

75 years on
and the Nabka
continues

Dr Aqel Taqaz



The new
scramble
for Africa

Steve Bishop



Madame Binh,
the 'Mother
of Vietnam'

Liz Payne

Liberation

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Andrew Murray, Iraklis Tsavdaridis, John Foster and Sevim Dagdelen

Ukraine, war and lessons for the Left



editorial/Liberation

As Britain's economic crisis deepens, the ominous drumbeat of war and military intervention abroad becomes louder by the day. However, people are resisting, one section of society after another, and in a spirit of unity.

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CND picture

"Those who seek war send weapons; those who seek want peace send diplomats"

As Britain's economic crisis deepens, the ominous drumbeat of war and military intervention abroad becomes louder by the day. Alas, this is nothing new... The British establishment and big business interests that are actually responsible for bringing about this crisis, have always sought to make working people shoulder the burden and even the blame. However, people are resisting, one section of society after another, and in a spirit of unity are organising strike action and protests in defence of their living standards and public services.

Further afield, in a rapidly changing world where the unipolarity enjoyed by the US over the last 30 years is increasingly being challenged and cold war in Europe has escalated into a hot war amid the tragedy in Ukraine, the prospect of World War III is a very real and present danger threatening the whole of humanity. Unfortunately, such a notion can no longer be dismissed as fantastical.

In the seas close to China, the US, UK, and NATO have deployed an armada legitimately seen as a provocation and threat by the People's Republic.

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, the US and western nations continue to defy the United Nations by turning a blind eye to the occupation of Palestinian territories, affording impunity to the Israeli apartheid state in its transgressions, and a role as its regional 'police' enforcer.

August 2023 sees the 70th anniversary of the UK-US orchestrated and funded coup against the elected, democratic, and secular government of prime minister Mo-

hammad Mossadegh in Iran. And while the current theocratic dictatorship faces mass popular protests and an ever-worsening crisis of legitimacy, imperialist interests are once more looking to subvert the will of the Iranian people for democratic change, with some even backing the return of the disgraced and deposed monarchy to the country. (For more on this, see the recent features on Iran at <https://liberation.org.co.uk/>)

In South America, while the situation remains fraught, there is a growing current seeking a definitive break with the past of US-backed dictatorships serving the interests of transnational neoliberalism. In Chile, September will mark the 50th anniversary of the US-backed military coup against the elected government of president Salvador Allende. Last year, the Chilean people emphatically restored to power a progressive government dedicated to peace and progress. However, the US continues with its strategy of interference, economic manipulation, and destabilisation – as can be clearly seen with regards to Cuba and Venezuela.

In Britain, the longstanding anti-war and peace movements have urgently kicked into gear against the warmongers. This is in recognition of the reality that to reverse the current crisis and slide towards a catastrophic world war, Britain needs to set a new course – one in which it can lead by example. An independent non-aligned foreign policy would represent just such a course towards justice, respect for and promotion of human rights, and the manifold benefits this would entail for all... Not a situation of perpetual crisis and devastating war!

Liberation will continue to work closely with other non-governmental organisa-

tions, in Britain and around the world to underline that the call for 'Peace NOW!' is the only way forward to a humane, just, and safe world, while the policies pursued by the US and UK governments and NATO offer up only fear and potential ruin for the whole world.



As an aside, Liberation is delighted to note the charity partnership between Nottingham Forest Football Club and the UNHCR (the UN's refugee agency) which sees the logo of UK for UNHCR on the front of their shirts as a mark of solidarity for those forced to flee their homes and communities. This stands in stark contrast to the corporate sponsorship arrangements and sportswashing that affect many other clubs, and is especially welcome at a time of general scapegoating and vilification of asylum seekers and refugees in Britain.

Jamshid Ahmadi Editor

news/Liberation

We are asking the US government to stop its involvement, its support for this coalition of foreign countries that decided to take over Yemen, and to stop providing assistance, maintenance, spare parts, weapons and intelligence sharing



Liberation joins thousands in “Peace Now” protest

LIBERATION MEMBERS Joined thousands demanding “Peace Now” in a demonstration organised by Stop the War Coalition and CND in London on February 25. Ahead of the demonstration Liberation issued a statement declaring “Those who seek war send weapons; those who seek peace send diplomats!”

Liberation’s statement echoed calls from Stop the War Coalition and CND for an “immediate cessation to the fighting all along the frontlines in Ukraine, accompanied by serious political diplomacy towards a definitive and lasting resolution – or, at the very least, a holding truce on mutually agreeable terms.”

Liberation added its voice to those of the growing calls saying “NO!” to the official narrative around this war and its continuation from amongst the working people of Europe, the Global South, and indeed the world.’

“Liberation believes that sound political diplomacy should always prevail over force of arms, or the threat thereof, and should be part and parcel of a principled and progressive foreign policy befitting Britain as an independent, sovereign, and forward-looking country in the 21st century.”

Liberation wishes to thank all our members who attended.

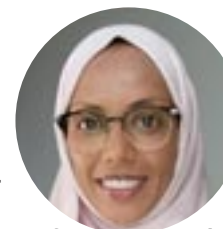
End foreign intervention to help women

YEMENI AMERICAN Scholar and activist Ms Shireen Al-Adeimi has called for an end to foreign intervention in Yemen as a critical step in ending the war and the devastating consequences it is having on all Yemenis, in particular women and children.

Speaking to Liberation on the eve of International Women’s Day and close to 8 years on from the start of the Saudi military intervention on March 26 2015, Ms Al-Adeimi also highlighted the impact of the Ukraine war and double standards applied to the two conflicts by the Western media and political establishments.

“Occupation, murder, starvation and blockade are wrong in Ukraine and also wrong in Yemen.” Yet in sharp contrast to Ukraine, most people know very little about what’s been happening in Yemen, she argued, adding: “Grain that was imported from Ukraine and imports generally, have basically been derailed in Yemen. Donations to Yemen through aid has significantly reduced because of the war. The other thing that we saw with the truce especially, was this need to refocus on something else and not focus on Yemen so much anymore.”

Ms further warned against the idea that the Ukraine war somehow brought an end to the



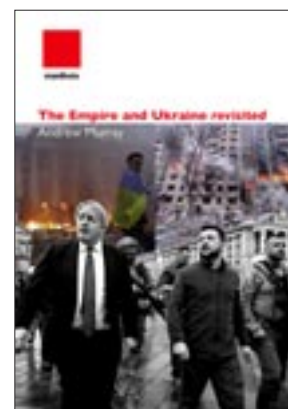
war in Yemen. A truce was secured in April 2022, two months after the start of the Ukraine conflict, as the US was seen to be trying to avoid proxy wars on too many fronts. Yet, having been extended once, the truce ended in October.

“The ask in Yemen is not intervention; it’s not weapons to defeat the Saudis. We are not asking the US government to do anything but stop its involvement, its support for this coalition of foreign countries that decided to take over Yemen, and to stop providing assistance, maintenance, spare parts, weapons and intelligence sharing... I would hope that progressives and governments would focus on this one goal,” said Ms Al-Adeimi.

Asked what the impact of the war on woman has been, she added: “Whether it’s displacement or starvation, many women and children end up bearing the brunt.”

The conflict has led to what the UN describes as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with more than 23.4 million people, including 12.9 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance and protection – almost three-quarters of the entire population.

Read the full interview on Liberation’s website: www.liberationorg.co.uk



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Progressive Knesset Member warns of dangers of extremist Israeli government

A PROGRESSIVE member of the Israeli Knesset issued a stark warning about the risk that the current extremist Israeli government could create bloodshed and instability in the Middle East at a meeting jointly organised by Liberation and the Marx Memorial Library in January.

The outspoken representative of the Hadash - Ta’al alliance shed a forensic, and unrelenting light on the nature and intentions of the government in Jerusalem. This turned out to be more prescient than the speaker or the “in person” and online audiences of the event would have wished, given subsequent disturbing developments in Israel and Palestine.

In a passionate and hard-hitting speech Dr Cassif laid bare the scale of the threat posed by the Benjamin Netanyahu’s administration. He urged progressives in Britain and elsewhere to put pressure on their governments to take action: “The danger is very grave. We need international and international intervention. If the international community, the governments around the world, don’t do something to stop this fascist, crazy, racist government, it’s going to end up in huge bloodshed that even Enoch Powell didn’t predict when he was talking about Rivers of Blood. Because if you want

me to borrow names from the history of Britain, Israel is controlled by combination of Enoch Powell and Oswald Mosley. That’s Israel today, as far as the government is concerned. And of course, the first victim are the Palestinians. Israel must be saved from itself.”

