

# 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!*



**SANCTIONS WAR  
BACKFIRING BADLY**

## **Boris's days are numbered ... like his pals in the Azov**



**SUCCESSES IN  
DENAZIFICATION**

## British politics



### Partygate again: Is Boris really about to suffer 'death by a thousand cuts'?

**The prime minister's lies and hypocrisy are once more back in the media spotlight. But the ruling class is struggling to find a replacement for its disgraced frontman.**

In the lead-up to the investigation by Scotland Yard into Downing Street parties during lockdown, MP David Davis warned prime minister Boris Johnson to resign early rather than suffer "death by a thousand cuts" as revelation after revelation exposed him as a hypocrite and a liar.

With some help from Scotland Yard, which postponed publication of its report, Mr Johnson bought time, which was then extended by the crisis in Ukraine. But now his lies and hypocrisy have brought him back under the spotlight. Johnson, along with his wife, chancellor Rishi Sunak and 47 others in the government and civil service, have all received £50 fines for breaking the Covid laws they legislated and supported.

In addition, we are expecting the publication of the police investigator Sue Gray's report and the possibility of further fines.

But despite this scandal, in reality, the worst thing that's likely to happen to Johnson is that he might not receive the knighthood that is awarded as standard to retired PMs.

Johnson knows about impunity. Tony Blair was able to wage illegal wars, destroy states, inflame terrorism that spread across continents, and create humanitarian disasters on a global scale, yet he went on not to stand trial but to obtain immense wealth and a knighthood.

This is just one of the ways that the British ruling class maintains its impunity. It is no accident that the British parliamentary system which masquerades as a beacon of democracy contains no mechanism to punish the decadent and sociopathic behaviours of our heads of government. Johnson is in no danger of being held to account other than by the liberal press putting him on the naughty step and the

Metropolitan police slapping a few more tokenistic fines on him – just enough of a public relations effort to invoke the notion it is a legitimate and 'independent' institution.

#### Britain's two-tier Covid justice system

Although Johnson's first instinct was to protect corporate interests through a 'herd immunity' policy at the outbreak of Covid-19, he was ultimately forced to engage some kind of (belated) public health strategy. The country went into lockdown in March 2020 and the government brought in laws that were modified throughout the pandemic.

As a result of rules and guidance, the police were given new powers, including the ability to issue fines of up to £10,000 for anyone organising the now outlawed social gatherings. And, indeed, thousands of people were fined for breaking these rules during lockdown. A few people even went to prison for being "selfish".

But it was no coincidence that those targeted with fines and jail were not wealthy owners of corporations and companies failing to adequately protect workers, but rather the lowest-paid, who were also the most vulnerable to infection and death from the virus. While workers died because of Johnson's initial herd immunity policy, employers failed to protect their employees' health, and the depleted state of the NHS meant it was unable to provide adequate Covid or non-Covid care, the police set about the one-sided enforcement of Johnson's Covid laws.

This particular form of 'accountability', where the working population is held criminally responsible for endangerment of life while the government's policies wreak havoc and misery upon the same popula-

tion exposes the reality of the British justice system – who it targets and who it serves. Britain's two-tiered bourgeois law punished the lower tier, the working class, in multiple ways during lockdown.

Thousands of people were issued fines that were illegal. A Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) review showed that police forces had misused the 2020 Coronavirus Act and around one in three of the fines they issued were not lawful. And this shocking figure only applies to the cases seen by the CPS.

In the summer of 2020 Johnson's attorney general brought in a closed court system, away from all scrutiny, for convicting lockdown law-breakers, called the single-justice procedure (SJP). Magistrates sat behind closed doors instead of in open court, holding mini trials where police officers rather than CPS lawyers brought the cases. It is thought that up to 25,000 people may have been illegally/wrongly prosecuted and fined via this process.

What's more, Johnson's government knew that under this system people would be unjustly prosecuted and fined – a further demonstration of their contempt towards workers, who are expected to tolerate a 'justice system' not fit for purpose.

One particular case that demonstrates the two-tiered nature of this system was that of Othniel Agyei, who was fined £12,000 by Westminster magistrate's court for having an illegal gathering at his home in December 2020 – the same week in which Boris Johnson attended a party at Downing Street, and for which he has now received a £50 fine.

Despite the police telling him they had dropped the case, the secret court convicted Agyei without his knowledge. As of

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December 2021, he was still being forced to pay the fine or face prison time.

### The darkest days of Boris's tenure could still be to come

Boris Johnson's behaviour has insulted those who stuck to the rules during lockdown, unable to see their relatives either in hospital or before they passed away, unable to celebrate their lives properly at their funeral, often unable even to bury them.

Johnson's denials, twisting of the truth, revisionism of facts, delays and false contrition have become a significant problem for his supporters, allies and party, as he carelessly exposes the ugly nature of ruling-class entitlement, which requires facade management.

Is this what the bourgeoisie means with its public relations rhetoric about a "constitutional crisis"? It is not that Johnson lies which upsets them; it is that *he keeps getting caught*. If the government decides to remove him, they will need to replace him with someone who has not been caught lying; someone who is not fined for breaking lockdown laws; someone who has not been caught failing at facade management.

But the choices are shrinking. If they want to find a more discreet liar who will also stick to Boris's Brexit promises, the choices shrink further still.

Whatever the outcome, these are dangerous times. If Johnson is able to exploit the Ukraine war in order to hang on, deludedly reinventing himself as a glorious wartime leader, he could lead us to a dark place where a sociopathic liar fronts a collapsing British empire aligned with nazis in a war that could become nuclear and worldwide.

## Paltry Partygate fines for Boris and Sunak are a slap in the face for British workers

### The 'us and them' reality of British class society has never been clearer.

Prime minister Boris Johnson and chancellor of the exchequer Rishi Sunak have finally received their dues from the Partygate saga, having been issued with laughably low fixed penalty notices (£50 apiece) by the Metropolitan police.

Whilst this is hardly likely to hurt their finances (Sunak is believed to have a net worth of at least £200m), presumably the fines are meant to stand as a symbolic rebuke to their behaviour.

There is no shortage of examples of Britain's capitalist politicians engaging in acts of blatant corruption and decadence whilst sticking two fingers up at working-class families barely managing to scrape by. But what has made this particular case so enraging for the masses is its sheer brazenness, which seems shameless even by ruling-class standards.

Politicians meeting up to have a fiesta – on multiple occasions – whilst ordinary people were all but forcibly locked into their homes – prevented from seeing their friends and families, prevented from working, prevented from accessing health care and other vital services. If this had been put forward as the plot idea for a movie it could well have been rejected as over-the-top and unrealistic!

In addition to the outrage, there is an undeniable element of feeling tricked. The population at large was led to believe that enforced near-total self-isolation for months

on end was necessary to 'stop the spread' of the coronavirus. Yet the very politicians who were lecturing and hectoring the public and imposing these draconian restrictions were themselves not taking them remotely seriously.

If anyone tries to make the argument that these were politicians, not scientists, they can be pointed in the direction of one Prof Neil Ferguson, the man whose research predicting half a million immanent deaths if the government didn't impose a national lockdown immediately *did not prevent him from flouting those same restrictions* to meet with his lover. Those working-class citizens who followed lockdown guidance to the letter could be forgiven for reconsidering their beliefs about whether their enormous personal sacrifices were necessary after all.

Indeed, if we had an economic system based on planning for the ever-increasing needs of society, none of this would have been necessary. In countries with socialist govern-

ments such as China and DPR Korea, a pre-planned mass testing strategy combined with localised and temporary quarantine orders where cases are detected has kept deaths dramatically lower than in western countries, despite the western nations having imposed *much harsher restrictions on individual liberty* than the supposedly 'totalitarian' socialist states.

The unpreparedness of the NHS to cope with a pandemic had been known by the British government since Exercise Cygnus was held in 2016. But those report findings were buried because long-term planning is anathema to a capitalist system built on the lust for immediate profit and the voodoo economics of leaving everything to the 'hidden hand of the market'. Acting on the report would essentially have meant reversing the ongoing project of healthcare privatisation – and so it was ignored.

The sight of Johnson, Sunak and co getting away with a trifling fine after an 'investigation' characterised by foot-dragging on the part of the police and constant lies from the defendants, when juxtaposed against the relentless persecution of working-class quarantine violators by the police, renders further comment superfluous.

The class nature of British society, the us-and-them reality, has never been clearer.

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# Industry



*If you fight you won't  
always win.*

*But if you don't fight  
you will always lose.*

*-- Bob Crow --*



## Train strike: Is Britain about to see the largest walk-out since the 1926 general strike?

Meanwhile, the government is considering adding to anti-trade-union legislation to try to outlaw the strike before it starts.

*The following article was written by Reddit user greaterlondoncouncil, and is reproduced with thanks. The order of some paragraphs has been changed.*

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On Wednesday 25 May, the RMT union voted 89 percent in favour of a nationwide rail strike.

Forty thousand rail workers are going on strike, and, unlike previous industrial action, it will not only be train drivers and guards. For the first time ever, this is a coordinated strike across 13 different train operating companies in a system fragmented in a way that's previously preventing this from happening.

Most importantly, Network Rail workers are also going on strike *for the first time ever*, meaning that signalling, track engineering, emergency maintenance and network coordination will also go down.

The latter point means that not only will passenger rail services be hit, but the freight

network, which is a primary supplier of goods to the largest supermarkets in the country, may very well grind to a halt amidst a cost of living crisis.

### Roots of the strike

There are two main issues motivating this action: pay cuts and redundancies.

During the pandemic, workers were subjected to a two-year pay freeze to make up for lost revenue in the rail industry. In light of the 9 percent inflation we are hitting right now, this effectively means that workers are being paid *10 percent less* than they were three years ago. When the union asks for a 'pay rise', what it is really asking for is that its members should be paid at the same rate they were pre-Covid and not have to take a pay cut.

It is important to stress that this strike is mainly not about train drivers. Currently, the relatively high salary of some train drivers, at £61,000, is being circulated in the media to present the strikers as 'greedy'. But the majority of

strikers are chefs, signallers, cleaners, etc, who are getting a lot less. The average salary of an RMT member is about £25,000-£30,000, with some being paid barely minimum wage.

On top of this, Network Rail is currently looking to cut 2,500 jobs from its books, at a time when the industry is already understaffed. Anecdotal testimony from many workers describes departments that are already overstretched, so that they simply will not be able to continue the work they are doing if they lose any more staff.

To combat this across the industry, some firms are trying to get workers to give up their right to a Sunday rest day, which is another point of contention.

The RMT states that, amidst all this, Network Rail provided £235m in profits to private engineering firms, to do work that the company is mostly capable of doing in-house.

When the unions noted that the management demanding effective pay cuts from workers were being paid figures in the ballpark of £300,000 a year, Network Rail's communications director stated that

it was a lesson to people who "should've probably worked harder in school".

A genius thing to say when your workers are balloting for a strike.

### Anti-union laws

The RMT, which had its leadership consolidated by allies of the Communist Party of Britain last year, has achieved an incredible victory in winning this ballot.

British trade union law, the most restrictive in western Europe, requires that any legal strike action can only occur if a majority of workers ballot to strike in an election that has a turnout of at least 50 percent. Regulations on these ballots are extremely tight, with prohibitions on in-person voting meaning that every member has to individually send their vote by mail for it to count.

