funds, personnel and resources. Washington, unsurprisingly, is the biggest 'donor', having generously pledged \$200m for this 'humanitarian' mission. (RT, 2 October 2023)

### Repeated rape scandals follow Minustah forces

There have been many UN missions to Haiti. The last one, officially 'led' by Brazilian sol-

# Americas

diers was known as Minustah (from the French: *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti*). Looking at the record of Minustah's operations, one is hardly filled with confidence that a 'Kenyan-led' force is going to be any different.

In line with what the world has come to expect from occupying forces around US bases in Okinawa (Japan) and south Korea, UN 'peacekeepers' in Haiti have consistently behaved very much like just such a hostile force. Writing in response to revelations regarding the gang rape of a teenager by Minustah soldiers, the Guardian article cited above asked: "Is this Minustah's 'Abu Ghraib moment' in Haiti?"

Abu Ghraib being the now infamous torture camp set up in Iraq by US occupation forces.

"Perhaps the most unnerving part of the video," commented Weisbrot regarding the evidence that had documented this heinous act, "is the constant chorus of laughter from the alleged perpetrators; to them, apparently, it's just a drunken party." (3 September 2011)

The incident was hardly an isolated event. According to Aina Hunter of New York paper Village Voice: "The US embassy [had] started muttering about sending in the marines. At the beginning of June, James Foley, US ambassador to Haiti, told AP reporters that Minustah wasn't doing its job.

"That's about when, critics say, Minustah started hammering down on the poor – in the name of killing off 'bandits' and 'gangsters'.

"After the raid, outraged human rights activists began funding pilgrimages to Port-au-Prince to see the damage for themselves. They returned with eyewitness accounts and

photos of dead children, igniting a nationwide series of protests." (2 August 2005)

Then in 2007, 100 Sri Lankan UN 'peacekeepers' were sent home because they were found to have been raping young girls. (BBC News, 3 November 2007)

Following this incident, the Sri Lankan Sunday Times wrote: "UN's office of internal oversight services (OIOS) has concluded that 'acts of sexual exploitation and abuse (against children) were frequent and occurred usually at night, and at virtually every location where the contingent personnel were deployed.'" (30 March 2008)

Even more devastating effects of the occupation were to follow. As reported in a previous article, Nepali UN soldiers were flown from a cholera hotspot into Haiti without any screening or quarantine being put in place, with inevitable and deadly consequences for the Haitian population.

"In the fall of 2010, months after a devastating earthquake struck Haiti, a new disaster began: a cholera outbreak that killed thousands of people and continues to sicken people across the country.

"Experts determined that the source of the disease was a UN peacekeeping camp. And now, nearly six years later, the United Nations has admitted it played some role in the deadly outbreak." (NPR, 18 August 2016)

It is hardly any wonder that Haiti's people are not expecting any relief from their sufferings with the arrival of a new force of so-called 'international peacekeepers'.

## Bioweapons and big pharma experiments

As in the case of other devastated nations like Libya and

Ukraine, Haiti has for some time been used by US imperialism as a petri dish for secret bioweapons experimentation and for the unmonitored testing of pharmaceutical products.

This is not a new phenomenon. The history of the 20th century is punctuated by scandals about covert experimentation on random or targeted sections of the population – in the centres of imperialism as well as in the colonised countries.

But – as Ukraine's experience has shown – countries that have been badly ravaged by war and economic disasters, with little or no remaining state machinery, have been particularly favoured for particularly nasty or secret activities.

Focusing on Haiti, it will be remembered that the US-based Centre for Disease Control (CDC) was caught out conducting lethal experiments with a hazardous measles vaccine in 1989. The experiments targeted black children in Haiti, Cameroon and south-central Los Angeles, and dozens of little girls were killed before the programme was abruptly halted. (LA Times, 17 June 1996)

More recently, another vaccination programme in Haiti led not to a *reduction* of cases but to an *outbreak* of polio on the island. This has been seen in other poor countries, too. In fact, global health numbers now show more children being paralysed by viruses originating in vaccines than from viruses in the wild. (The Scientist, 25 November 2019)

It is this regime of biomedical tyranny under which the people of Haiti and other nations decimated by imperialist war and superexploitation are trying to survive.