He further warned that the new administration would seek to exploit regional tensions between those reactionary Arab governments with which Israel has recently reached accord and the equally reactionary Islamic Republic of Iran – with the very real risk of a catastrophic war erupting as a result.

A courageous campaigner for peace and justice for the Palestinians during the First Intifada, Dr Cassif was the first person to refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories, for which he was imprisoned.

Liberation would like to put on record its thanks to Dr Cassif for accepting our invitation to speak at this event. We would also like to thank Marx Memorial Library for jointly hosting the event and providing the library as the venue.

● Watch the video of the Dr Cassif’s speech on Liberation’s youtube channel or Facebook page.
For more on Israel & Palestine read the article on page 6 by Dr. Aqel Taqaz

International Women’s Day

LIBERATION CELEBRATED International Women’s Day in the House of Commons in an event that highlighted the need for international solidarity and a new approach by the UK government that supports women in the Global South and struggles for gender equality.

Attendees of the meeting on the evening of March 8 heard powerful speeches from activists on Iran, India and Sudan.

Among the all-woman panel were:

- Dr. Azar Sepehr, women’s rights activist, Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women in UK, speaking on the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in Iran
- Joginder Bains, activist, former general secretary and current member of the Indian Workers’ Association, Derby Stand Up to Racism, Derby People’s Assembly: providing an update on women’s and equal rights’ campaigns in India
- Ameena Al-Rashid, activist: Women’s struggles for democracy and equality in Sudan. A full report of the meeting is available on our website: www.liberationorg.uk

peace movement/analysis

Imperialism is best challenged under the current circumstances by fighting for peace in Ukraine, by demanding an end to the war, a halt to the massive shipment of arms, and an end to NATO expansion. This policy aligns with huge slices of world opinion, from China to South Africa, Brazil to India

Only an independent progressive foreign policy can avert a third world war

Mass action is the only way to get anti-imperialist principles accepted by all parties in this conflict. It is consistent with the realities of the situation and the only course that holds out any prospect of establishing a durable peace in eastern Europe, argues **Andrew Murray**



THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST movement in Britain is clearly facing dramatic new challenges. The high degree of unity achieved in relation to the Iraq invasion above all, which allowed it to expand its reach throughout society, not least in the Labour Party, is a thing of the past.

The war in Ukraine, begun in 2014 by the NATO-nationalist coup against Ukraine's President and intensified – massively, illegally and destructively – by the Russian invasion of a year ago, has crystallised differences which had been simmering for some years, particularly in relation to the Syrian civil war.

This has been exacerbated by Keir Starmer's drive not only to restore the Labour Party to imperialism's good graces after the aberrant Corbyn period but also to prohibit any dissent at all on the issue. MPs who question NATO's role, for example, do so on pain of losing their place in the Parliamentary Labour Party and thus ultimately their jobs.

In relation to the Ukraine war three positions have arisen, broadly on the left, among forces which were aligned on Iraq and generally on the Afghan occupation too.

The first, which has a purchase on a minority in the anti-war movement but very little in society at large, is supportive for Putin's Russia. It endorses the rationale for the invasion of Ukraine, pins the entirety of the blame for the crisis on NATO and the Kyiv government and, while scarcely able to deny the oligarchic capitalist nature of contemporary Russia, bridges at any suggestion that it is imperialist.

Here is not the place to address detailed issues of political economy, but it is a feature of this tendency that it undertakes no analysis at all of the nature of Russia today, when a serious understanding of world politics mandates such an effort at comprehension as imperative.

Mercenaries

Ukraine aside, the activities of the Wagner mercenary group in several African states, operating as an arm of the Russian state to secure access to natural resources, should give pause for thought.

This position does not stand for peace unless it be on terms which constitute a Russian victory. It derives its strength from global hostility to the role of the USA and its close allies over the post-Cold War period of unipolar hegemony, or even longer.

Anti-imperialism here means opposition to Washington and London, no more and no less, whatever other changes may emerge in the world. This argument draws strength from the

understandable outrage at the hypocrisy of NATO warmongers calling out Russia for the sins they have themselves perpetrated in one part of the world after another to excess and beyond.

An opposite position likewise opposes peace unless it be on terms signalling a comprehensive Russian defeat, which would obviously mean a victory not just for Ukraine but for the NATO powers which are supplying and directing its war effort.

Bipartisan policy

That is of course the policy of the British government and also of the Labour Party. Some on the left and in the labour movement have also embraced it for one reason or another. Obviously, it is a policy that has significant support in British opinion as a whole, unlike the pro-Putin camp.

This embraces a section of the left, perhaps exemplified by individuals like Peter Tatchell and Paul Mason, who invariably find themselves more-or-less aligned with the British ruling class on international questions, whatever dissent they allow themselves on domestic arrangements.

They have never been anti-imperialist by any reckoning, including their own. Or at least, they oppose Russian imperialism but deny the existence of the British or American varieties. They are no different to those who described opponents of the First World War as the "Kaiser's agents".

They are buttressed however by those genuinely horrified by the Russian invasion – by its evident illegality, by the barbarities it has occasioned, by the plight of Ukrainian refugees. A robust anti-imperialism able to shape political debate needs to take account of such understandable sentiments.

Finally, there are elements in the labour movement which use any crisis to push for more spending on arms, leading to the shameful TUC resolution last year pledging a campaign, in the midst of austerity and strike action to defend living standards, to increase the arms budget.

Many unions of course reject this approach and, unlike Labour MPs, have been able to stand with the anti-war movement.

This constellation of pro-war forces have recurred throughout the history of the British labour and anti-war movements over the last century and more bringing together chauvinists and humanitarians, social-imperialists and pragmatists in an alliance which, objectively, supports the war policy of the capitalist class. The art is to divide it.

Nor is it new for there to be a reflux in the shape of sectarian posturing, of taking positions which have the capacity to shock but not to mobilise. The movement against the Gulf War of 1991 had to endure such fissures from the far left, for example.

It was a strength of the movements against the Afghan and Iraq wars that equivalent factions urging slogans like "victory to the Taliban" or "support Saddam" were entirely marginalised. Striking such attitudes may gratify a small minority but it does nothing to actually pressure the warmongers.

Antiwar

The mainstream of the anti-war movement, represented by Stop the War and CND, believes that imperialism is best challenged under the current circumstances by fighting for peace in Ukraine, by demanding an end to the war, a halt to the massive shipment of arms, and an end to NATO expansion.

These demands can build broad support across British society, the more so if, as looks likely, the conflict becomes bogged down in prolonged attritional warfare. There are already signs of such an approach gaining traction in the USA. Peace is becoming a more attractive option for societies themselves mired in economic crisis.

Moreover, this policy aligns with huge slices of world opinion, from China to South Africa, Brazil to India. These states and many more have refrained from any condemnation of Russia's actions, still less from joining in NATO's sanctions, even if overt approval is almost non-existent.

China has now gone further and started to outline a policy to bring the war to an end, something the US and British governments are clearly deeply opposed to.

In fact, the outlines of peace remain relatively straightforward, based on sovereignty, self-determination and security. Sovereignty for Ukraine, democratic self-determination for its minorities and security arrangements that work for everyone in the region, which means they cannot be based upon NATO.

These are clear anti-imperialist principles. Getting them accepted by a Russian government that may still dream of subordinating Ukraine to its own power, by Ukrainian nationalists looking to reconquer Crimea and by Washington and London bent on prolonging the conflict to weaken Russia and eventually encircling the far more formidable China will not be easy. It will depend on mass action, of which the demonstration on February 25 was but the start.

But it is the only course true to the anti-war movement's traditions, consistent with the realities of the situation and holding out any prospect of establishing a durable peace in eastern Europe.

Andrew Murray is vice-president of the Stop the War Coalition and its former chair

interview/**Iraklis Tsavdaridis**

Through the WPC and its members in dozens of countries and with their cooperation with the organized popular and labour movement in those countries, we coordinate efforts, campaigns and take initiatives on a mass level in order to raise conscience about the root causes for wars, misery, hunger and unemployment, for the millions of victims of imperialist wars and aggression



The recent 22nd Assembly of the World Peace Council - in Hanoi, Vietnam, in November 2022 - has been acclaimed as a great success by those who attended. What is the nature of that success and how, in your view, was it achieved?