This makes it extremely difficult to organise an election, as up-to-date address records have to be maintained on every single member, each one of whom has to send in a mail ballot. *This law exists to prevent large-scale strikes*, and my own union struggles to manage ballots on workplaces with over 100 people let alone

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1,000.

Not only has the RMT union achieved to get a 71 percent turnout on an election of 40,000 people under such conditions, but it has managed to achieve a 89 percent majority in favour of striking, meaning that the media cannot claim that this strike does not represent the wishes of most railworkers.

## Prepare for a vilification campaign

Speaking of the media, they are going to go into overdrive to bring the strike down. The RMT has been the victim of endless slander virtually since its inception, with attacks on its members and leaders from right-wing media based around their radical left-wing links and from liberal media based around their support for Brexit and implied 'support' for Russian president Vladimir Putin (which is a total lie).

Union organisers have been stalked by journalists, criticised for their choice to live in modest housing, their choice not to live in modest housing, their choice to travel by car, their choice to travel by train, for being too posh, for being from underprivileged backgrounds and numerous other ridiculous charges over the years that I do not have time to go through.

Public opinion on this strike is going to be heavily influenced by straight-up misinformation on the part of the media, and British leftists must fight this at every turn.

Suddenly caught on the back foot since the laws they've passed to prevent a strike on this scale have failed, the Tory government is going to try to rush through legislation that will render the strike as currently planned illegal. However, the RMT's leaders have pledged to fight tooth and nail if any such law is passed.

If this strike becomes illegal, it will be an uphill battle for the government to rein in control. Unlike with the miners' strike of the 1980s, our rulers cannot simply close down the network permanently as a long-term response. The sheer diversification of the skills involved in the strike and the time taken to train rail workers and engineers also makes it difficult to diffuse the strike with scabs, agency workers or the military.

Even more damning for any government attempt to suppress the right to strike is the response from the one million strong Unite union, whose recently-elected leader Sharon Graham has pledged industrial action of their own in case of such an event, with an even more radical response than the RMT, stating: "If you force our legitimate activities outside of the law, then don't expect us to play by the rules," and condemning the Labour party for its lack of involvement in the issue.

This has been followed up by statements of solidarity from two other significant unions.

Simply put, this nationwide strike may end up becoming a pivotal moment for the British labour movement, and is another sign that trade union radicalism is the highest it's been for decades amidst economic dissatisfaction across the country.

The government could concede and pay the workers what they deserve, but the British left must prepare for what could be a long-drawn-out and determining fight for the future of labour power and the right to strike.

**Solidarity with the RMT!**

**Workers of the world, unite!**

**Rest in peace Bob Crow!**



## It's the economy stupid ... and that bloody stupid war

**The commentariat might not be admitting it, but it is the Ukraine war that looks like finally finishing off Boris Johnson's premiership.**

Poor old Boris. It all started so well. Swept into power on a wave of Brexit enthusiasm, facing a neutered and electorally devastated opposition, given a free pass for every personal 'peccadillo', seeming to emerge from ever more blatant corruption scandals as if he was made of Teflon ...

But these things all add up, don't they? It was bad enough that the workers had to suffer Covid lockdowns, a deepening economic crisis, unemployment, stolen pensions, poverty pay and dire conditions, supply lines chaos and an energy crisis. It was bad enough to be given endless empty promises about 'levelling up', 'building back better', 'saving the planet' and 'fixing' the NHS.

Then 'partygate' came along, and while it didn't seem like it would be enough to dent his grip on the top job, it all added fuel to the fire of workers' rising anger and MPs' rising panic in the face of that anger.

But the really big blow has come from the economy. Workers are pretty cynical about the British political class. We know they're a self-serving hypocritical lot, out to feather their own nests while serving the super-rich monopoly class. If people were able to keep putting food on the table and beer in the

glass, they might well keep shrugging and looking the other way.

But instead they have found that in the middle of the worst inflation crisis in decades, with living standards falling off a cliff, the best our Churchill wannabe prime minister can do is mouth platitudes about tightening our belts whilst junketing off to Ukraine to keep pouring petrol on the flames of a conflagration provoked by his ruling-class masters in their insatiable quest for profits and domination.

Instead of putting measures in place to secure affordable fuel, housing and food for ordinary workers and to make sure their pay is keeping pace with the price of essentials, we are being told *not* to ask for pay rises – even as we are also being asked to accept seemingly unlimited billions in subsidies to the arms industry under the guise of 'military aid to Ukraine'.

Not only is the war an insane and unjust provocation, but waging it is *actively exacerbating* the already deep inflation crisis. In particular because of the economic war that our rulers were so sure would bring about the downfall of those damnably independent-minded Russians, there- ▶ **page 12**

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## The day that P&O sacked all its staff: view from a worker in Dover

**When capital makes decisions about its profit margins, it is real people whose lives are destroyed.**

*David Kerr is a Workers Party of Britain activist in Dover.*

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Thursday 17 March seemed a normal day for Phil and Adrian as they met outside the Maison Dieu in Dover. The building was originally erected by Hubert de Burgh in 1203 as a hospital for those making the pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, and had just gone through a major refurbishment.

Both Phil and Adrian had worked for P&O for many years, Phil as a chef and Adrian as a deck hand. They had a quick chat about last night's football and headed towards the market square to meet up with the rest of the gang.

As they walked down through the town, they noticed more boarded-up shops. Many major stores had departed the town in recent months and years – including Marks and Spencer,

Peacocks, Burtons, MacDonald's and Barclays bank – to be replaced by charity shops and plywood windows.

As they approached the market square, they wondered what the place would look like when it stopped being a building site. Millions of pounds spent for what? They were hoping it would do more for the town than the disastrous cycle lane had done. Probably not. Both district and county councils had a rich history of ignoring local people and wasting public money.

Outside what had once been a Lloyds bank and is now an estate agent, they met the rest of the group. Mark and Elaine were a married couple who had both worked for the company for some years. They were excited about their upcoming appointment with an estate agent – the dream of buying their own home after many years of saving looked like it

might finally be realised. Living with Elaine's parents was fine, but they were more than ready to take five-year-old Jake to a home of their own up the Vale.

Also joining them was young Hendry, better known as H. H had only been with the company a few months, and had a lot to learn. The rest of the gang would randomly fire him questions about ship drills and emergency procedures. "What's the signal for a general emergency, H?" asked Phil "Seven short and one long blast of the ship's whistle or through the tannoy, followed by an announcement." "Well done, mate. Remember: run and jump."

H was always terrified of drills, especially Port State Control inspections, and was grateful for the help of his more experienced crew members. There was so much to learn about safety on board, including: the quickest way to your muster station, how to use all the equipment, and how to get passengers down the chutes to safety should the worst ever

happen.

As they walked through the tunnel under the A20 and onto the harbour, they noticed the difference. This area was run by Dover Harbour Board and so much money had been spent on its regeneration. Unfortunately, not all had gone as planned. Millions had been spent on the new marina, but this still had no boats berthed in it.

The planners had, unfortunately, found out too late that when the wind was of a certain strength, and from a certain direction, any moored boats would be smashed to bits. Any local seaman could have told them this, but they didn't ask. They never did.

As the group walked along the promenade, they noticed a large queue of freight. "Bloody Brexit," said Phil. "Nothing to do with Brexit," stated Adrian.

The fact is that we've always had queues on a busy day like this, and they got worse after P&O cut their fleet from six vessels to four. At one time, they operated eleven vessels: eight on the Dover to Calais route, and three on the freight service from Dover to Zeebrugge.

Dover harbour is very prone to wind, and the port will close to shipping if the wind rises above 50 knots in a certain direction. It's not because the vessels can't handle it, but because of the ferries coming in through the eastern arm. In-bound from France, they have to navigate around a sand bar, which then brings them in at an angle. To avoid the dangers of a collision with the eastern arm wall, they close the port.

Other exacerbating factors for the queues at Dover port are problems with the Eurotunnel and industrial action.

When the queues get really bad, two systems are put in place. First of all, ► **page 21**

# Economy



## Cost of living crisis worsens as inflation and energy prices soar

**Our rulers are keen to blame ‘the Russians’ for the intrinsic failings of the capitalist system.**

Last month, working-class food blogger Jack Monroe – known for her budget recipes for working families – wrote a brutally honest article on the realities of living on the breadline in Britain.

She was writing in response to those who claim that ‘the poor’ are only hungry *because they simply aren’t spending their money properly*. That a nurse, skipping meals in order to feed her kids, should be spending *smarter*.

Monroe, rightly outraged at this condescending attitude, tore apart this absurd myth and painted a vividly authentic picture of what life is really like for the many British workers struggling to make ends meet under capitalism.

Workers like Jack Monroe are to be commended for their efforts in gathering together hard evidence that demonstrates the dire conditions in which many workers live. In particular, her efforts to debunk the

figure-fudgers at the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and their dishonest measure of inflation are extremely enlightening.

Monroe pointed out that the cost of the staple food goods used in her recipes have risen dramatically in recent years – in many instances, they have doubled. Meanwhile, the ONS occupies itself on such important questions as whether or not *pet collars* should be added to the basket of goods used to measure inflation (apparently, the answer is yes). One can’t help but pity the poor civil servants whose time was occupied by such a frivolous task.

For those wishing to get a better understanding of what is really driving inflation, we recommend to our readers the illuminating article *Is inflation good for you?* on this website. (5 December 2021)

Of course, it’s not just the rising cost of the food shop that’s ramping up expenses

for workers across the country. Since February 2021, the energy price cap has risen from £1,138 to £1,971, and will *again* be increased to a whopping £2,800 in August this year.

That’s a staggering 146 percent rise – in just a year and a half! We must wonder what the point of an energy ‘price cap’ is in the first place if all it does is simply obey the diktats of an out-of-control market.

Energy ‘regulator’ Ofgem, under the guise of making “the market fairer and more resilient”, is currently considering moving from a six-month to a quarterly (ie, every three months) ‘update’ (ie, rise) to its ‘cap’. Shrouded in PR-speak, this statement really means “we’ll increase the cap at an even faster rate and stick even closer to wildly fluctuating world prices”.

This is what is meant by ‘resilience’ in the energy market: that the allegedly impartial ‘regulator’ should use whatever power it has been granted to give a respectable veneer to the profiteering of the energy

monopolists, currently racking up record profits quarter after quarter as workers sink into poverty and anticipate with dread the prospect of having to choose between heating and eating next winter.

In 2017, the government decided to stop subsidising much of Britain’s gas storage capacity, leaving us with the smallest reserves in Europe. The result? The further subjection of Britain’s energy supplies to world market prices, since we no longer have the capacity to feed in extra and keep prices low during a supply crisis. The energy giants have us, in fact, over a barrel.

Naturally, the true ‘resilience’ of the energy market (or, indeed, of any market) is demonstrated by 200 years of the repeated and inescapable crises of capitalism. This is the true face of the market economy, and the ultimate cause of all our present woes. Not the Ukraine conflict – although the reckless stoking of that war has undoubtedly exacerbated already-rising inflation, further disrupted essential supply lines, and generally worsened all the problems workers were facing.

Ultimately, though, the war is being used as a conveniently-timed scapegoat for our rulers to distract attention away from the real economic issues caused not by this or that policy, but by the routine workings of their system itself.

