

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!



Ruling class doubling down on war drive and economic pain for workers as it backs Liz Truss for PM

Social



Food bank Britain

British families are relying on charity to eat as the market and the government both fail to provide even such a basic necessity as food.

Britain is the fifth-largest economy by GDP in the world, a net exporter of foodstuffs, a country using 71 percent of its land to produce food and a signatory to the United Nations' 'right to food' resolution.

Why then, are ordinary Brits relying more and more on food banks and charities to feed themselves and their families?

Why are increasing numbers reporting that they are missing meals in order to try and balance their budgets?

Recent research published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) shows the magnitude of this increasing struggle to fill British working-class bellies:

- Three in every 4 (76 percent) Britons report food costs as being a major concern.

- The number of people using food banks has grown rapidly in just the last year, from 1 in 10 (9 percent) in March 2021 to more than 1 in 6 (15 percent) in March 2022.

- Or to take a longer view, ten years ago the UK had 60,000 food bank users; now, there are 2,173,000.

- More than 1 in 5 Britons (22 percent) are now skipping meals or reducing meal size owing to affordability.

These figures reveal Britain's mounting food crisis. When this is added to the spiralling costs of heating, travel and cooking, to rising levels of unemployment and real cuts wages as a result of rampant inflation, the picture becomes even grimmer.

The market is the problem

The picture painted by the figures above is of millions of people finding it difficult to access or afford food. Yet, absurdly (and tragically), there is no shortage of foodstuffs – or, indeed, wealth – in Britain.

Britain produces enough staples to meet nearly all the population's requirements, according to the government's own report on food security in 2021. The country produces 100 percent of the barley and oats, and 90 percent of the wheat British people need; and that is after 7 percent waste during production has been taken into consideration.

So if we are producing enough domestically, why are we having to worry about food costs? One of the absurdities of capitalist relations of production is that *not a grain* of barley, oat or wheat is produced to *meet people's need*

– it is not produced for its *use* value. It is only produced as a *commodity*, for its *exchange* value.

This means that food, the output of workers' labour and British soil, is being produced not to ensure those same workers can eat, but for sale on the market. The market doesn't weigh up production against the needs of the population, it demands that production makes a profit.

Wheat, for example, has seen its market price double in the space of two years. This has been attributed to many causes: the pandemic, distribution issues, or rising costs of inputs – fertilizers, fuel and equipment. These increases are passed onto consumers, very often on just the excuse of a *predicted* price rise in costs for the capitalists.

The opposite cannot be said when the going is good for the capitalist. Sudden *falls* in price are rarely passed on to workers in this era of monopoly, when competition is actually very limited and the big companies that dominate each sector tend to work together (in cartels) to eliminate small competition and fix prices artificially high. As a result, price changes of many essentials are in one direction only, and those rises hit workers' wallets hard, always rising faster than our (sometimes drastically) lagging wages.

So who can stand in the way of these market forces to regulate prices of vital necessities like food and fuel? The government?

FSA chair Professor Susan Jebb says: "In the face of the immediate pressures on people struggling to buy food, food banks are playing a vital role in our communities. We are urgently working with industry and other major donors, and

Industrial

food bank charities, to look at what more we can do together to ensure that food which is safe to eat can be redistributed to people who can benefit from this support.

“Food banks can be a trusted lifeline in the short term, but governments and regulators must also look more widely at other ways to enable people to reliably access safe and healthy food in the long term.”

The professor appeals to ‘regulators’ and the government, ignoring the fact that the ‘regulators’, despite a thin facade of ‘independence’, are totally beholden to big capital, directly or indirectly controlled by business interests. So then what are the solutions that our current system can offer?

Subsidising profits for the monopolies

An example of the present government’s ‘efforts’ to keep costs down has been to *pay capitalists to keep producing* (ie, to subsidise profits) at a time when there is little or no profit to be had. Subsidies and one-off payments of eye-watering sums to ‘persuade’ the bourgeoisie to give some attention to human need – even if only for a moment.

A rise in gas prices (gas being an essential raw material in fertiliser production) caused US-owned fertiliser producer CF Industries to halt production. Not that gas wasn’t available, mind you, but the price increase meant the company could no longer produce at a cheap enough price to compete on the world market. So the British government gave CF Industries tens of millions of taxpayer pounds to restart production. Nice work if you can get it!

A successful intervention by our rulers, right? Hardly. This was a temporary (and extremely expensive) sticking- ▶ **page 4**



Rail strike spreads as employers and government remain intransigent

Our rulers are well aware that a victory for rail workers would boost the confidence of workers in other sectors, all suffering from the rampant inflation crisis.

As rail strikes continue to spread across Britain, causing massive disruption and mobilising workers in all three rail unions in a spirited defence of their pay and jobs, the government is leaning on management at Network Rail and the train operating companies not to *engage* in meaningful talks.

As Mick Whelan of drivers’ union Aslef summed it up: “We’ve been forced into this position by the companies, who say they have been driven to this by the Tory government.”

Faced with a cost of living crisis, and wary of the seething anger that is accumulating in response, the government is eager to head off any kind of organised resistance in advance.

The rail unions, and the RMT in particular, have an impressive reputation for using the power of organised labour to resist all attempts to make the working class pay for a crisis which it did not cause.

The government’s aim is clear: to break the rail unions

and cow the rest of organised labour into submission. By this policy it hopes to head off future social revolts come the winter.

The two contenders to replace Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, are engaged in a bidding war to establish who can talk toughest about crushing workers’ last remaining rights. Both say they would ban strikes on essential public services, and Truss wants to legislate for minimum service levels on critical national infrastructure.

So the striking rail workers willy nilly find themselves in the vanguard of the resistance, and deserve the full support from the whole working class in their just cause.

The RMT’s Mick Lynch has called for tough measures in retaliation to ministers’ threats to curb industrial action, warning:

“If these proposals become law, there will be the biggest resistance mounted by the entire trade union movement,

rivalling the general strike of 1926, the suffragettes and Chartism.”

Learn the lesson of history and break the link with Labour

The biggest obstacle blocking unions from following through on these good intentions, however, remains the sapping influence of the imperialist Labour party, to which most are still affiliated. The lessons of the general strike of 1926 remain a closed book for those who forget how the Labour party and the TUC linked arms to *sabotage* the strike.

The sad fate of Corbynite diehard Sam Tarry, booted out of the shadow cabinet for consorting with the devil on a picket line in Euston, might prompt sympathy – until we recall the crucial role that the fake-left Labour has ever played in keeping the unions hogtied to social democracy.

We will be making some real progress when Sam Tarry, and any other Labour politician, is hooted away from every picket line in disgrace.

More strikes are planned this month and must be given the fullest support.

Social

Food bank Britain

◀ **page 2** plaster solution that once again funnelled money taxed from workers into the pockets of the monopoly capitalist class.

Less than a year after receiving this bonanza, the company is shutting a plant in Cheshire, not only restarting the panic for much-needed chemicals, but casting hundreds more workers onto the scrapheap of unemployment, with all its attendant woes – including, of course, food insecurity.

This is but one example of the capitalist system's inability to address even the most basic needs of its workers.

Food as a right

Food, it goes without saying, is a requirement for life. Many calls have been made for nationalisation of other essential services and products (railways, water, utilities), but food is rarely included on the list.

Meanwhile, there is nationalisation and there is nationalisation. Farmers in Britain are already paid huge subsidies, which are *paid per hectare of cleared ground* (not for the amount of food they produce!) on the 'assumption' that this land will be used for meeting the needs of food production in Britain.

But in conditions of the world market, this subsidy has in fact led to a vast acreage of fields *left untilled*, their owners finding it more 'efficient' (profitable) to passively accrue subsidies than to engage in the risky and expensive business of employing workers to cultivate and harvest crops that are dependent on nature for the right conditions to grow.

As with so many areas of the capitalist economy, the distribution of these subsidies is such that small farms receive

very little while having to compete on the market with large farms, accelerating the process of their being assimilated by their larger competitors and the further concentration of Britain's agricultural land into ever fewer hands.

Even so, British farms do actually produce enough to feed every man, woman and child in Britain. If the government can step in to pay private farmers to produce for the market, could they not do the same to subsidise production aimed at meeting workers' food needs?

Would full-blown nationalisation, while firmly resisted by our government, press and, of course, the capitalists, solve the problem?

It could certainly bring down prices and enable a measure of planning. But without planning in the whole of the economy, nationalised industries under capitalism are still subject to the anarchy of the market – to rises in gas and fuel prices, for example. Unless all these essentials are being produced for need rather than for profit, the knock-on effects of crisis and inflation would still be felt.

A UK-wide food service would, however, be a vast improvement on our present situation, allowing the state to achieve economies of scale and to ensure that good quality and nutritious food was available at reasonable prices to all workers.

Securing that right

So why isn't this happening, especially a time of rising food poverty? Essentially, it is because there is a global crisis of capitalist overproduction – too much wealth has been accrued into too few hands, and those exponentially expanding piles of cash are increasingly difficult to *reinvest* in profitable ways.

This is all that capital cares about – constantly expanding capital into more capital. The irony of such a system is that the more successful it is in doing this, the *harder the mission becomes*. The world's masses have been so impoverished they simply don't create enough 'demand' for the goods of expanding capitalist production.

As avenues for profit-making via production disappear, *privatisation* of any public services all over the globe is proceeding at a breakneck pace and is combining with stock-market gambling and asset (land, artworks, bitcoin ...) speculation bubbles to keep the system limping along.

At such a time, the idea of *removing* essential commodities from the marketplace, denying the possibility to investors of throwing in their vast accumulations of capital and realising corresponding profits from their sale, is simply out of the question as far as our rulers are concerned. The only thing that might change their minds (for a while) is *huge and irresistible pressure* from the organised working class – backed up by the credible threat of revolution.

Moreover, providing secure and meaningful employment – and thereby reducing the reserve army of labour (ie, the unemployed) – is no part of the capitalists' plan. This reserve army is necessary to the effective functioning of a market economy – to quickly provide more manpower when business is booming, and to act as a permanent downward pressure on pay and conditions at all times, essentially holding the terrifying threat over the heads of the employed: work on the terms dictated by your exploiters or join your even less fortunate brothers on the dole queue.

At a time like the present, despite the obvious advantages for the workforce and for social peace, true nationalisation (ie, running an industry without the need to make profits) is something our rulers are extremely wary of pursuing. Not only would it remove an avenue of profit-taking from the monopolists, but it would remind workers that anything they rely on for life can only be reliably and affordably provided by removing it from the anarchy of capitalist production.

It is a small step from recognising that this makes sense for one or two essentials to recognising that it makes even more sense for the entire economy.

Only with the levers of industry in the hands of the producers themselves – ie, in the hands of the workers – will we arrive at a situation in which food, heating, housing, healthcare and all the other requirements of a decent and civilised life are available to all.

Meanwhile, freed from the monstrous requirement to pay so much of society's wealth in tribute to the corporate bloodsuckers, humanity will finally be in a position not only to provide all the essentials of life cheaply and securely, but to begin the socialist mission of unlocking the full potential of all its members.

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Social



British citizen Graham Phillips placed on UK sanctions list

Are we soon going to see the government seizing the assets of every citizen it doesn't like, without even the charade of a legal process?

British imperialism, whether through its governments or assorted law-wielders, may talk about free speech and basic human rights in the abstract, or applied to some shady group it supports in another country, but these flowery notions of 'fairness' and 'even-handedness' have no place when someone telling the truth could upset their own deadly strategies and war aims.

British freelance journalist Graham Phillips has repeatedly upset the British state by reporting news from Ukraine via the shocking medium of reality rather than through the prism of the heavily-doctored and dishonest narrative that is universally parroted across corporate and state-owned media.

As a result of this outrageous behaviour, Mr Phillips has now been added to the British government's list of sanctioned people – until now made up almost mostly of Russians, who have lost their belongings, homes, bank accounts and other assets merely because they are Russian.

By preventing those under sanction from undertaking any form of economic activity in

Britain, it effectively renders them 'non-people', unable even to buy a train ticket, never mind to take a job or pay a bill. To give money to a sanctioned person, whether for work done or out of charity, is itself a criminal act.