The XXII Assembly of the World Peace Council (WPC) was held with extra-ordinary success and with the participation of more than 100 delegates from over 50 countries, representing anti-imperialist peace movements and organisations, invited national and international organisations. After the necessary adjustments we had to do during the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was the first big international in-person meeting in excellent conditions provided by our host organisation, the Vietnam Peace Committee. The second element of success was that we had managed to hold four regional consultative meetings prior to the assembly in Portugal, Bangladesh, Cuba and Amman respectively, which allowed the better preparations overall. Thirdly, our Assembly was a self-financed event, since the WPC is genuinely “non-governmental” since we do not receive any direct or indirect governmental funding, neither from institutions nor from “millionaire NGOs” who are tend to white-wash the imperialist crimes of their sponsors. The WPC relies on the support of the members and friends of the WPC who are struggling together for a World of genuine peace and social Justice. Last but not least, the rich deliberations during the Assembly were held in smooth and fraternal atmosphere and the conclusions were unanimous, while a new collective leadership

(Executive Committee and Secretariat) was elected with a new Presidential Organisation from India and Pallab Sengupta as President of the WPC.

Next year (2024) we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the World Peace Council. To what extent, if at all, have its key objectives changed in that time and what is its key focus today?

The WPC was founded in 1949 right after the end of the Second World War on the ashes of Europe and after the liberation from Fascism and Nazism by peace loving forces, the resistance of the peoples and the great contribution of the Soviet Union and its Red Army. The slogan of the founding days was “No more War-No more Fascism”. From those days till today the WPC has always remained committed on the side of the poor and the oppressed. There was no just cause and liberation struggle for which the WPC did not stand up firmly mobilizing its members and friends. And so we are doing also today. The “enemies of peace” are powerful and waging regional wars, occupation, interference in domestic affairs of sovereign countries, coups d’etat but also carrying out economic wars, sanctions and illegal coercive measures in order to boost the profits and serve the interests of the big capital and the multinational corporations. For example, the WPC was against NATO since it was founded in 1949, denouncing it till today as the armed wing of imperialism and today we have a firm and clear anti-imperialist position towards and against the European Union which goes hand in hand with the USA and NATO in many corners of the world, despite internal antagonisms.

When the international correlation of forces changed dramatically in 1991 many people and even friends thought the WPC would not have any future. As we approach our 75th anniversary next year we can only underline that the WPC proved and reaffirmed its existence and struggle constituting a necessary tool in the hands of the peace movement and the peoples struggling for their just causes till today.

Why was it so significant that the 22nd Assembly was held in Vietnam?

Vietnam and its Peace Committee is a prestigious historical member of the WPC. The first President of the Vietnam Peace Committee (VPC) in 1950 was the legendary Ho Chi Minh himself. Given the objectively difficult conditions in which this Assembly took place, we have to underline that very few organisations can carry out what the VPC delivered by hosting our Assembly. The high prestige and respect the Vietnamese people gained from the multiple fights and struggles against powerful invaders from Japan in the past, from the French colonialists later and finally from the US imperialists, remains till today a source of inspiration for the peoples and their movements in the world.

Vietnam, being a peaceful nation, defeated the most powerful enemies in defence of their freedom and dignity, united under the banners of the Communist Party of Vietnam, for their right to determine alone their destiny and future. The brave people of Vietnam paid a high price for its freedom and are facing the consequences of the dirty US war against Vietnam till today. The delegates and participants of the WPC assembly had thus the opportunity to learn and get to know the history of the people and country in favour of which previous generations in dozens of countries mobilized and demonstrated.

In what ways does the WPC benefit from the experience of organisations simultaneously fighting for peace in more than 90 countries?

The internationalist solidarity was and is an important tool and “weapon” in the hands of the peoples. Through the WPC and its members in dozens of countries and with their cooperation with the organized popular and labour movement in those countries, we coordinate efforts, campaigns and take initiatives on a mass level in order to raise conscience about the root causes for wars, misery, hunger and unemployment, for the millions of victims of imperialist wars and aggression. We strongly believe that the problems and challenges of the vast majority of humanity on the planet have common roots and if the social and political forces who act against the interests of the peoples unite and coordinate, then we have to do the same in order to reveal, fight back and defeat those forces.

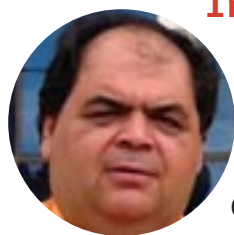
What are the most urgent things that the WPC and its member organisations must do at the present time to pull the peoples of the world back from the brink of nuclear war and devastation?

Today, given existing weaponry, a new war of unprecedented proportions, more destructive than the two world wars of the 20th century, there can only be one outcome - the destruction of humanity as we know it. It is therefore more urgent than ever before to defend such principles as the peoples’ right to self-determination, national sovereignty, and independence; non-interference in the domestic affairs of states; peaceful resolution of international conflicts; an end to all forms of national oppression; disarmament; the dissolution of political-military blocs; and cooperation among the peoples and countries for a world of peace and emancipation and for humanity’s progress.

Global capitalism’s relentless drive for profit results in devastation of the natural environment through depletion of resources, pollution of the land and water, and global climate change. This indiscriminate destruction ruins the lives of billions of people, displaces millions around the world, and threatens the survival of the entire human race. The bulk of the environmental crisis has been caused by the economic activities of the richest countries, which refuse to bear their full share of responsibility.

The WPC, in accordance with its character, does not support wars for forced redistribution of natural resources, markets and spheres of influence amongst big capitalist powers for their geopolitical interests, attempting to change borders and impose their rule over the peoples, including by means of violent regime change, through controlling the corporate media and manipulation of peoples’ ability to access information and analysis. We denounce the foreign debt and the conditions that are imposed on the people as a great obstacle to peace and to facing up to climate change, as well as preventing the exercise of sovereign policies for the well-being of the people.

Iraklis Tsavdaridis is Executive Secretary of the WPC and representative of the Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace (EEDYE) at the WPC. He was leadership member of KNE, the youth wing of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and elected President of World Federation of Democratic Youth from 1999-2003. Since 2004, he has been Executive Secretary of WPC, a full-time task. This involves the running of the Secretariat of the WPC at its Headquarters in Athens.



Iraklis Tsavdaridis
talks to
Liberation
about the
enduring
resilience,

relevance and reach of
a popular international
organisation founded
after World War II
under the slogan ‘No
More War, No More
Fascism’

comment/**Palestine**

The new administration in Israel is a game-changer in terms of the usual ebb and flow of this seven-decade-long conflict, with a real danger posed towards the future of democracy in Israel - a notional democracy now disenfranchising and threatening large swathes of the Jewish population let alone the Palestinian citizens of Israel

75 years on and the Nakba continues!



The international community – first and foremost the UN – must be alert to the wider dangers posed by the Israeli government's wanton abuses and continuing impunity, and the resulting instability. Support, solidarity, and urgent action are needed more than ever to definitively resolve the Palestine-Israel issue and prevent escalation to a

new disastrous war in the Middle East, argues Dr. Aqel Taqaz



THE CAMPAIGN for Palestinian liberation and statehood is currently going through perhaps its most difficult, fraught, and dangerous stage since the military annexation of what remained of free Palestine in June 1967. The hopes that were harboured at the beginning of negotiations to reach a political solution in the wake of the First Intifada, culminating in the signing of the Oslo Accords, have largely been dashed. This agreement, which was supposed to bear fruit within 5 years of its signing - with a final agreement reached on a political solution to the decades-long conflict, an end to the occupation of Palestine, and the establishment of full Palestinian statehood - was instead used to cynically bide time by Israel, which went about encroaching further into Palestinian territory, building more illegal settlements, and rendering the prospects of the two-state solution more remote by the day. This 'pressure-cooker' exploded in September 2000 in the Second Intifada, which essentially led to Israel's complete repudiation of Oslo, the invasion of territory controlled by the Palestinian authority, as well as the besieging of its president, Yasser Arafat, and his probable murder (by poisoning) four years later.

All subsequent attempts to "re-table" efforts towards the reaching of a political solution have been similarly exploited by Israel so as to ultimately deny the Palestinian people their inalienable right to self-determination and an establishment of an independent state within the borders as they stood on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of return for all Palestinian refugees - as per Oslo and recognised by the UN. Thus we have witnessed continued and unrestrained land confiscations, demolitions of homes, construction of the West Bank Wall, besieging of Gaza, ethnic cleansing in areas of East Jerusalem (so as to alter the demographics on the ground there), as well as the arbitrary arrest and incarceration of thousands of Palestinians over the years.

The crisis worsened even further with the arrival of the Trump administration to the White House. During this singularly disastrous presidential term, the US government proceeded to officially recognise Jerusalem as the sole capital of Israel, moving the US Embassy there despite an international outcry; recognised Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, which is part of Syria; and essentially placed punitive sanctions upon the Palestinians by cutting-off support for the Palestinian Authority, closing the PLO's office in Washington, and attempting to choke the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) by cutting off all US aid to the body.

This has been massively exacerbated by Washington's pressuring of some MENA countries to

normalise their relations with Israel in return for the shoring-up of a regional alliance against the Islamic Republic of Iran - as opposed to any step towards addressing let alone resolving the issue of Palestine, which remains close to the hearts of most ordinary people throughout the region.

