

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!

War and inflation bringing British economy to its knees



Social



Coffey's 'plan for patients' boils down to more targets and some magical thinking

Reams of empty phrasemongering are aimed at hiding the fact that Truss and co have no plan to do anything to fix the crisis in our health service.

While Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng unveiled his massive tax cuts for the rich, Thérèse Coffey was unveiling her 'Plan for patients', allegedly intended to 'save' the NHS. Of course, no one with an ounce of intelligence will believe either minister is acting for the benefit of the majority – or that Labour, given the chance, would perform any better. But for the sake of trying to understand the government's proposals, let's take a look at the current state of the NHS from the patient's point of view.

Health service in crisis

The first thing to note is that there are more than six million of us on waiting lists at the present moment, and that number only looks set to grow.

Nearly 380,000 people have waited for over a year, while 2,800 have been stuck in the ever expanding backlog for at least two years. Some 30 per cent of attendees at A&E wait longer than four hours to be treated, while around a thousand patients every day have to

wait longer than 12 hours.

Results from August tell us that the average 'category one' (life-threatening situation) response time was 9mins 8s, although the current target time is 7min. Response times for 'category two' calls (burns, epilepsy, strokes etc) have a target of 18min, but were taking, on average, 42mins 44s. The response time for 'category three' calls (late stages of labour, non-severe burns, diabetes etc), which should be answered in under two hours were averaging 2h, 16min 23s.

Apart from a shortage of paramedics in ambulances, the biggest block to their job is the A&E departments themselves, which are not sufficiently staffed to cope with the daily influx of patients. This is combined with a lack of ability to move on those patients who need further care after their emergency treatment has been completed (hospital beds on overfull wards, further tests and investigations from other hospital departments, attention from social services or a

mental health professional, etc).

As a result, ambulances end up parked by the doors of A&E for hours, with paramedics unable to transfer their patients – and unable also to respond to the next call.

A further cause of blockage in A&E departments is the chronic lack of GPs and mental health services for people to access instead of heading to A&E. Over two million of us are right now waiting to see a local GP.

Meanwhile, there are 60,000 NHS vacancies across the country at this moment. This is probably the single biggest cause of care delivery disfunction in Britain's public health service.

Yes, the NHS needs more funding for frontline services. Yes, it needs more hospitals with more beds and more A&E capacity. Yes we need to stop the private sector, chemists and the huge multinational drug manufacturers from bleeding our health budgets dry.

But first and foremost we need paramedics, doctors, nurses, cleaners, etc – and for the efforts of those staff to be subject to a centralised plan focused on real care delivery!

Record staff vacancies

Dr Farah Jameel, chair of the BMA's GP committee for England, said recently: "Despite delivering over a million appointments a day with the lowest number of GPs we have ever recorded, we continue to struggle to deliver the care we know our patients so desperately need. GPs and their teams are already doing everything they possibly can to see those patients with the most need urgently. Despite this, we know there are so many more patients who cannot access their GPs in a timely fashion."

He added: "Today's GP workforce data shows that between August 2021 and August 2022 we lost the equivalent of 314 full-time GPs. We now have the equivalent of 1,850 fewer fully qualified full-time GPs than we did in 2015, with 16 percent more patients per GP. We are losing more GPs than we can recruit, and this combined with cost of living pressures is starting to spell the end of GP practices as we know them."

Across the health service, the story is the same – shrinking pay, worsening conditions, impossible stresses, and a depressing inability to give patients the care they really need are leading more and more health professional to quit their jobs in despair.

So, in the face of all this, what have our new prime minister and health secretary got planned? Ms Coffey pledges to offer "easier access to the NHS and social care this winter and next". Her 'plan' promises to address priorities that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) says are "most important" to patients, including "ambulances, backlogs, care and doctors and dentists".

That all sounds perfectly reasonable, but how will it actually be done?

We are told that there will be "common sense" changes, delivering "tangible benefits" for patients, and that this means removing the barriers that get in the way of patient care, putting more information at the fingertips of patients and freeing up the time of clinicians to do what they do best: caring for patients.

Again, this sounds great, but how will it actually be done?

In the end, without regurgitating the whole sorry report, what the plan amounts to is a new set of targets, higher than the ones the NHS is already not ▶

Comment

Kwarteng's budget: pouring oil on Britain's troubled economic waters

Caught between the rock of runaway inflation and the hard place of their commitment to war in Ukraine, Liz Truss and her chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng's attempt to 'reassure' investors and workers alike that they 'have a plan' to get everything 'under control' has spectacularly backfired.

The problem, of course, is that no-one in government has the ability to do any of the things that might actually lead to improved conditions, either for workers or for businesses.

In the interests of trying to shore up profits, Kwarteng announced measures such as 'light-touch' economic zones (where planning, H&S and environmental regulations, and workers' rights will be torn up in the interests of maximising returns), 'slashing red tape' (ditto), and lowering corporation tax. That is: facilitating corporations to pocket high dividends while the taxpayer picks up the bill for subsidising below-poverty wages, rectifying environmental fallout and degraded infrastructure, and funding vital services.

In aid of keeping London as the preferred base for finance capital, the chancellor added in such incentives as lifting

the cap on bankers' bonuses and scrapping the top rate of income tax. (A huge proportion of Britain's GDP comes via the imperialist looting and money laundering that is routed via institutions in the City of London.)

Alongside these measures to 'grow the economy' by 'encouraging investment' (ie, facilitating maximum exploitation of the workforce and maximum subsidy by the taxpayer), Kwarteng felt impelled to include measures that were aimed at *keeping the lid on rising social unrest*. These were the 'unfunded' promises that sent international money markets into a tailspin and caused hedge fund managers to start betting heavily against the pound: the decision to drop the deeply unpopular National Insurance hike, which disproportionately hits poorer workers, and a promise to cap energy bills, subsidising whatever the providers are charging that goes above the present (already extortionate) rate.

Of course, such huge pledges could only be paid for by borrowing and/or by more money printing – both of which would ultimately fuel the inflation and debt crises in which Britain is currently mired. A little-

discussed aspect of the energy cap is the very large subsidy being promised to businesses of all sizes (their energy bills will also be capped), alongside the gargantuan pay-out to the energy monopolies. Of course, any sane government interested in the needs of its people would simply take over the entire energy sector and run it according to a plan so as to make sure that all workers could access enough energy at a price they could afford, without the need to provide dividends to shareholders.

Meanwhile, the (formerly steady and now precipitous) drop in the value of sterling will make imported goods (including energy) more expensive, fuelling inflation once more. And the money-printing that the Bank of England was forced into to try to stabilise the pound will fuel it still further. It is, after all, the trillions of pounds that have been printed to bail out banks and corporations since 2008 that have led to the steady devaluation of the currency that has now become evident in rampant and runaway inflation.

Ultimately, the root cause of the country's economic woes is the global capitalist crisis of overproduction, which no capitalist has any power to solve without indulging in an orgy of destruction – of men as well as of unsaleable goods. The drive to war is ultimately the imperialists' only hope of saving their system for another decade or

two – by crushing rival powers and conquering independent territories, while destroying enough accumulated products and productive forces to create 'demand' in the form of a contracts to rebuild what they themselves have torn down.