For Haiti, this was exacerbated by the strange assassina-

tion of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021 – killed by a team of elite Colombian and US mercenaries with links to US intelligence organisations for reasons that remain unclear.

Rumours were rife at the time that the true motive for his killing was his opposition to the WHO's Covid-19 vaccination programme. Given Haiti's experience as a big pharma testing ground, there was certainly good reason for any president there to be cautious.

And the Haitian president's was not the only death to create such concerns. A spate of deaths amongst black leaders in Africa who died suddenly in 2021 sparked similar speculation. The phenomenon caused enough concern for the British Medical Journal (BMJ) to carry a paper about it, and for Reuters to issue a defensive 'fact-checking' article. (29 April 2021 and 22 July 2021)

## Solving 'gang violence'?

More recently, Al Jazeera pointed to the fact that "gang-related violence has spiked since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse two years ago", as providing the pretext for the latest armed intervention. (3 October 2023)

So on the one hand US-backed mercenaries murdered the president, and on the other the USA is supposedly taking colonial control of Haiti *in order to suppress the explosion of social unrest and violence that followed his assassination.*

This strategy is redolent of the USA's now notorious international wars 'on drugs' and 'on terror': first create a problem in the targeted country, then send in your forces on the pretext of helping to 'solve' it!

Recent events in the Sahel indicate just how 'helpful' the people there found **page 24 ▶**

# Americas

## UN mission to Haiti

◀ **page 23** the presence of French and US soldiers in ending the carnage created by the (west-backed) jihadi terrorists who fanned out across the region after the destruction of Libya in 2011. *Indeed, it was only with the eviction of the French that the armed forces of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger began to make real progress in wiping out these mercenary invaders.*

In a recent interview with the Orinoco Tribune, Kim Ives of media outlet Haiti Liberté explained that many of the ‘gangsters’ and ‘bandits’ being fought by the USA and Minustah are actually ordinary people organising themselves to fight for social change in a country where the rule of law has broken down and society has become a corrupt petri dish of human experimentation, child and drug trafficking, overseen by mafiosi gangs in the service of US imperialism.

The similarities with Libya and Ukraine are, indeed, striking.

“The revolution is coming from the streets of Haiti,” said Ives. “There is an armed uprising, and they [the US] are presenting it as ‘gangs’. Of course, all revolutionaries or people resisting US imperialism with whatever degree of consciousness are always called bandits, always called outlaws or terrorists – as we see in Palestine today.” (US sponsoring military intervention in Haiti to stop revolution, 20 October 2023)

## Haitian masses will not be kept down forever

More protests are bound to erupt in Haiti against the illegitimate comprador government that is welcoming these occupation forces with open arms.

Meanwhile, new boots on the ground will do nothing to

quell the real gangsters who actually do terrorise ordinary Haitians – undoubtedly under the direction of the CIA and US intelligence-linked mafiosi.

“The Haitian people have kept the bitter taste of a foreign force in charge of our situation: theft, rape, cholera, food dependence, deregulation of the economic system, without mentioning the fact that we don’t remember seeing then-gang leaders be arrested or rendered unable to do harm,” a Haitian think tank, Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité (the Security Working Group), said in a statement last year. (RT, *ibid*)

As US imperialist power wanes, it is forced into numerous retreats. It can no longer be seen to occupy Haiti directly, but has to delegate its occupation to proxy forces and lickspittle governments hoping to curry favour and earn kickbacks for their services.

But the failed Ecowas plan for intervention in Niger demonstrates how even those regimes that are still willing to sell their souls to the devil are finding that such services, far from strengthening their position domestically, are rendering them vulnerable to popular anger from their own increasingly restive masses.

As the desperate situation on the island continues to deteriorate and the popular will of the masses continues to be thwarted, the question placed before the Haitian people is becoming ever more urgent.