People like Jack Monroe are fighting fiercely for British workers. Her efforts to relieve the terrible burdens placed on the shoulders of the poorest are to be applauded.

But the problems she is highlighting are *systemic* ones, and there is only one way to get at the root cause: we must take on the capitalist system itself.

# Ukraine war



## Ukraine operation's phase 2 drawing to a close as Mariupol nazis fall and Donbass is steadily liberated

**Our rulers are keen to blame 'the Russians' for the intrinsic failings of the capitalist system.**

Western narratives of an imminent Russian defeat in Ukraine have had to be grudgingly recast. With the Azov stranglehold on the port city of Mariupol broken by the combined forces of the Russian military and the Donbass militias, the antifascist forces have been able to move on to the second phase of the campaign, the liberation of the Donbass.

Facts on the ground have given the lie to Kiev's frantic whistling in the dark about the imminent collapse of Russian forces, as the Russian offensive daily advances in the Donbass.

The relief of Mariupol was a crucial turning point in Russia's offensive. The Azov goons, who had gloried in their reputation as the most vicious and ideologically committed of Ukraine's armed forces, had sworn never to surrender, barricading themselves inside the Azovstal steelworks and holding the city's largely Russian population hostage.

However in practice the do or die promises of fighting to the death eventually evaporated in the cold light of day, as one after another the would-be heroes emerged blinking from the tunnels under the factory complex and into the custody of the Russian forces. The job of denazification was made simpler thanks to the passion of the would-be martyrs for getting themselves tattooed with swastikas and SS flashes, conveniently revealed when they were required to lift their shirts.

### Media spin falters in the face of reality

Despite the barrage of carefully curated social-media snippets, full of emotional hyperbole and spin, with which the imperialist-run psychological warfare units are saturating workers in the west, facts on the ground can be deciphered by those who are interested in uncovering them.

The initial offensive of Russian troops that surged into

Ukraine from all directions, having achieved its apparent aim of misdirecting a section of the Ukrainian forces and allowing that section to be separated and wiped out, then switched focus. The Russian army pulled back to focus on drawing a cauldron around the bulk of the Ukrainian forces' most experienced soldiers, cut off in the south-east.

This slower, more ponderous stage of combat was at first seized upon by the Kiev junta, not only as proof of the fallibility of their Russian adversaries and the strength of their own military, but in order to claim that Russia – winning by every conceivable measure – was somehow on the brink of defeat.

Mainly supported through a deluge of non-contextualised video content of captured tanks and downed aircraft 'from the warzone', the claims made by the Ukrainian state of a hotly contested war had been widely disseminated throughout western media, stoking the imagination of the uncritical to such a degree that many have been led to fall for and regurgi-

tate the assiduously constructed imperialist narrative of a 'plucky and defiant' Ukraine facing off against rampaging Russian hordes (the fact that the original Russian operation force numbered 190,000 troops against Ukraine's original 250,000 is, of course, never mentioned).

Fondly imagining that the Kiev junta's cause has the backing of the Ukrainian masses, supposedly ready to launch a veritable people's resistance war, the pundit chorus still tried to kid themselves that with just one more heave of support from western countries, the Russian menace would be seen off entirely.

In reality, this narrative was never anything other than a desperate propaganda campaign on behalf of a rotten comprador state on the verge of collapse. As Ukrainian state officials beat their chests to proclaim imminent victory, they are at the same time scrabbling to shove hastily conscripted civilians towards the front line with only the barest of equipment and training.



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Russian pilots, initially forced to fly low so as to avoid Ukrainian air defences, are now able to strike the Ukrainian rear in Lviv almost with impunity. And despite the deluge of weaponry that has flooded into the country from the west, the regular capture and destruction of these silos has meant that shortages of even the most basic weapons and equipment have become painfully apparent.

Foreign volunteers have routinely been seen on social media complaining about the difficulty of acquiring even rifles and ammunition, while their more cowardly comrades have simply scattered westwards towards European borders, eager to escape with their lives when brought face to face with a disciplined and well-trained force (as opposed to the unarmed civilians that Azov and their ilk prefer to practice their thuggery on).

## Ukronazis dig into civilian neighbourhoods

In sharp contrast to the hysteria about atrocities and the barbaric targeting of civilians, all the evidence indicates that the Russian armed forces have been careful and restrained, using their substantial artillery and air strike capabilities selectively in order to take out military targets while minimising casualties and collateral damage to civilian infrastructure.

This contrasts greatly with the criminal destruction of civilian infrastructure that has characterised every US-led war. Civilian casualties during the Mariupol siege were the bitter result of tactics employed by the Azov battalion, whose squads routinely hunkered down in residential buildings, using the residents and their homes as cover.

This pattern – of Ukrainian forces using schools, hospitals and residential blocks as cover, in contravention of all rules of war and humanitarian principles – has been repeated throughout the war and is being thoroughly documented by the Russian ministry of defence.

As the city of Mariupol was freed block by block, evacuated non-combatants repeatedly testified that they had been prevented from fleeing their homes by Azov fighters – that they were, in fact, being used as human shields.

Russia's consistent practice in such situations has been to open humanitarian corridors to allow residents to get away from the fighting, and to offer an amnesty to any Ukrainian soldier who is prepared to surrender. It is the Kiev regime and its puppetmasters in Washington who have *refused to allow* residents to leave and soldiers to lay down their arms – apparently intent on fighting to the last Ukrainian to try and rescue their ill-fated cause.

The cruel and inhuman tactics of the west-trained Azov battalion only serve to further highlight the remarkable degree to which Russian armed forces have worked to limit civilian casualties, despite deliberate attempts from their adversaries to engineer confrontations that will maximise civilian loss of life and perhaps justify a further escalation or even direct intervention by the USA and its allies.

Independent military experts have concluded that to all intents and purposes the war was already decided with the encirclement of Mariupol, and the subsequent desperate measures adopted by Ukraine seem to bear this out. With the fall of Mariupol, Russian battlefield dominance seems virtually assured within the current

scope of the war.

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## Postscript

It is important to acknowledge, however, that the scope of the war could well lurch and extend. News of two battalions of Polish troops being invited on to Ukrainian soil by the Kiev junta raises the possibility of new proxy forces entering the fray or even of direct and open imperialist intervention.

The US Senate vote for \$40bn of further assistance to Kiev (ringingly endorsed by the neoliberal Democrats), and the supply now of top-of-the-range weaponry previously held back for fear of prematurely igniting a third world war, including missiles which can strike at targets within Russia itself, are factors which could radically alter the picture.

Another straw in the wind is Washington openly encouraging Finland and Sweden to abandon even their formal 'neutrality' and join the war-mongering Nato alliance, perhaps in readiness for a remake of the Winter War which ended with the humiliating defeat of the Nazi-backed Helsinki regime? (Only this time the aggressive imperialist sponsor is not Berlin but Washington.)

Meanwhile, however, no sooner had Finland and Sweden received their invitations to the Nato club than fellow Nato member Turkey blackballed the whole idea, revealing the disunity within the institution and the growing challenges to US hegemony.

Whether President Erdogan will stick to this position has yet to be seen, but with Russia continuing to advance there is every chance he may decide Turkey is better off aligning itself economically and militarily with the east. The west, after all, has delivered nothing to

Turkey but social strife, impoverishment and broken promises.

And whilst thieves fall out, the Russian army maintains its steady progress towards the liberation of the Donbass.

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# Ukraine war



## Greek workers have the power to play a leading role against Nato in Europe

Those who spread the lie that the conflict in Ukraine is an 'interimperialist war' are helping to demobilise the world's most militant antiwar activists.

The following interview was given by CPGB-ML vice-chair Joti Brar to Panos Papadomanolakis of the Press Project in Greece.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Q. Recently the CPGB-ML organised an event on the war in Donbass. However the Ukrainian embassy tried to block it. Could you tell us what exactly happened?**

We didn't organise the event, it was arranged by another group. However we knew the speaker – Dean O'Brien – and had arranged to interview him after the public meeting, which we encouraged our local members to attend.

The meeting was advertised on Twitter, which attracted a lot of attention from pro-Ukrainian forces. The pub that had been booked for the meeting claimed not to know about it, and even closed for the day.

This level of opposition to holding a public meeting has been seen before – during the height of western aggression against Syria, for instance, when it was very difficult to hold meetings with the few independent (not socialist, just not pro-imperialist) journalists who were countering the corporate war propaganda at the time.

Since the booked venue had cancelled, we met up informally in a nearby pub, but we were also asked to leave that venue. It seems odd that a quiet pub wouldn't want a couple of dozen paying customers, but luckily we (CPGB-ML) had been able to arrange an alternative venue a short distance away, so the meeting was able to go ahead.

The speed and effectiveness with which the meeting venue was made unavailable was definitely suspicious. It certainly demonstrates the pressure not to allow public meetings that

counter the bellicose war propaganda being pushed by our pro-Nato imperialist government and media, who are vigorously singing from the same hymn sheet.

Even the most mildly antiwar or anti-intervention voices are being ignored or condemned.

**Q. What is the party's analysis of the conflict in Ukraine?**

To get a full answer to that question, I would encourage your readers to visit our website ([thecommunists.org](http://thecommunists.org)), where we have published many articles and videos on this topic.

In summary, our view is that it is not *Russia but Nato* which is the aggressor in Ukraine. Nato has been carrying out aggressive actions in Ukraine ever since the end of World War 2, and has consistently used Nazis and their descendants as its proxies there.

The USA in particular, with support from Britain, sponsored fascist remnants to wage a guerrilla war in the years after WW2 (in fact, this began in 1943!); they helped the lead-

ers of that defeated war to escape into comfortable exile in the west; many of them were then absorbed into the CIA. These elements and their descendants were brought back to Ukraine after the collapse of socialism and have been a tool of the imperialists inside the country ever since.

Two coups have been carried out at the behest of Nato/the USA since 1991: the first in 2004 (the so-called 'Orange revolution'), the second in 2014 (the so-called 'Maidan movement'). Both times, elected governments whose policy was one of friendly neutrality towards both east and west were removed in order to make way for a more controlled and overtly anti-Russian leadership. Since the Maidan coup, it has become ever clearer that the 'government' has no control over the country, no ability to make policy or direct its own economic or military affairs, but is merely a CIA-controlled front.

The war to resist the implementation of this coup government and to resist the second-class citizenship it immediately imposed on Russian-speakers has been going on in the Donbass (eastern) region ever since the Maidan coup of 2014. This context is totally disappeared by western media, who cared nothing for the lives of the 14,000 Ukrainians who had already died in the interests of imperialist profit and domination, cared nothing for the silencing of opposition voices, and cared nothing for the rampaging of fascist thugs on Ukrainian streets.

The imperialists want to control and loot Ukraine's resources and to use Ukraine as a base from which to attack and weaken Russia – all their excuses are merely public relations window-dressing for this agenda.

# Ukraine war

This helps to explain the demonisation of Russian-speaking people in Ukraine: which is on the one hand a means to foment anti-Russia sentiment generally, and on the other a way to persuade the impoverished people of *recolonised* Ukraine that Russia is their enemy, not their own rulers or the western imperialists. The fascist forces, who have always had a fanatical and ideological hatred of Russians, communists and jews, can be relied upon to misdirect the anger of any workers who can be brought to listen to them, as well as to be a militaristic force on the streets to put down any resistance by the people.