So far, though, the war in Ukraine has been spectacularly backfiring. Instead of bringing the *Russian* economy to its knees and the Russian people onto the streets to bring down their government and allow the monopolists free reign to loot Russian resources at rock-bottom prices, the imperialists' sanctions have only aggravated their own supply and inflation problems.

Unfortunately, since our government serves the monopoly capitalist class and not the workers, we can expect its war rhetoric to go up rather than down in response to the increased difficulties of our rulers. As far as the imperialists are concerned, their main hope of salvation still lies in destroying and then looting first Russia and then China.

The only real and permanent way out of this downward spiral of poverty, crisis and war is for humanity to abolish entirely the irrational, parasitic and murderous system of capitalist commodity production and replace it with a planned economy and working-class rule – a socialist state whose primary aim is satisfying the wants and taking care of the wellbeing of its workers.

◀ reaching, alongside (and one can imagine the vacuous grin of triumph across Liz's face as this one was announced) ... a new 'cloud-based' phone system!

Back on Planet Earth, Dr Farah Jameel simply pointed out: "Many practices already use cloud-based telephone systems, but we simply don't have

the staff to answer more phone lines, nor more clinical staff to offer more appointments. The promise today to free up over around 3 million appointments per year is equivalent to just two-and-a-half extra days' worth of general practice activity in England – or less than 1 percent more than we deliver already."

Planning v 'the plan'

We live under the rule of a political system in which the profit-drive of the wealthy is the basis of all activity. Profits always come before people – and maximum profits at that. The days of buying us off with trinkets (you can have two cars, own your own house – or mortgage one anyway, have a TV in

every room, etc) are over for the majority of workers in Britain, and a rapid deterioration in living standards is underway.

With their economic system in crisis, our rulers can no longer throw workers the crumbs we have grown used to whilst also protecting their profits – and if it's a decision between workers' welfare and ▶ **page 13**

Industrial



Shameful capitulation of workers' struggle to our rulers' demand for 'national mourning'

With hunger, blackouts and war knocking urgently at workers' doors, our demand should be: 'Don't mourn, organise.'

The astounding decision by the TUC to postpone its annual congress in Brighton out of 'respect' for the death of Queen Elizabeth will be greeted with a near-audible sigh of relief across the union hierarchy.

A spontaneous fight-back had been building, erupting in militant strikes by posties, rail workers and others, taking on a new sharpness as the harsh reality behind the anodyne phrase 'cost of living crisis' is starting to be felt by millions of workers.

This has been most uncomfortable for the TUC mandarins, whose entire claim to legitimacy rests upon on their supposed role as the general staff of the labour movement, giving overall 'leadership'.

As the Brighton bash loomed, pressure was increasing for the TUC to give direction to workers' fight-back. The demise of the reigning monarch was just the excuse it needed to dodge

this urgent responsibility, allowing it to surf a shallow wave of jingoist nostalgia and to join in distracting workers from the class struggle instead of directing their prosecution of it.

With a near-identical turn of phrase, union leaders dutifully queued up to mouth the same tired shibboleths about a nation in mourning for the loss of a beloved monarch, her alleged 'service' to the nation, a nation 'united in grief', ad nauseam.

No doubt our new king, Charles III, will be first in line to return the favour, dipping his hand deep into his capacious pockets this winter when those same workers face hunger and black-outs.

The CWU's Dave Ward explained why his union had pulled the plug on what was shaping up to be a serious militant defence of pay and conditions by postal workers as follows: "Following the very

sad news of the passing of the Queen, and out of respect for her service to the country and her family, the union has decided to call off tomorrow's planned strike action."

Train drivers' union Aslef also postponed a strike planned for 15 September, blaming "the sad news of Queen Elizabeth II's death" and expressing "our deepest condolences to her family, friends and the country".

Saddest of all, and a reminder that even the most militant trade union politics cannot be relied upon in prosecuting the class struggle, the RMT's Mick Lynch explained the suspension of planned rail strikes in the following stomach-churning words: "RMT joins the whole nation in paying its respects to Queen Elizabeth. The planned railway strike action on 15 and 17 September is suspended. We express our deepest condolences to her family, friends and the country."

If trade unions respond in this way to the demise of the monarch, what kind of response can we expect when it's a ques-

tion of war and peace?

We have already had the unedifying spectacle of workers refusing to handle Russian sea-borne freight – in a cruel reverse parody of the anti-imperialist British dockers who refused to load military supplies to be used in the war to crush the Russian revolution a century ago.

Workers need to know – and it is the job of communists to tell them – that their true class interests can only be advanced through proletarian internationalism and the anti-imperialist movement, and not via the Union Jack and the British bourgeoisie, whether tricked out in the pomp and circumstance of a bourgeoisified monarchy with phony feudal trappings, or served straight up in the form of bourgeois dictatorship.

If we are to mourn, let us mourn for something worth mourning for. Better still, let's stop mourning and start organising.

In response to official mourning

Mourning for the wet supermarket voucher that got refused

Mourning for the cancelled operation

Mourning for the christening grandad missed because of the coach ticket he could not afford

Mourning for the kid's shoes that got tight and cannot be replaced

Mourning for the last portion of cereal before mum went to bed hungry

And a minute's silence for the working class that cancels its strikes because of 'mourning'

– Nina Kosta

Industrial

Support the postal workers!

Workers at Royal Mail are joining those on the railways and the docks in standing up for their pay and conditions.

Royal Mail postal workers, already on strike on 26 and 31 August in a dispute over pay, have now also voted overwhelmingly for further industrial action over working conditions. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) reported that almost 99 percent of its members voted in favour of taking further strike action on a 72 percent turnout.

Clearly the lead taken by the rail workers and dockers in refusing to take cuts in their pay and working conditions at a time when the cost of living crisis is already pushing people onto the breadline, is having a tonic effect on workers everywhere.

Privateers chasing profits

Royal Mail bosses have blamed workers for the losses the company is making, resorting to the crudest blackmail and threatening that if there is not a “significant operational change” (that is, unless workers accept the imposition of inferior pay and working conditions) the company will be broken up and jobs will be lost.

Since the privatisation of Royal Mail in 2014, exposing the company to cutthroat competition from rival carriers, it has had mixed fortunes.

When lockdown struck, Royal Mail management chased after elusive profits by cashing in on the boom in online shopping and prioritising parcel traffic. But as the high streets

reopened and online shopping took a dip, so too did parcel traffic.

And now, with inflation ballooning and prices rising, consumer spending is contracting across the board. According to Royal Mail itself, the company is losing a million pounds a day.

Decent pay is the right of all workers

There is a good deal of smoke and mirrors to be encountered in trying to assess the likely future of the company. Although Royal Mail may be losing a million a day, its parent, International Distributions Services, has hived off its profitable overseas operations to yet another entity, called GLS.

Who really knows where the money trail leads? Not into the pockets of postal workers trying to make ends meet, that’s for sure.

The problems hitting Royal Mail have not been caused by the workers. The postal workers are right to strike to defend their class interests and they deserve the support of workers everywhere.

And if something as basic and essential as the postal service cannot be run sensibly by the privateers, then let it be brought back into public ownership, and subjected to a national plan dictated by public need, not private greed.