Far right

Meanwhile, we have witnessed the inexorable rise of the Israeli far-right over the course of 5 elections in less than 4 years, culminating in the coming-to-power in November 2022 of the most right-wing administration in Israel's history - one comprising of fascistic and extreme-sectarian elements that would have previously been unpalatable even to the Israeli right. The deal sees the re-emergence of the disgraced former prime minister, Netanyahu, who by entering into this political alliance can press ahead with the Likud party's program while conveniently ducking the corruption prosecutions hovering over him.

Since the very first day of this government's formation, it has rolled out the implementation of an aggressive, racist, and extremist policy against the Palestinians. This has been manifested in daily attacks and provocations at holy sites, particularly in Jerusalem; the announcement of the expansion of illegal settlements on Palestinian land; and the adoption of legislation allowing for the summary depriving of citizenship, expulsion from Israel, as well as the reinstitution of the death penalty.

This trend continued with the sanctioning of armed incursions into Palestinian towns and cities, especially in Jenin and Nablus, in vague suspicion-led operations even where no crime or provocation had taken place. Hundreds of armed settlers, under the protection of the Israeli army, proceeded to attack the village of Hawara - burning down homes, torching cars, and uprooting orchards - setting a template then adopted by settlers in the rest of the occupied West Bank.

In continuation of previous policy, the current US administration has sent representatives to try and dampen down the immediate conflagration and its fallout - while still ultimately supporting Israeli aggression and working to prevent any censure of Israel at the UN Security Council, as well as any other initiative or measure aimed towards bringing about a workable political resolution of the conflict. Once the fire is out, the US will turn its back on the issue once more and Israel will return to the same practices, safe in the reassurance of its impunity. Unfortunately, the European countries adopt a similar stance to the US in this respect.

However, the situation vis-à-vis the new administration in Israel is a game-changer in terms of

the usual ebb and flow of this seven-decade-long conflict, with a real danger posed towards the future of democracy in Israel - a notional democracy now turned in on itself, one that disenfranchises and threatens large swathes of the Jewish population let alone the Palestinian citizens of Israel who comprise around 20% of the country's population overall.

Indeed, many Israelis are becoming increasingly worried by the course of political developments inside the country - with draft laws being put to the Knesset that undermine and endanger what have long been held out to be the tenets of Israeli democracy, not least the clear separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary. Thus, we see tens of thousands of Israelis demonstrating and beginning to take a stand, albeit belatedly, against the current ruling administration.

Two state solution

Regrettably, the prospects for the implementation of the two-state solution - a vision subscribed to by most ordinary Palestinians and their political representatives in the PLO since the First Intifada, and the only realistic political solution to this conflict - seems more remote than ever before. This is largely due to the policies of successive Israeli governments which have ridden roughshod over their commitments according to Oslo and the abject failure of the international community to hold Israel to account. Instead, Israel is afforded an impunity unthinkable for any other country, shored up by the US and many Western countries with no effective inroad or role for the UN.

The danger of this situation becomes even more acute when the worsening stand-off with the Islamic Republic of Iran is also factored in to the equation, especially in light of the near-total collapse of the Iran nuclear negotiations. With the current administration in Israel, there remains the real risk that the 'internal' Israeli crisis is transposed to a regional level meaning another deadly confrontation in the Middle East - the catastrophic consequences of which cannot be emphasised enough.

The international community - first and foremost the UN - must be alert to the wider dangers posed by the Israeli government's wanton abuses and continuing impunity, and the instability that will continue to fester for as long as no serious attempt is made to definitively resolve the Palestine-Israel issue. Support, solidarity, and urgent action are needed more than ever to prevent escalation to a new disastrous war in the Middle East.

Dr. Aqel Taqaz is a member of the Palestinian Committee for Peace and Solidarity (PCPS) and the Secretariat of the WPC

ABOVE: Palestine solidarity protest outside the British parliament on 5 June 2018.

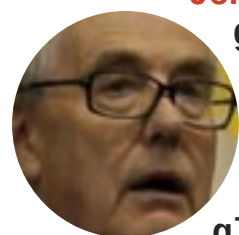
analysis/Middle East

The Left in Britain must listen to the demands of progressive voices in the Middle East itself – in practice, demands already largely embodied in the UN resolutions, on Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Yemen, that have largely remained dormant and unfulfilled, often for decades.



A new phase of imperialist challenge

John Foster on geopolitical shifts in the Middle East and how recent global



crises, such as US aggression on China, NATO enlargement and the resulting war in Ukraine have influenced them.

FOR THE PAST decade the Middle East has experienced an uneasy stability – one based on harsh repression, sectarian politics and gross economic exploitation. Initiated by Obama's 'pivot to Asia', this period saw the US seeking to replace direct military occupation by reliance on proxies, specifically Israel, and the exploitation of a balance of power between the region's dominant states: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Iran.

This period has now come to an end – in part as a consequence of the next stage in the pivot to Asia, the development of direct military threats to China, NATO's enlargement across Eurasia, the associated war in Ukraine and the impact of this on the world economy.

The resulting multiple crises pose a direct challenge to all those committed to Liberation's founding objectives. In framing its response, the Left in Britain must listen to progressive voices in the Middle East itself – in practice, demands already largely embodied in the UN resolutions on Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Yemen, that have largely remained dormant and unfulfilled, often for decades.

What has triggered this situation? First, the massive economic dislocation resulting from the war in Europe, bringing hunger and destitution to the most vulnerable Middle Eastern economies; Syria and Lebanon in particular and to a lesser extent Iraq and Iran. The second is a more subtle but important shift in diplomatic and economic alignments, resulting largely from the economic consequences of the war, affecting Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, Egypt and Turkey.

First, let us consider the impact of war and profiteering by the great energy and food monopolies. This has had devastating consequences for countries that are either without oil or where oil revenue is appropriated by a sectarian elite.

Lebanon, according to the World Bank, faces one of the world's worst economic crises. GDP has fallen steadily for the past three years and precipitously in 2022. Already by 2021 it was down by 37 percent. By 2022, 82 percent of the population were in poverty and inflation raged at 145 percent.

The World Bank's comment, in January 2023, is that this is a 'deliberate depression ... organised by the country's elite'. Unusual language. What does it mean? Effectively that ever more income is being seized by the ruling elites, whether Christian or Moslem, to buttress their failing sectarian control through direct handouts to those they can buy. The formal state machine, the usual provider of welfare

and relief, has virtually disappeared. Government revenue is now just 6 percent of GDP.

To a lesser, but significant extent, the same has happened in Iraq – whose oil revenues should have been sufficient to guarantee a significant buffer against rocketing food prices.

However, in both Lebanon and Iraq, there has been one positive result. Sectarian control has started to loosen – especially among the young. In the 2022 elections in Lebanon, an anti-sectarian Left and progressive coalition managed to secure a block of 13 seats in the Parliament, including one Communist. In Iraq's 2022 election Muqtada al Sadr, whose base is among the poorest sections of Baghdad's population, broke with his sectarian allies. A Communist-supported popular alliance has correspondingly increased in its influence.

To this extent, the revolt in Iran has similar origins – though here it is combined with a more explicit rejection, especially among the country's students and organised labour, of the brutal sectarian regime itself, of 'Political Islam' as the foundation for state governance.

So what of the other side of the equation – the changing political alignments among those dominant Middle Eastern states on whom the US had relied to maintain a balance of power: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey and Egypt.

First, Saudi Arabia and allied Gulf states.

The lingering distrust between Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler and the US state department has been sharpened by conflict over oil. Saudi Arabia's absolutist rulers want to maximise oil income while they can and safely store this wealth overseas. The US, to placate its EU allies on energy costs, wants the reverse: to minimise energy prices and maximise its own shale oil exports. At the same time Saudi rulers also want a safe haven for their assets and are concerned by the dollar's monopolistic control over banking and payment systems. Over the past three months these concerns have seen the Gulf Coordination Council strike agreements with China over oil supplies and to agree payment in Chinese currency. This move followed earlier conflict with the US in September over OPEC's decision to freeze oil production.

The Gulf States, as well as Egypt, have additionally been discomfited by the failure of the US to provide them with the same state-of-the-art weapons as supplied to Israel. On this front also, they have turned to China.

In the US, these developments, on top of the

popular mobilisations in Iran since September 2022, have led to a major shift of attitudes in the State Department, reflected in recent issues of its house magazine, Foreign Affairs. Intervention is now back. This time it will not be direct but instead mainly through reliable allies, particularly Israel – despite the criminally revanchist and racist nature of its new government.

The first target is likely to be Syria, prostrate as a result of the earthquake, denied oil income by the continuing US-Kurdish occupation of its oil-bearing North-East and facing an Israeli bombardment now reaching its capital, Damascus.