We should be clear that the fascists of Ukraine, although their roots can be traced back to the revolutionary period a century ago, have *always* been willing tools of *external forces*, whether British, German or American imperialists. It is to the imperialists' patronage (money, training, weapons, propaganda support, diplomatic cover etc) that these forces primarily owe their strength.

The present escalation in Ukraine was actually begun by the Ukrainian/Nato side. A huge massing of forces took place in early February and there was a large escalation of shelling against the Donbass. Clearly an operation to retake the region (and the Crimea) by force was about to be launched.

The Ukrainian side signed up to the peace process at Minsk in 2015 – a process 'guaranteed' by France and Germany – but Ukraine's fascists, armed and emboldened by the US/Britain/Nato, made it clear that they *would not allow* the implementation of its terms and viewed it merely as a *delaying tactic*. When the actor/'president' Volodymyr Zelensky made a small show of going to the border of the liber-

ated areas to 'talk peace' (the only reason he won the presidential election, after all), the Azov battalion sent him back with a flea in his ear.

In the end, under pressure from the Russian people and parliament, who had been watching the war's progress for eight long years (unlike workers in the west, who have been given no information about it at all) and were well aware of the mounting likelihood of a massive invasion of the Donbass, President Putin gave up trying to bring about the implementation of the Minsk accords, recognised the independence of the territories of Lugansk and Donetsk, and agreed to give them military support against attack.

If the Russians wanted to avoid a massacre in Donbass and the spill-over of the war from there into Russia itself, they had very little choice but to act swiftly to remove Ukraine's ability to wage such a war against their people. They also had to take serious note of the existence of the biowarfare programme and the growing evidence of a fairly advanced nuclear programme, since any such weapons in Ukraine could only be for use against Russia.

**Q. In the context of the imperialist encirclement of Russia, we see how the US State Department is fomenting unrest on the border with Russia. Before the conflict Ukraine, took place**

**the failed Orange Revolution in Kazakhstan. Shouldn't the imperialists learn from the reaction of Russia and CSTO in Kazakhstan?**

Well perhaps it 'should', but it won't!

Imperialism is not capable of learning the lessons of history, for the simple reason that it is not run according to the principles of *human logic* but according to the principles of *capitalist logic*.

For capital there is only one motive for all action: profit – the need to *transform capital* into more capital lies at the heart of every decision taken by our rulers. And not only some profit, since those who make less than the maximum possible will simply lose the battle of competition and go under.

In the era of imperialism, as explained by Lenin, the drive for maximum profit requires the monopolies who control the world to compete with one another for domination of resources and markets. And in the conditions of a generalised capitalist overproduction crisis, any country, resource or service not already under their control and bringing them a profit must be grabbed.

Only this explains why the USA continues to launch aggressive war after aggressive war, despite the catastrophic failures of Korea, Laos, Vietnam, etc, which proved conclusively that the era when a people will submit to invasion and

colonisation are over. This lesson was retaught to the imperialists by the Afghan resistance only yesterday, yet still it is impelled to continue its quest for world domination.

**Q. What is it that prompted Nato to escalate the conflict?**

Nato has been escalating conflict with Russia ever since the election of Vladimir Putin as president and the shift in Russian policy away from being a client state of the west and towards political and economic independence. The new Russia has made it clear that it wishes to be treated as an equal and to sell its goods at a fair price on the world market.

But imperialism demands subservience and the right to loot resources everywhere. Since Russia has the ability to defend itself militarily (a legacy of the Soviet era), it could not be taken down all at once. Its gradual encirclement by Nato bases and demonisation by Nato ideologues is all part of the drive to break up and destroy Russia's strength and sovereignty.

You can read more about this in my short pamphlet, *The Drive to War Against Russia and China*.

**Q. How is the UK government involved in supporting the Kiev regime and its fascist organisations?**

Britain has been central to funding and supporting fascists in Ukraine since at least 1943. It worked with the CIA to drop defeated Bandera-ites (who had been rounded up after the rout at Stalingrad) *back into Ukraine* (although officially Britain was allied to the Soviet Union at the time!) to form an anti-Soviet insurgent army there, which fought on until 1953.

# Ukraine war

## Joti Brar interview

◀ **page 11** It brought thousands of Ukrainian 'prisoners of war' to Britain in 1945 and later simply absorbed them into the population as 'displaced European workers'. These fascists and their descendants have been funded and facilitated to retain their Ukrainian 'identity' and 'traditions' (ie, to retain their Nazi sympathies), helped to rewrite their history (inserted into the media and into academia) and whitewash their fascist past as a 'liberation struggle', and many were brought back to Ukraine after the fall of socialism in 1991, where Britain and the USA continued to fund and support their development.

Since 2014 at least, British army operatives have been in the country training fascist militia – unknown to the British working class. Alongside the military assistance, British *psychological* warfare operatives fund and train their Ukrainian counterparts in producing emotive video packages (of material that is entirely fabricated) for use by corporate media in order to keep the narrative of plucky freedom fighters alive in the minds of workers all over the world.

**Q. We have seen that especially in the Anglophone countries, McCarthyism has been strengthened in the context of the war against China and Russia. Today, western governments are leading racism against Russian culture. Has this affected British society?**

In the early weeks of the war, a noticeable Russophobia spread throughout the population and was felt very keenly by Russian workers living in Britain. As the conflict has dragged on, the minds of the mass of the poor workers has

turned away from these events and towards the rampant inflation crisis, which is making life much harder very quickly for the masses and which threatens to get worse and worse as the year progresses. They have remembered how much they distrust politicians and the media and become somewhat sceptical towards the official narrative.

Privileged workers continue to be strongly influenced by the wall-to-wall anti-Russian hysteria, in which not only the president and government of Russia are demonised, but even its athletes and cultural icons.

A country where Dostoyevsky and Tchaikovsky are removed from syllabuses and concert performances is one where the lunatics would seem to have taken over the asylum.

We have yet to see how such narratives stand up against the realities of the rising cost of living, the shortages of fuel and food that are likely to hit Europe this winter, and the information that starts to leak through the corporate media information stranglehold from tribunals that will be taking place in Donbass and elsewhere as Ukrainian/Nazi war criminals are put on trial.

**Q. In Greece we see right-wing 'antiwar' mobilisations in support of the Ukrainian government. On the other hand, the leftist forces are trapped in the equal distances between Russia and Nato. What is the attitude of the antiwar movement in the UK?**

Our so-called 'antiwar' move-

ment has taken a very similar line to yours: that this is a conflict between *rival imperialist* forces and that workers therefore must oppose both sides.

This mischaracterisation of Russia as 'imperialist' only helps the real imperialists of Nato and serves to demobilise the working class's power to give meaningful opposition to the imperialists' aggression.

***It is a criminal act against the progressive and socialist movement to spread this false idea of 'Russian imperialism', which renders our class an impotent bystander in the struggle.***

It is a criminal act against the progressive and socialist movement to spread this false analysis, which renders our class an impotent bystander in the struggle.

Workers need to understand the

truth – that Nato is the aggressor and that Russia in this case is fighting imperialism – so as to orient themselves correctly. Our support for Russia has nothing to do with Russia's capitalist economic system but for its objective role as a front line against imperialist domination. In its quest to free itself from imperialist control, Russia has found itself playing a growing and very important role in the world anti-imperialist front, involving China, the DPRK, Venezuela, Iran, Syria and many other countries. This must be supported.

Our job in the Nato countries is to do everything in our power to obstruct the activities of the Nato war machine and to expose the lies of the psychological operation being perpetrated against our peoples.

Greece's *working-class* movement has the potential to play a leading role in this struggle that could act as an inspiration to workers across the continent

## Boris and Ukraine

◀ **page 5** by opening up new markets for their plunder and control.

Only they didn't. Not only is Russia still standing and more united and independent-minded than ever, but world food and energy prices are becoming even more expensive – and it is European workers who will go hungry and cold this winter.

As Alexander Mercouris of the Duran pointed out recently: "A political leader can survive scandals, they can survive appearances of corruption and incompetence if there's an impression that the economy is booming ... But Boris Johnson played a major role in orchestrating both the war and the sanctions. He didn't take into account what the effect of the sanctions would be. We have a major economic crisis in Britain ... and now the country has turned against him and so has the Conservative party.

"Although the *principle* in the media is 'don't mention the war', in *practice*, the war is the cause behind [Johnson's imminent fall], just as it was for the collapse of the Estonian government a few days ago."

Whether they openly acknowledge the cause or not, the commentariat are essentially agreed that Johnson's days as PM are numbered. Quite an irony when one remembers how loudly he himself has joined the imperialist chorus demanding the fall of so many anti-imperialist leaders, from Vladimir Putin and Nicolás Maduro to Bashar al-Assad and Kim Jong Un, who are all not only still in place, but stronger than ever and working increasingly closely together.

The world is changing. The US-led unipolar era is dying. The next British prime minister would do well to take note of this reality.

# Ukraine war



## Liberal journalism's fury as Soviet symbolism returns to liberated Donbass

**True colours? Guardians of western values are agonising over the rout of the murderous thugs who have been rampaging for eight years in east Ukraine.**

The Guardian's foreign correspondent, Luke Harding, is upset. Back in 2014, when the Maidan 'revolution' was in full swing, overthrowing the elected president Victor Yanukovich in a fascist coup instigated by the west and installing a puppet regime serving the interests of US imperialism and propped up by a resurgent Nazi fifth column, Luke's Maidan chums were having a field day.

He writes, in his 23 April article *Back in the USSR: Lenin statues and Soviet flags reappear in Russian-controlled cities*: "Ukraine removed its Lenin statues in 2014, in the wake of the Maidan revolution. Monuments vanished from squares in Kharkiv, Kyiv and elsewhere. Communist slogans were banned under 'decommunisation' laws passed by Ukraine's parliament."

For Harding, these were clearly the golden days, signifying the triumph of capitalist 'freedom'. Somehow he neglects to mention that, as the statues of Lenin were being pulled down, those same

hands were busy replacing them with posters and memorials commemorating Stepan Bandera, the wartime Nazi collaborator who sent thousands of communists, Jews and Poles to the gas chambers, and who is ideologically resurrected today by the Azov battalion, Right Sektor and the rest of the fascist pack.

Imagine Harding's dismay when he finds out that, in towns where Moscow's promised denazification programme is in progress, statues of Lenin and other memorials of the Soviet era are being restored as the fascists creep back into the woodwork and memories of a shared socialist history revive.

What a joy it was to see the hammer and sickle Soviet flag hoisted above the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol! And we may be sure that many Ukrainian hearts beat a little faster too, remembering the war years when Ukrainians and Russians fought alongside each other in the common life and death struggle to exterminate the Nazi menace, or

the subsequent years when a highly industrialised and modern Ukraine took a leading part in postwar socialist advances across the USSR.

The indomitable struggle of the people of Donbass to assert their independence, withstanding eight murderous years of shelling of civilians and infrastructure by the Ukraine armed forces and their fascist auxiliaries, has been driven by the same spirit of courage and self-sacrifice that has always animated those bolshevised Donbass miners.