As Josef Stalin put it in 1924:

“Either eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon – this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat.” (Foundations of Leninism, Chapter 1)

## Joan Jara obituary

◀ **page 21** commitment to the rebuilding of democracy.

Joan died aged 96 on 12 November 2023 at her home in Santiago, surrounded by members of her close family. Three days later, thousands filed past her coffin in the Centro de Danza Espiral, including President Gabriel Boric and a host of prominent artists and politicians. The mourners left messages of gratitude and expressions of love for the artist and activist whose fight for truth and justice had become totemic for a people still struggling to come to terms with the events and significance of 1973.

Joan Jara leaves behind her two daughters, Manuela and Amanda. Her 1983 book documenting the life and times of her husband, Victor: An Unfinished Song, remains an enduring monument to them both.

## Poem: Estadio Chile

There are five thousand of us here  
in this small part of the city.  
We are five thousand.  
I wonder how many we are in all  
in the cities and in the whole country?  
...

How hard it is to sing  
when I must sing of horror.  
Horror which I am living,  
horror which I am dying.  
To see myself among so much  
and so many moments of  
infinity  
in which silence and screams  
are the end of my song.

Victor Jara

## The Drive to War Against Russia and China



Why do the US and British ruling classes seem so set on war with Russia and China?

What has the economic crisis of capitalism got to do with it? Why should it be that Russia and China in particular inspire such belligerence? And what kind of antiwar movement do workers need to build if they wish to stop the juggernaut in its tracks?

Despite the urgency and importance of these questions, they are hardly discussed in what passes for the British working-class movement at present, but one thing is for certain: we cannot succeed in a task we have not even set ourselves.

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## Industry



# TUC launches fake 'campaign to defend the right to strike'

**A campaign most workers are unaware of, aimed not at overturning anti-worker legislation but at garnering votes for the Labour party.**

If there is one area where the British ruling class is still innovative, it is in creating ways to repress and divide the working class. Our rulers may have long since given up innovating in the fields of science and technology, China may have surpassed them in creating new means of production, and the Russians have surpassed them in military prowess, but when it comes to creating complicated and repressive anti-worker legislation, the British ruling class truly have no equal.

The latest piece of what is now several libraries' worth of legislation restricting the right to strike is the Minimum Service Levels Act. What this law seeks to do is to establish a *legally enforceable level of staffing* that the workforce has to provide in the event of a strike – the level to be decided upon by the employers, and any worker who refuses to abide

by this state-enforced strike-breaking will face disciplinary action and dismissal.

The British working class has had successive waves of anti-union legislation heaped upon it for over 40 years now, from the Employment Act of 1982 through the consolidation of various anti-union laws into one large legal framework via the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act of 1992. This latter pulled together a series of restrictions on how strikes were to be conducted, solidarity action was effectively outlawed and everything possible was done to make strike actions as useless and ineffective as possible.

Between 1967 and 1986, the ruling class in Britain had received numerous nasty scares from the working class, who had fought back in militant struggles against the governments of Harold Wilson, Ed-

ward Heath, James Callaghan and Margaret Thatcher. In response, and as the reappearance of capitalist crisis compelled a driving down of pay, conditions and social service provision, the state constructed a complicated set of legal barriers to ensure that any grassroots militancy was punishable by the courts, and they took care to make the unions legally liable for any such action as well.

In recent years, we have seen the introduction of new ballot thresholds, raising the bar for what is considered to be a legal strike ballot to levels that would rule a lot of by-elections and local council elections null and void if applied across the electoral system.

The legal regime that is imposed on workers has (from time to time) been denounced by the leaders of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) but, in reality, its leaders have been willing to act as co-managers of the system, alongside the government and other state

institutions.

Britain's trade union leaders and their attendant bureaucracies long ago embraced this role, playing their essential part in making sure that no dispute ever gets 'out of hand'. When a strike threatens to take a more combative turn, TUC leaders are quick to engage in a calculated sell-out in order to defuse the situation and demoralise workers whose sense of class-consciousness was starting to advance.

Thus we see that it is not just the ruling class and the government who are working hard to keep the working class from recognising the potential of their collective power; the majority of union leaders are equally invested in keeping workers as divided and demoralised as possible.