Join the communists

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

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

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

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

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

Become a supporter at thecommunists.org



Social



Families face energy bills topping £5,000 this autumn

Privatisation of the energy industry has put Britons at the mercy of world market prices – and no bourgeois party has a clue what to do about it.

A timebomb is ticking away in British society, and no bourgeois party has a clue what to do about it. Boris doesn't care. Rishi and Liz are mainly using it to score points off one another.

And various Labour bigwigs seem to see it as an opportunity to look like they know what they're doing while proposing patently inadequate 'plans'. The whole establishment, in fact, is simply fiddling while Rome burns, even as its media are filled by increasingly frantic warnings that the whole lot might be brought down if *something isn't done*.

On Friday 26 August, the energy industry 'regulator' Ofgem announced that the October 'price cap' will be raised by a further 80 percent, meaning that average energy bills could rise to £5,000 a year or more, plunging millions more families into poverty.

Not only that, but further hikes are expected in three and

six months time. Hikes that no-one living on a daily, weekly or monthly wage packet (even those who are used to considering their wage packets to be pretty generous and perfectly sufficient for a decent life) has any idea what they will do about. Clearly there's only so far you can go with extra jumpers and fewer hot meals.

'Regulator' is in quotes because in reality it acts as *the mouthpiece of the privatised energy industry* rather than its watchdog, and 'price cap' is in quotes because the cap does not impede but rather legitimises maximum profit-taking by the energy monopolies at the expense of the consumer.

Inflation continues to grow faster and faster, outpacing wages, driving up prices and hollowing out savings. Only days ago, the hot news was that the rise in inflation had hit double figures, racking up 10 percent. Yet now predictions

are that inflation could hit as much as 18.6 percent by January.

"Rapidly increasing prices for natural gas have left economic projections out of date. At the start of the month, the Bank of England forecast that higher gas prices would push inflation above 13 percent towards the end of this year. Bank of America said last week that it expected UK consumer price inflation to peak at 14 percent in January, while Goldman Sachs and EY projected it to hit 15 percent.

"But with Europe's gas crisis escalating in August, Citi predicted on Monday that inflation would reach 18.6 percent in January." (UK inflation projected to hit 18.6 percent as gas prices surge by Chris Giles, David Sheppard and Jim Pickard, Financial Times, 22 August 2022)

For those who are wondering why Britain is so badly affected by rising energy prices when we don't actually buy much Russian gas (whose supply disruption is one of the exacerbating factors in the present inflation crisis), it's because total *pri-*

vatization of all energy supply means that we pay world market prices and are totally at the mercy of the big energy cartel.

The problem is compounded by the lunatic decision back in 2017 to close the Rough storage facility in the North Sea, owned by Centrica. Rough had provided 70 percent of Britain's gas storage capacity, helping to smooth over peaks and troughs in gas supply.

The government stopped subsidising its expensive maintenance and Centrica shut it down – a particularly egregious illustration of the congenital failure of capitalism to plan beyond the end of its nose.

Former chancellor Gordon Brown has urged the government to temporarily nationalise the British energy industry, following the same model that he adopted with the banks in 2008. Under his direction, banks were bailed out at vast public expense, nursed back into solvency and then returned to the private sector, leaving successive governments crippled with debt and ushering in vicious austerity policies to make workers pay for the crisis.

Now Brown, having convinced himself that bailing out the banks was his finest hour, proposes to repeat the same trick with the private energy companies.

What is required, however, is not temporary state intervention to shield the energy monopolies from the growing public backlash caused by the glaring disparity between the obscene profits of the companies and the crippling bills of consumers.

What is required is the permanent and complete nationalisation of the energy industry, expropriation of the energy monopolies and subordination to a national plan that serves social need, not corporate greed.

Ukraine war



Tempo likely to shift in Ukraine as east and south vote on joining Russia

Partial mobilisation of military signals Russia's determination firmly to protect any newly-joined regions and their citizens.

Referenda are to be held in the next few days in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics (known collectively as the Donbass) to ascertain whether they wish to form part of the Russian Federation. The same question is to be asked in the south-eastern regions of Kherson and Zaporozhye.

These referenda were announced in concert with the announcement by President Vladimir Putin of a partial mobilisation of 300,000 Russian troops, perhaps signalling the end of the special military operation and the beginning of a war of broader scope – a war in defence of Russia itself.

The significance of this shift is likely to be lost on many who live in the west, kept in the dark as they have been about the fact that the majority of the fighting in Donbass over the last seven months has been carried out by *local militia* (the self-defence forces of the Lugansk and Donetsk people's

republics), whom Russian airpower and artillery have been supporting.

As Alex Christoforou and Alexander Mercouris of The Duran discussed in a recent video, Russia's self-imposed restrictions, and the nature of its supporting role to date, have meant that it has been fighting with its hands tied, leaving most of Ukraine's vital infrastructure intact, and with *minimal forces* (less than 200,000 men) against everything Nato has been able to throw onto the battlefield via its proxies and mercenaries in Ukraine. (Referendums. Special Military Operation coming to an end?, The Duran YouTube channel, 20 September 2022)

Are the gloves about to come off?

Assuming the referenda are positive and the provinces involved are absorbed into the Russian Federation, any subsequent encroachment by Ukonazis will be treated as a

direct assault on Russian territory, and as such, an existential threat to Russia that would be answered by any means necessary.

A Kremlin spokesman interviewed on the BBC was asked whether Russia would contemplate using a nuclear weapon against Ukraine. No, he replied (in so many words), there was no intention of nuking the brothers in Ukraine: it was the west that should look out if it's tempted to try for nuclear escalation.

Most speculation in the media misses this point, obsessing about tactical nukes rather than long-range weapons. It is one thing to train thousands of soldiers to be sent back to die in Ukraine; it is something else to contemplate the possibility of rockets aimed at London.

The west, alarmed at this plain speaking, cheers itself up by claiming that Putin is bluffing and that it is Russia's supposed "military reverses" that are prompting this "sabre rattling". Such voices will be stilled when it becomes clear that many of the legal constraints hemming in the special military operation kind of conflict – for example a verbot on attacking civilian infrastructure – under international law do not obtain when it's a case of defending the homeland.

Some commentators have suggested that the infusion of 300,000 more troops could signal a move to accelerate military operations, now "with the gloves off".

A quagmire of the west's own making

None of this needed to happen. In December, when Russia demanded security guarantees to counter escalating provocations and Nato expansion on Russia's borders, this could have been taken seriously and acted upon. Because it was not

dealt with, the special military operation was obliged to cross the border in February to help clean out the nazis directly.

And even then, a negotiated peace remained a possibility, something that the west's stooge actor-president Volodymyr Zelensky himself appeared to entertain in the early days of the operation.

According to the Conflicts Forum's weekly comment: "Originally Team Putin was angulated towards a negotiated settlement in Ukraine, just as in Syria. And it almost happened. Turkey again mediated, with peace talks occurring in Istanbul in late March, with promising results showing.

"In one respect however, events here did not follow the Syria pattern. Boris Johnson immediately scuttled the settlement initiative, warning Zelensky that he must not 'normalise' with Putin; and if he did reach some accord, it would not be recognised by the west." (23 September 2022)

But imperialism vowed to keep pouring dollars and weapons, and the poor bloody Ukrainian infantry into an unwinnable war, hoping that by keeping going they could wear the Russian enemy down militarily whilst sanctions wore him down through the economic war on the home front.