This is an unprecedented move by our rulers, and opens the door to a far more efficient mechanism for suppressing free speech and political activism than has hitherto been available to them, since it evades the messy business of having to navigate the potentially unreliable and time-consuming justice system.

Abolishing due process

Graham Phillips was born in Britain and remains a British citizen. He is, for the moment, the only Briton on the UK's sanctions list, having been added for the heinous crime of reporting facts that the government describes as being "destabilising" to Ukraine. (As opposed, presumably, to all that training of Ukrainian nazi gangs and looting of Ukrainian state assets it has been engaging in itself.)

As of the time of writing, with his bank account frozen, all

the standing orders set up to meet his household bills have bounced and Phillips and his family are being pursued for debt. He can no longer access any of the money paid by western supporters to fund his work, and he is receiving a growing quantity of hate mail.

'Sanctions' are, in effect, an excuse for our rulers to tear up all legal frameworks and act with complete and arbitrary impunity, inflicting the most draconian criminal punishments on people who have been neither accused nor convicted of any criminal act.

While there is no official mechanism for Mr Phillips to question this decision or have it examined or revoked, he has submitted an appeal to the government, describing it as "absolutely absurd, dangerous, ridiculous". But in a country that is sending another journalist (Julian Assange) to the USA, where he will in all probability spend the rest of his life in solitary confinement for the same 'crime' of broadcasting inconvenient facts, 'absurd, dangerous and ridiculous' are par for the course.

In a video posted on 19 April, Mr Phillips was seen questioning captured British national Aiden Aslin, who had been fighting for four years with Ukrainians in Mariupol. Aslin has received the death sentence from a Donbass court, convicted of multiple acts of violence and murder. On camera, Aslin explained that he was not speaking under duress and, to the indignant horror of the British government, Phillips referred to him as a "mercenary".

But how else should he have described someone who had joined a foreign armed group as a paid soldier? At the time of Aslin's arrival, the terror group he joined was not officially attached to the Ukrainian army, and Russia's special military

operation in defence of the Donbass people was four years in the future. When Aslin enrolled, his militia was bombing, torturing and murdering Donbass civilians on a daily basis.

Honest journalism under pressure

Graham is on another list as well, along with at least three other British journalists and most Russian journalists in Ukraine: a hit list issued by one of the neo-nazi groups close to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. While the majority of bought-and-paid-for ink-flingers are quite happy to follow government guidelines and lie their heads off for money, honest journalists are living in very dangerous times indeed.

It is worth noting that the organisation that is supposed to give journalists some protection and support, 'Reporters Without Borders', recently posted an appeal for the censorship of Russian media, on the premise that it is "inciting hatred" and "condoning war crimes". RSF claims to "defend the right of every human being to have access to free and reliable information" and says it "acts for the freedom, pluralism and independence of journalism", existing only to "defend those who embody these ideals". In fact, RSF is just one more in a string of supposedly 'humanitarian', 'democracy-loving' western NGOs whose real purpose is to provide a fig leaf for the naked lies of the imperialist aggressors.

What this once again shows is that most "journalists are the prostitutes of very rich men". (John Swinton, 1880) In reality, only a working-class movement capable of disseminating the truth and awakening class-consciousness in the masses of our people by any means necessary, can evade the crushing grip of the British ruling-class censor.

British politics



‘Bill of shame’ spits in the face of ‘Troubles’ victims

British attempts to whitewash war crimes in Ireland make clear once again: there will be no ‘reconciliation’ until reunification.

In yet another display of startling (but hardly surprising) arrogance, the British government has pushed through a ‘legacy’ bill on northern Ireland designed to limit criminal investigations and legal proceedings against perpetrators of crimes during the Irish liberation war of 1968-98.

The movement of the bill through the Commons began on 17 May at the unilateral behest of the Tory party. Since then, it has managed to unite in opposition every party in the north of Ireland, the Irish government, academic groups and law societies, NGOs, and even the toothless Labour party.

The bill removes access to independent investigations for victims and survivors of British state war crimes in the north of Ireland, and puts the power to grant amnesty for such crimes directly into the hands of the British government, in the person of the secretary of state for northern Ireland.

There have been angry protests across the north in response, as victims and families of the bereaved make clear their opposition to this attempted whitewashing of British imperialism in Ireland – a ‘legacy’ that includes war crimes and collusion with loyalist paramilitaries in arms dealing and murder.

A one-sided bill

The bill gives specific powers to the British state allowing it to intervene in the justice system in the case of crimes committed during what is euphemistically referred to as ‘the Troubles’.

The chief commissioner of the so-called ‘independent’ body that will review cases – the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) – will be appointed by the secretary of state. The secretary of state will also have the power to withhold information from re-

ports, and control the information that ends up in them.

What has been pushed through by Brandon Lewis is therefore merely a repackaging of the blanket amnesty originally promised by Boris Johnson in 2019 – to righteous uproar then, too, amongst family groups and every political party except the Tories.

That original bill had promised blanket amnesties; the only difference now is that the power to grant these has been given implicitly (rather than explicitly) to the secretary of state.

On top of all this, it is an explicitly one-sided bill that denies the right to immunity to those convicted by the British state of terrorist offences – ruling out anyone, for example, convicted of membership of the IRA – whilst conveniently enabling immunity for members of the security forces, who will, of course, have no such convictions. (Clause 19(1), p17)

All this makes a mockery of the government’s pretensions to be ‘upholding human rights’, which require that investigations into deaths and serious injuries be independent. It is therefore no wonder that campaign group Relatives for Justice has called the bill “an unprecedented political overreach by a western government into the criminal justice system, locking down the courts and administration of justice”.

Convenient timing

This should be no surprise, however, coming as it does in the wake of the Bloody Sunday inquiry, in which £195m was spent to reach the verdict that the actions of the Parachute Regiment were “unjustifiable” and that its members had “lost control”. (Saville rules Bloody Sunday killings were ‘unjustifiable’ by Steven Carroll, Irish

Times, 15 June 2010)

Likewise, the verdict of the Ballymurphy inquest, which found that all ten victims – who had been described by British army as “republican gunmen and women” – were entirely innocent, and that the British army’s actions were unjustified and in breach of the European Court of Human Rights.

Clearly, the British state is seeking to avoid a repeat of such embarrassing fiascos by explicitly closing down the potential for new inquests.

Before this, in the absence of such convenient legislation, the state’s response to investigations like the Bloody Sunday inquiry has been to engage in what police intelligence themselves were found to call a ‘slow waltz’ – what the brother of one of the victims has called ‘amnesty by attrition’.

This deliberate strategy, uncovered during the investigation into the Loughinisland massacre at the Heights bar in 1994, has been described by a team of experts from Queen’s University Belfast and the Committee for the Administration of Justice:

“In the Police Ombudsman report into the murders at Loughinisland, the then Ombudsman Dr Michael Maguire refers to police intelligence documents being marked as ‘slow waltz’, which connotes a deliberate strategy of delaying access to such materials including to other investigating officers.

“The ‘slow waltz’ process is not limited to intelligence files. The experience of those engaged in these judicial processes is one that is beleaguered with obfuscation and delay. High court legacy cases are regularly challenged by defendants such as the PSNI, MoD and NIO as a default position.” (p60, our ► page 8

British politics



Britain's rulers fretting over their declining ability to set 'the rules' as China and Russia rise

The accelerating development of a strong anti-imperialist camp is threatening the foundations of imperialist domination and plunder of the globe.

Liam Byrne, a Labour MP and member of the foreign affairs select committee, helped to raise the tempo of the war drumbeat recently when he stated: "What we've got to do is make sure that Britain isn't the weak link in the defences of the western alliance.

"China is building a digital Silk Road around the world. And there are very real concerns about how China will exfiltrate data and technology to provide power that its leadership is seeking by 2030."

This was reported by Gareth Corfield in the Telegraph of 8 July in an article titled Russia and China accused of trying to turn Britain into a 'rule-taker' – a title which in itself encapsulates the blatant imperial arrogance displayed by figures such as Byrne when addressing governmental institutions on matters of foreign policy.

In that article, Corfield quoted MI5's director general Ken McCallum, who spoke alongside the US's FBI chief Chris Wray at MI5's Thames House

headquarters last week.

McCallum introduced his speech with the following series of statements:

"The most game-changing challenge we face comes from the Chinese communist party. It's covertly applying pressure across the globe. This might feel abstract. But it's real and it's pressing. We need to talk about it. We need to act.

"I want to be really clear up front on a couple of points:

"First, the aim here is not to cut off from China – one-fifth of humanity, with immense talent. China is central to global issues: economic growth, public health, climate change. Having, for example, almost 150,000 Chinese students in the UK's universities is, in almost all cases, good for them and good for us. The UK wants to engage with China wherever it's consistent with our national security and our values.

"There are situations where the risks are sharper – and you'd expect the head of MI5

to focus on those. But even then, our aim is to make conscious choices on issues that are rarely binary. We want a UK which is both connected and resilient.

"My second point is we're talking today about the activities of the Chinese communist party and certain parts of the Chinese state (I'll mostly use the shorthand 'CCP'). [In fact, the proper name is CPC – the Communist Party of China – which for some reason western officials and media refuse to acknowledge – Ed.]

"We're not talking about Chinese people – in whom there is so much to admire. We wholeheartedly welcome the Chinese diaspora's hugely positive contribution to UK life. Responding confidently to specific covert activities is just us doing our job. If my remarks today elicit accusations of Sino-phobia from an authoritarian CCP, I trust you'll see the irony."

What is really ironic is the spectacle of the head of MI5 standing alongside the head of the FBI and lecturing an audience of business people about how Britain "wants to engage with China wherever it's consistent with our national security and our values".

The fact that McCallum felt the need to make a clear distinction between the Chinese state and the Chinese diaspora in Britain makes the position of MI5 fairly clear: if you're a Chinese person who might side with imperialism against the Communist Party of China, you could be useful. If you're a Chinese student studying in Britain, McCallum will be doing his best to try and work out if you have any links to the CPC so you can be expelled as a foreign threat.

The spymaster crowed about booting 50 out or so students who had connections to People's Liberation Army univer-

sities back in China, while claiming that the vast majority of Chinese students studying in Britain *do so to the benefit of both nations* – something which doesn't quite add up considering that the main thrust of his advice consisted of urging British businesses to treat all engagement and correspondence with Chinese businesses and citizens as a possible espionage operation being carried out at the behest of the CPC.

Not so long ago, the attitude of imperialism was one that led to links being built between Chinese academic institutions and British universities.

This was a way of projecting 'soft power', and was based on the assumption that such exchanges were steadily exporting western liberal values to China, and would eventually culminate in the demise of the CPC and the People's Republic and the outright restoration of unfettered free-market capitalism (and neocolonial status) in China.

Whilst some aspects of McCallum's speech inferred that this strategy has not been wholly abandoned as an avenue of influence, there was also an inherent admission that the overall project has been an abject failure for imperialism.

Not only has China failed to divest itself of the CPC, but it has also become a global superpower prepared to defend its economic and political independence.

The FBI's Chris Gray stressed that the transfer of technology and research from western companies to China is now recognised as "an even more serious threat to western businesses than even many sophisticated businesspeople realised", citing a case where a Chinese agent had "dug up seeds" from a GM ▶ **page 8**

British politics

Irish legacy bill

◀ page 6 emphasis)

In the case of Bloody Sunday, this strategy of prevarication has led to the north's ineffective Public Prosecution Service being thrown into disarray by separate court rulings over the admissibility of evidence and vacillating over the prosecution of so-called 'Soldier F' for the war crimes committed in Derry in January 1972.

The passage of this present bill will remove the need for state agencies to engage in such time-consuming behaviour in future.

A broader anti-democratic agenda

None of this can be divorced from the Tory party's general disregard for – and dismantling of – democracy, both in the north of Ireland and across Britain. British imperialism has found itself in a sticky situation at home and abroad, and it is in this context – a position of weakness – that the Tories' arrogant unilateralism must be seen.

The ongoing crisis of capitalism that presents itself now as the 'cost of living crisis' – and the organised response that has already seen the RMT out on pickets and will likely see others follow suit before the summer is out – is forcing an increasingly authoritarian response from the British state.