Iran will be next, a much bigger target. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has now been placed onto the backburner given the new opportunities that exist to exploit leverage or otherwise exert pressure on the regime in Tehran. The US is now backing those exiled groups that advocate armed intervention and regime change, including the monarchists and the mujahedin (MKO) who are further financed and facilitated by Iran's regional adversaries – not least Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Success here, in Syria and Iran (and consequentially in Iraq and Lebanon) would dramatically change the balance of forces across the Middle East and restore US leverage over the Gulf states and Turkey. Turkey under Erdogan has ridden free of any control in order to pursue Ottoman ambitions. Although now smitten by the earthquake and facing an imminent general election, Erdogan has used abundant labour and harsh coercion to supply a production base for external capital. This base has financially sustained interventions in Syria, Cyprus, Libya and Armenia as well as new alliances with the Turkic countries of central Asia.

In both cases, of Turkey and Saudi Arabia and allied Gulf States, the new alignments would assist the US in bringing them back into line with its wider strategy of isolating and confronting China and its allies. Currently they are seen to be obstructing it.

These are today's challenges in the Middle East – challenges posing grave dangers for the peoples of the region and world peace. What should be the response of the Left in Britain?

First, to understand these challenges, then to act.

First, on Iran. Every support must be given to the democratic opposition. Mr Hossein Mousavi, Iran's prime minister for eight years during the 1980s, leader of the country's opposition 'Green Movement', and president-elect in 2009 before being placed under house arrest, has called for a secular constitution, a disbanding of the theocratic regime and free democratic elections. This is the position backed by the students and striking teachers and oil workers. The alternative, the US-domiciled monarchists and their mujaheddin, must be opposed. CODIR supplies the briefings.

Second, on Israel, the current US tool. The extremist character of the Netanyahu government provides an opportunity for a renewed drive to secure the enforcement of UN resolutions for Palestinian rights. Starmer's Labour Party must be put to the test.

Third, on Syria. The UN-backed Astana Peace Accords are there. They must be carried forward to ensure Syria's territorial integrity under UN resolutions.

Fourth, there must be action to end Turkey's occupation of Northern Cyprus and to defuse conflict over oil resources off the costs of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine. Here Britain has a direct responsibility as chair of the UN-brokered Commission tasked to secure agreement.

Finally, Yemen, where 350,000 have died. Britain must stop arming Saudi Arabia and work for a negotiated settlement.

John Foster is an Emeritus Professor of Social Science at the University of the West of Scotland, and has authored many books.

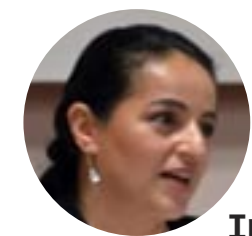
ABOVE RIGHT: Protesters opposing US intervention in Syria in New York City

report/globalisation of solidarity

The significant call from many countries of the South for a ceasefire and a swift end to the Ukraine war by diplomatic resolution, as recently and prominently voiced by Brazil's President Lula da Silva, is mirrored by the urgent desire of popular majorities in the West for peace, security and stability



Sovereignty, instead of subjugation



Sevim Dagdelen reports from the International

Conference for World Balance in Havana where delegates from more than 80 countries, including many from the Global South, came together to participate in an extensive programme of presentations, discussions and workshops



"This gathering shows both that Cuba is not alone and that there is a vast reserve of people of goodwill in the world who are actually concerned at the international situation, the absence of dialogue, and the many problems within modern societies."

THOSE WERE the words with which Hector Pardo-Hernández, head of the organisational committee, opened the International Conference for World Balance in Havana. Guided by the motto of Cuban independence fighter and national hero José Martí, "With all and for the good of all", delegates from more than 80 countries, notably including many from the Global South, came together from 25 to 28 January [2023] to take part in an extensive programme of presentations, discussions, and workshops.

Despite the planning and travel difficulties which the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic crisis continue to present, the conference managed to set a new record of around 1,100 attendees. This was not surprising, given the high-calibre programme with speakers like Brazilian liberation theologian Frei Betto; former Secretary General of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) Sacha Llorenti Soliz; and Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba. In my capacity as chairwoman for the Left Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs, I had the honour of also participating as a guest speaker and conversing with the delegates.

The International Conference for World Balance was first held in 2003, marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of José Martí. Every three years since then, this global forum organised by the UNESCO-funded José Martí Project for World Solidarity has provided the framework for hundreds of social activists, intellectuals, parliamentarians, artists, and academics to enter into dialogue about the most pressing problems of our time. The starting point and remit for this endeavour lies in the historical and intellectual heritage of José Martí, who is not only honoured in Cuba as a hero in the fight for the island's independence but who also, through his philosophy, continues to shape the

political and cultural integration of Latin America. For example, in his famous 1891 essay, *Nuestra América*, Martí called for the decolonisation of Latin America and emancipation from the US imperium. Martí's stance, which today forms the basis of the Cuban and Bolivarian Revolutions in particular, as well as the efforts for Latin American integration, is diametrically opposed to the Monroe Doctrine, which relies on US subjugation and control of the Latin American states and shapes the United States' policy of hegemony over the Americas to this very day.

Monroe Doctrine

Today, in the year marking 200 years of the Monroe Doctrine and the 170th anniversary of Martí's birth, the conflict between democratic emancipation, sovereign development, and social justice on the one hand, and imperialistic subjugation and capitalist exploitation on the other, is as current as ever. The persistent brutal and inhumane US blockade against socialist Cuba, lately made vastly more severe by US President Donald Trump and upheld by his successor, Joe Biden, is symbolic of the attempt to place large swathes of the Global South under a neo-colonial yoke.

It was in this context that Frei Betto gave an interview in which he highlighted the significance of the conference in Cuba. The large number of participants, he said, was an expression of the amount of interest in Martí's work and in everything Cuba stood for - namely "a sovereign, independent nation that is in a position to stand up to the American imperium". Betto also voiced optimism with regard to political developments in Latin America, seeing them marked by successes for progressive movements, such as Lula da Silva's election win in Brazil and deeper Latin American integration. Emancipatory organisations independent of the United States - like the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which convened in Buenos Aires just a few days before the Cuba conference - could help, he said, "break down borders between our peoples and facilitate our integration".

Dialogue

In this spirit, as the conference organisers note in their welcoming remarks, dialogue about building a world "in which balance, peace and education reign, in which diversity is respected, which is truly democratic, environmentally sustainable and socially just and in which the

sovereignty of nations is reaffirmed" was at the heart of this year's conference. That shared objective was also expressed by Pope Francis, in an address read by a representative of the Vatican as part of the opening ceremony, in which he called for greater cooperation and solidarity in the quest for peace and justice. Building bridges within society, he urged, would "help us find viable solutions together that exclude nobody".

Building on the observation that the war in Ukraine has set humanity back by years, if not decades, on that road, I focused my guest presentation on the causes, the global effects, and possible prospects of a peaceful solution to the conflict. My thesis was based on three elements. First, the proxy war in Ukraine is an expression of the United States' attempt to maintain its unrestricted global hegemony in a declining unipolar age. A fundamental component of this strategy is the ambition, which the United States has pursued since the end of the Cold War, to prevent a common security order in Europe that would include Russia. Second, the war against Russia, which is being waged in the economic arena as well, is also an inward assault at the social level. In Europe, the nonsensical economic war is tantamount to voluntarily amputating a limb from our own economy and is furthering the shift in favour of the US in the power balance within the Western alliance. Third, in the battle for hegemony it is fighting with Russia, the West is taking the countries of the Global South hostage and thereby demonstrably isolating itself, as the failure to make Russia a pariah state internationally is now manifest.

In light of the brutal collateral damage that war and economic sanctions are causing in the already vulnerable regions of this world, as well as the real danger of a nuclear escalation, I am convinced that ending it must be our top priority. The significant call from many countries of the South for a ceasefire and a swift end to the war by diplomatic resolution, as recently and prominently voiced by Brazil's President Lula da Silva, is mirrored by the urgent desire of popular majorities in the West for peace, security, and stability.

The absence of military and economic violence is the precondition necessary for a fair world order and for socially and environmentally responsible development. While peace and security in Europe will only be possible in the long term with our own sovereign foreign and security policy that takes us beyond NATO's policy of confrontation and armament, the important thing for the countries of the South is to make the current trend towards a multipolar order fruitful in order to renegotiate international economic relations and regain democratic sovereignty. In that connection, Cuba's President Díaz-Canel's closing address to the conference recalled Fidel Castro's call for a "globalisation of solidarity" that should be characterised by dialogue, cooperation, and integration rather than hegemonic subjugation.