Harding's account of the birth of the people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk insults the intelligence of even the Guardian's readership. Moscow, we are told, "instigated and armed a pro-Russia separatist rebellion in the eastern Donbas region".

Every word of this is a lie. The voters of the Donbass voted along with the rest of the Ukrainian electorate, and Yanukovich came out as the winner. But the USA, not happy with Yanukovich's relatively neutral foreign policy as regards the USA and Russia, 'instigated' (to borrow this charlatan's phrase) a fascist coup d'état to oust Yanukovich, installing in his place a junta whose agenda

was openly Russophobic.

Confronted with this rebellion against the democratic mandate of the Ukrainian electorate, Donetsk and Lugansk declined to accept the illegitimate authority of a government for which they had never voted and took the necessary decision to assert their independence from Kiev's jackboot rule.

Having established his foundational Goebbels style Big Lie about a "Russia-instigated separatist rebellion", Harding feels free thenceforth to call white black and black white with impunity. The Russian armed forces are portrayed as behaving like "imperial masters" engaging in a "grandiose colonial project", whilst armed fascist gangs who use civilians as human shields to save their own skins are depicted as plucky heroes of the antifascist resistance!

Harding can barely contain his glee over the fate of some "collaborators" (ie, antifascists) at the hands of some "patriotic citizens", gloating that "Collaboration, however, can be dangerous. On Wednesday, Valery Kuleshov, a pro-Russian activist and blogger, was shot dead in Kherson. He had left his apartment block at 8.15am and climbed into his grey Mazda. It's unclear who raked the front of his car with automatic gunfire. Valery Kim, the mayor of Mykolaiv, said it was impossible to stop patriotic citizens from taking out 'traitors'."

A constant theme in Harding's diatribe is the accusation that Russia is living in the past, whilst the Maidan generation is looking to the future. But it is the latter-day Banderites and their dupes who are up to their necks in historical failure, and the people of the Donbass who can draw inspiration for their present struggle from their own proud revolutionary past.

# Ukraine war



## Why did the USA build a string of biolabs across Ukraine?

### Why were they funded by the US defence department and what was Hunter Biden's role?

Ever since Moscow put the cat among the pigeons by drawing attention to the existence of a network of US-funded and controlled biological warfare labs on Ukrainian soil, Washington has kept changing its story.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki opted for a flat denial: the reports were fake news put out by the Russians. Intelligence officials finessed the question: yes there were biolabs, funded by the USA, but they were simply conducting research into pathogens.

Quite why it was necessary to pursue academic research across the border from Russia in Ukraine, rather than save air miles and do the research back home in the USA, was not clear.

Victoria Nuland further muddied the water by telling a Senate committee: "The US is working with Ukraine to prevent biological research facilities from falling into the hands of Russians."

It is hard to imagine such a panic seizing Washington if all that was at stake was some innocent academic study about, say, the common cold. In fact, a report by the US National Academy of Sciences back in 2012

reported that some of the labs were working with such pathogens as cholera and anthrax, prompting the World Health Organisation to advise their destruction to avoid "any potential spills".

The development of the couple of dozen biolabs in Ukraine – themselves a fraction of the 400-odd US-controlled biolabs worldwide – is best understood in the context of European Union/Nato pressure on Ukraine to 'integrate' the country into the 'civilised' west.

In 2005, under president Viktor Yushchenko (the darling of the US-backed 2004 'Orange revolution', US-funded biological warfare laboratories began operations on Ukrainian soil in collaboration with the USA. In 2008, Nato promised membership to Ukraine as an inducement to further integration with the west.

However, in 2013, the elected president Viktor Yanukovich, in line with his preferred policy of maintaining balanced relations between west and east, desisted from cooperation with these US-supported labs. This move was cut from the same cloth as Yanukovich's pull-back from signing an association agreement with the EU, not wish-

ing to sell out his country lock stock and barrel to the west.

Outraged by this modest show of independence, the US and EU backed the fascist putsch which unseated President Yanukovich and propelled the 'chocolate king' Petro Poroshenko into office. The new Kiev junta promptly signed up to the EU association agreement, embarked upon the state persecution of Russo-phone Ukrainian citizens – and resumed collaboration with the USA in setting up a network of biowarfare labs across the country.

So aside from a brief hiccup when it seemed that Kiev might actually cleave to a path of neutrality, the biolab project has been a work in progress for the last 17 years.

For most of that time, their doings flew under the public radar. But now, with Washington contradicting itself at every turn, and the sordid details of Hunter Biden's business involvement reaching even the far reaches of the Daily Mail, this is a story that refuses to go away.

On 25 March, the Mail headline read: "Hunter Biden DID help secure millions in funding for a US contractor in Ukraine specialising in deadly pathogen research". The day before, the Russian state duma speak-

er Vyacheslav Volodin reported that an investment fund run by Hunter Biden had financed research and the implementation of the US military's biological programme. (Josh Boswell)

It turned out that Hunter had started an investment company which went on to invest \$500,000 in an outfit called Metabiota, specialising in pathogen research. Hunter further used his position as the holder of a well-remunerated sinecure on the board of Burisma (a Ukrainian gas company) to introduce Metabiota to Burisma officials, with a view to participating in a "science project" setting up biolabs.

These dealings were all revealed in emails preserved on a laptop owned by Hunter. According to the Daily Mail, Metabiota has worked in Ukraine for US defence contractor Black & Veatch (B&V), which built secure labs in Ukraine.

B&V was asked by the US government to build a lab in Odessa. According to the company's own blurb, the aim was to "enhance the government's existing surveillance systems to detect, report and respond to bioterrorism attacks, epidemics and potential pandemics".

Yet, back in February, before Russia launched its military operation and was able to reveal physical evidence from the labs themselves, a spokesman had stated that the Russian military had documents which proved "that the Kiev regime was seriously considering the possibility of using biological weapons against the population of the Donbass and the Russian Federation".

It is clear that questions about the activities of these toxic labs, why the US defence department is funding them, and why Ukraine has the dubious honour of hosting them, will not go away in a hurry.

# Ukraine war



## Is Poland planning to invade Ukraine? Nato eyes new fronts in its drive to WW3

**US imperialism is desperate to shore up its waning hegemony – and doesn't care who or what it has to lay waste in the process.**

As we watch Ukrainian military position after position surrender to Russian troops, and as the remainder of Ukraine's demoralised and exhausted soldiers witness the genuinely humanitarian treatment of prisoners by their Russian captors (in direct contradiction to the claimed torture and execution that Kiev's ruling elite had told them they could expect), Nato warrior chiefs are worrying.

They are worrying that Ukraine might collapse totally before Nato can open a second and/or third front. Having finally got Russia to enter the ring, the US-led Nato wants to keep the war going by any means necessary, desperate to weaken Russia as a preliminary to overthrowing its independent government, breaking up its vast territory and looting its valuable resources.

The economies of the USA,

the European Union, Britain and other assorted Nato fiends are sinking faster than the Titanic, and they have staked a lot on having (and, of course, winning) this war with first Russia and then China. Defeat in eastern Europe will see those western economies go down faster still.

As this article is being written, Nato is guiding the militias of 14 countries (surprisingly, or maybe not, these include Ukrainian forces) through massive war drills in Estonia. Nato claims that this 'exercise' of 15,000 plus soldiers, the largest such gathering in Estonian history, will see all branches of the armed forces taking part in air, sea and land drills, as well as in cyberwarfare training near to, and possibly along, the country's 183-mile border with the Russian Federation.

The drills began barely a day after Finland and Swe-

den officially announced their suicidal intention to apply for Nato membership – a move that Russia has clearly stated would necessitate a military response. Finnish and Swedish troops are among those involved in the Estonian wargames, which include the US navy's Wasp-class landing ship *Kearsarge*.

Let's not forget that Finland, which gained its independence from the Russian empire at the hands of the Bolsheviks, signed a treaty with the Soviet Union promising to remain neutral *in perpetuity*, in return for being allowed to continue to exist as an independent state. This was despite having allied itself with Nazi Germany in WW2 and facilitated the deaths via starvation of a million Soviet citizens through the terrible '900 day' siege of Leningrad, which lasted from September 1941 to January 1944.

For Finland even to *apply* to join Nato would be an act of war against Russia and an existential threat to that country – as a quick glance at the map will show.

Meanwhile, in Lithuania, which has a 65-mile border with Russia, the 'Iron Wolf' exercise is also playing out. This 'exercise' includes 3,000 Nato troops and 1,000 pieces of military equipment, including German Leopard 2 tanks.

Nato chiefs have issued a statement saying that two of their largest exercises – 'Defender Europe' and 'Swift Response' – are also taking place in Poland and eight other countries, involving a further 18,000 troops from 20 nations.

At the same time, a Nato response force is participating in drills dubbed 'Wettiner Heide' in Germany with a force of 7,500, while 'Neptune series' naval drills featuring the *USS Harry S Truman* carrier strike

group, to be placed under Nato command, are scheduled to take place imminently in the Mediterranean Sea.

If all that were not enough more 'exercises' are scheduled for June, when the Baltic states and Poland will host what Nato describes as "Europe's largest integrated air and missile defence exercise", involving 23 countries.

And against this backdrop there are widely-circulating rumours of a possible invasion of western Ukraine by Poland to reoccupy land that was once Polish (and in the process to increase its land border with Russia from 120 to 450 miles). What is certainly happening is that Nato-trained Polish pilots are being used to fly Ukrainian planes and Polish territory is being used to facilitate the Nato-funded rest, retraining and rearming of the exhausted Ukrainian troops.

Clearly, the imperialists are determined not to let the war come to its inevitable conclusion any time soon, but are willing to fight 'to the last Ukrainian' – or even the last European – to keep Russian forces on the battlefield and weaken them as much as possible.

While it is not possible for us to know Nato's precise plans, it is worth noting that while US-backed Poland is making increasingly belligerent noises regarding Russia and Ukraine, US-backed Israel is also making regular threats against Iran, and various US-backed east Asian and Pacific countries are making ever-more menacing moves towards China.

Everywhere one looks on the global scene, impelled by the global capitalist economic crisis and by the desperation of US imperialism to shore up its waning hegemony, the possibility of an earlier than expected third world war looms large.

## British politics



## Labour: party of Nato, the party of war

**Throughout Labour’s history, its leaders have always been unabashed cheerleaders for the crimes of imperialism.**

The death and destruction in Ukraine, the result of the proxy war against Russia by the western imperialist bloc under the command of its US master exposes once again the war-mongering imperialist nature of the British Labour party.

Recent articles by Labour leaders unmask the craven nature of Labour’s ideological allegiance to empire and its desire for the destruction of governments and populations who defy it. Once again, we see it salivating: this time for Russian blood.

At its core, the Labour party is a party of treason against the class which it claims to represent. Bullets, bombs, missiles and drones that have torn flesh from the bodies of workers and their families across the globe have received the stamp of approval from the party of the British labour movement. Whether through complicity or direct leadership in the mass murders in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, or its support for the starvation caused by sanctions against numerous countries including Iraq and Venezuela, the Labour party has the blood

of generations of workers on its hands.

Labour fully supports the sacrifice of Ukrainians for the purpose of the western bloc’s goal: the destruction of Russia.