In Britain, we have seen a drastic erosion of civil liberties at exactly the same time as an unprecedented expansion of state power: the CHIS bill gives law enforcement the right to break the law in any way police officers see fit, whilst the PCSC bill takes away our right to complain about it.

Regarding Ireland, the government has pushed through a bill that will whitewash murders

committed by paratroopers, 'security forces' and paid state informants, while the wounds caused by those deeds are still very much fresh.

The same bill also indicates our rulers' intention to produce an 'official' history of the Irish liberation struggle. Only last year, their bare-faced lies over the Brexit northern Ireland protocol lit the touchpaper for loyalist riots across the province.

This growing disregard for even the pretence of democratic process is the unsurprising response to a changing reality: a combination of Brexit, demographic change in the north, and the growth of Sinn Féin into the largest party on the island is underscoring the likelihood of – and the need for – reunification, sooner rather than later.

For, whilst there's been a lot of talk comparing the bill – favourably by its proponents, unfavourably by its detractors – to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that took place in South Africa, it's currently a moot point.

For all its flaws, the very foundation of the TRC in South Africa was the abolition of apartheid, the stunning victory of the ANC in the 1994 elections, and the authority thereby given to the commission by Nelson Mandela.

Never mind the brass neck that would compare this particular bill – vested as it is in the inestimable authority of Brandon Lewis – to the sincerity of the process that took place in South Africa.

So long as Ireland remains partitioned and the northern six counties remain tied to the British state, any talk of truth and reconciliation in the north is whistling in the wind.

Rule-makers

◀ page 7 crop farm in the American mid-west in a daring action that, according to Gray, saved China billions of dollars and a decade in research.

And there we have the astounding arrogance of imperialist logic on full display once again.

For whilst the arguments in defence of intellectual property rights for western businesses are advanced by Messrs McCallum and Gray as moralistic positions, in reality they are concerned only with protecting the right of a handful of parasites to control the global economy in the interests of extracting maximum profit, immiserating the workers who produce their fabulous wealth for them in the first place.

These servants of the super-rich apparently see no irony in complaining about competition from China, which they accuse of "lying, cheating and stealing" to advance its national interests, whilst at the same time claiming the right to 'set the rules' for the rest of the world on the sole basis of their dominant economic and military position in the imperialist world order, and in the sole interest of preserving profits and living standards for a minuscule minority at the expense of the mass of humanity.

(They also seem to have 'forgotten' how former CIA director Mike Pompeo boasted that of course the USA *routinely* "lies, cheats and steals" – yet another case of one rule for us and another for you!)

The simple fact is that putting new technologies to use in a way that benefits people and society as a whole is not *compatible* with the generation of maximum profit.

That China is able (through having retained some measure

of regulation over the market economy and through its Communist party leadership) to curtail some of the market's most socially-destructive effects whilst pursuing a long-term goal of national rejuvenation and development, evidently infuriates the high Aldermen of imperialism.

Their fears of a world in which considerations *other* than the rights of multinational corporations to suck the planet and its population dry in the pursuit of profit may come to the fore along with the growth of a multipolar global consensus are well-founded.

Such a situation would indeed be terrible news for the capitalist-imperialist blood-suckers, who require everything from lifesaving medicine to housing, from education to public transport, to exist only in the form of commodities – available for those able to pay and provided for only as long as they are profitable.

Only when the rules are made with the interests of humanity at their core, and are implemented by the working majority of the population (with the former exploiting classes forced to 'take' them), will Britain and the wider world be free of characters such as Byrne, McCallum and Gray, and the imperialist institutions they represent.

Byrne worries that Britain is in danger of becoming the weak link in the imperialist chain. To break that link would be in our greatest interest as British workers.

Indeed, when it finally comes to pass, it will be the crowning achievement of the British working class.

Economy



Sainsbury's CEO in the money as workers feel the pinch

As conditions for the mass of workers get rapidly worse, the obscene inequalities of the system come into ever-sharper relief.

In the midst of panic about fuel prices doubling and trebling, food shortages with rising prices for what is still available, and stagnating (or worse) wages for those who still have jobs, it seems almost incredible to hear of a gigantic pay rise. What sector of industry could this be in? Which group of workers has fought for and won this massive victory?

The sector of industry is food retail, but the recipient was an individual not a group of workers, or even what most would consider a worker at all – and no fight was necessary.

The individual in receipt of this amazing pay rise was Simon Roberts, the CEO of supermarket giant Sainsbury's. The take-home pay of this individual, which includes an annual bonus and a long-term incentive plan, has skyrocketed this year by a whopping 185 percent to £3.79m!

Sainsbury's pats itself on the back for paying the government's 'living wage' to all those who are *directly* employed by them – although, with dividends set to increase 24 percent to £300m, the largest figures since 2015, and with profits that *doubled* last year to

£730m, it is not really digging very deep to do that. Still, many of its competitors don't even manage that small act.

But before we are accused of patting the company on the back, we should point out that many who work for Sainsbury's don't do so directly but via a subcontracting company, and these arms-length employees certainly *don't* get the 'living' wage, or anything close to it.

Sainsbury's, meanwhile, keen to keep up its profitability success, is now looking at cutting some of those oh-so-well-paid 'ordinary' staff. Three hundred redundancies have been announced as part of a cost-cutting drive, which should help ease the 'pressure' on the company's wages bill. We note that Simon Roberts' wage increase, meanwhile, puts his salary at 183 *times* that of the average Sainsbury's worker.

In case Mr Roberts feels singled out, we note also that Sainsbury's chief financial officer, Kevin O'Byrne, is also enjoying a rather significant pay rise – from a (clearly unlivable) £2.33m last year to an inflation-busting £3.17m for this.

Sainsbury's, along with every other employer, is not in business to provide jobs or to make its workers happy. It is not even in business to bring great products to shoppers at cheap prices. Its sole aim is to make maximum profit, and if that means lowering the price of one thing while upping the price of another in a constant PR/marketing-driven pricing merry-go-round; if it means publicly trumpeting an increase in wages for low-paid staff and then quietly 'offsetting' the cost by cutting the total number of employees, then that is what it will do.

It will do whatever is necessary to increase its share of the market, to send its competitors to the wall (along with the staff of said competitors) if it can, or indulge in price-fixing with competitors when a round of price wars has deprived them both of market advantage.

This is the nature of capitalism, and the likes of Simon Roberts and Kevin O'Byrne are the captains who steer these companies on behalf of major shareholders and, ultimately, of the 0.001 percent who really rule full-grown imperialist societies. Shedding workers to bump up a 1p per share profit to 1.01p is all in a day's work, as is selling goods at extortionate rates whenever possible and reining a few prices back only if forced to by stiff resistance from consumers or competitors.

Can we escape this downward spiral?

If they were at all interested in doing their jobs, trade union leaders would be leading their members in struggle for a greater share of employers' profits – *without* job losses. But most trade union leaders have far more loyalty to the social-democratic (ie, monopoly capitalist-aligned) Labour party than they do to the interests of

their own members. And the Labour party has no interest in supporting workers in struggle – it is far more concerned with trying to prove to the monopolists that it is 'fit to govern' on their behalf!

If the Labour party supports workers at all, it is only those from the top layer – those who enjoy the lion's share of crumbs falling off the monopolists' overstuffed table (crumbs taken from a banquet of imperialist global loot). But even this more privileged, bought-off section is feeling the pinch as inflation takes hold in earnest.

A century and more of bitter experience has demonstrated decisively that the Labour party has no solutions to offer to the mass of British workers. There is no way out of the downward spiral under capitalist-imperialist conditions, which constantly act to concentrate wealth into the hands of a tiny clique while steadily impoverishing the creators of that wealth. Under such conditions, workers are merely fodder for the monopolists' industrial or war machines, to be used or cast aside as capital sees fit.

There is no way back to some mythical 'better' time. However things used to be, those conditions led us inexorably to this point. But there is a way *forward* to liberation from the endless downward spiral of poverty, degradation and war; there is a way for all the wealth that we create to be put into the service of humanity as a whole.

Marxist science, the highest achievement of humanity to date, offers not only a route to understanding the seemingly incomprehensible insanity of the world around us, but also hope for a brighter, saner future, and the tools to enable us to get there. We just need to have the courage to pick them up and learn how to use them.

British politics



Meet the new PM; she's a lot like the old PM

Liz Truss represents a continued commitment by our rulers to their catastrophic direction on both the war drive and the economy.

Over 150 years ago, Karl Marx noted the paucity of intellectual talent amongst the political representatives of Britain's imperialist class. That class may have been supremely self-confident; it may have 'ruled the world', but its best days – the days when it had something useful to offer to humanity – were already firmly behind it.

Referring to the philosopher, political economist and parliamentarian John Stuart Mill, considered one of the 'great men' of 19th-century liberalism, Marx wrote: "On the level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the insipid flatness of our present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects." (*Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 16, 1867)

One can only imagine what he would have made of the present crop of career politicians (Sunak, Starmer, Sturgeon, Drake, the latest LibDem guy ...), whose vapidness and utter forgetfulness make Mill and his ilk seem like giants in comparison.

In their race to the bottom,

the main characteristic shared by today's parliamentary drones seems to be a sociopathic willingness to lie and cheat for money in full view of an increasingly disgusted and cynical public; to shamelessly sell their souls in return for a decent salary today and a nice pension tomorrow – boosted by whatever can be wrung from a seat in the Lords and a few boardroom sinecures.

And so, as we go to press, we note that the liberal-turned-Margaret Thatcher wannabe Liz Truss will soon be anointed as the new leader of the Conservative party – and as the next prime minister of Britain.

It is obvious to anyone who cares to look that Truss is a political nobody, with neither ideas nor principles to her name. The general public hadn't even heard of her a year ago, and she clearly has nothing meaningful to contribute on any level. In no way can she be said to be 'Britain's choice'.

Yet we can be quite sure that when she is appointed as the country's 'leader' via a Tory

party popularity contest, the British chatterati won't miss a beat in continuing to lecture the rest of the world about the importance of 'western democracy', or in asserting the superiority of the system that fills our 'mother of all parliaments' with such a motley collection of third-rate attention-seekers, charlatans and grifters.

Backing Truss for more of the same

So if Liz Truss is such a nobody, what is it (besides the fact that most people with a bit of talent prefer to expend their energies elsewhere) that is suddenly catapulting her into the driving seat of the British imperialist executive office?

Watching her leadership campaign, we cannot help concluding that what has sold our rulers on Ms Truss is her dedication to becoming a perfect servant to the ruling class. Time and again she has shown her willingness to do and say whatever is required by her masters, without a hint of demur or pushback.

Like her good friend (for now) Volodymyr Zelensky in Ukraine, she is an empty vessel ready to regurgitate whatever talking-points she is fed – and to change the narrative as and when required, whether or not it conforms to the narrative she was spouting the day before, and without a thought of her own to interfere.

In her role as foreign secretary (and clearly aware that this would be one of the keys to the top job), Truss has been more rabid than any of her competitors in her support for the war in Ukraine and in promoting the virulent Russophobia that has engulfed the country.

Far from approaching her role as Britain's 'chief diplomat' (don't laugh) with tact and discretion, keeping open the doors to negotiation and

realpolitik, she has revelled in the opportunity to show her 'toughness', fanning the flames of Nato's hysterical war propaganda by donning a bullet-proof vest ("like a modern Amazon", as one commentator put it) to ride in an Estonian tank for a photo opportunity near the Russian border.

Even the aggressively pro-war Guardian ran an opinion piece pointing out that Truss's "belligerent comments on Russia" were "reducing Ukraine to a pawn in the Conservatives' power struggle":

"Liz Truss is playing with fire. On Wednesday night she described Russia's Vladimir Putin as a 'rogue operator' lacking rationality, and with 'no interest in international norms'. As a result, she said: 'We will keep going further and faster to push Russia out of the whole of Ukraine.' She is clearly reveling in her imagined proxy war on the Russian bear and no one in Whitehall appears able to restrain her.