The situation is similar to what happened with Finland with the Winter war of 1939. The USSR requested some minimal border adjustments from the Finns in order to deprive German imperialism of an easy line of attack against Leningrad. These adjustments would actually have resulted in a net gain of Finnish territory.

Instead, Helsinki, egged on by Berlin from the sidelines, chose to provoke a war with Russia – a war that ended with the defeat of Finland ▶ **page 9**

Ukraine war



“The greatest opportunity in Europe since World War II”

Selling Ukraine to the highest bidder

Alongside the wanton sacrifice of its military-aged men, the total immiseration of Ukraine’s entire population by western imperialism continues apace.

Volodymyr Zelensky’s latest media stunt, addressing himself directly to corporate America via a video link to the New York stock exchange, plumbed new depths in the humiliation of Ukraine.

Whilst its president clowned about, pretending to ‘virtually’ ring the famous bell which traditionally signals the commencement of the day’s trading on Wall Street, his message was deadly serious: Ukraine is up for sale.

He painted a glowing picture of Ukraine’s future, a future in which state-owned enterprises would be privatised, labour protection laws would be repealed, the economy would be deregulated and monopoly capital could plunder \$400bn worth of state sell-offs without hindrance.

In other words, Ukraine is now undergoing another round of the economic shock therapy that was previously imposed on the former republics of the

USSR, plunging their populations into misery and enriching the imperialist monopolies. (Zelensky rings New York Stock Exchange bell as Euro dips below dollar by Alexander Rubinstein, The Grayzone, 7 September 2022)

If imperialism could get its way, Russia would also suffer the same fate, one balkanised chunk at a time. That is why, in acting to liberate the Donbass and demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, Russia is not only lending a fraternal hand to Donetsk and Lugansk after they had spent eight years under the cosh, but is fighting for its own independence and very survival. It is a battle that all anti-imperialists should wholeheartedly support.

Back in 2014, imperialism had high hopes that it could lure the then government of Viktor Yanukovich into a European Union accession agreement, promising a glittering future if only it would abandon its policy of neutrality and walk

into the EU/IMF debt trap. It was when Yanukovich failed to take the bait that imperialism moved to Plan B, engineering a fascist coup to oust the elected government and win by force what it had failed to secure by guile.

And this imperialist intervention set in train the events that culminated in the present war – a proxy war that the Kiev putschists cannot win, but which their imperialist masters senselessly prolong, pouring weapons and dollars into an insatiable black hole.

Locked in the spotlight, Zelensky is in the unfortunate position of an actor who has accidentally got two different scripts muddled up in mid-performance. One minute he is expected to pose as a plucky national hero, prepared to give up his life to defend his fatherland – a doughty David confronting the Russian Goliath. The next minute he finds himself called upon to ring the stock exchange bell to announce a fire sale of all Ukraine’s national assets – a grubby huckster happy to sell off what remains of his country for a fistful of dollars.

Imperialism has been work-

ing on the latter script for a long time. Jake Kallio and Ben Norton have recorded on the Multipolarista website that “Starting in 2017, representatives of western governments and corporations quietly held annual conferences in which they discussed ways to profit from the civil war they were fuelling in Ukraine.

“In these meetings, western political and business leaders outlined a series of aggressive right-wing reforms they hoped to impose on Ukraine, including widespread privatisation of state-owned industries and deregulation of the economy.

“On 4 and 5 July 2022, top officials from the USA, EU, Britain, Japan and south Korea met in Switzerland for a so-called ‘Ukraine Recovery Conference’. There, they planned Ukraine’s postwar reconstruction and performatively announced aid commitments – while salivating over a bonanza of potential contracts.

“New Nato candidates Finland and Sweden committed to assure reconstruction in Lugansk, roughly 48 hours after Russia and separatist forces announced the region had fall-

Ukraine war

en fully under their control.

“But the Ukraine Recovery Conference was not new. It had been renamed to save the expense of a new acronym. In the previous five years, the group and its annual meetings were instead referred to as the ‘Ukraine Reform Conference’ (URC).

“The URC’s agenda was explicitly focused on imposing political changes on the country – namely, ‘strengthening the market economy’, ‘decentralisation, privatisation, reform of state-owned enterprises, land reform, state administration reform’ and ‘Euro-Atlantic integration’.”

So it is that, even with the war in Ukraine still dragging on, the vultures of monopoly capitalism are already picking through the wreckage in search of more loot.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian workers will be the first to feel the icy wind of labour law reforms. “In an explicit call for slashing labour protections, the document attacked the remaining pro-worker laws in Ukraine, some of which are a holdover of the Soviet era.

“The National Recovery Plan complained of ‘outdated labour legislation leading to complicated hiring and firing process, regulation of overtime, etc’. As an example of this supposed ‘outdated labour legislation’, the western-backed plan lamented that workers in Ukraine with one year of experience are granted a nine-week ‘notice period for redundancy dismissal’, compared to just four weeks in Poland and south Korea.” (West prepares to plunder post-war Ukraine with neoliberal shock therapy, Multipolarista, 28 July 2022)

This year, the Ukrainian parliament has already passed a law allowing bosses to suspend collective agreements, and an-

other which simply says that if you are employed by a business with fewer than 200 staff then you are no longer covered by labour laws at all!

Postscript

A Donbass-based commentator on Telegram, Aleksei Karpushev, posted the following observations on his channel on 19 September:

“Scrolling through the Ukrainian media, I came across interesting data on the current state of the economy of this country. These data are mentioned there somehow in passing, without much emphasis, and now we will understand why.

“The first thing I want to draw attention to is a serious drop in wages. According to the pension fund of Ukraine (other organisations simply do not publish such statistics there now), the decrease in salary in a number of industries as a percentage amounted to double-digit figures. Thus, Ukrainian public utilities now receive an average of 31.5 percent less than in December 2021, workers in the mining industry 17.8 percent, and transport workers 16.3 percent less. And this means nominal wages. And taking into account, again, double-digit inflation, we can conclude that real earnings in many professions have fallen dramatically over the past six months.

“Recently, the ministry of finance of Ukraine prepared a draft state budget for 2023, where the cost of education and healthcare will be reduced by more than 10 percent, social protection of the population by 6.3 percent, and physical development by two times. Also, housing subsidies for the most disadvantaged segments of the population will be reduced by 9.2 percent compared to this

year. That is: doctors, teachers, pensioners and disabled people in Ukraine, at best, will become beggars, and at worst, they will simply not be able to live next year.

“Well, and finally, the ‘icing on the cake’. According to the Ukrainian government, two million jobs have already been permanently lost in the country. By the end of the year, the reduction in the number of people employed in all areas will be five million, and the unemployment rate will reach 30 percent! At the same time, most still-working Ukrainians said that they either have begun to receive less money, or are on unpaid leave and do not receive anything at all.

“All this suggests that Ukraine has already slipped into an economic catastrophe, and that next year, if nothing changes, the impoverishment of the population there will become almost total and threaten the elementary physical existence of millions of people. The west, which even this year has not been providing even half of the funding needed to meet Ukraine’s declared minimum needs (which is about \$5bn a month), and is at present *reducing* the allocated amounts, will obviously not help here.