*Only this explains the consistent actions of TUC and trade union leaderships, not only over the last 40 years but over the last century.*

The strikes that have recently taken place on the railways, in the NHS and in schools have stirred up hopes amongst workers that a meaningful fightback might be on the cards. The ruling class also recognised this possibility, and this is why the latest laws to restrict strike action are being introduced.

These are clearly a direct response to the strikes on the railways and the NHS in particular, and target other areas of work the government deems important to social cohesion including health, education, the fire service, transport, border security and nuclear decommissioning. As the TUC itself has pointed out, this restricts the right to strike for one in five workers in Britain.

### Shameful tokenism

Given that this is the worst assault on the right **page 26 ▶**

# Industry

## TUC fake campaign

◀ **page 25** to strike in at least 30 years, one might expect that Britain's trade union leaders would be treating the matter with the utmost urgency. Bearing in mind their real role as co-managers of the system of repression against effective working-class organisation, however, we can understand why their response to this latest attack on workers' rights is strangely muted.

The TUC bigwigs know that they have to be seen to be 'doing something', but they do not want to instigate a strong campaign that actually rallies workers in a meaningful way. What they want is to run a 'campaign' that does not offend the sensibilities of the British ruling class too much and also one that is entirely acceptable to the leadership of the Labour party.

This is why they have taken as their inspiration the campaign against the banning of trade unions from GCHQ (the British government's chief domestic spy station) that lasted from 1984 to 1997. This particular choice of inspiration for the TUC's campaign is quite deliberate: it was a campaign that never involved strike action and ended only with the election of Tony Blair's Labour government in 1997, which reversed the ban.

*The message? Vote Labour to protect your rights, of course.*

If Keir Starmer himself had come up with a campaign, he couldn't have designed it better to suit his purposes. The only action in support of their campaign that the great heroes of the TUC's general council have come up with so far is a march and rally in Cheltenham, held with little fanfare and minimal attendance by anyone outside of a few paid officials, on 27 January.

Given that this is the most extreme attack on workers' rights that has taken place in 30 years, affecting a vast number of people, why has the TUC opted to construct a campaign that very few workers will even notice?

The answer, as is often the case, lies in the intimate relationship between the trade union leaders and the Labour party. Sir Keir has made commitments to reversing this legislation and the TUC hierarchy are clearly promoting the hope that if he gets into office he will actually honour this promise and no further action will be required by the trade union movement.

Not only is this very foolish given the number of promises that Starmer has already abandoned under ruling-class pressure, but in creating such a low-profile campaign the trade union leaders are once again demonstrating their true role as managers of the working class on behalf of British monopoly capital.

### What would a meaningful campaign look like?

If the TUC's leaders were actually serious about challenging this latest attack, they would be organising public meetings every major town and city in the country.

Given their vast resources and their access to facilities, getting rooms booked and advertising the events wouldn't be a challenge. Nor would it be difficult for the TUC to communicate the importance and urgency of the situation to the wider working class.

The unions should be instructing every workplace rep to prepare as many face-to-face briefings on this issue as possible. Mobilisations in defence of union rights should be being built by every union

branch and trades council up and down the country.

If done properly, the unions could tap into the deep hatred that is now felt by large numbers of workers for the entire political establishment and ruling class.

Mass demonstrations and walk-outs could be organised in every town and city to begin to mobilise working-class anger against this legislation and against the government proposing it.

But none of this happening because the likes of TUC general secretary Paul Nowak, Unite the Union general secretary Sharon Graham and even the leftist favourite RMT general secretary Mick Lynch are not interested in mobilising the working class or raising British workers' level of class-consciousness.

They are only interested in persuading workers to vote for the wretched and treacherous Labour party.

***Yet again we face a situation where the path to effective struggle is being blocked by the trade union leaders and Labour party just as much as it is blocked by the Tories and the ruling class.***

***Until our class can break free of the stranglehold the Labour party has had over our organisations for the last century, we can expect to see every struggle we try to wage being destroyed by the traitors and scabs who call themselves our 'leaders'.***

## Britain's Road to Socialism?



First published in 1951, the British Road to Socialism (BRS) set a new orientation for what was then the only communist party in Britain.