"The use of the word 'we' publicly identifies Britain's interests with Kiev's. Truss calls for ever more economic and military aid to be sent to Ukraine, and such aid now teeters on the brink of overt engagement with Russia ... She nowhere mentions the risk involved in her desired escalation, let alone the possible compromises of peace. Hers is tabloid diplomacy.

"Before his stunt visit to Kiev this month, Boris Johnson also instructed Volodymyr Zelensky not to make any concessions to Putin, a line Truss is clearly seeking to rival. It is not unknown for democratic leaders to play war games to excite their electorates, but this must be the first Tory leadership contest fought on the frontiers of Russia." (Liz Truss risks recklessly inflaming Ukraine's war to serve her own ambition by

British politics

Simon Jenkins, 28 April 2022)

Truss's posturing has indeed been reckless and inflammatory. But she appears to have been right in believing that that was what her bosses were after. Despite the evident blowback from both the military and economic fronts in Nato's proxy war against Russia, the British ruling class appears to be intent on doubling down on that war drive – and even on expanding it to China.

On that front, Liz has been equally aggressive. She has stirred Sinophobia by accusing China of “not playing by the rules”, by promising to “clamp down” on Chinese companies in Britain, by making veiled threats about a possible sanctions war against China, and by demanding the “defence” of the Taiwanese region against “Chinese aggression”.

In a recent speech on Commonwealth trade, she labelled China's growing influence as “malign” and her campaign spokesperson described the country's leadership as “authoritarian”. In 2020, back when she was trade secretary, Truss supported a move to give British courts the right to decide on whether a ‘genocide’ was taking place against the Chinese Uighur Muslims of Xinjiang – against the advice of the Foreign Office, which was concerned about the impact of a sanctions war on the British economy.

Many more thoughtful politicians and businesspeople continue to be aware that picking a fight with Beijing would have dire consequences for ‘Global Britain’ (British imperialism), but the saner voices do not appear to be prevailing.

The imperialist system is in trouble. Its economic crisis is deepening. Its people are becoming restive. And the only solution it can see is to break open all those markets that are

currently closed to its domination and superexploitation – by economic means if possible, and by military means if not.

The lesson of the economic war against Russia – that the western imperialists are simply not strong enough to fulfil the task they have set themselves, and that although they have the power to wreak untold damage on the world and its people they no longer have the power to enforce their will onto the globe at gunpoint – is one they are *constitutionally incapable* of learning.

Make the workers pay

Meanwhile, as they ready themselves for further catastrophic wars, our rulers want to make sure that no money is being wasted on such trivialities as lightening the cost of their economic crisis on the impoverished workers.

Although she quickly backtracked when it proved a step too far for some in the commentariat, Truss clearly showed her loyalty to the ruling class on this point too, when she announced her plans for a pay review for nurses and teachers. Not with the aim of compensating them for a decade of real-terms pay cuts, or to make good on the still unfulfilled Tory promise of ‘levelling up’, but in order to cut pay to those living and working outside London and the south-east. *Levelling down*, in fact.

Mindful of the gaffe made by Theresa May in announcing her ‘dementia tax’ to the electorate in 2017 (rather than waiting until she was in office to quietly implement it), Truss performed an immediate U-turn. But as Kate Andrews of the Spectator pointed out, this wasn't so much a change of heart as a recognition that it had been “bad timing”.

The priority of attacking national pay-bargaining remains

USA's Taiwan stunt

◀ **page 24** yond Taiwan. We will look back at this as a step change in how they are going to operate.”

When Mao Zedong led the Chinese people to victory in 1949, Taiwan served as a bolt-hole for the disgraced nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek. Unwilling to accept the historic decision of the Chinese masses, imperialism conspired to help Chiang's ‘Republic of China’ usurp China's seat at the United Nations until 1971, when it was finally restored to the People's Republic. Given the overwhelming facts on the ground, even the USA felt obliged to stop clinging to the fiction that Taipei spoke for all China. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally recognised the PRC and broke official relations with Taiwan.

Under the resultant diplomatic status quo, dubbed the ‘One China’ policy, the USA grudgingly recognised Beijing as the sole government of China and *acknowledged, but did not accept*, its claim to Taiwan. This abstract formula concealed two very different versions of

high for the ruling class. Ms Truss knows it, and is prepared to act as soon as the time seems propitious.

And just in case anyone should suspect Truss of having too much heart, her most recent pronouncements have been focused on her determination to implement tax cuts for the rich, which she claims will be far more “effective” than what she calls “hand-outs” to the poor, currently facing rampant inflation and out-of-control energy bills.

So while our rulers have chosen their next representative based on *their* priorities – saving their decaying and crisis-ridden system at the expense

‘One China’: Mao Zedong's and Chiang Kai-shek's. It was, in effect, a frozen conflict which, for a period, *until now*, neither party has been prepared to resolve militarily. But loose talk from Biden and others about intervening if China “attacked” Taiwan, combined with the likes of the Pelosi stunt, are irretrievably turning up the heat on the frozen conflict.

With the build-up of imperialist provocations culminating in Pelosi's botched visit and China's swift and comprehensive response, all ambiguity has gone out of the window. It is Washington and Taipei that must bear responsibility for this stark new reality – reality with the gloves off. As Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov correctly concluded, the Pelosi stunt showed the USA is determined “to show everyone how it can get away with everything and do whatever it wants”, adding: “I don't see any other reason to create an irritant like this basically out of thin air in full knowledge of what it means for China.”

Such hooliganism is a sign of desperation, not strength. The common need to resist such

of the working masses at home and abroad – it behoves workers to be equally clear in understanding *our own* interests and priorities.

First and foremost must be the understanding that no changing of the guard at No 10 or on the green benches of parliament is going to help us escape the downward spiral of crisis, poverty and war.

The only way out for us is to arm ourselves with socialist science and organise ourselves to remove the bloodsuckers and build a society that places human need above all else.

There is no third way.

Ukraine war



ANC veteran: 'An anti-nazi patriotic war is not an interimperialist war'

Seven decades of revisionist rot are revealed in the anti-Russia stance being taken by so many communist parties today.

It is shameful to note that while large sections of the oppressed masses around the world instinctively side with Russia in its bid to cleanse Ukraine of Nato-backed fascist forces, many parties that ought to be heading those masses have mischaracterised Russia's special operation as an 'imperialist invasion'.

Their failure to understand either imperialism or the nature of the conflict is having serious consequences for the unity and action of the world communist movement, and these can only get worse as the imperialist drive to war against Russia and China continues to escalate.

Alexander Moumbaris is a veteran fighter, political prisoner and escapee from the South African liberation movement Umkhonto we Sizwe. His article is reproduced here with thanks.

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched a denazification and disarmament operation against the Kiev nazi regime that had come about by a Nato-organised putsch in 2014.

Two days later, 31 communist and workers' parties rushed to denounce this "invasion" as an imperialist, or more clearly interimperialist conflict.

The situation now, three months later, may be clearer for the communists who had signed that declaration.

The 2014 putschists, organised and aided by Nato, took power by force, ruse, bloodshed and massacres – including the use in Maidan of snipers from Poland, Lithuania, Georgia ... These events occurred not only in Maidan Square, but also all over the country.

Before 2014, the previous regime – not to mention during the Soviet period – had an aura of bourgeois-democratic legitimacy, and although there were differences if not divergences among the population between: Russians/'Ukrainians', uniate/orthodox christians, communists/non-communists ... they nevertheless lived in harmony – or at least in peace.

In the face of the crushing of the resistance by the putschists, the Donbass – made up of the oblasts of Donetsk and Lugansk – succeeded in resisting. The populations there

fought valiantly, heroically for eight years. Their struggle up to 24 February 2022 was a legitimate, patriotic, democratic, popular struggle for survival against the genocidal neo-nazi regime that had been promoted and orchestrated by the west and Ukrainian oligarchs such as Igor Kolomoisky ...

It would be dishonest, even undignified, to consider this first phase of the conflict as imperialist, illegitimate or indefensible by communists or democrats. It was a just war of national survival and liberation against the nazi regime that concerned not only their local territory but all of Ukraine and all oppressed Ukrainians.

There is evidence that at that time, on 24 February, a large-scale attack, with Nato and European Union weapons, by the Ukrainian army, including tens of thousands of mercenaries, nazis of all kinds, was planned, with the aim of liquidating the Donbass resistance and everything that was Russian, whether physical, linguistic, cultural, religious ...

This would have been the continuation and completion by the Kiev regime, of the genocide it had begun, where the Russian-speaking civilian population was treated as subhuman and systematically used as hostages and human shields during military operations and sieges. Murders, massacres, rapes, looting... were more than common, the horror of lawlessness was complete.

Consequently, the questions for communists and also democrats to answer would be:

- Firstly, could the Russian Federation let the population of Donbass be exterminated by the neo-nazi regime?

- Secondly, could the Russian Federation not react to the extreme provocation and men-

ace by Nato, and especially the United States, of setting up on its border a nuclear stronghold, supported by dozens of biological warfare laboratories, financed by the Pentagon?

This conflict had a worldwide significance and could not be dismissed as 'only' interimperialist when it had the potential to lead to a third world war. The US provocation was immense and had been going on for three decades. It is not necessarily the one who initiates an aggression who is responsible for it. Neither the communists nor the democrats can evade such a situation.

The character of this conflict has parallels: some with the Spanish Civil War, others with the 1939 Soviet campaign against Finland, but above all there is a resemblance with the Great Patriotic War: on the one hand the Nazis and their supporters and on the other the Russian people, descendants of the heroic Soviet people, betrayed and robbed of their patrimony.

Each war has its specificities. Of course, the conflict in Ukraine is not led by communists, but does have the full support of the Russian communists of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

The democratic reintegration of Ukraine into Russia is not a conquest, nor is it a colonisation. It will not prevent class struggles from continuing.

Let's not forget that during the Great Patriotic War it was necessary for the Soviet Union to make alliances with the USA, Britain and other imperialist colonialist countries ...

Often communists and patriots have had to make unnatural alliances, just as the Chinese communists had to with the Kuomintang against Japan, or the Greek communists with the dictator Metaxas against the Italian fascists ► **page 23**

Society



Bombing of civilians in Donetsk city by Ukronazi regime is no aberration

Business as usual for imperialism and its allied stooges engaged in trying to suppress all those who fight for their freedom.

The city of Donetsk, capital of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) that seceded from Ukraine in 2014, has come under heavy fire and shelling from the Ukrainian military in recent days, according to multiple reports. Footage on social media shows smoke billowing above the city, burning houses, apartment blocks ablaze, and streets littered with debris and shrapnel.

Perhaps with a twisted sense of irony, the Kiev regime's forces have even targeted the city's maternity hospital, according to a report by independent journalist Eva Bartlett.

Only a month or two ago, the corporate media was filled with lurid Ukrainian ultranationalist accounts of "Russian airstrikes on a maternity hospital", which was later found to be a fabrication according to eyewitness testimony.

Needless to say, no such media outlet is very interested in covering the very real crimes

of the pro-Kiev forces, except for a minority whose Putin Derangement Syndrome has reached such levels that they have accused Russia of bombing its own side.

At first glance, it may seem very strange that the Ukrainian forces would waste precious ammunition attacking civilian areas with no military value, given the chronic shortage of weapons and ammunition at the front. According to the Moon of Alabama, on 13 June the Ukrainian military used 5 percent of its entire daily ration of ammunition bombing civilian neighbourhoods in Donetsk city.

The reality is that these actions of the Ukrainian forces, as shameful as they are, should not be surprising to anyone. The political ideology and worldview of the Kiev regime and its supporters is very much one that is prepared to commit any crime to justify its ends. Contrary to popular belief, this is not something limited to Nazi

ideology (although of course many of the Ukrainian troops are followers of that particular brand of fascism). Rather, it is common to all liberal-imperialist thought, no matter how 'democratic' and 'human rights defending' it may subjectively claim to be.

Are the crimes that Ukraine is committing against the people of the Donbass any different from the actions of the USA, Britain and European Union imperialist nations when they flattened Raqqa, Fallujah, Ramadi, Mosul, etc?