In the face of war, neo-colonial exploitation, growing inequality, and environmental destruction, the urgent duty shared by the progressive forces in the West and the South is to conceive of such a fair multilateral alternative for the balance of the world and to make it a reality. A different world is possible; the exchange of views that took place at this conference - inspiring and in solidarity - gives us cause for hope.

Sevim Dagdelen is a Member of the German parliament (Bundestag), spokeswoman for the Left Party parliamentary group on the Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs, a deputy member of the Defence Committee and spokeswoman for international policy and disarmament.

analysis/Africa

It is increasingly clear that, given the West's colonial past and Russia's historic association with various liberation movements on the continent, in many African states, intelligentsia and ordinary people are eager to break free from the grip of western hegemony

The new scramble for Africa



The twenty first century scramble for Africa is no less significant than that of the nineteenth century and is potentially even more dangerous argues **Steve Bishop**.



The Rhodes Colossus: Caricature of arch imperialist Cecil John Rhodes, after he announced plans for a telegraph line and railroad from Cape Town to Cairo.

THE DIVISION of the continent amongst the imperialist powers and precipitated the first imperialist war in 1914, with the re-division of natural resources and economic control at its core.

The twenty first century scramble for Africa is no less significant and is potentially even more dangerous, due to the increased magnitude of firepower possessed by the imperialist powers and the heightened stakes in the race for the new re-division of Africa.

In terms of natural resources political and economic control of Africa is a huge prize. The continent has 30% of the world's mineral reserves, crucial components in the manufacture of electronic goods and armaments. Africa also has 8% of the world's natural gas and 12% of the world's oil. In a period where energy costs are soaring and control over energy resources is at a premium, reserves on such a scale are significant.

USA in Africa

Not surprisingly the United States has been at the head of the Western charge to gain or retain control of African resources. While neo-colonial pressure has consistently undermined the efforts of African nations to fully assert their independence, the presence of the former Soviet Union was a significant counter weight to the machinations of imperialism to fully dominate the continent. The political and material support of the Soviet Union to many national liberation movements, struggling to free themselves from colonial domination, was



often a crucial factor in many African nations gaining and sustaining their independence.

While the demise of the Soviet Union has by no means meant African allegiance was transferred to the newly emerging oligarchy in Russia, it nevertheless ensured a strong anti-imperialist legacy in many African states, determined to be free of the neo-liberal diktats of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. For example, trade between Africa and China rose to a record high in 2021. The jump was massive: 35% between 2020 and 2021, reaching a total of \$254 billion. China is by far Africa's biggest trade partner.

It is increasingly clear that, given the West's colonial past, and Russia's historic association with various liberation movements on the continent, in many African states, intelligentsia and ordinary people are eager to break free from the grip of western hegemony.

Western governments and media have devoted a great deal of time and attention to Africa as China, and to a degree Russia, continue to alter the foreign policy map of many African countries. However, Western interference in the affairs of African nations continues to hamper development in many parts of the continent.

Regional war

The continent has continued to experience regional wars, often stoked and supported by the West out of economic and political self-interest.

The insurgents in northern Mozambique have weakened the ability of the state to fully address the challenges confronting the country. The continued crisis in Ethiopia is also undermining the integrity and sovereignty of the country. The spill-overs into South Sudan and horn of Africa, point to much broader regional instability which could lead to external Western intervention, as has been seen in Libya, resulting in its destruction and partition. More positively, in Mali, the military coup has seen France and its military expelled. The new government is aiming to unify the country and overcome historic tribal divisions.

However, there is growing evidence that the United States is attempting to increase its hegemony in Africa, with a significant presence of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), with 29 bases across the continent, and military drills, often in cooperation with the EU and NATO. France also continues to have a military presence in about ten countries on the continent.

The occupation of the Western Sahara by Morocco, effectively with the backing of the United States, continues to be a blight on the movement towards democracy on the continent. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), led by the Polisario Front, has for decades been engaged in an independence struggle for the former Spanish colony. SADR is recognised by many African countries but not by Morocco or the West.

The intransigence of those opposed to SADR independence was underlined in June 2022 when the annual African Lion military exercise, the largest on the African continent, was launched by the United States and host country Morocco. More than 7,500 soldiers from ten nations took part, including Britain. In addition, military observers from NATO and fifteen partner countries were also involved.

If the sheer scale of the operation were not provocation enough, troop landings and artillery fire took place close to the Polisario Front base in Tindouf, Algeria. In spite of a decades old referendum having voted for independence in the Western Sahara, the US and Morocco continue to hold out. During his presidency Donald Trump took things a step further by approving US recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the territory claimed by Polisario. In return Morocco resumed diplomatic ties with Israel.

Countering Russia

In April 2022 the House of Representatives in the United States passed the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act, aimed at sanctioning African states if they trade with Russia. The US is clearly not prepared to tolerate the fact that, in a series of United Nations votes to condemn Russian intervention in Ukraine, there has been a hard core of over 35 countries abstaining, including a number of African nations, with a handful of countries voting against.

Such outcomes challenge the Western narrative that 'the world' is united in its opposition to Russian intervention in Ukraine, given that the nations abstaining or voting against US resolutions represent nearly half of the global population.

The political and economic instability forced upon much of the African continent has resulted in migration being one of the key issues shaping relations between European countries and Africa. Large numbers of young African migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean are lost through drowning. Even if they manage to reach the coastline of Europe, they are often subjected to inhumane treatment. The issue of migration has resulted in a shift to the right in many parts of Europe, as the fortress mentality takes hold and migrants become easily scapegoated for home grown social and economic problems.

African nations continue to struggle for the right to self determination and control over their land and natural resources. The legacy of colonial and neo-colonial relationships with the West presents significant challenges for many African nations. However, as with the divided international response to the war in Ukraine, the unipolar world under its control, which the US desires, is by no means a given.

While the US, backed by the EU and NATO, may desire hegemony in Africa a new centre of gravity, linked in particular to the emerging economic power of China, is beginning to grow. That may at least give African nations, for decades dominated by unequal trade agreements with the West, alternative approaches to structuring their economies.

The scramble for Africa in the twenty first century may not go as smoothly as the West hopes, with the real scramble being that for real economic and political independence and self-determination for African nations themselves.

Steve Bishop is a member of Liberation

history/colonialism

We should simply forget and erase the memories of the historical wrongs which are manipulated through the convenience of institutionalised amnesia. This careful orchestration deliberately creates confusion, clouds the barbarity and glorifies the conquest of people, their culture, language and the destruction of their economic systems



Britain's not so glorious imperial past

The legacies of dividing nations and sowing the seeds of permanent conflict following the retreat from Britain's occupied colonies, from Ireland, India, Cyprus and Palestine requires an examination and an open discussion



without fear or favour, argues Harsev Bains

Jallianwala Bagh memorial: On 13 April 1919, a crowd of non-violent protesters, along with Baishakhi pilgrims, had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh garden in Amritsar, Punjab to protest the arrest of two leaders. On the orders of Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, the army fired on the crowd for ten minutes. Officially 379 people died, the real figure was 1,500 plus innocent men, women and children, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims butchered within 10

IT IS IRONIC That we have Prince Charles, now King, addressing the 26th heads of Commonwealth government meeting last year, underlining the need for recognising the wrongs of the past. "To achieve this potential good, however, and to unlock the power of our common future, we must also acknowledge the wrongs which have shaped our past." Contrast this with the political leadership of the ruling class, repeating the worn-out mantra to forget the past. With a promise of cake tomorrow.

We are asked to simply forget and erase the memories of the historical wrongs which are manipulated through the convenience of institutionalised amnesia. This careful orchestration deliberately creates confusion, clouds the barbarity and glorifies the conquest of people, their culture, language and the destruction of their economic systems. It is an insult to the hundreds of millions killed under colonial rule to say "move on."

The support and solidarity for people still struggling for liberation and control of their independent destiny is stigmatised. The uncomfortable truth of the past that should haunt us and give us sleepless nights is sanitised. All criticism of repressive governments is censored. Leaders of the people, speaking in favour of peace and justice for the people struggling to defend their own lands and live with dignity and human rights within the UN recognised international borders are marginalised and hounded from office. Voices are silenced.

Liberation has always challenged such notions. We cannot remain silent spectators. As long as there is exploitation of one human by another, the struggle for emancipation must go on. In a world where children go hungry, where people sleep on an empty stomach, where they die of the inability to access health care are kept ignorant of science and education. Liberation will speak up and raise awareness. For us it's not a question of moving on.

An examination of a You Gov poll in 2016 confirmed the illusions about the British Empire, with 44% believing that it was a force for good and only 21% regretting that it happened. We do not blame the people. It is the result of the inherent prejudices of the education system in Britain with a curriculum designed to be in deficit of the truth, mostly projecting the false narrative of the ruling classes.