With its message of a parliamentary route to socialism via an alliance with the Labour party, this document played its role, along with the international campaign launched by Khrushchev in the USSR, of demobilising and demoralising Britain's postwar militant working-class movement.

Our pamphlet examines the history and ideas of the BRS, contrasting them with the real history of the Labour party, to show that we will make no progress towards our liberation from capitalist wage slavery until we discard the practice, slogan and justifying 'theory' of voting for or supporting the Labour party.

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# Industry

## Post Office scandal

◀ **page 2** gation team, which investigated transactions that failed to complete on Post Office systems, revealed that Fujitsu knew about a string of ongoing problems that it did not reveal.

“Problems that Fujitsu found included as many as one-third of transactions being duplicated with some fixes involving ‘manual workarounds’ [pencil and paper? back of an envelope?], which the company knew if exposed could call into question the integrity of the data and therefore prosecution cases.

“In essence, we have a problem with the ARQ [audit record queries] extraction tool,’ said one executive in one of a number of email exchanges shown at the inquiry covering the period 2008 to 2010. ‘If we do not fix this problem our spreadsheets presented in court are liable to be brought into doubt if duplicate transactions are spotted.’

“Problems with the system were variously referred to as ‘inherently insecure’ and ‘endemic’. In 2010, it emerged that a so-called ‘fast ARQ’ method developed to collect the data did not distinguish duplicate transactions when it was handed over to the Post Office.

“The customer [Post Office] and indeed the defence and court would assume that the duplicates were bona fide transactions and this would be incorrect,’ stated an email in 2010. ‘There are a number of high-profile court cases in the pipeline and it is imperative that we provide accurate records. Defence teams may spot this and call into question the integrity of our data. This will call into question the reliability of the evidence presented by the prosecution team.’”

“Fujitsu executives hoped to present data to make prosecution evidence ‘more consistent’, in an effort to ensure hundreds of ultimately wrongfully brought cases would ‘go through smoothly’.

“As part of this process it was decided at Fujitsu not to keep a ‘known error log’ of the bugs, or disclose them to defence teams as they tried to fix them. (Fujitsu still providing Horizon IT data for use in Post Office legal actions by Mark Sweney, 16 January 2024)

Public anger is growing as each new day of the inquiry exposes further the lies told by Fujitsu, the vile treatment meted out to the Post Office workers and the complete failure of successive governments to exercise their duty of care for what in practice were its own employees. (The Post Office is in theory a private company and the subpostmasters are ‘self-employed’, but in practice the company is wholly owned by the government.) Instead, the government has stood by and watched as Post Office workers, often with many years of loyal service, have been trampled underfoot by outsourcing monopolists.

A few heads will roll, but do not expect any fundamental changes on the back of this scandal. The Post Office is still contractually bound to Horizon, and Fujitsu still has many fingers in many lucrative government pies. The pledge to desist from lobbying for further juicy contracts is only for the duration of the inquiry – after which it will be back to ‘normal’.

Forget the Guardian and 38 Degrees placebos. The public anger stirred up by this scandal needs to be harnessed and directed towards the path of revolution, the only solution to capitalist oppression and exploitation. *Fight for socialism.*

## Join the communists

**Not only do we need to campaign against the bad conditions and lack of prospects for working-class people in Britain today, but we need to work for a completely different type of society – one where people’s needs decide everything.**

**So many problems face this world: environmental catastrophe, poverty, disease, racism and war. They’ll never be solved while capitalism remains, but they could all be sorted if society was set up for the benefit of the majority rather than the private gain of a few billionaires.**

**The Communists refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain’s corporate media. It is the capitalists’ job to try to stop us from building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!**

Our aim is to revive revolutionary Marxism and popularise it amongst the broadest possible sections of our class. Combining knowledge with disciplined organisation is the key to success in the fight against capitalism.