Was there any concern for civilians shown by these most highly-developed 'liberal-democratic' nations, which are invariably idolised as role models by every supporter of Ukraine's Maidan movement and the Kiev junta?

The Nato alliance that Ukrainian regime supporters are so desperate to join showed no mercy to civilians in Yugoslavia in 1999, nor in Libya in 2011.

The imperialists understand that when a population is truly united behind its chosen leadership in resistance to imperialist control, the distinction

between civilian and military becomes somewhat blurred. This is seen particularly clearly in imperialist client regimes that do not care so much about maintaining a 'liberal' image, such as Saudi Arabia or Israel.

No distinction is made by the Saudi aggressors between the ordinary Yemeni people and the Yemeni resistance. No distinction is made by the Israeli aggressors between the ordinary Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and the Hamas and Hezbollah resistance. In all cases, the people and the resistance are seen as one united enemy, to be broken down through indiscriminate terror and brutalised into submission.

More 'liberal' and 'respectable' capitalists will deny harbouring such fascist views. Nonetheless, their actions have been the same throughout the history of western imperialist capitalism, from the French terror during the Madagascar and Algeria rebellions and the British terror in Kenya and Malaysia during the 1940s and 50s, through to the more recent terror bombings of Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan by US imperialism.

Such is the reality of fighting a class war on behalf of a decaying minority ruling class, in the face of which all their subjective pretences to be defending 'democracy' and 'human rights' are shattered into pieces.

When this is the track record of the USA, Nato and the EU, is it any wonder that the Ukrainians who revere them and take them as role models would be just as brutal to the patriotic civilian populations of the Donbass? If these are the leaders of the free world, what can be expected from the followers?

Victory to the Donbass resistance!

Trade war



How the USA's proxy war in Ukraine is cementing the world anti-imperialist alliance

Not only have the imperialists strengthened instead of crushing Russia, they have in the process given new confidence to independent-minded states everywhere.

Ukraine started the war with Russia by massive shelling of eastern Ukraine and a build-up of troops on the Donbass border. (Ukraine – Who is firing at whom and who is lying about it?, Moon of Alabama, 20 February 2022)

The Nato puppet state did this so that its imperialist masters could try to build a brick wall around Russia via sanctions, initiating an economic collapse, re-enslave Germany (which had been drifting toward Russia and China via the Nord Stream 2 project) and, if possible, bring about regime-change in Moscow.

In fact, the opposite is happening.

It is looking more and more like the west is isolating and disunifying itself (after an initial show of unity behind the war aims of the USA).

The consolation prize of the Ukraine war was supposed to be Finland and Sweden's entry into Nato. But even here Turkey's wily President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has stepped in to obstruct their entry.

The west's real 'prize' will be

de-dollarisation of the global economy, massive inflation, rising costs of staple goods and soaring petrol prices. The consequences for western European governments towing the US line will be a rapid decline in living standards and economic chaos.

We will likely see a wave of toppled governments in the coming years. As de-dollarisation of the global economy accelerates, the United States is going to see its currency lose value every day – taking with it the ability to print money at the expense of other countries by exporting inflation round the globe.

After all, it's one thing to 'stand with Ukraine' by putting a blue and yellow flag on your Twitter bio. It's quite another to insist on sanctioning Russia whilst ordinary Europeans freeze in their apartments so they can serve the foreign policy of the United States.

In Estonia recently the prime minister was forced to resign amid inflation rates of more than 20 percent. Boris Johnson's government in Britain

will likely fall as an indirect consequence of the cost of living crisis facing Britain. We should expect a wave of governments currently towing the pro-Ukraine line to be toppled between now and next winter.

Imperialist thievery provides impetus

Nations across the world seeking to develop their economies have been thwarted by being hostage to an imperialist system. The banks of London happily stole \$1bn of Venezuela's gold in January 2019.

The imperialists likewise stole \$3.5bn from Afghanistan's reserves on 11 February this year, and unknown billions from Iraq and Libya when those countries were invaded in 2003 and 2011 respectively. Joe Biden's criminal administration stole the Afghan reserves at a point when upwards of eight million of the country's people were at risk of starvation.

Iran was cut from the Swift system (which facilitates instant payment settlements across borders) by the USA in 2012. In 2016, access was restored under the JCPOA agreement, but the administration of Donald Trump reneged on this agreement and cut Iran from Swift again.

The greatest heist, though, was perpetrated on 13 March 2022, when the imperialists stole \$300bn (!) in foreign reserves from Russia.

These events have provided a huge impetus for the countries outside of the imperialist bloc to form alternative organisations and payment systems that are not under the arbitrary control of the pirates (sorry, 'bankers') in Wall Street or London – systems in which foreign reserves can't be stolen at will and countries won't be locked out of global trade on a political dime.

Even many of the countries on notionally 'friendly' terms with the imperialist bloc have understood that their wealth is not safe if it can be ransacked wholesale at will. After all, who knows when they might fall foul of the imperialist diktat?

An alternative payment system is being built

Whilst the Russians started building the SPFS system (a Swift alternative) in 2014, the Chinese began building Cips in 2015.

Nations living under the imperialist yoke and formerly subject to the dollar dictatorship are now on the move. Iran and Venezuela have signed up to a 20-year cooperation 'road map', with direct flights between Caracas and Tehran, and Venezuela has praised Iran's help with its oil industry.

"I believe that our future will be one of pleasing and solid friendships," President Nicolás Maduro said on a recent visit to Iran. "The future of the world is one of equality and justice and standing up against imperialism. We must build this future together." (Iran, Venezuela sign 20-year cooperation plan during Maduro visit, Al Jazeera, 11 June 2022)

In 2021, Iran signed a 25-

Trade war

year cooperation deal with China, and this year is negotiating a renewed 20-year cooperation deal with Russia.

As former US presidential advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski made clear in his book *The Grand Chessboard*, in order to maintain American global unipolar dominance, US imperialism must do everything to ensure that an alliance between Russia-China and Iran does not come to pass that could expel the USA from the Eurasian continent. (1997)

Drunk on American exceptionalism and 'led' by the hawks who pull the strings for feeble-minded Joe Biden, the American imperialists (and their Atlanticist lackeys and useful idiots in Europe) have forgotten this lesson.

The small clique of neoconservatives that actually runs the United States and Europe (probably as few as 10,000 people) have only one gear – and that's escalation.

And that escalation has led to an anti-imperialist alliance being created and strengthened in many institutions, from the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) to Brics and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The CSTO (a military formation) was recently instrumental in stabilising Kazakhstan when the west attempted a coup and colour revolution there in January 2022. Troops from Russia, Belarus and Armenia were able to organise quickly through its joint security mechanisms to put down that US-backed coup attempt. (The US-directed rebellion in Kazakhstan may well strengthen Russia, Moon of Alabama, 6 January 2022)

What we are seeing is the emergence of two opposing blocs: an imperialist one that seeks to stagnate and retard

human development and productive forces against an anti-imperialist one that is actually interested in infrastructure development and economic growth for the masses of the world's people.

The above organisations are gaining more coherence and clarity by the day, and are set to play a major role in the new multipolar world that is emerging. The consolidation of a payment system outside of US control will ensure that freshly-printed US dollars cannot be endlessly sent into the global economy to 'pay' for goods and services at everyone else's expense. The USA may well wake up in the near future, unable to afford its 900+ military bases worldwide and unable to service its \$30 trillion debt.

Failure to isolate Russia and emerging multipolarity

The west had hoped to draw a new Iron Curtain over Russia as it once did to the Soviet Union and eastern bloc countries. However, it increasingly looks as if the west has only succeeded in drawing the curtain around itself.

Even India refused to condemn Russia's operation in Ukraine. Shortly after this refusal, the United States insisted it would start "monitoring India for human rights abuses", once again shedding light onto how the question of 'human rights' is cynically weaponised by the west. (US monitoring rise in human rights abuses in India: Blinken, Al Jazeera, 12 April 2022)

Meanwhile, Venezuela has committed to expanding military cooperation with Russia.

"We have reviewed military cooperation plans and endorsed an area for strong military cooperation between Russia and Venezuela to defend peace, sovereignty and

territorial integrity," Venezuela de Television quoted President Maduro as saying. "Defence minister Vladimir Padrino has clear instructions on this matter. We will expand the programme [of cooperation] ... Russia is fully supported by Venezuela in the face of the threats from Nato and the western world." (Venezuela to expand military cooperation with Russia – President Maduro, Tass, 17 February 2022)

On 16 June, Chinese president Xi Jinping restated the legitimacy of Russia's actions, calling president Vladimir Putin to endorse "the legitimacy of the actions taken by Russia to defend its core national interests in the face of challenges to its security created by external forces". (Old friends: Xi lends Putin his loyalty as EU leaders line up behind Ukraine, Financial Times, 16 June 2022)

The emergence of multipolarity has long been reflected in the Brics alliance between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Vyacheslav Volodin of the Russian parliament (duma) suggested that, were Indonesia, Iran, Turkey and Mexico to join too, then we could be looking at the "new G8".

Volodin noted: "The United States has created conditions with its own hands so that countries wishing to build an equal dialogue and mutually beneficial relations will actually form a 'new G8' together with Russia." (The 'new G8' meets China's 'Three Rings' by Pepe Escobar, The Saker, 15 June 2022)

A Shanghai professor has explained China's three-ring theory utilising the liberation war concept of the countryside encircling the city, with the countryside in this case representing the developing nations.

"One hundred years ago, the leaders of the Chinese Com-

munist Party proposed the revolutionary path of 'encircling the city in the countryside'. At this time of 'unprecedented changes', China and the developing countries need to break the centre-periphery order of the contemporary world, and the western countries' suppression of non-western countries, and instead to improve solidarity and cooperation in the global 'rural' areas.

"The emergence of a new global system and the deepening of south-south cooperation will create good conditions for China to enter the forefront of the world economy and politics, and to mobilise global resources to build a 'three-ring' international system, to resolve international pressures and to break through." (Building the 'New Three Rings': China's choice in the face of possible complete decoupling by Cheng Yawen, China Environment Net, 13 June 2022)

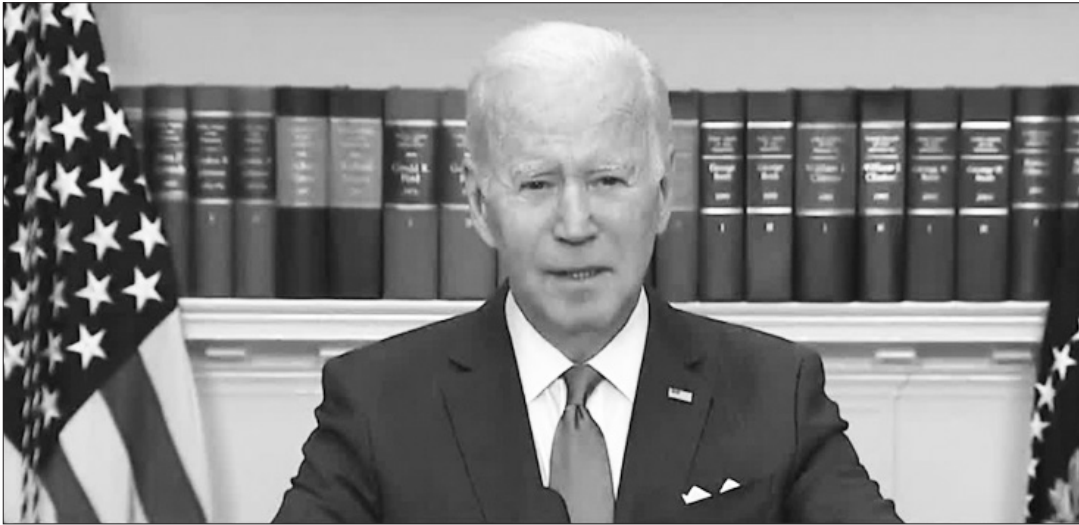
China's Belt and Road initiative is joining Eurasia into a coherent economic bloc. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed in November 2020, is a trade bloc comprising 30 per cent of humanity and 30 per cent of global GDP.