Shadow defence secretary John Healey, who has a long record of voting for war, recently celebrated in the House of Commons the pointless death of Ukrainians who could, even now, choose life: a concept Healey appears to not grasp, given that the Ukrainians in question are by all accounts still alive: “... bravery is led by President Zelensky personally, but it is typified by the military last stand of the troops at the Azovstal steel plant.”

Unable to conjure a single word approaching the notion of peace or the ending of conflict, and bypassing the widely recognised fact that the Ukrainian forces at the Azovstal factory are known to be Azov forces, murderous and radical [neo-Nazi] nationalists who aspire to eradicate Russian-speaking Ukrainians, Healey offers Russophobia, propaganda and distortion to support the imperialist war against Russia.

In line with the Nato narrative, Healey tells us that Russia’s intervention in Ukraine is unprovoked, removing any common-sense or honest analysis of Russian motives. Honest analysis would require honest consideration of steps towards peaceful resolution, a process unacceptable to the US/Nato war machine, which has invested heavily in the destruction of Russia through colossal sanctions (to the detriment of western economies) and almost unlimited funding of weapons for Ukraine.

Like other Labour leaders, Healey has used the conflict in Ukraine to celebrate the Labour party’s historical role in the creation of the imperialist Nato war machine, telling us: “Bevin was a central figure and essential force in its creation. He viewed Nato as a ‘constructive and defensive’ alliance of democracies. Labour values are embedded at the heart of Nato, with its founding treaty enshrining democracy, freedom, peace and the rule of law, as well as collective security. It embodies British and Labour internationalism at its best.”

Labour’s Ernest Bevin was a lifelong anticommunist. He supported the eradication of communists in Greece during and after World War 2.

The communist movement in Greece, which had mass support, was crushed through the unified interventionist tactics of the British and US governments.

In December 1944, in Athens, Greek communists were massacred by *British occupying forces in alliance with fascists and Nazis*, while elsewhere British men and women were fighting against nazism. When Bevin became Labour foreign secretary in 1946, the murderous scheme of Winston Churchill’s Tory government to return Greece to reactionary powers and the Greek royal family was safe in Bevin’s hands.

We should ask the question: how much has the Labour view of Russia changed since the end of World War 2? Today, it is just as paranoid and terrified as it was when Clement Attlee, leading the Labour government, secretly allowed the USA to deploy atomic weapons in Britain so that Russian targets could be reached.

Labour is committed in its essence to corporatocracy, monopoly capitalism, and free markets, and equally committed to the annihilation of communist movements and countries, workers included, that challenge the power and domination of the British ruling class.

The Labour party now again fiercely defends western imperialism, exploiting Russia’s military operation in Ukraine to ramp up Britain’s military expenditure, pushing for an even more aggressive policy on the pretext of British ‘leadership’ in Europe, and enjoying the fruits of the war machine.

Labour shadow foreign secretary David Lammy has claimed: “UK leadership could be securing new security agreements with European partners that would allow British businesses



## British politics

to take advantage of new defence investment and help create a more capable European pillar in Nato.”

Such is the Labour leadership’s fanaticism over Nato that it has threatened any Nato-dissident party MPs with the withdrawal of the party whip [ie, expulsion] should they now criticise Nato. Such blasphemy cannot be tolerated by the party of war.

This is not new to Labour. The present leadership under Keir Starmer is continuing the decades-long practice of Labour leaders, demonstrated by Bevin and Attlee, to silence voices opposing imperialist war by punishing MPs – a punishment that includes expulsion.

Starmer, closing down any antiwar rhetoric in Parliament, has followed loyally in the footsteps of the recently ennobled serial war criminal and former Labour leader Tony Blair who recently described Russian president Vladimir Putin, without a hint of self-irony, in the following terms:

“He became the autocrat, accumulating personal wealth and unfettered power ... though cold-blooded, still calculating ... detached from reality, and with no one around him prepared to tell him the truth ...”

The fact that Labour and Tories make up the two cheeks of the same imperialist posterior is not new. In his day, Bevin, like Lammy, could not be distinguished politically from his contemporary Tory opposite. Tory foreign secretary Anthony Eden said about Labour foreign secretary Ernest Bevin: “There were many discussions on foreign affairs. I cannot recall one single occasion when there was a difference between us. I hope I do not embarrass the foreign secretary when I say that.”

And so it is today. We see Boris Johnson and Liz Truss on

one cheek and Keir Starmer and David Lammy on the other of the Nato posterior. Empire-building is a bipartisan affair. Therefore, delusional ramblings of the entitled Nato adventurists are echoed by both sides of the imperialist House of Commons:

“As members of Nato, our security border is not the cliffs of Dover, but the frontiers of our eastern European allies that border Ukraine.” (David Lammy, Labour)

“In today’s world, the road to Global Britain runs through eastern Europe.” (Tom Tugendhat, Tory MP, Chair of the foreign affairs committee).

In reality, the only border of interest to agents of imperialism, whether Healey, Lammy, Starmer or Tugendhat in 2022, or Attlee and Bevin in 1949, when Nato was formed, is the Russian/Soviet border. An independent and strong nation and people who can hold the western imperialist bloc to account is an unacceptable restraint on imperialist savagery.

Labour must be held to account for the atrocities it has committed in the name of British workers. Its historical and present role in the murder, starvation, torture and annihilation of working people and their children across the globe should be understood by all.

The British Labour party is a threat to humanity. It welcomed US atomic missiles onto British soil; it welcomed the birth of the British atomic bomb; and it welcomed the mass killing of communists in Europe and made an alliance with fascists and Nazis to achieve this goal. Now the current leaders are deeply invested, as traitors and enemies of the working class, in the same deadly adventurism, only this time its alliance is with Ukrainian Nazis, fascists and nationalists in Nato’s proxy war against Russia.

## 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.

***Become a supporter at [thecommunists.org](http://thecommunists.org)***



## Asia Pacific



# Ella Rule: China's history confirms that workers need a scientific socialist party if they want to be successful

## Marxism is our most powerful weapon, if we can but learn how to use it.

*The following speech was given to a meeting of British friends of China hosted by the Communist Party of China as part of the preparations for the CPC's upcoming 19th party congress. The meeting was entitled 'My impression: the CPC in my eyes'.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Comrade Mao Zedong famously taught us: "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history." (On coalition government, 24 April 1945)

Nevertheless, freeing the people from the shackles of past history requires organisation and the dissemination of the understanding among the people that they have the power to put an end to the injustices they have been enduring and to create a new world that serves their interests.

That role is played by those people who grasp this under-

standing earlier than others, who devote their lives to deepening that understanding while spreading it far and wide to those for whom it spells liberation.

Deepening understanding requires profound study of the science of the theory of revolution, which is encompassed in Marxism-Leninism. Spreading enlightenment requires working tirelessly among the masses, participating in their struggles. To be effective, these pioneers form themselves into an association through which they can act as one, the Communist party.

As Comrade Mao Zedong said: "If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the

broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs." (Revolutionary forces of the world unite, fight against imperialist aggression!, November 1948)

When the Communist Party of China was formed in 1921, it was tiny. Yet, grasping the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism as a powerful and indefeasible weapon, it was able to lead the masses in defeating both local reaction and the imperialist powers that were severely oppressing the Chinese people, to throw off the century of humiliation and to establish a sovereign socialist state whose people were at last able joyfully to stand up proud.

Freed from the yokes of feudalism and imperialist oppression, the people of China, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, went on to build a powerful industry and agriculture, an economy that in manufacturing terms is now the world leader, and is still advancing further by leaps and bounds.

It has achieved its goal of building a moderately prosperous society, and has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty.

Besides bringing prosperity to its own people, it has also helped poor countries all over the world to improve their economies, lessening the stranglehold of imperialism that has been keeping them poor despite their abundant natural resources and hard-working local populations.

Thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative, huge opportunities are being opened up for countries all along its path to accelerate their economic progress and secure their own prosperity, based on cooperation and mutual respect for the sovereignty and wellbeing of all participants.

Because such a party as the CPC is in the leadership of China, the Chinese people are able effectively to resist any encroachment on Chinese sovereignty by imperialism, despite the major investments made by the latter in the country, and despite all its attempts to undermine that sovereignty through the corruption of officials, incessant anti-China propaganda, attempts to take advantage of internal contradictions among the people, and military threats.

The CPC has waged a successful and untiring battle against corruption, and always deals promptly, fairly and effectively to overcome any contradictions that may arise from time to time among the people.

When imperialists fail, as they always do, in their plans to take advantage of such contradictions, they try to explain away their failure on the basis that the Chinese people are being repressed by a dictatorial regime. Nothing could be further from the truth.

# Asia Pacific

For instance, in Xinjiang, where problems arose because of terrorist crimes perpetrated by a tiny minority of people under the influence of religious fundamentalism, no stone was left unturned to protect China's muslim population from being misled, doing so by means of education rather than repression, so that everybody was able to understand where their true interests lay and the falsity of the messages being smuggled in by a few people who felt threatened by the advances being made by society.

As a Marxist-Leninist party, the CPC fully understands that people's religious sentiments can only be fuelled by repression, which is why in China all people have full freedom of religious worship should they wish to do so.

Under the leadership of the CPC, China gives first importance to the human rights of the Chinese masses.

Comrade Xi Jinping has written: "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a significant document in the history of humanity, which has profoundly impacted progress in human rights round the world.

"Together with the peoples of other countries, and based on the common values of humanity – peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom – China is committed to safeguarding human dignity and rights, and promoting fairer, more equitable and inclusive global governance of human rights, so as to build a global community of shared future and strive for a better world.

"The ultimate human right is that people can lead a happy life."

Of course, human rights mean nothing unless the rights of all other citizens are respect-

ed as one expects one's own to be respected. There is no 'human right' to jeopardise the wellbeing of anybody in order to enrich oneself or out of nostalgia for the glories of a past exploitative society.

Anybody who acts in such a way has to be prevented from doing so. Such people become the darlings of imperialism, which holds them up as victims of repression, but the fact remains that what got them into trouble was their own desire to attack the wellbeing of their fellow citizens, directly or indirectly.

Another accusation laid against the Chinese government that is led by the CPC is that China's political system is 'undemocratic'. This is, of course, nonsense, as in China the masses of the people have a far greater ability to influence government than the people of any western 'democratic' country enjoy.

In Britain, for instance, communists have no chance of winning elections because they are excluded from media coverage and all kinds of bureaucratic obstacles are put in the way of their candidates even standing. There is a 'choice' only between various bourgeois parties whose policies are largely identical, albeit their marketing may be aimed mainly at one section of the population rather than another.

Successful candidates then work purely in the interests of the ruling class, with the parties even ignoring their own campaign promises if they want to. How different is the situation in China!

Xi Jinping has written: "We must uphold the principle that all power of the state belongs to the people, which guarantees not only democratic elections in accordance with the law but also democratic

decision-making democratic management, and democratic supervision, and avoids any risk that pre-election promises will not be kept" (Confidence in the political system of Chinese socialism, 5 September 2014)

Another important area in which China is leading the world is on the issue of climate change. Despite all the dire warnings of the scientists regarding global warming being on course to destroy the world as we know it, in capitalist countries it has proved impossible to take adequate steps to address this issue. The profit motive always comes in the way.