Our membership is youthful, while our leadership is experienced. We may be small, but we are growing. We welcome anyone who is serious and committed to working for a socialist future.

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# Proletarian



## Who wants war with Iran?

**War hawks in the USA are obsessed with the idea that ‘taking out’ Iran will destroy the Axis of Resistance. They are dead wrong.**

Erstwhile US national security advisor John Bolton wrote an article in the Telegraph newspaper shortly after Christmas, lambasting the inaction of the Biden administration over attacks on Israel-affiliated shipping and accusing it of “ignoring the reality of who is calling the shots in this conflict” (supposedly Iran). He claimed that “only if Israel, America, Britain, and others show they possess the resolve and capability to impose significant costs on Iran, as punishment for its aggression, will they persuade the ayatollahs that proceeding further will bring them intolerable pain. Very likely, only direct military force, applied against critical targets inside Iran, will impose such costs.” (28 Dec)

What appears to have slipped Bolton’s mind is the disastrous outcome of every other such effort to ‘punish’ US enemies into compliance with imperialist diktat, be it in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen or Russia. Nowhere has the imposition of any amount of ‘intolerable pain’ on US enemies succeeded in installing a stable comprador government fit to

undertake the Sisyphean task of shoring up US hegemony and reversing US decline – or, in his own words, “overthrowing the mullahs” and “replacing them with some other form of government that enjoys the support of Iran’s citizenry [!], is central to decreasing insecurity throughout the middle east”.

Instead, the more the USA, Nato and imperialism’s proxy forces have piled on the truly ‘intolerable pain’, the less willing have their targets been to tolerate this treatment and the more willing to find new and innovative ways of striking back at their tormentors, sharing a common interest with millions of other oppressed and exploited peoples. So it is that the agony of Zionist oppression visited on the people of Gaza has not only resulted in their own most heroic uprising but has also swept the middle east with an unstoppable tidal wave of solidarity with that struggle.

That is why the national naval forces of Yemen, misleadingly dubbed as “Houthi rebels”, have been running

circles around Israel-affiliated shipping, opening fire on and occupying boats blockading Israel and forcing the rest of the ‘international community’ to wake up to the new reality that turning a blind eye to the ongoing genocide now has material consequences.

Bolton makes a meal out of a statement from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps correctly hailing the Al-Aqsa Flood operation as “one of the acts of revenge for the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani by the USA and the Zionists”. Desperate for a *casus belli* against Iran, Bolton pretends that this supposed “gaffe” reveals that Tehran is pulling all the strings and is paying all strands of the resistance.

Contrary to Bolton’s lies, the richly deserved solidarity pledges and actions that are now strengthening the anti-imperialist cause globally are not a put-up job paid for by evil puppet masters in Tehran. Nobody had to fund the Yemeni comrades to carry out their brilliant solidarity work in the Red Sea.

Nobody had to pay the Palestinian resistance forces, so intimately integrated with Palestinian society, to fight to the

death to defend their people. Nobody needed to pay the resistance forces in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Army or the Iraqi resistance brigades to come out in support of Palestine. It is the imperialists who dig their own graves deeper with every new frantic attempt to bury the resistance.

If we want a *genuine* example of a foreign power bankrolling a terrorist group to commit heinous atrocities, we should rather look to Washington’s Islamic State (Isis) proxies.

“Isis has claimed responsibility for the deadly twin blasts near the burial site of slain military commander Qassem Soleimani in southern Iran. At least 84 people were killed and 284 injured in the blasts on Wednesday, state-run news agency IRNA reported, in what was the deadliest attack in Iran since its 1979 revolution.

“Isis media wing Al-Furqan issued a statement on Thursday – more than 24 hours after the explosions – claiming two suicide bombers, who are brothers, had detonated their explosive vests as mourners gathered for the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Soleimani near his grave in his hometown of Kerman.” (CNN)

This barbaric atrocity would seem to indicate that John Bolton, clutching his dogeared regime-change playbook to his chest, is not alone in pushing for war with Iran. But should his hawkish line gain serious traction in ruling circles, the endgame for US imperialism could arrive even sooner than anticipated.