“I can already foresee the question: ‘What do we care about this, because life in the Donbass is also not sugar right now?’

“And indeed, life is not sugar for us for eight and a half years, since Ukrainian troops began to shell our region. Consequently, only the fall of today’s Ukraine, both militarily and economically (and these factors are very interrelated) can bring peace and prosperity to the people of Donbass.

“Now we are gradually approaching the climax of this process.” (Translated from the Russian by Google)

Ukraine referenda

◀ **page 7** and the actual loss of some territory. That Russia had been justified in anticipating war with Germany and taking proactive steps to defend herself was made clear by the subsequent 1941 invasion – an invasion in which the Finns were enthusiastic participants.

Today, the imperialist lie machine accuses Russia of conducting a ‘land grab’ in Ukraine. Western media and politicians claim (in advance!) that the popular referenda are ‘fake’ and pretend that Russia is ‘annexing’ parts of Ukraine – just like all the ‘other’ imperialists do in their aggressive wars.

And these impudent lies are given greater currency thanks to the muddle and cowardice of the left swamp, whose members are only too glad to furnish ‘Marxist’-sounding arguments to prove that Russia is just another imperialist power, no different from Britain, France, Germany and the USA – thereby absolving themselves from any moral responsibility to stand in solidarity against real imperialism.

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Ukraine war



Imperialist governments and media aid and abet Ukronazi war crimes

With the full backing of western war and propaganda machines, Ukraine's armed forces have perpetrated a string of atrocities – but the truth will out.

Ukraine continues to commit its war crimes with the assistance of arms shipments from imperialist governments. In support, the corporate 'mainstream' media obfuscate the truth, giving Ukraine a free hand to commit crimes not only against Russian soldiers, but also against civilians who are seen as 'disloyal' to Kiev.

Petal mines showered on Donetsk city

On the night of the 27 July, thousands of PFM-1 antipersonnel mines, also known as petal mines or butterfly mines, were airdropped over the city of Donetsk, capital of the Donetsk Peoples Republic (DPR).

Each of these plastic antipersonnel mines contain 40g of high explosive, and is designed to maim with enough power to blow off a foot. When released from the air, they glide to the ground without exploding, to be detonated by pressure – either from a single contact such as

being trodden on, or from the cumulative effect of being handled. These innocuous-looking plastic 'petals' are routinely picked up by civilians – often children – who have no idea what they are.

Social media footage from the city of Donetsk shows civilians in a state of fear and panic attempting to avoid mines they have been warned about as they walk down a footpath, and cars driving down the street with mines exploding underneath tyres.

The sheer volume and location of the mines dropped can only be the result of a determined, deliberate attack on civilians. It has been reported that so far 16 civilians have been injured – many with lifechanging injuries.

Ukraine is thought to possess *more than three million* of these mines, despite having signed up to the United Nations' anti-personnel mine

disarmament treaty in 1999. The Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) has accused Ukraine of using airborne missiles to scatter the mines, while Ukraine is insisting that the guilty party is Russia.

Although the Ukrainian fairy tale has been duly trotted out by western stenographers, it is surely one that stretches credulity too far, for not only does it expect its audience to believe that the Russians have suddenly taken it into their heads to mine a city that has been under the control of their Donetsk Republic allies since April 2014, it also requires them to accept that Russia has, *for no military or political gain*, recklessly and criminally abandoned its established strategy of avoiding civilian casualties wherever possible.

Massacre of POWs at Elenovka

On 29 July, two US-supplied Himars missiles were fired at a prison camp in Elenovka some 30km south of Donetsk city, killing 50 prisoners of war and injuring a further 70. The camp housed fascist fighters of the Azov battalion captured during

the liberation of Mariupol city in southern Donetsk.

True to form, Ukraine has accused Russia of covering up murder and torture at the camp, but media teams that have visited the site have seen the remnants of parts belonging to Himars missiles, pointing the finger squarely at a Ukrainian attack.

Once again, the Ukrainian version of events is simply laughable. Why would Russia need to 'cover up' any secrets held by the Azov prisoners? Even without the evidence of Himars fragments to prove that the hit was carried out by Ukrainian military, it is perfectly obvious who benefits from wiping out as many captured Azov fighters as possible.

One has only to remember that preparations were already well underway for the west's favourite 'freedom fighters' to stand trial for war crimes. Head of the DPR Denis Pushilin has confirmed that trials will begin by the end of the summer, and they are widely expected to provide a Nuremberg moment – revealing to the world the truth about the barbarity that was unleashed against the people of Donbass after the US-backed fascist coup of 2014.

The west-backed junta in Kiev, on the other hand, has every motivation to kill the captured Azov fighters, who had already begun speaking openly to their captors. On 28 July, the day before the massacre, an interview was published with Azov prisoner Dmytro Kozatsky (call sign Orest), who accused senior Zelensky advisor Oleksiy Arestovich of ordering the torture and execution of Russian prisoners of war for propaganda purposes.

Shock videos of such war crimes were ordered to be released on social media with the aim of deterring Russian soldiers from fighting.

Ukraine war

Imperialists and their prostitute media continue to defend the indefensible

Just two of the many headlines on this issue give a flavour of the utter servility of the western media in defence of the imperialist narrative. Politico US ran with ‘American-made rocket launchers not used in Ukraine prison strike, US assesses’, while CNN asserted: ‘Russia claims Ukraine used US arms to kill jailed POWs. Evidence tells a different story’.

In an ill-advised interview with the British Telegraph, Major General Vadim Skibitsky, the deputy head of Ukraine’s military intelligence service, let slip the extent of US involvement in missile strikes.

“Asked how the US-provided Himars multiple-launch rocket systems have so precisely targeted Russian fuel and ammunition depots, as well as battlefield headquarters in eastern Ukraine, Gen Skibitsky said: ‘in this case in particular, we use real-time information’.

“US officials are not providing direct targeting information, which would potentially undermine their case for not being direct participants in the war, Gen Skibitsky said.

“However, he suggested there was a level of consultation between intelligence officials of both countries prior to launching missiles that would allow Washington to stop any potential attacks if they were unhappy with the intended target.” (Britain helps Ukraine hunt for Russian spies eyeing Western military aid by Dominic Nicholls, 1 August 2022)

On the back of this interview, the Russian Ministry of Defence directly accused the USA of orchestrating missile attacks against civilian targets: “Political, criminal and moral responsibility for the Elenovka mas-

sacre and other war crimes in Ukraine, along with Zelensky, lies directly with the Biden administration.”

Nuclear blackmail at Zaporozhye

The Zaporozhye nuclear power plant (ZNPP), the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, has been under the protection of the Russian armed forces since early March. The plant is in the Zaporozhye district in the south-east of Ukraine on the Dnieper river, and sits close to the city of Energodar, which was built by the Soviet Union in the 1970s specifically for power plant workers.

Since taking over the plant, Russian national guard and nuclear protection specialists have secured the site while its Ukrainian staff have continued to run it without hindrance.

Since mid-July, however, there have been concerted attacks by Ukrainian armed forces against the plant, with multiple incidents involving artillery projectiles and kamikaze drones striking the surrounding infrastructure as well as the plant itself. These attacks have resulted in the deaths of civilians, damage to the electricity grid resulting in partial shutdowns of the plant, and damage to radioactive waste storage facilities.