Both Iran and India are seeking free-trade deals with the Eurasian Economic Union, whilst Russia is robustly pushing for a transit route to India via Iran known as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). (India-Iran reset gets under way by Melkulangara Bhadrakumar, Strategic Culture Foundation, 22 June 2022)

The first shipment using this corridor, carrying 41 tons of wood laminate, left from St Petersburg to Astrakhan in Iran, before sailing through the Caspian Sea and arriving at Nhava Sheva port in Mumbai.

India replied to ► page 17

Ukraine war



\$65bn in western 'aid for Ukraine' is neither aid nor is it for Ukraine

Ukraine will be paying off its latest 'aid' package for the rest of this century. That is, provided there is a viable Ukrainian state left when the conflict ends.

This article is reproduced from InfoBrics with thanks.

In recent weeks, much has been said about the political west's (primarily US) 'aid' to the embattled Kiev regime. The US Congress has so far approved, or is in the process of approving, at least \$54bn to Ukraine. In addition, various reports put the amount of European Union 'aid' at up to €10bn so far, although the actual number is most likely orders of magnitude higher.

When put together, this pushes the publicly-acknowledged figure to a staggering \$65bn, which is equivalent to Russia's annual military spending in nominal USD exchange rates.

The number seems rather impressive and may give the impression that Ukraine will be able to defeat Russia's forces. However, the situation on the ground says otherwise. With the political west's post-industrial economy, its abil-

ity to mass produce affordable and easily replaceable military hardware has increasingly been called into question.

Thus, most of the 'aid' from the USA/EU is essentially a half measure. Throwing money at a problem is highly unlikely to resolve it, as actual situations require genuine, not monetary action.

The amount of hardware Ukraine has lost so far is difficult to determine, since the two sides provide diametrically opposing data and independent confirmation from the ground is virtually impossible. However, war footage taken by civilians, alternative media embedded with frontline troops, and soldiers themselves, clearly shows that Ukraine's losses in manpower and equipment have been massive.

To replace lost hardware, the Kiev regime will require enormous resources. However, this will prove quite a challenge, as the country's military-industrial

complex has been virtually annihilated by Russia's long-range strikes. Thus, the regime will need to acquire additional military hardware elsewhere.

The political west is the go-to address for this purpose, as Ukraine has been getting Nato weapons for years. Still, this hardware has had a limited impact on the battlefield. To try to change that, the Nato powers decided to ramp up their so-called 'lethal aid'.

However, in reality, the prospect of Ukraine getting the promised 'aid' is rather grim. An obvious question arises: what will happen to nearly \$65bn? The first go-to address for such a question should be the US Congress. With the law-making body busy fast-tracking the deal, some US congressmen have voiced concerns that corrupt officials would be able to steal the 'aid' – as was the case for decades during numerous US invasions across the globe.

However, corruption and embezzlement, which geopolitical expert Paul Antonopoulos recently covered in a superb analysis, is the lesser problem in this situation.

Mainstream media have been portraying the political west as if it will be sending actual, physical money to the Kiev regime. But nothing could be further from the truth – the funds will essentially stay in the 'donor' countries.

The largest share will officially be allocated to arming, or rather, rearming the Kiev regime's forces. But who exactly, or more precisely, which companies will be producing weapons for the Ukrainian military? It's safe to assume we all know the answer: the US military-industrial complex, the largest and most powerful arms manufacturing cartel on the planet.

Household names such as Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, BAE Systems, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, to name a few, will be getting the vast majority of those funds.

For instance, the 'Phoenix Ghost' drones (manufactured by the California-based Aevex Aerospace) and 'Switchblade' drones (manufactured by AeroVironment), are both designed to strike tanks and other armoured vehicles, as well as infantry units. M113 armoured vehicles are also being sent, which, while old, largely obsolete and out of production since 2007, is still quite numerous in US stocks.

Getting rid of these stockpiles will make way for the US army's acquisition of its successor, the AMPV (armoured multi-purpose vehicle), a turretless variant of the Bradley fighting vehicle, produced by the BAE Systems.

Another BAE Systems product is the M777 howitzer, a towed 155mm artillery piece designed for direct fire support. Ukrainian troops are already using some of these, although recent videos released by the Russian military show many have already been destroyed in

Ukraine war

battle. Interestingly, the howitzers delivered to Ukraine lack digital fire-control systems.

The much-touted 'Stinger' Manpads (produced by Raytheon) and 'Javelin' ATGMs (co-produced by Lockheed Martin and Raytheon) have been sent in the thousands. However, their effectiveness has been questionable at best, despite western media trying to portray them as supposed "game changers".

Russian tanks have been filmed surviving up to seven 'Javelin' hits, even continuing to fight – much to the frustration of Ukrainian forces, which have recently been ordered to stop publicly complaining about the lacklustre performance of western weapons.

Raytheon's AN/MPQ-64 'Sentinel', an X-band range-gated, pulse-Doppler radar used to alert and cue short-range air-defence systems, has also been sent. In addition, 40 million rounds of small-arms ammunition, 5,000 assault and battle rifles, 1,000 pistols, 400 machine guns and 400 shotguns have been sent to Ukraine, along with more than 1 million grenades and mortars and 200,000 artillery rounds. These deliveries were completed by early May, so the actual number is most certainly much higher at the time of writing.

The weapons in question have not changed the strategic balance between Russia and the Kiev regime, but they are prolonging the fight, resulting in even higher military and civilian casualties. Meanwhile, having so many different types of weapons creates a lot of logistical problems for the Ukrainian military, which is barely holding together as it is. There are also issues of training and doctrinal incompatibility.

M777 howitzers are immobile when deployed and are de-

signed with air dominance in mind. US troops are supposed to use them from a safe distance, serving as fire support by striking very specific targets during overseas operations.

This is the exact opposite of what is going on in Ukraine, where the other side (Russia) enjoys air dominance and uses massed artillery to punch holes in the Ukrainian lines, followed by massive and well-coordinated armour assaults. Thus, US weapons not only fail in providing an effective counter to Russian troops, but are even getting Ukrainian forces killed, as they are still not accustomed to using them.

Last, but not least, the 'aid' already provided (and soon to be) provided by Nato countries are essentially in the form of long-term loans, which will have to be repaid in the following decades. The WW2-era 'Lend-Lease' programme for the USSR, estimated at \$160bn in present-day USD, was repaid in full only in 2006, so we can assume Ukraine will be paying off its \$65bn 'aid' package for the rest of this century.

That is, provided a viable Ukrainian state remains when the conflict ends.

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Sanctions backfire

◀ **page 15** pressure from the USA to stop importing Russian oil by heavily increasing its imports. Russia is moving toward greater use of national currencies with Iran and India to conduct its trade and economic transactions.

Increased cooperation between Iran-India and Russia is thus opening the way for a tripartite cooperation in using local currencies for trade. Russia and India are already settling gas payments in a rupee-rouble scheme.

A new bridge linking the Russian city of Blagoveshchensk to the Chinese city of Heihe across the Amur river was opened to great fanfare as Russo-Chinese relations hit a new modern high, facilitating further mutual trade and development.

The military and security pacts being signed, the trade agreements, economic co-operation agreements and infrastructure development roadmaps are providing a concrete alternative to the west's Malthusian demands to retard growth, impose debt-driven austerity and accept imperialist looting of natural resources via the now infamous 'structural adjustment programmes' of the US-controlled World Bank and IMF.

According to Russian economist Sergei Glazyev: "The west has no image of the future but an image of death. Everyone says this is a world hybrid war although it was clear from the beginning it should be considered in a much broader context. Russia is fighting for the preservation of mankind."

As Lenin pointed out in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*: "the rentier state is a state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and

this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the sociopolitical conditions of the countries concerned". (Chapter 8, 1916)

The west initiated and then escalated the war in Ukraine in an attempt to retain its hegemony. But witnessing the west's debasement of humanity by its 'green' theories on 'overpopulation' and 'de-growth', and the continual wars it wages against humanity, we see ever more clearly the rank fruits of imperialist parasitism.

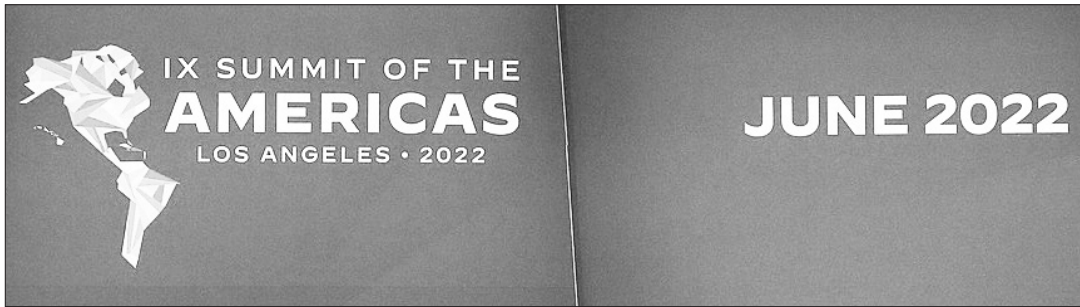
The economic war launched against Russia has not turned in the imperialists' favour. In the arena of economic war initiated by the west, we see emerging a contest between the world of real-estate bubbles, accounting fraud and money laundering, and the world of real productive economies producing real goods – this is what western pundits and politicians are deriding when they discount Russia's economy as "being the size of Spain/Italy/Texas" or whatever is the latest comparison they trot out.

The last few months have given all concerned a hard lesson in what a real economy looks like, and the difference between those whose wealth is backed by tech-addiction apps, speculation, property bubbles and accounting fraud and those backed by commodities, raw materials and essential food staples.

The imperialist economies are degenerating before our eyes as food and petrol prices rocket, with Britain's (grossly underestimated) 9 percent inflation at its highest in 40 years.

As the imperialist system continues to decay, the world will continue to strive toward multipolarity as surely as the sun sets in the west and rises in the east.

Americas



Failed 'Summit of the Americas' foreshadows the collapse of the USA's Monroe Doctrine

The people of Latin America are on the move once more, spurred on by the growing confidence of the anti-imperialist global alliance.

Fifth president of the USA James Monroe first articulated what was later to become known as the 'Monroe Doctrine' on 2 December 1823, at his seventh State of the Union address to Congress. The Monroe doctrine became a central tenet of US foreign policy from that day forth, declaring that the USA would not interfere in European affairs and European powers' existing colonies so long as the Europeans didn't interfere in the Americas, while any intervention in the political affairs of any part of the Americas by a foreign power was to be considered a hostile act towards the USA itself.

In practice, what this meant was that Latin America was effectively to be recognised internationally as the USA's 'back yard', where the USA alone was free to interfere, colonise and terrorise in order to plunder the continent's resources and exploit its labour-power. Since 1890, there have been at least 56 US military interventions in Latin America, against which the masses have again and again risen up, as they previously had done against their Spanish and Portuguese colonisers, forging a proud history of anti-imperialism that still inspires and motivates today's

resistance fighters.

The anti-imperialist resistance

The anti-imperialist movement in Latin America traces its roots to the beginning of the 19th century, most notably with the fight against Spanish colonialism led by Simón Bolívar in the foundation of Greater Colombia. The process of transition from Spanish colonialism to US imperialism lasted almost a century, in which the US sometimes allied itself with the revolutionaries, until the Spanish-American war of 1898 at which Spain ceded Cuba, its last remaining colony in the Americas.

In the 20th century, with almost exclusively US imperialism to contend with, the example of the Russian and Chinese revolutions gave an enormous boost to progressive forces in Latin America. From Tierra del Fuego on Chile's southern tip right up to the USA's southern border, anti-imperialist struggles have taken hold in every country – in most cases being brutally suppressed, but in some cases managing to fend off US imperialism and attain sovereignty.

Notable examples that stand

proud today are those set by Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

From the OAS to Celac

After the tremendous victory of socialism in WW2 the socialist movement and liberation struggles in Latin America received a great impulse. In response, the USA established the Organisation of American States (OAS) in 1948, headquartered in Washington, as a means to exert more influence over the restive continent.