Second Boer War

One of the earliest examples of Britain's not so glorious past is that of Boer concentration camps in Africa.

During the Second Boer War (1899-1902), the British rounded up around a sixth of the Boer population - mainly women and children - and detained them in overcrowded camps. These became the breeding ground for outbreaks of disease, malnutrition and ultimately death.

Of the 107,000 people interned in the camps, 27,927 Boers died, along with an unknown number of black Africans.

Jallianwala Bagh massacre

When peaceful protesters defied a government order and demonstrated against British colonial rule in Amritsar, India, on 13 April 1919, they were blocked inside the walled Jallianwala Gardens and fired upon by Gurkha soldiers.

The soldiers, under the orders of Brigadier Reginald Dyer, kept firing until they ran out of ammunition, killing officially 379 people, massively distorting the real figure of 1,500 plus innocent men, women and children, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims butchered within 10 minutes, cornered with no means of escape. The district and surrounding districts were subjected to bombing, public floggings, crawling orders and other degrading and inhumane practices.

Brigadier Dyer was later acclaimed as a hero by the British public, who raised £26,000 for him as a thank you.

Michael O'Dwyer the lieutenant governor of Punjab at the time of this atrocity was later assassinated by the Punjabi revolutionary Udham Singh on 13 March 1940; for this he was hanged on 31st July.

Udham Singh is often linked to the Indian Workers' Association GB. Documents related to his case were released by UK authorities after a sustained campaign by the IWA GB late General Secretary Avtar Joughl.

Shaheed Udham Singh as he is fondly remembered globally by Indians reportedly used the name Ram Mohammed Singh Azad, which represents the three major religions in Punjab with Azad denoting freedom. It was this growing unity of people of Punjab that frightened the Governor and ruling elite which led to the massacre at Jallianwala.

A meeting is being held at the House of Commons on 30th March 2023 seeking a formal apology by a serving Prime Minister and the teaching of British colonial History.

Bengal famine 1943- 1944

Between 12 and 29 million Indians died of starvation while it was under the control of the British Empire, as millions of tons of wheat were exported to Britain as famine raged in India.

In 1943, up to four million Bengalis from Bengal and Orissa, out of a population of 60.3 million, starved to death when Winston Churchill diverted food to British soldiers and countries such as Japan and Greece while a deadly famine swept through Bengal.

According to Jason Hickel, an anthropologist, author and fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. "The mass starvation that killed three million Indians during the closing years of the Second World War was no act of nature; it was engineered. Britain must face up to this crime."

This appalling fact of the famine being made is supported with empirical evidence based on the causes of the war time inflation that pushed the price of food beyond the reach of Bengalis. The inflation didn't just occur by itself, an experience that resonates with the British working class today (2023) facing a crisis with unprecedented cost of living inflation. This was a deliberate policy at that time put forward by the economist Liberal Lord John Maynard Keynes.

In his capacity as advisor on the Indian Financial and Monetary Affairs for the British Government. Keynes advocated the notion of profit inflation in order to finance war expenditure by the allied forces from Bengal. This deliberate policy gave rise to the catastrophic inflation with a 600% percent increase in the price of rice which contributed to the Bengal famine of 1943-44. This was when the British Government found the "magic money tree" and printed unprecedented amounts of money for military expenditure causing an exponential increase in inflationary price increases in the cost of basic commodities.

Ever wondered why the British ruling classes find it easier to cover this most uncomfortable truth, the reflection of always placing its national interests above others it looted and exploited? The grand coalition of World War II provides the key to this mystery. The war cabinet from May 1940 -May 1945 featured the two most powerful leaders of British politics Winston Churchill (Conservative) and Clement Attlee (Labour) as Prime minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively.

Talking about the Bengal famine in 1943, PM Churchill openly expressed his disdain "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion. The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits."

Partitioning of India

In 1947, Cyril Radcliffe was tasked with drawing the border between India and the newly created state of Pakistan.

After Cyril Radcliffe split the subcontinent along religious lines, uprooting over 10 million people, Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India were forced to escape their homes. The movement of people across the artificial borders with the creation of East and West Pakistan with India in the middle descended into violence and over million people lost their lives in sectarian killings.

This episode is a tragic chapter with a multitude of political players, silent spectators, none of whom can be proud of their respective roles and who find it convenient to let ignorance prevail.

Kenya: Mau Mau Rebellion 1952-1960

Sometime referred to the Mau Mau uprising in the British colony (1920-1963). Led by the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu people struggle against the European colonialists.

Members of the Kikuyu tribe were detained in camps, since described as "Britain's gulags" or concentration camps, where, they allege, they were systematically tortured and suffered serious sexual assault.

Estimates of the deaths vary widely: historian David Anderson estimates there were 20,000.

Thousands of elderly Kenyans, who claim British colonial forces tortured, mistreated and raped the people during the Mau Mau Uprising (1952-1960), have launched a £200m reparations claim against the UK Government.

The legacies of dividing nations and sowing the seeds of permanent conflict following the retreat from Britain's occupied colonies, from Ireland, India, Cyprus, Palestine, requires an examination and an open discussion without fear or favour.

It is absolutely correct that an institution in remembrance will be built at Westminster in the memories of history's most horrific barbarity the victims of Holocaust.

Along with this it's time that Britain's ruling classes come to terms with its own inglorious past and establishes a centre to acknowledge the wrongs done in the name of the British people.

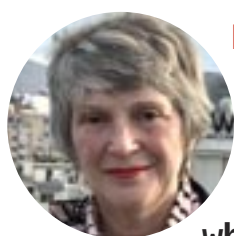
Harsev Bains is a member of Liberation's Education Committee and national vice-president of the Indian Workers Association GB

Liberation Hero/**Nguyen Thi Binh**

My own life, in concert with the life of our nation, has helped me understand that seizing political power and demanding independence were extremely difficult, particularly when opposing colonialists and imperialists. However, maintaining political power and building a nation...is much more difficult



A woman's life in war and peace



Liz Payne celebrates the 'Mother' of Viet Nam whose

remarkable life has been inextricably bound with the struggle for the peace and freedom of her country

WHILE ATTENDING an international meeting in Ha Noi in late 2017, I had the privilege of meeting Nguyen Thi Binh. The then 90-year-old woman was introduced to me by Pallab Sengupta, now president of the World Peace Council. "This is the 'Mother' of Viet Nam," he said, and as I soon discovered, her remarkable life and the struggle for the peace and freedom of her country are inextricably bound. This is her story.

Her birth name was Nguyen Thi Chau Sa. She was born in May 1927 into a politically conscious patriotic family, the oldest of six children. Her grandfather on her mother's side was the renowned scholar, nationalist and democrat, Phan Chau Trinh who emphasised the role of the people themselves, rather than external intervention, in ending French colonial domination. Following time in detention as a political prisoner, he spent 14 years in exile in Paris where he became like an older brother to the young Ho Chi Minh - as the president was to tell Nguyen Thi Chau Sa many years later. Phan Chau Trinh died in 1926 before his granddaughter was born but had great influence on her, as also did her father, a civil servant and resistance fighter, Nguyen Dong Hoi.

French rule

The young girl grew up in a land that had been under French rule since 1858. The country's resources were plundered, and the people exploited as cheap labour and reduced to grinding poverty. So determined were the French to maintain their colonial hold at whatever cost that they collaborated in power-sharing with the Japanese fascist occupiers who brought horror and starvation from 1940 to 1945.

Despite this, led by the Viet Minh Front, the people of Viet Nam triumphed in the August Revolution of 1945 and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (DRV) was declared on 2nd September. Democratic elections took place in January 1946 but immediately French troops, with the open support of the US and Britain, attacked the new Viet Minh administration in the south of the country and the

War of Resistance against France began.

The young Nguyen Thi Chau Sa joined the struggle, operating in secret and in constant danger. She joined the Vietnamese Communist Party and, in 1949, began work as a grass-roots organiser. In April 1951 she was arrested in Sai Gon by the French police and imprisoned in the notorious Chi Hoa Detention Centre. Here she was repeatedly interrogated under torture and sentenced to death. However, she was reprieved and released in very poor health in 1954.

Nguyen Thi Chau Sa almost immediately went north to work in Ha Noi for the National Women's Union. Her job took her to many localities where she witnessed first-hand the impact of colonialism and the French War on ordinary people and especially women and children.

Victory

1954 was a year of momentous victory for the Vietnamese army. The defeated French were forced to sign the Geneva Accords recognising the independence, sovereignty, and unity of Viet Nam. The country was temporarily split in two at the 17th parallel, with the French moving to the south from which they would withdraw, while the Viet Minh went to the north. A general election for the government of a united country was to follow within two years.