While Ukraine’s President Zelensky has once more tried to turn the tables, accusing Russia of “nuclear blackmail” and alleging that the plant has been turned into a military base from which attacks are launched, the Ukrainian PR machine has also tried to claim that Russian troops have been *shelling themselves and the plant* in a false-flag ploy to discredit Ukraine.

Ukraine expects the world to believe that Russia is attacking a nuclear plant that is being protected by Russian troops,

endangering not only the lives of its own soldiers and the integrity of a critical piece of infrastructure, but threatening the whole of Europe with a nuclear disaster of unknown proportions. Given that the population of Zaporozhye is majority Russian, it is hard to understand what possible advantage could accrue to Russia from a public health crisis on such a scale.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is desperate and demonstrably reckless enough to carry out such criminal attacks. On the one hand, bombing the plant may be aimed at pressuring its imperialist backers to further escalate their involvement in the conflict. On the other hand, forcing the wider world into ‘taking action’ to prevent a nuclear accident might bring in UN peacekeepers and deny Russia the ability to operate freely in the Zaporozhye region – a much-needed success for Zelensky and his coterie as they attempt to ward off the inevitable Russian victory.

Zelensky has previously called for the nuclear plant to be demilitarised and returned to Ukrainian control, which would disrupt an upcoming referendum on the region joining the Russian Federation.

Ukraine was also worried at the prospect of the plant being removed from its electricity grid – a fear whose fruition it has only advanced by its reckless behaviour. Before the conflict, the plant at Zaporozhye provided Ukraine with 20 percent of its electricity, and until Ukraine started shelling it, it continued to do so – just as Russian natural gas continued to flow through Ukraine and payment of transit fees for gas delivered to Europe continued to be paid until Zelensky himself decided to close the Soyuz gas pipeline in May.

Meanwhile, material evidence backs up the Russian

version of events. Fragments of British Brimstone missiles that have been supplied to Ukraine have been found at the power plant.

Despite the obvious implausibility of Ukraine’s ‘Russian false flag/nuclear blackmail’ fable, major news organisations such as the New York Times and Bloomberg have been quite happy to repeat the claims that Russia is simultaneously shelling the power plant and using it to shield troops and equipment.

This does appear to have been a step too far for the imperialist establishment generally, however, which has refrained from blaming Russia entirely.

Meanwhile, a US defence official had to admit that some Ukrainian strikes had occurred at the plant: “I don’t want to say that the Ukrainians haven’t fired in that vicinity either, because I think there’s probably a likelihood that they have, but in a good – in a number of cases, it’s returning fire of the Russians who are firing from those locations.”

Bonnie Jenkins, the US under-secretary for arms control and international security, said: “I’m not able, at this point, to make any confirmation about the shelling and where it’s coming from. But what I would say is that, once again, the important thing to keep in mind and want to continue to reiterate here with all of you, is the importance of Russia’s withdrawal.

“Because these are all important questions, important issues, but we have to remember that we would not be in this situation if Russia would simply withdraw and give the site back to Ukraine.”

Indeed, many media were left with egg on their faces after a tacit admission from Ukraine of shelling around the ► **page 12**

Ukraine war

Ukronazi war crimes

◀ **page 11** nuclear plant: “In the areas of the settlements of Kherson and Energodar, accurate strikes by our troops destroyed three enemy artillery systems, as well as an ammunition depot and up to a company of personnel.”

In response to the ongoing attacks on the plant, the UN sent a team of investigators on a fact-finding mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which arrived on 1 September. The team’s brief was to estimate the material damage to the plant and to evaluate the operational capabilities of the its safety and security systems. Representatives of the IAEA were also tasked with continuing to document the effects of any further attacks.

Escalating their lunacy, and apparently inspired by watching one too many James Bond movies, Ukrainian forces launched a farcical attempt to recapture the nuclear facility on the very day that the team from the IAEA arrived.

“Over 40 motorboats, divided into two groups and carrying more than 250 Ukrainian special operations troops and foreign mercenaries, reportedly tried to land on the coast of the Kakhovka reservoir not far from Energodar, where the nuclear power plant is located.

“The assailants were quickly spotted and targeted by Russia’s Su-30 jets and Ka-52 attack helicopters. Those strikes sank some 20 boats, while the rest turned and retreated. The remaining Ukrainian troops were than targeted by Russian artillery as they tried to come ashore, the defence ministry in Moscow said.

“According to Moscow, the failed attack on the nuclear power plant saw 47 Ukrainian

service personnel killed, including ten foreign mercenaries, with at least 20 others wounded.

“Kiev’s special forces attempted to storm the facility despite the inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) being there, the defence ministry stressed.” (Moscow reveals details of latest Ukrainian assault near Zaporozhye nuclear plant, RT, 3 September 2022)

In response to a question about the attack, UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric responded: “We are glad the Russian Federation did what it needed to do to keep our inspectors safe.”

The IAEA has since published its report on nuclear safeguards in Ukraine. Unsurprisingly, it does not accuse either Ukraine or Russia of shelling the plant. Hiding how the damage to the facility came about seems to have been deemed politically expedient in some quarters.

Readers can perhaps recall how another UN organisation, the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), falsified a report in order to blame the Syrian government for carrying out an alleged chemical weapons attack in the city of Douma. That falsified report was used as vindication for ‘retaliatory’ missile strikes conducted by the USA, Britain and France before any proof of a chemical attack had even been collected.

Lies, lies and more lies

Every attempt at transparency regarding Ukraine’s conduct is met with concerted imperialist push-back. In late July, notorious western ‘NGO’ Amnesty International published a report accusing the Ukrainian forces of committing war crimes by stationing troops and artillery in or near schools, hos-

pitals and residential buildings, thereby using civilians as human shields. This practice was identified in 19 different towns and villages by Amnesty, where return fire from Russian armed forces had led to the death of Ukrainian civilians.

The report, modest as it was, was met with hysterical condemnation in the western media. Oksana Pokalchuk, the head of Amnesty’s team in Ukraine, quit, stating that her team had done “everything they could to prevent this material from being published”.

Despite these protestations, Pokalchuk has found herself on a target list on the notorious fascist-run Myrotvorets website (linked to the Ukrainian government). Myrotvorets publishes a running list, and personal information, of people who are considered by its leadership to be “enemies of Ukraine”.

Daria Dugina, the daughter of Aleksandr Dugin, was also on the Myrotvorets hitlist. After her shocking murder, which was generally presumed to have been the result of a failed hit on her father, her profile on Myrotvorets was updated with the word ‘terminated’ stamped across her photograph.

By the author’s own admission, Amnesty had focused exclusively on Russia’s alleged war crimes up until the publication of its brief report on Ukrainian crimes: “I think the level of self-censorship on this issue has been pretty extraordinary, said Donatella Rovera.

“Amnesty International has produced dozens of reports about Russian war crimes. Rovera said she personally investigated when hundreds of tortured bodies turned up in suburban Kiev after Russia retreated from the area.