Only with the CPC's leadership of the Chinese government is it possible to ensure that steps shall be taken to minimise damage to our planet, even though to do so means sacrificing profitability. Moreover, China ensures that to a considerable extent measures to protect the planet are incorporated into projects that form part of the Belt and Road Initiative throughout the world.

The imperialist press never ceases to belittle and mock at China's efforts in this regard, even though in the imperialist countries the only way that they are able to achieve any clean air or climate change minimisation targets is by exporting their industries to non-imperialist countries – which is only done for the purposes of profit maximisation – and then blaming those countries for the ensuing toxic emissions.

The world is on the brink of suffering a tsunami of over-production that will dwarf the capitalist economic crises of the past. Already several countries, even those such as Pakistan, Lebanon and Sri Lanka, which have not been devastated by imperialist wars, have been plunged into insolvency, and the masses of the people

of those countries are finding they cannot afford the most basic necessities of life.

The Nato aggression against Russia has further severely aggravated the situation with regard to world energy and food supplies, which had already reached crisis point even before the Covid pandemic struck, and got worse, of course, with the pandemic itself. Even in imperialist countries such as Britain people's lives are being devastated.

As Marxist-Leninists we are only too aware that the imperialists respond to these desperate situations by intensification of military aggression to try to save themselves at the expense of peoples of other countries. Only China, led by the CPC, recognises that world peace is the only rational way to proceed.

As the ultimate irrationalities of the market are unleashed on the world in devastating fashion, the CPC-led Chinese government can be the only one with the strength and the will to lead the world out of disaster, armed with the knowledge and understanding of Marxism-Leninism that makes communism historically infeasible.

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# Africa



## The example of Thomas Sankara lives on in Burkina Faso

**Murder trial reminds the Burkinabé masses that freedom and dignity will only return when theirs is once more the land of the upright men.**

When Burkina Faso's latest president, Roch Kabore, was kicked out by an army coup in January, the event barely registered as news in the west. Isn't that just what happens in Africa every so often?

After all, this coup was preceded by two earlier similar coups in the same eight-month period in the west African region. Doesn't it show that these former French colonial subjects just are not ready for democracy? (Unlike the sophisticated French electorate who have just voted in a president who most people never wanted in the first place, thanks to clever tactical voting.)

It suits the racist neocolonial mindset to blame the instability of African governments on a supposedly general political

immaturity or passivity of the masses – a view that conveniently lets French and US imperialist meddling off the hook, leaves out of account the reactionary and destabilising activities of the local comprador and feudal interests, and robs the masses of all historical agency. This way of looking at matters lends succour to the comforting illusion that history travels in a circle, that there is really nothing new under the sun and that the 'third world' is destined forever to serve the interests of imperialism – to the detriment of the world's oppressed and exploited masses.

Something that vigorously challenged this myth, demonstrating that, given the necessary leadership, the masses can and will make their own history and take control of their

lives, was the revolution that briefly swept Burkina Faso in the 1980s.

A revolutionary that brought new confidence to the Burkinabé masses

From 1983 to 1987, President Thomas Sankara led revolutionary struggle on all fronts, nationalising the country's mineral resources; advancing projects to make the country self-sufficient in food and to reverse the desertification caused by deforestation; initiating mass health and literacy campaigns; fighting corruption and tracing the roots of that corruption back to French and US imperialism; and fighting for African unity, urging other countries to join Burkina Faso in denouncing IMF and World Bank loans.

In every speech he made or interview he gave, Sankara expressed an unbounded confidence in the ability and duty

of the masses to take their future into their own hands. The reverse of demagogic, he was not afraid to call on the masses to tighten their belts if that was the sacrifice that had to be paid to get out of the IMF debt trap, and always made it clear that whatever social gains were to be had could only be achieved by mass collective efforts.

He did not flinch from doing battle with a petty-bourgeois teachers' union that organised strikes against the government in cahoots with a simultaneous coup attempt against the Jerry Rawlings government in neighbouring Ghana. His popularity was not bought with cheap populism, but was founded on a consistent anti-imperialist understanding that confidently tapped into the latent energy of the Burkinabé peasant masses and the tiny proletariat.

**Murder of Sankara and of Burkinabé socialism**

Both French and US imperialism grew alarmed at the revolutionary example being set, and did what imperialists always do, scouting around for any cracks in the leadership that might be exploited. Both Paris and Washington were rumoured to be behind the cowardly assassination of Sankara on 15 October 1987, carried out by his own brother in arms, Blaise Compaoré.

Once this turncoat was in charge, he promptly pulled the plug on all Sankara's progressive policies, cosied up to France and got the country back under World Bank and IMF control. Compaoré ruled on behalf of his masters for the next 27 years, before he himself was overthrown in 2014, giving way to a series of short-lived administrations ending with the presidency of the banker Roch Kabore, ousted by last January's coup.

All the social contradictions that helped shape the revo-

# Africa

lution in the 1980s are still there, and some new ones too. Whilst the masses continue to suffer unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, they now also live under the shadow of jihadism. Where once the Burkinabé people had for a fleeting moment known what it was to hold and exercise a growing degree of control over their own lives, now parts of the country are effectively no-go areas, haunted by jihadis and bandits.

The Financial Times has suggested that what broke the Kabore presidency was a failure to deal with a “jihadist insurgency that has left thousands dead and millions displaced”, adding that “Al-Qaeda and Isis-linked groups have in just a few years taken over wide swaths of Burkina Faso.” (Burkina Faso’s president overthrown in military coup by Neil Munshi, Financial Times, 24 January 2022)

With youth unemployment at record highs, the lure of small-scale, labour-intensive informal gold mining (there are thousands of such ‘artisanal’ mines in the country) draws many into what is an increasingly hazardous profession.

Imperialist control of rich resources via jihadi proxies

Another Financial Times piece from 2021 noted: “Over the past two years, the violence has been increasingly concentrated on the country’s thousands of artisanal gold mines, where jihadis – keen for lucrative sources of funding – have perpetrated massacres, levied taxes on miners and taken full control of mining operations.”

By a United Nations estimate there are a million miners supporting an average of five dependents each, meaning that a quarter of Burkinabés rely on the industry to survive. Interpol seized 40,000 sticks of dynamite during an operation at

land borders in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali and Niger.

According to the International Crisis Group all the explosives were “intended for illegal gold mining, which constitutes a new source of financing, and even a recruiting ground, for armed terrorist groups in the Sahel”. (Instability in the Sahel: how a jihadi gold rush is fuelling violence in Africa by Neil Munshi, Financial Times, 27 June 2021)

The FT cited the judgement of a former CIA man, saying: “Neither its government nor its security forces are up to the enormous challenges the country faces and the population seems to be casting about for new solutions.” One place they could begin looking is their country’s own history.

Compaoré found guilty 34 years on

Hopefully some memories will be stirred by the announcement that on 6 April a “Burkinabé court has sentenced former President Blaise Compaoré to life imprisonment for the murder of his predecessor, the revered Thomas Sankara. The long-awaited verdict on Wednesday brought to close a six-month trial about the murder of Sankara, who was assassinated during a coup led by his friend and comrade-in-arms Compaoré on 15 October 1987.” (Life sentence for Burkinabé ex-leader Compaoré for Sankara murder, Al Jazeera, 6 April 2022)

Deutsche Well commented: “More than 34 years after Thomas Sankara’s assassination, a trial to establish the facts has taken place. For some, justice that has been delayed for decades is finally being served. Some 34 years after the killing of Burkina Faso’s former leader Thomas Sankara, closure over his untimely death that ended the revolutionary’s reign in 1987

appears to have begun.

“A survivor of the 1987 coup, Aloun Traore, commented that ‘They attacked our dream thinking they could kill him. Thirty-five years later, I realise that the Burkinabé dream holds water. This excites the whole continent, the lines are moving.

“Thomas has done useful work, his example is being followed. Our joy is that young people, future generations use it for better fights, so that we can make these so-called territories of misery and precariousness, territories of happiness and wellbeing.” (What Thomas Sankara’s murder trial and verdict mean for Burkina Faso by Isaac Kaledzi, 7 April 2022)

Clearly, justice is very far from done and there is no ‘closure’. The traitor Compaoré remains holed up in Cote d’Ivoire evading justice. Much more importantly, the hidden hand of France and the USA in the coup remains concealed. But when a country has gone through a revolution, it is not so easy to unlearn the experience.

Neither the ousted banker-politician Kabore, nor any other imperialist stooge of his ilk, nor any would-be warlord will ever be able to deal with the jihadi threat, for the genesis and growth of which imperialism bears primary responsibility.

Nor will any miraculous transfer from rule by coup to rule by parliamentary democracy hope to reverse the further slide into corruption, banditry, jihad and nihilism.

The only way forward is to pick up the banner carried by Thomas Sankara and resume the anti-imperialist struggle. As Traore so eloquently put it: “We can make these so-called territories of misery and precariousness, territories of happiness and wellbeing.”

## P&O sackings

◀ **page 6** Dover Tap is implemented. This involves holding freight in lane one of the A20 outside Dover by Aycliff. This gives control for loading and keeps the town traffic flowing. When this is not enough, Operation Stack is implemented, which involves holding freight on the M20 between Ashford and Maidstone, using lane one for Eurotunnel traffic and lane three for port traffic.

As the group approached the entrance to the port they were joined by the remainder of their crew, along with some crew from rival company DFDS. There was an exchange of friendly banter as they all knew each other: some were related but worked for different companies.

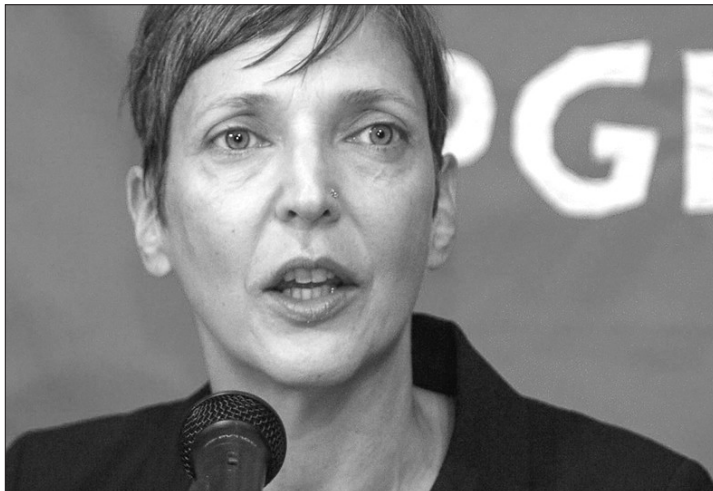
Dover has had a sea crossing since Roman times, and a proud seafaring tradition has been carried on for centuries in the town. There have been good times and bad. Everyone remembers the seamen’s strike of 1988-89 when 2,220 seaman went on strike over changes to working practises. This ended with P&O sacking all the strikers – an injustice that to this day has not been resolved.

Never to be forgotten is the disaster of the Herald of Free Enterprise in 1987. On that tragic day, 193 souls, including several crew members, lost their lives when the boat sank after departing Zeebrugge.

As the group boarded the vessel, an air of concern was felt around the ship. They were told that all sailings today were cancelled as an important announcement was to be made.

The rest is history. The fight for jobs, and justice, has begun.

# Americas



## To US workers: 'Only class politics can save us from the rampaging monopolists'

The looting of countries abroad and the forcing down of pay and conditions at home are both caused by the same drive for maximum profit.