Despite this, there have been numerous attempts to strengthen integration between Latin-American countries. These include the Latin American Free Trade Association (Lafta) in 1960, the Andean Community (CAS) in 1969, the Caribbean Community (Caricom) in 1973, the Latin American Integration Association (Aladi) in 1980 which replaced Lafta, Mercosur in 1991, the South American Community of Nations (CSN) which integrated the Andean Community with Mercosur in 2004, Unasur (the successor of the CSN) in 2008, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Celac) in 2011 which was established as an alternative to the OAS and designed to facilitate integration of Latin American states whilst excluding imperialists.

With Hugo Chávez winning

the 1998 presidential election in Venezuela, the relations between Venezuela and Cuba became fraternal, and, in 2004, Fidel Castro's Cuba and Hugo Chávez's Venezuela led the establishment of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, known as Alba (which means 'Dawn' in Spanish). Around the same time, the USA tried to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas (Alca), an extension of Nafta to Latin America, which failed to materialise due to the unwillingness of various leaders at the time.

Alba is the only socialist-oriented union of Latin-American states and, since its establishment, it has included as members Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Santa Lucía.

The aims of Alba were clearly stated on the tenth anniversary of its foundation, at the eighth summit in 2014, where its joint declaration read as follows:

"We, the heads of state and government of the member countries of Alba ... express our steadfast commitment with the consolidation and growth of Alba and the struggle for the second and definitive independence of Latin America and the Caribbean, in concert with the ideals of our national heroes, within a complex regional context characterised by an offensive inflicted by globalised transnational capitalism and US imperialism that would like to destabilise and overthrow progressive governments democratically elected by their peoples."

In 2018, when Lenín Moreno of Ecuador withdrew his country from Alba, the response from the executive secretary gave an insight into the prob-

Americas

lems the anti-imperialists were facing: “The executive secretariat takes due note and respects Ecuador’s sovereign decision. However, using the Venezuelan people’s current political situation to join some regional governments’ efforts seeking the exit of President Maduro’s government clearly tells the line adopted by Quito regarding these issues, using them as arguments to terminate its participation in Alba.

“The announced withdrawal of Ecuador from Alba is aligned with the political strategy currently developed by some South American governments, aimed at attacking Latin-American and Caribbean integration; such as the case of Unasur, a tendency that will surely extend to other integration mechanisms of Our America.”

This makes it clear that the previously formed blocks like Unasur, which aimed to emulate the European Union, although they may help economic integration under capitalism, have remained tools for US imperialism and transnational capital’s control of the region and looting of its resources. Alba and Celac, on the other hand, seek to facilitate true liberation of the continent from imperialist control.

The ninth ‘Summit of the Americas’

The first Summit of the Americas was convened by US president Bill Clinton in Miami in 1994. Its purported goal was to bring together world leaders from the western hemisphere (OAS countries) to discuss issues such as democracy and human rights, but its real objective was to try and push forward the free-trade zone known as Alca.

As Alba general secretary Sacha Llorenti has pointed out, the Summit of the Americas’ main purpose is to consoli-

date US control over natural resources, secure markets for US corporations, exploit sources of cheap labour, control commercial routes such as the Panama Canal (hence the USA’s opposition to the construction of a new channel in Nicaragua) and punish any country that tries to interfere with any of these aims.

This year saw the ninth summit, hosted by the USA for only the second time, and held under the theme of ‘Building a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future’. The USA blocked (not for the first time) Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan representatives from attending, labelling their governments ‘dictatorships’ and asserting in its usual high-handed way that these renegades don’t meet the requirements of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

This hubris was concisely expressed by President Joe Biden himself when he publicly told the first lady of Mexico last month, regarding her country: “It’s not our back yard, it’s our front yard.” Perhaps Biden didn’t get the memo after WW2 about countries not belonging to other countries any more.

The exclusion of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua sparked a vociferous response from across the continent, which was led by Mexico’s Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Along with the leaders of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and others, he refused to attend the summit.

Many corporate media highlighted this own-goal of US ‘diplomacy’ and the USA’s increasing political isolation: Summit of the Americas snubs threaten to overshadow Biden-hosted gathering (NBC), Biden seeks unity at Summit of the Americas, finds discord (PBS), The Summit of the Americas was meant to counter China’s influence. Instead, it showed

how weak the US is (Time), Biden heads to Summit of the Americas amid event turmoil, Mexican president boycott (Fox), Snubs from key leaders at Summit of the Americas reveal Biden’s struggle to assert US leadership in its neighbourhood (CNN).

The picture these headlines paint indicates that all is not well in the camp of the USA and its puppets in the Americas. Their grip on the continent is weakening with the rise of the Brics countries and the transition to the multipolar world that Russia and China are leading.

The real embarrassment for Biden’s handlers came when the majority of leaders who *did* attend used the platform to variously condemn: the summit’s format; the exclusion of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua; the embargo on Cuba; and the sanctions on all three countries.

Prime minister John Briceño of Belize said: “This summit belongs to all of the Americas – it is therefore inexcusable that there are countries of the Americas that are not here, and the power of the summit is diminished by their absence ... At this most critical juncture, when the future of our hemisphere is at stake, we stand divided. And that is why the Summit of the Americas should have been inclusive. Geography, not politics, defines the Americas.”

Antigua and Barbuda’s prime minister Gaston Browne, Bahamas’ prime minister Philip Davis, Barbados’s prime minister Mia Amor Mottley, Chile’s president Gabriel Boric Font and many other leaders condemned the exclusions and many of them the embargo on Cuba also. These sentiments were echoed by a majority of leaders present at the summit, the obvious exceptions being

Canada’s Justin Trudeau and Colombia’s Iván Duque, who spent more time talking about authoritarianism, human rights and Russia than about the problems faced by the people of the Americas.

For how long the countries that condemned the summit will continue to participate in it at all is a moot point.

Significance of the summit

As part of the summit, an event was held at the Walter Cronkite school of Journalism in downtown LA on 7 June 2022. To a rather small audience, secretary of state Antony Blinken held forth on the USA’s supposed ‘protection’ of the free press around the world – a protection Julian Assange would no doubt be relieved to hear about. When independent journalist Abby Martin and the Breakthrough News team confronted Blinken with unexpected questions, however, these representatives of the *actually* free press were met with blank stares and one of them was bundled out by security.

Peaceful demonstrations held outside the summit venue met a similar fate. As usual, they were given no coverage by the corporate media and police handling of these peaceful events was brutal. One video surfaced on Telegram of a woman with a megaphone being tackled to the ground and punched in the face by a police officer.

Meanwhile, to complete the US government’s discomfiture, a parallel summit open to everyone was organised by Alba and also held in Los Angeles. Named the People’s Summit, it was attended by groups from the USA and Latin America, helping to raise awareness amongst US citizens about the plight of Latin Americans, whilst also no doubt ► **page 21**

Americas



Cuba responds to broken US-led summit: Our America deserves meaningful action; a better world is possible

With anti-imperialist sentiment on the rise once more, the USA is more terrified than ever of the infectious socialist example in its continental 'back yard'.

The following is the text of the final declaration of the third forum of Cuban Civil Society and Social Actors, 'Thinking Americas', issued in Havana on 23 May 2022 (Year 64 of the Revolution).

Cuban civil society's social actors and organisations, authentic representatives of the Cuban people, gathered to express our positions on the central theme of the ninth Summit of the Americas, 'Building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future', and the issues to be addressed in that forum:

I. Emphatically condemn the exclusion of the organisations of Cuban civil society from participation in the virtual and in-person formats of the Civil Society forum at the ninth Summit of the Americas, by refusing their registration, despite the comprehensive application for registration submitted by their representatives

and by social actors. Combined with the admission of a mere handful of social actors, this demonstrates the double standards and discriminatory, anti-democratic policies prevailing among the summit organisers.

II. Deplore the fact that the decision of the United States as host country to exclude Cuban civil society organisations and social actors breaches the principles of respect for sovereignty and for the self-determination of the peoples and that of non-interference in their domestic affairs, tenets fully supported by Cuban civil society.

III. Denounce the US government's refusal to process at its Havana embassy the visas of the few social actors which the organisers of the parallel forums approved for participation in person at the ninth summit. This decision rides roughshod over America's obligations as host country, shows its contempt for regional public

opinion – which argues for the inclusive nature of the event – and highlights the essence of the hostile, interventionist policy deployed by Washington against Cuba, with the failed aim of toppling the political, economic and social system which we Cubans have decided on, in full exercise of our self-determination.

IV. We reject the drawing up of an apocryphal 'Plan of Health and Resistance' that excluded the contribution Cuba can make to this document, based on the authority it has acquired in such matters. Its cooperation in the public health sphere provided to numerous countries in the region, the most recent example being that offered in combating the Covid-19 pandemic, is a clear demonstration of the Cuban state's political will, with the active participation of the civil organisations and social actors, to enhance the resilience of the public health systems of Cuba and the countries in which it has staged this type of south-south cooperation.

V. Reaffirm that digital transformation is urgent and stra-

tegic for the countries of the region, not only for its effect on the economy and improvement in the quality of people's lives, but also because of what digital technologies and their critical, ethical, humanist use signify for the prospects of a sustainable, resilient and equitable future and in the struggle to safeguard independence, sovereignty and the full exercise of human rights.

VI. Call for access to infrastructures and platforms that enable knowledge sharing and facilitate cooperation in the formulation and implementation of public policies in the field of digital transformation.

VII. Condemn the use of information technologies to wage a media war on Cuba and subvert the political, economic and social system constitutionally chosen by our people, who are represented by the Cuban civil society organisations and the social actors, participant in the forum.

VIII. Demand an inclusive, genuinely democratic format for the summits, in which the views of the civil society representatives of all the countries on the issues debated are heard; we are utterly opposed to the attempts by the organisers to impose concepts and exemplars that are alien to the societies, peculiarities and essence of Our America.

IX. Undertake to continue our active participation in the building of a sustainable, resilient and equitable future at national, regional and global levels, including by the participation of members of Cuban civil society in cooperation initiatives with other countries in our region.

X. Reaffirm our commitment to implementing the National Programme of Economic and Social Development (PNDES 2030), its coordination with Agenda 2030 and meeting

Americas

its sustainable development goals, despite the devastating effects of the genocidal, multidimensional blockade imposed by successive US administrations on the Cuban nation, intensified to extreme degrees during the Covid-19 pandemic.

XI. Demand an end to the criminal blockade, which undermines the essence of the principle of equity and fairness in social policies; it constitutes a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the country's entire population; affects the operations of the Cuban civil society organisations and the policies applied by the Cuban state, with the participation of the civil society organisations, aimed at building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future.

XII. Express our gratitude for the solidarity and support received from the region's civil society organisations, which have defended an inclusive character for the summit.

XIII. Deplore the fact that Cuba's exclusion from the summit is part of the aggressive policies and defamatory media campaigns targeting our country, designed to subvert the political, economic and social system that the Cuban population, also represented in the civil society organisations and social actors attending the forum, has decided on for itself.

XIV. Reassert our right to continue socialist development in this, our beloved homeland, and reaffirm our decision to continue building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future with everyone and for the benefit of everyone. We similarly reiterate the unshakeable confidence on the part of the civil society organisations and the social actors participant in the forum, that a better world, that we know to be possible, can be achieved.

Failed summit

◀ **page 19** strengthening the resolve of Celac and Alba to persist in the struggle.

This increase in solidarity between and assertion of sovereignty by Latin-American countries is exactly what is needed to accomplish the aims of Alba and to see through the second Bolivarian Revolution, and the international context in which it is taking place can only aid the process.

In a speech delivered by Russian president Vladimir Putin at the recent Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum (Speif), the message was clear: all countries under the yoke of US imperialism should show courage and follow the Russian example. President Putin stressed that Russia would be there for any country wishing to free itself. The rouble has exchanged at less than 60 to the dollar for over a week, making it the strongest-performing currency this year, according to Bloomberg – a salutary lesson to those in the US and European ruling classes who believed their economic global power to be unlimited.

Imperialism – the era that has dominated our lives for over a century – is coming to an end. As sure as day follows night, we know that eventually it will be replaced by socialism as humanity travels forward in its long march to a classless and prosperous society.

What forms the struggle will take along the road we cannot know in detail, but we can be sure that it is the exploited and oppressed masses of the region who will together be shaping that future, drawing inspiration in their struggle from their proud revolutionary forebears.