“To say that issuing a four-page press release compares to hundreds of pages that

we’ve published since the beginning of the Russian invasion ... it’s just not true,’ said Rovera.” (Amnesty International’s report criticising Ukraine is dividing the rights group by Julian Hayda, NPR, 5 August 2022)

Amnesty has since issued an apology for any “distress” caused by its report.

CBS news also recently censored its own documentary as a result of push-back from western politicians and media. The investigation it carried out in Ukraine found that *only 30 percent* of the weapons provided by the west were reaching their intended destination, with the rest remaining unaccounted for.

The Amnesty apology and CBS documentary withdrawal show clearly how targeted pressure can force nominally ‘independent’ organisations into self-censorship, and indicate that for now Ukraine will continue to act with impunity. The US and EU imperialists, having spent tens of billions of dollars arming their proxy forces in Ukraine, have every reason to hope that their war crimes can be swept under the carpet.

With imperialists and their media patsies doing all they can to vilify Russia, it falls to the lot of anti-imperialists to counter the west’s propaganda blitz. Various pretexts for the US and EU imperialists to escalate the war into a direct conflict with Russia are already in place. Jingoism is being stoked amongst western workers to prepare them for such a war. A key condition for stopping its outbreak or curtailing its extent is that the working class must be educated as to how and why we have reached the precipice of another world war.

In particular, workers in the west must be brought to understand that the imperialists have been following their long-standing objective of subjugat-

Ukraine war

ing and breaking up Russia for many decades. The 2014 fascist coup was one act in a long line of aggressive moves to this end.

Nato's proxy war in Ukraine is aimed at denying self-determination and independence to Russia and at widening the scope of imperialist control and looting. It is part of a desperate drive to stave off the total collapse of the capitalist-imperialist economic system, which is currently threatened by a catastrophic economic crisis of overproduction.

Only by telling workers the truth can we hope to prepare an effective resistance to a wider imperialist war against Russia. The British working class has nothing to gain from war with Russia, only death and misery!

NHS 'plan'

◀ **page 3** capitalist profits, workers had best start learning to look out for themselves!

We are going to have to wake up to the fact that there are two *implacably hostile classes* in this society, each one of which can only benefit at the expense of the other. Only a centrally planned health service, aimed at prevention as well as cure, and delivered free to all, without rationing or profiteering of any kind, can fulfil workers' needs – alongside the provision of decent housing, education, food, social facilities, useful work, and all the other prerequisites of good health.

And only a socialist planned economy will be able to deliver those in perpetuity, free from the constant fear of their being lost again at some point down the road when the militancy that achieved these vital concessions has once again been bought off and lulled to sleep.



EU quietly rowing back on self-defeating sanctions against Russia

In the face of the abject failure of their economic war, EU leaders are trying to salvage what they can without admitting to a U-turn.

As Russia's special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine reaches its six-month mark, so does Russia's status as the most heavily sanctioned country on earth.

The US regime and its European sidekicks are very much used to strangling 'disobedient' nations' civilian populations with murderous economic sieges aimed at causing so much human suffering that the people's resolve is broken and they consent to giving up their country to US imperialist domination.

This tried-and-tested strategy, although so far largely unsuccessful at actually unseating many 'disobedient' governments, has been brutally effective at crippling economies and causing tens of thousands of excess deaths in many countries, including Iran, Syria, Venezuela and the DPR Korea. Six months ago, in response to Russia's SMO, the western imperialist bloc decided to make an enormous gamble by attempting the same routine against Russia.

The problem for the imperialists is that Russia is not Ven-

ezuela or Iran. It is not a small or medium-sized nation reliant on imports and trade with the west or western-aligned nations. It is the largest country in the world by landmass, an economic powerhouse that has a huge trade surplus.

Russia exports far more than it imports and produces most of what it needs domestically; a surviving achievement from its former socialist days as the leading republic of the old Soviet Union.

Hence, we see today the embarrassing spectacle of the imperialists beginning to row back their sanctions, albeit as quietly as possible to avoid losing face.

For example, officially speaking, Russian food and fertiliser exports have "never been included" in the sanctions. In actual fact, this was deliberately kept as an ambiguous grey area so as to frighten others into not trading in these items whilst maintaining a show of 'humanitarianism' in the face of the huge civilian hardship that would be caused by cutting these vital commodities off from the world.

Such a policy is well-known to Iranians, for whom trade in life-saving medicines and critical hospital supplies under western sanctions has long been very much a "well technically yes, but actually no" situation.

Now, however, food and fertiliser from Russia have been given a clear green light from the European Union. A similar reversal has taken place on the question of Russian oil, where Britain's previous policy of banning insurance for any Russian oil tanker (no matter where it was heading) has been watered down to only prohibiting insurance for Russian tankers destined for Britain.

It is clear that the western imperialists, in particular the EU nations, severely underestimated the impact that sanctioning Russia would have on their own supply chains and corporations.

Whilst the above moves suggest they are making some efforts to get runaway inflation and energy price spikes under control, European leaders show no signs of readiness to end their Ukrainian proxy war with Russia.

They still clearly hope that they are in with a chance of replacing President Putin's anti-imperialist government with a submissive US-controlled client regime – one like the Zelensky regime in Ukraine, presumably.

The contradiction in this have-your-cake-and-eat-it policy suggests that European workers still face very difficult times ahead. As soaring fuel bills look likely to push millions into poverty, the class war that has lain relatively dormant in the west for the past half-century is bound to intensify once more.

The questions of socialism and proletarian revolution, so long forgotten or ridiculed as relics of a bygone era, will once again come to the fore.

Ukraine war



How corrupt is Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky?

Who is this man who 'preferred the ruin of his country to a timely compromise'?

This article by Jeremy Kuzmarov is reproduced from Covert Action with thanks.

Will the real Volodymyr Zelensky please stand up?

In 2019, the CIA-run Radio Free Europe reported on Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's connection to Ihor Kholomoisky, a Ukrainian oligarch whom the State Department banned from entering the USA in March 2021 due to his "significant corruption".

This report is ironic given that, since Ukraine's war with Russia began over four months ago, Radio Free Europe along with the rest of the western media has depicted Zelensky as something equivalent to a reincarnation of Winston Churchill and Mother Teresa, driving a campaign for his nomination for the Nobel peace prize and inspiring a flamboyant musical tribute during the 2022 Grammy awards.

Steering one of the biggest ponzi schemes in world history

Meanwhile in January 2022, the US Department of Justice filed a civil forfeiture complaint – the fourth against him – which alleges that Kholomoisky and Gennadiy Bogolyubov, who owned PrivatBank, one of the largest banks in Ukraine, embezzled and defrauded the bank of \$5.5bn, which went missing.

The two allegedly obtained fraudulent loans and lines of credit from 2008 to 2016 and laundered portions of their criminal proceeds using an array of shell companies' bank accounts, primarily at PrivatBank's Cyprus branch, before they transferred the funds to the USA, where they continued to launder them illegally through an associate operating out of offices in Miami.

Some of the stolen money was from IMF loans granted to the Ukrainian government after the 2014 Maidan coup, which

was paid out by the National Bank of Ukraine into Privatbank. [1]

According to a profile in the American Spectator, Kholomoisky laundered millions in Cleveland, Ohio, and across the US midwest, where, as "one of the [region's] biggest real-estate landlords", he "steered one of the biggest Ponzi schemes in world history".