But it never happened. The US now came centre stage to ensure that the Accords were never implemented. Driven by strategic interests in the region, it made sure that the country remained divided - preventing an election that would have swept Ho Chi Minh to power with 80% support, while bankrolling, and controlling the reactionary regime of Diem-Nhu south of the 17th parallel. This regime violently suppressed all opposition, executing of thousands of Viet Minh supporters and condemning hundreds of thousands to concentration camps and prisons.

In response, the National Liberation Front (for the liberation of South Viet Nam and unification of the

country) was formed in 1960. Nguyen Thi Chau Sa was assigned to the Foreign Affairs Section of its Re-unification Committee and given the name Nguyen Thi Binh (Peace). From 1962 onwards, her high-profile diplomatic work, took her across the world. She represented the aspirations of the people of Vietnam in every country and forum she visited, while the world's strongest imperialist power made all-out war on her small country.

Her work was outstanding; she was calm, determined and totally focussed on the cause of peace and unification. It is therefore no surprise that when the Paris Peace Conference on Viet Nam formally opened in January 1969, she was chosen as deputy head of the National Liberation Front delegation. Shortly afterwards she came to Britain and addressed crowds massed for peace in Trafalgar Square.

A few months later, the NLF formed the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam (PRG) and Nguyen Thi Binh became its minister of foreign affairs and head of its delegation in Paris, a position that she kept throughout what she described as "the longest peace negotiation in history."

Nguyen Thi Binh was the only woman to sign the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam on 27th January 1973. South Viet Nam was liberated on 30th April 1975 and the two parts of Viet Nam were finally brought together in 1976 as the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Reconstruction

Nguyen Thi Binh now embarked on her remarkable contribution to the reconstruction and development of her country as a place of prosperity and peace - meeting the people's hopes and aspirations. In her memoirs, she said of this: "My own life, in concert with the life of our nation, has helped me understand that seizing political power and demanding independence were extremely difficult, particularly when opposing colonialists and imperialists. However, maintaining political power and building a nation...is much more difficult."

From 1976 to 2002 she was a member of the National Assembly, holding the office of minister of education from 1976 until 1987, the first ever woman minister in the history of Viet Nam. Following the long years of war, unification of the education system across the country, reformation of teacher education, eradication of illiteracy and development of the curriculum to match Viet Nam's needs and aspirations were mammoth tasks.

From 1987 to 1992, returning to diplomacy, she served as deputy head of the Communist Party's External Relations Department. Then, in 1992, Nguyen Thi Binh was elected Vice-President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, a position she held for two terms until 2002.

Five years on from when I first met her, I saw Nguyen Thi Binh again. This time, now in her mid-nineties, the honorary president of the Viet Nam Peace and Development Foundation, addressed the Ha Noi Peace Conference by video link in November 2022.

"Having suffered numerous sacrifices, pain and loss during decades of struggle against foreign aggression and for peace, independence and freedom, the people of Viet Nam deeply appreciate the value of peace," she told those gathered. Warning that the danger of wars, including a nuclear catastrophe, is greater than ever before, she stressed the vital importance of "rallying and uniting peace forces and movements" to halt aggression and build a world of peace and justice for all.

Her life, her example, and her words are ones we should all heed.

Liz Payne is a member of Liberation's Education Committee

When the Paris Peace Conference on Viet Nam formally opened in January 1969, Nguyen Thi Binh was chosen as deputy head of the National Liberation Front delegation. Shortly afterwards she came to Britain and addressed crowds massed for peace in Trafalgar Square

book review/**Chagos Islands**

As a lifelong supporter of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF) and subsequently Liberation I have one complaint which is that the book does not mention the long campaign waged by MCF/Liberation against this crime nor the many interventions in Parliament by Stan Newens MP

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The human cost of neocolonial robbery

Bob Newland reviews a timely publication that tells the terrible story of the abuse by Britain and the United States (US) of the people of the Chagos Archipelago, condemned in the recently published report of Human Rights Watch as a crime against humanity

THIS IS A VERY Timely publication. It tells the terrible story of Britain and the United States (US) abuse of the people of the Chagos Archipelago, condemned in the recently published report of Human Rights Watch as a crime against humanity.

Based on the saga of the Chagos islanders the book tells a wider story. Its author, Philippe Sands, is an international law practitioner. While chronicling the last throws of British Colonialism, he focusses on the international legal framework for this rather than the national liberation struggles with which readers may be more familiar.

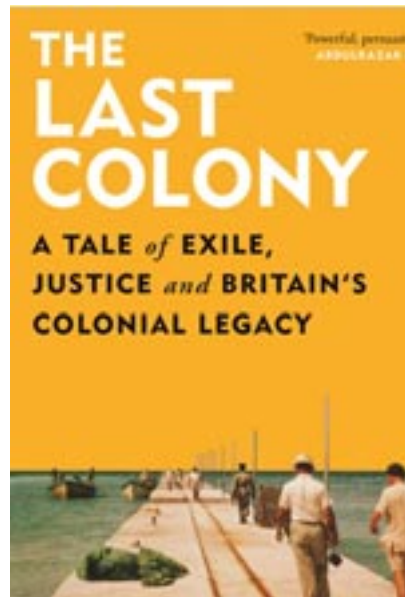
This is not to detract from the drama of the story. Starting with the defeat of Nazi Germany it delves into events behind the drafting of the 'Atlantic Charter' by Churchill and Roosevelt and the creation of the United Nations (UN). According to the author, 'Roosevelt saw the Charter as announcing an end to empire ... [providing] a tool that promised people ... 'their own nation state'. Churchill meanwhile promised the House of Commons that the Charter did not mean 'an end to Britain's Colonies'.

Of course, the great hopes of Mandela, many other leaders of colonised peoples and progressives worldwide that the UN would usher in the end of colonialism and a new world of peace and equality were dashed as Britain, the US and other imperialist powers pursued their national interests.

People of good will did use International Law to challenge some of the worst excesses of the imperialist powers. Sands documents cases as diverse as Nicaragua and South-West Africa (Namibia) to illustrate success and failure in applications to the International Court in the Hague. Many of these rulings were ignored.

Returning to the book's main title, 'The Last Colony'. I initially thought this to be erroneous believing that Britain had several remaining colonies. Online research confirmed that Britain has 14 colonies now hidden beneath the thin disguise of 'British Overseas Territories'. Reading on, one discovers that 'the British Indian Ocean Territory' (BIOT), as the Chagos became known, was in fact not the last remaining British Colony but rather the last one created.

Much to their shame, it was the Wilson Labour Government that was responsible for the 'illegal'



separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius. They used bullying and bribery to gain the acquiescence of the leaders of Mauritius with the final promise being independence for their country after the partition. Britain subsequently granted Mauritius independence in 1967. What came to light very soon after was this manoeuvre was a cynical plan to remove the population of the islands and hand Diego Garcia, the largest of them, over to the United States for a strategic airbase. Within days of independence, Britain signed the agreement granting the US the rights to build their airbase.

Despite the 1949 Geneva Convention explicitly prohibiting the 'forcible transfer' of individuals or groups or their deportation from one territory to another, the people of the islands were forcibly removed by Britain to Mauritius or the UK, permitted only to carry hand baggage. They and their descendants continue to campaign for the right

to return in accordance with natural justice and International Law.

Sands explores the many rulings of various international courts and tribunals usually but not always against the UK. An interesting episode was when Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary in the Blair Labour Government agreed to permit the former residents of the islands except Diego Garcia to their homes. Tragically for them, the Iraq War intervened. Cook resigned and Jack Straw, his replacement, reneged of the commitment adding yet another crime against international law to that of his pursuit of the illegal Iraq War.

In its latest considerations on the Chagos, the International Court of Justice rejected efforts by the UK Government to obtain a ruling that the Court had no jurisdiction. Following this they expressed the opinion that 'BIOT was illegally separated from Mauritius'. Various judges made statements with regard to their deliberations. The Jamaican Judge spoke harshly likening the enforced removal to 'the abduction and enslavement of millions of Africans'. The Court unanimously referred the question of the return of the people of the Chagos to the UN General Assembly. Britain has yet to comply with these requirements.

As a lifelong supporter of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF) and subsequently Liberation I have one complaint which is that the book does not mention the long campaign waged by MCF/Liberation against this crime nor the many interventions in Parliament by Stan Newens MP. That said, the book is a fascinating and informative read for anyone interested in the process of decolonisation or more generally the history of the UN and International Law.

The Last Colony: A Tale of Exile, Justice and Britain's Colonial Legacy by Philippe Sands. Publisher Weidenfeld and Nicholson £16.99.

Bob Newland is a member of Liberation and was a London Recruit.



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