It is time to bury the Monroe Doctrine once and for all.

About the CPGB-ML

An understanding of society (theory) and a way of uniting to change it (organisation) are the two things that we need to make a socialist revolution. Ordinary people in Britain have everything to gain by getting involved in this process sooner rather than later. This world isn't working for us and we deserve better!

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.

Our party is different because we consistently apply Marxist science to all areas of our work, and we're not scared to tell it how it is.

We 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!

Challenge your ideas – challenge their propaganda – seek the truth – serve the people – change the world!

Understanding the prime importance of knowledge for workers, the CPGB-ML organises its activity around branches that study Marxism as well as organising practical activities. Our aim is to revive revolutionary Marxist-Leninist science 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.

It is noticeable today that all the other parties calling themselves socialist and communist are falling into dependency and disarray, having travelled right to the end of the blind alley dictated by their fatally flawed programme of 'voting Labour to bring about socialism'. Their memberships are declining and their leaders are fighting amongst themselves for the diminishing returns still to be got out of the social-democratic gravy train.

Our party, on the other hand, is growing year on year, and our members are characterised by their enthusiasm and optimism. As a result, our party is becoming more active, more organised and more steeled in the struggle.

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.

To find out about joining, visit our website at thecommunists.org

World



Food and decolonisation

How is it that war in Europe should threaten people in Africa and the middle east with starvation?

This article by Prabhat Patnaik is reproduced from Indian Marxist journal People's Democracy, with thanks.

Russia and Ukraine together account for 30 percent of the world's wheat exports. Many African countries, in particular, are heavily dependent on them for their food supplies, which are now getting disrupted because of the war; and this disruption would continue since the war is also affecting the acreage being sown under foodgrains there.

Ukraine alone accounts for about 20 percent of the world's maize exports, which again are under threat, endangering food availability in several vulnerable countries. Besides, Russia is the source of fertilizer supplies for a number of countries and the disruption in fertilizer imports from Russia will have a further escalating effect on world food prices and reduce food availability.

Compared to what it had been in the month of February

before the start of the Russo-Ukraine war, the price of staple foodgrains had increased by 17 percent by 8 April, making millions more people vulnerable to famine; these numbers can only increase in the coming days. The countries most vulnerable are in west Asia and in Africa, especially countries like Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan.

Experts have been warning of this possibility for some time. But while there is much concern over the loss of lives in the actual theatre of war, the far greater loss of lives that the decline in food availability threatens in countries far away from the theatre of war has scarcely drawn the attention of the world at large, especially the western world.

In all this discussion however a central question has not even been asked: *Why have some countries in the world become so vulnerable to famines that any disruption in food supplies anywhere immediately threat-*

ens them with massive loss of lives? Why in short do we have 'famine-vulnerable countries' at all?

The immediate answer to this question would be that these are countries that have themselves been afflicted by war. Whether it is Afghanistan, Sudan, or the Horn of Africa, there has been a history of wars, stretching even up to the present, and their vulnerability to famines arises from the disruptions effected by this history.

This explanation however simply would not do: wars in this context obviously must include internal insurgency or what is commonly called 'terrorism'. But this raises two questions: first, insurgency itself cannot be assumed to be an externally-given phenomenon; it is so rooted in and related to the phenomenon of poverty and food non-availability that it cannot provide an independent explanation for the latter.

And second, wars in this more comprehensive sense, incorporating insurgency as well, characterise virtually the whole of the third world. Why, then, are only some countries considered vulnerable and not

others?

The real answer to the question why some countries are considered vulnerable not others lies in the fact that these countries have sacrificed their 'food sovereignty' to the demands of imperialism.

After decolonisation, most countries in the third world, which had witnessed steep declines in their per capita foodgrain output and availability during the colonial period (a phenomenon that had underlain recurrent famines in the colonial era) sought to increase their domestic production of foodgrains. It was considered an essential counterpart of decolonisation, and rightly so, to build up domestic foodgrain production and availability.

This, however, was resisted by imperialism, which on the basis of an entirely spurious argument based on 'comparative advantage', not only 'advised' third-world countries to abandon the quest for food self-sufficiency, but incorporated this demand into the WTO agenda (that land-use should be determined by market signals rather than any goal of achieving food self-sufficiency).

World

Now, the advanced capitalist countries have a permanent surplus of certain grains, while they simply cannot grow (or grow in adequate quantities, or the entire year around) a whole range of tropical or sub-tropical crops, such as fresh vegetables, fruit, fibres, sugar crops, oil crops, beverages and spices. Altering the pattern of land-use in the third world, which is roughly co-terminus with the tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world, therefore is doubly advantageous for the advanced capitalist countries: first, by forcing the third world to import foodgrains it enables the metropolis to get rid of its surplus foodgrains; and second, the third world land devoted earlier to foodgrain production is now released for producing other crops, namely those that are demanded by the metropolis (which would now also include crops that are earmarked for biofuel production).

Africa acceded to this imperialist demand more quickly than any other part of the third world; and not surprisingly, the list of 'vulnerable countries' is replete with African examples. Let us just take two examples from among those that figure in the above-mentioned list: Nigeria, which is by far the largest country in Africa in terms of population (with more than 200 million people), and Kenya which not too long ago was being hailed by the OECD as a "success story" of "liberalisation".

According to the statistics provided by the Food and Agri-

culture Organisation (FAO), the gross per capita cereal output index for Nigeria (2014-16 = 100) was 129.37 in 1990; it fell to 101.09 in 2019, a drop in excess of 20 percent in the course of just three decades. In Kenya, the gross per capita cereal output index (2014-16 = 100) showed a similar drop of close to 20 percent over the same period, from 132.82 in 1990 to 107.97 in 2019. If we go back to 1980 in the case of Kenya, then the drop is even more precipitous, from 155.96 to 107.97, that is by more than 30 percent in the course of just four decades!

It is this phenomenal drop in domestic foodgrain output, resulting in substantial reliance on imports, that makes countries vulnerable to famines.

This also shows clearly why all this talk of 'comparative advantage' is completely bogus. The concept of 'comparative advantage' of course is conceptually flawed: when one of the countries simply cannot produce one of the commodities (as was the case with colonial trade), comparative advantage cannot be defined at all. Put differently, trade according to 'comparative advantage' – ie, according to the notion that a country should export what it produces relatively cheaply

and import what it does not – presumes that all countries produce all commodities before trade.

In addition, when 'comparative advantage' flows from relative 'factor endowments' that are themselves alterable (through capital accumulation for instance), then trade according to 'comparative advantage' prevents such alteration and therefore freezes the production pattern to the detriment of the 'capital-poor' and labour-abundant country. [That is, poor countries are prevented from investing in high-technology industries or even industrialising at all – Ed.]

But even if we ignore these basic objections to 'comparative advantage' and proceed on the assumptions made by the very advocates of this theory, even then following 'comparative advantage', and becoming import-dependent for a crucial commodity like foodgrains, is suicidal for a country. A whole range of unforeseen developments in the world, over which a country has absolutely no control, can expose its people to famines.

This simple truth was understood by the anticolonial struggles everywhere. They took it for granted, very rightly,

The real answer to the question why some countries are considered vulnerable and others are not lies in the fact that these countries have sacrificed their food sovereignty to the demands of imperialism.

that *independence meant being food self-sufficient*, at least at a certain minimum level of consumption, not necessarily within each country but at least among a group of third-world countries constituting a 'food community', and strove towards it.

Africa, however, was coerced by imperialism into abandoning this goal and is alas paying the price for it today with the threat of famine looming over it.

India, notwithstanding its early post-colonial plan for raising domestic food production (of which the 'Grow More Food' campaign was an expression), got trapped into buying American food under the PL-480 scheme. It is only after the acute droughts of the mid-1960s that the importance of being food sovereign dawned on our ruling governments and the Green Revolution, no matter what its other lacunae, was launched to achieve this target.

Imperialist efforts to undo India's food sovereignty have been relentless since then; and imperialism found a 'sucker' in the Modi government, which passed agrarian legislation to withdraw the minimum support price regime that constitutes the lynchpin behind India's food sovereignty.

The heroic kisan agitation however has saved the day, and the government was forced to withdraw the three farm laws. Food sovereignty continues for the time being; but the people must remain unremittingly vigilant if it is to be preserved.

Antifascist war

◀ page 12 – and there have been others.

It should also be considered (let us not pretend to be naive) that some leaders of the communist parties among the

signatories, and not the least of them, publicly consider that the Great Patriotic War itself was an 'imperialist war'.

What is most serious, beyond nazism in Ukraine, is the ignorance of history, and even of the present-day situation, amongst the western popula-

tions, as well as the progress of unconscious acceptance of the content of nazism and supremacism, whether white or of any other colour or species.

The French should remember that the trident of the Ukrainian neo-nazis looks like the crest of the SS Das Reich division guilty

of the Oradour-sur-Glâne massacre in June 1944. The Jews should also remember the butchery in September 1941 at the Babi Yar ravine of nearly 34,000 of their own, and the Poles the execution in 1942 of 100,000 civilian compatriots in Volhynia.

Proletarian



United States' provocations against China faced down by the People's Liberation Army

In its desperation to 'stop' China, the USA is pushing towards all-out war – all while driving its various targets into ever-closer alliance.

Proving that you can't teach an old imperialist dog new tricks, the United States of America is busy repeating over Taiwan the same mistakes that it made over Ukraine.

It kidded itself that Moscow's warning back in December last year about the urgent need to get serious about establishing security guarantees for Russia's borders (a pressing matter given the previous 30 years of encirclement by Nato aggression, eight years of shelling inflicted on the people of the Donbass and the impending threat to take back Crimea and the Donbass by force), was just so much diplomatic hot air.

The consequences of this error are visible for all to see in Ukraine. Conclusion: if you keep prodding long enough, the bear will sooner or later respond.

And now imperialism is kidding itself again, this time

about just how seriously China takes western efforts to stir up separatist sentiments in Taiwan and undermine Chinese sovereignty.

In flat contradiction with President Joe Biden's publicly expressed 'disquiet' at the plan to send the speaker of the US House of Representatives to Taiwan on an evangelical mission to preach 'democracy' versus 'authoritarianism', Nancy Pelosi trampled on regardless.

Readers more familiar with the role of the speaker at Westminster, whose job is mostly confined to banging the gavel and yelling "Order", may underestimate how powerful the US congress speaker really is, and consequently what a high-level affront it is for her to pay a visit to the Chinese territory of Taiwan whilst ignoring the guardians of Chinese sovereignty in Beijing.

According to the US consti-

tution, if Biden passed away (though how could you tell?) and his vice-president Kamala Harris joined him, next in line for president would be Pelosi, making her one of the most senior figures in US politics.

In a farcical own goal, Washington has managed to land itself in the worst of all worlds over Taiwan. By pressing on with its reckless provocations against China, even after the US president and the Pentagon had come out publicly against the plan to send Pelosi to stir up separatist mischief in Taiwan, US imperialism succeeded only in achieving two self-defeating ends.

Firstly, it exposed the weakness and impotence of a president in his dotage (a fitting exemplar for a moribund society), either genuinely unable to forbid the Pelosi trip, or else playing at charades and distancing himself from the decision lest it go wrong. With breathtaking naivete Biden babbled that "the military thinks it's not a good idea right now" – yet he sanctioned the adventure any-

way.

Secondly, it has given China a first-class opportunity to display to the world its readiness to defend its sovereignty throughout the entirety of its territory, Taiwan not excluded. The military drills that China organised to coincide with the Pelosi stunt were widescale, complex and carried out to a disciplined timetable.

As the FT reported: "As Pelosi landed in Taipei on Tuesday night, the People's Liberation Army announced plans for extensive joint air and naval drills and long-range live fire shooting exercises in six large areas around Taiwan, which extend into the country's territorial waters and airspace near Kaohsiung and Keelung, its largest and third-largest ports. The PLA is planning to conduct the drills from Thursday until Sunday, after Pelosi has left." (3 August 2022)

The report went on to cite the view of a retired US admiral: "It is a change in the way that China can now respond to events in and be- ▶ **page 11**