This message was addressed to the members of Caleb Maupin's Centre for Political Innovation, who held a conference in Austin, Texas on 12 March 2022.

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On behalf of the Communists of Britain, I bring our warmest greetings to all the comrades meeting in Texas this weekend.

We wish your event great success and hope very much that it will be a useful step in the process of reorganising the US working class for socialism.

We are being given fresh proofs that this reorganisation is desperately needed on a yearly, a monthly, and even on a daily basis.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted just how brutally unequal our society is, and how unfit monopoly capitalism is to take care of even the most basic needs of the people.

Today, we are being given fresh proofs of the need to rid

ourselves of the rule of monopoly capital. We see how capitalist production entrenches and widens inequality from day to day.

And we see how in the drive to win the battle of competition, and in a desperate bid to escape the inescapable economic crisis their system has created, our rulers are constantly driven to war.

Wars for domination and control. Wars for resources and markets. Wars to stamp out rivals or impediments to the extraction of maximum profit.

As I record this message, 30 years of slow-motion aggression against Russia have finally led the Russians to take action in Ukraine – not to start World War 3 but to try to prevent it if at all possible by removing the huge stockpiles of weapons that the west has planted on Ukrainian territory and by disarming the Nazi gangs whom the west harboured all through the cold war, who were replanted into the country after

the fall of the USSR, and who have been receiving imperialist weapons and training for the last decade and more.

Why did the Nato countries do all this? Why are they so set on wiping out Russia and China? It's because *just by existing* as independent economic and political entities Russia and China are an impediment to the monopolists' drive to make maximum profits.

Not only that, but by offering development aid or military backing, Russia and China are able to help other, poorer countries to break free of the imperialist chains as well.

Russia and China may be a threat to the expansion of monopoly capital – for capital must expand or die. But they are not a threat to workers in the USA, in Britain, or anywhere else.

Our interests are not those of our rulers. In fact, our interests are *diametrically* opposed to theirs.

Our interest is in the weakening and destruction of the rule of the monopolists, whose colossal power stands on two feet: one of those feet presses down heavily on the oppressed countries, but the other is planted here at home.

The same drive for maximum profit is what pushes down our wages and our pensions, forces us to work longer hours for worse pay, destroys our public services, prices our children out of education or leaves them with a mountain of debt that they will be servicing forever.

The same drive for maximum profit is what forces the closure of factories and the moving of production to where land, materials and labour are cheap and profits high.

The same drive for maximum profit is what makes our gov-

ernments treat a health crisis as a business opportunity, following the path that is most advantageous to monopoly capital rather than the one that saves the most lives and brings the pandemic to a quick and effective close.

The drive for maximum profit is what leads to unemployment, to homelessness, to hunger in the midst of plenty, to the rampaging of preventable acute and chronic diseases, to environmental degradation, to racism and to war.

Only planned production can solve these problems, which all seem so intractable while the monopolists remain in power and the wealth of humanity remains concentrated in their hands.

And *only class politics* can organise us to be able to fight effectively to achieve a socialist society with a planned economy.

To free the people of the United States from the rule of the neoliberal empire – the rule of the rampaging monopolists, the market fundamentalists – workers must *organise* and they must *unite the maximum possible numbers* on the basis of their class.

They must study and learn from the works of the founders of scientific socialism, and they must take every opportunity to popularise its core messages and to connect them with the wider working class.

Our enemy is strong, but ultimately, with the power of truth on our side: with science, with organisation and with numbers, we are stronger.

In the words of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."



## Yemen v Ukraine: What makes a war newsworthy?

### Why are the crocodile tears of our leaders and their prostitutes reserved for some victims of war and denied to others?

With the Saudi/UAE war of aggression against Yemen now having reached its seventh year, it has been revealed that the Saudi/UAE coalition air force has dropped at least *three million* cluster bombs during the course of the war.

The cluster bomb is a weapon, supposedly banned under international law, designed to break up in mid-air into hundreds of mini-bombs, which rain down over a wide area. Many fragments fail to explode and effectively become landmines, ready to kill any child or hapless passer-by who happens to pick them up or tread on them.

That such an inherently indiscriminate weapon would be used so frequently proves that this is not an operation against isolated 'Houthi rebels', as corporate media outlets repeat in their typically unanimous identikit manner. Rather, it is a Nazi-style *mass terror campaign*, fully backed by US and British imperialism, aimed at cowing the entire population of Yemen into submission.

According to Unicef, more than 10,000 children have been killed since the start of the Saudi coalition's Luftwaffe-

style campaign. The northern part of the country, controlled by the popular resistance forces (or 'Houthi rebels' if you please), is under siege conditions not seen since the battle of Leningrad in WW2, and which have forced more than 17 million people to the brink of starvation.

Even western intelligence-front outfits like Bellingcat have admitted that the Saudis have deliberately targeted water treatment facilities, leading to a mass cholera outbreak that has killed thousands of people and effectively amounts to biowarfare against the civilian population.

Hospitals, wedding parties and school buses filled with children have all been likewise targeted, in a campaign of carnage that makes even the brutality of the Israeli army in Gaza or the US army in Iraq look humane in comparison.

A campaign, incidentally, that is largely ignored by a press corps that is falling over itself with indignation at the 'atrocities' it spuriously claims are being committed by Russia in Ukraine.

It cannot fail to escape any objective observer that the

plight of Yemenis is, relatively speaking, much more dire than that of the average Ukrainian, despite the horrors that inevitably accompany any war. This much can be seen just from the images of fleeing Ukrainian civilians that flood our TV screens; naturally frightened by the conflict, tearfully emotional (often to the point of obvious theatrics) but generally healthy and unharmed.

Compare this with the horrific images of Yemeni children we see on charity adverts (never in the news headlines), who are visibly starving, skeletal and barely alive.

When one strips away all the hysterical reporting and propaganda spin, it is obvious that Russia demonstrates far more concern for the lives of civilians in war than the USA and its allies do.

There are multiple reasons why Ukrainians garner so much more sympathy in the west than Yemenis. One is, of course, that Yemenis are not white, blonde Europeans, not photogenic enough for our liberal intelligentsia, saturated in centuries of racism and chauvinism.

This is even acknowledged by many respectable liberals, who openly wring their hands in outrage at the discrepancy in coverage, such is the barbaric cruelty of the Saudi-led coalition. Invariably, however, this outrage only extends to the *tactics* of the coalition. The idea that the coalition, however brutal it may be, is ultimately justified in wanting to restore a supposedly democratic government overthrown by a 'rebel coup', is never challenged by anyone in the corporate media.

This brings us to the second, much more important reason why Yemen is treated with such brutality: because this is a US imperialist war. It is not, as many bourgeois pacifists and

Trotskyists pretend, a purely Saudi/UAE adventure that western imperialist states are taking advantage of in order to sell weapons but are otherwise indifferent to.

Yemen occupies a *crucial geostrategic location* at the corner of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, one of the world's principal shipping lanes. US imperialism will not allow such a country to break from its chains and chart an independent path (again) without an extremely bloody fight.

The reality ignored by most so-called 'socialists' is that the Ansarullah (Houthi) Islamist movement that seized power in the 2014 popular uprising is the most progressive and revolutionary force in Yemen. A Houthi-run Yemen would be solidly anti-imperialist and unshakably committed to the Palestinian cause; a living nightmare for the imperialists.

On the other hand, the 'internationally-recognised' government, anointed as it is with United Nations holy water, is a disparate group of comprador Saudi stooges and cronies from the hated dictatorship of Ali Abdullah Saleh, ranging from 'feminist' Nobel peace prize winners to al-Qaeda-supporting wahhabi zealots, united by nothing other than their joint desire to see Yemen subjugated once more to the west.

As for the self-styled 'Southern Transitional Council', it is merely a UAE mercenary force that takes advantage of widespread nostalgia for the glory days of the socialist Yemeni PDR for recruitment purposes.

In the face of all these disparate enemies, the Houthi-led National Salvation Government and popular committees tirelessly continue their fight for liberation.

**Victory to the Yemeni resistance!**

# Proletarian



## Palestinian Nakba continues with the murder of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

**After 74 years of endless atrocities, the Israelis are further than ever from realising their fascistic goal of an ethnically 'pure' state.**

The *Nakba* (catastrophe) is marked by Palestinians and their supporters every year on 15 May. This year, on the 74th anniversary of the declaration of Israel as a 'jewish state', to be achieved by the murder and unashamed robbery of so many Palestinians, the forced expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their country, and the bloody butchery of whole villages (such as Deir Yassin in 1948), the Nakba continues.

We mustn't think that in the commemoration of that catastrophe for Palestine and its people that only the events of 1948 are remembered, That was the start, but the Nakba has been ongoing, and with every year that passes we witness ever greater tragedies brought down upon the heads of the long-suffering Palestinians by those who run the zionist entity on behalf of their

imperialist US masters.

This year saw zionist military forces increasingly regularly invading the holy Al-Aqsa mosque to beat those in prayer, whether young or old. Meanwhile, the zionist 'high' court has given the thumbs up to the Israeli government to forcibly displace over 1,000 Palestinians from 12 villages in the Masafer Yatta area in the occupied West Bank.

On 11 May, in the run-up to Nakba day, the much-loved and respected Palestinian-American Shireen Abu Akleh, a veteran journalist at Al Jazeera's Ramallah bureau, was murdered by zionist killers from the Israeli 'Defence' Force (IDF) while she was covering a very violent raid that its members were making on the refugee camp at Jenin.

For the zionists, this was the

deliberate elimination of someone who had long been a thorn in their side, and they showed their customary lack of remorse for her killing. This was compounded by a total lack of ordinary human respect for the dead, when Israeli police tried to prevent mourners from attending the 50-year-old's funeral and then attacked the crowd that was trying to bring her body out from the catholic hospital morgue where it was laying.

Friends, family and colleagues wanted to carry Shireen's body on foot to the Greek orthodox church in east Jerusalem where her burial would take place, but the police prevented them with ruthless violence, beating not only the many mourners who were carrying Palestinian flags in her honour but even those bearing her coffin, which they took possession of and whisked away.

Checkpoints were set up to prevent people processing through the streets to attend

the funeral ceremony, with police even going so far as to check whether mourners were christian or muslim, and to search their pockets for hidden flags in a desperate attempt to crush all expression of national identity and collective grief or rage.

Yet despite such barbarous acts; despite the seven-and-a-half decades of murder, imprisonment, legislative and armed harassment, property theft, racial apartheid and human/civil rights denial that Palestinians have endured under the brutal zionist regime, they have not given in or gone away. Quite the contrary. Every year, every new atrocity reaffirms their determination to win through to freedom.

History has shown that such determination cannot be overcome by firepower. A time will surely come when Nakba day will be a commemoration to remember only the trials of the past, in a country once again called Palestine, where people's religion, or lack of it, will be a personal matter with no bearing on their legal, civil or human rights.

Until that day arrives, workers all over the world continue to stand with their Palestinian brothers and sisters, declaring their full support for the Palestinian liberation struggle, in whatever form it takes, and their rejection of the slow-motion genocide that is being attempted by the zionist thugs in the interest of their own petty privileges and in the service of the maximum profit and global domination of their imperialist masters.