Making even other oligarchs, no strangers to violent crime, blanch

Born in Soviet Ukraine in 1963, Kholomoisky was among those to benefit after the Soviet collapse in the early 1990s from the sale of formerly state-owned enterprises like steel plants and gas wells at fire-sale prices.

According to the American Spectator, Kholomoisky had two advantages over other nascent oligarchs. First, he had a background in metallurgy – in the science of making and moulding metals and alloys in demand. Second, Kholomoisky "displayed a ruthlessness that made even other oligarchs, no strangers to violent crime,

blanch".

A writer for Forbes magazine reported that, in one instance, he saw "hundreds of hired rowdies armed with baseball bats, iron bars, gas and rubber-bullet pistols and chainsaws forcibly [take] over" a steel plant that Kholomoisky eyed.

For the full Bond-villain effect, Kholomoisky put a shark tank in his office. Allegedly, he was not averse to shoving the head of a visitor in it as a reminder never to cross him.

A jew funding neo-nazis

According to Oleg Noginsky, the president of the Suppliers Customs Union, after Ukraine's February 2014 Euromaidan 'revolution', Kholomoisky "hired the guys who carried out the Odessa massacre" – the killing of several dozen supporters of deposed Russian-allied president Viktor Yanukovich who were holed up in a trade union building.

As governor of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast from 2014 until 2016, Kholomoisky bankrolled anti-Russian units operating with the Ukrainian army in Donetsk and Luhansk – which voted to secede after the post-Maidan government tried to impose the Ukrainian language on them.

These units included the neo-nazi Azov battalion, which terrorised the people of eastern Ukraine, along with the Dnipro and Aidar battalions, which were sometimes deployed as personal thug squads to protect Kholomoisky's financial interests.

Burisma and the CIA

The New York Post reported that Kholomoisky had a "controlling interest" in Burisma Holdings – the Ukrainian energy company that employed Hunter Biden as a board member for \$50,000 per month. Russian media, quoted in State

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Department emails, referred to Burisma as “part of Kholomoisky’s financial empire”.

Six months after Hunter Biden departed, Burisma appointed Cofer Black to its board – a position that he maintains. Black was a career CIA officer who served as director of the CIA’s counterterrorism centre following the 11 September attacks.

This appointment raises questions as to whether Burisma served as a CIA-front operation that was designed to help finance the anti-Russia militias in eastern Ukraine.

Ihor and Volodymyr sitting in a tree ...

Kholomoisky’s relationship with Volodymyr Zelensky goes back to around 2012, when Zelensky and his partners in a television production company, Kwartal 95, began making regular content for TV stations owned by Kholomoisky.

A comedian and actor who had been famous since the 2000s, Zelensky began his political rise a few years after taking on a starring role in the political satire ‘Servant of the People’, which began airing on Kholomoisky’s network in 2015.

The show starred Zelensky as a humble history teacher whose anti-corruption rant in class is filmed by a student, goes viral online, and wins him national office.

In a case of life imitating art, Zelensky ended up winning the real-world Ukrainian presidency just three-and-a-half years after the show’s launch, with more than 73 percent of the vote.

Zelensky capitalised on widespread public anger at corruption, but his 2019 campaign was dogged by doubts over his anti-graft bona fides given his connection to Kholomoisky.

In the heat of the campaign, an ally of incumbent Petro Poroshenko, Volodymyr Ariev, published a chart on Facebook purporting to show that Zelensky and his television production partners were beneficiaries of a web of offshore firms, which they had set up beginning in 2012, that allegedly received \$41m in funds from Kholomoisky’s Privatbank.

Ariev did not provide smoking-gun evidence, though the Pandora Papers – 11.9 million leaked documents published by a consortium of investigative journalists in October 2021 – show that at least some of the details in this alleged scheme correspond to reality.

In specific, the Pandora Papers reveal information on ten companies in the network that match structures detailed in Ariev’s chart, and show that Zelensky and his partners used companies based in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Belize and Cyprus.

Forbes magazine currently places Zelensky’s net worth at between \$20 and \$30m – a total he could not have earned simply as a TV performer and comedian. [Others have placed it considerably higher. The true total is unknown.]

Zelensky allegedly owns lavish properties in central London, Italy and Miami Beach – to which he could retire if he is forced to flee Ukraine.

Two of Zelensky’s associates in the offshore network, who were also part of his TV production company, have held powerful positions in his government. Serhiy Shefir is Zelensky’s top presidential aide, while Ivan Bakanov headed until very recently the feared security service of Ukraine (SBU), which is Europe’s largest security agency and nearly the same size as the FBI, despite Ukraine being 16 times smaller than the USA.

You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours

Besides providing financial support during Ukraine’s 2019 election, Kholomoisky supplied Zelensky with a car, lent his personal lawyer to him to be campaign adviser, and promoted his candidacy on various media outlets that he owned.

The close ties between the two were apparent in 2018, when Zelensky traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, for Kholomoisky’s birthday, and then afterwards back to Geneva another ten times.

When Kholomoisky moved to Tel Aviv, Israel, Zelensky traveled there to visit with him three times, according to Radio Free Europe.

Zelensky claimed that his relationship with Kholomoisky was not political; rather, he had gone to visit him because of TV work.

However, Zelensky made sure to reward him when he became president. He removed Kholomoisky’s opponents, the prosecutor general, the governor of the national bank of Ukraine, and his own prime minister, who tried to regulate Kholomoisky’s control of a state-owned electricity company.

Ukraine’s parliament also passed a measure that prevented Kholomoisky from having to pay higher taxes on his mining operations.

No lion of a leader

Zelensky’s longstanding ties to Kholomoisky belie the pristine public image of a man hailed by US politicians as a “lion of a leader” (August Pfluger R-TX) and person of “incredible bravery” (Adam Schiff, D-CA).

A neoliberal who advanced a sweeping privatisation initiative, Zelensky has banned 11 opposition parties and carried

out a reign of terror against political opponents.

The victims include former leader of the Ukrainian left forces Vasily Volga, and the Kononovich brothers, leaders of Ukraine’s Young Communist League, who were accused of being pro-Russian.

Despite campaigning on a peace platform, Zelensky provoked war with Russia by a) enacting a major troop build-up in eastern Ukraine in February; b) increasing shelling of eastern Ukraine in violation of cease-fire agreements; and c) calling for the retaking from Russia of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which houses the Russian navy’s Black Sea fleet.

Since the fighting began, Zelensky has eschewed negotiations and instead begged the west for more and more weapons while inviting foreign mercenaries into Ukraine.

Swiss journalist Guy Mettan has written that Zelensky will ultimately be held responsible for Ukraine’s devastation in the war as he “preferred the ruin of his country to a timely compromise”.

This assessment is at odds with the current media hagiography of Zelensky, which also obscures ties to Kholomoisky that the CIA itself has acknowledged.

NOTES

1. Journalist John Helmer points out that Hillary Clinton, Victoria Nuland and Christine LaGarde, the former IMF directors, ignored the evidence of Kholomoisky’s corruption and the squandering of IMF loan money in a Ponzi scheme; probably because of the political imperative underlying the IMF’s policy towards Ukraine after the Maidan coup. (The Kolomoisky pyramid started with Hillary Clinton and Victoria Nuland, 30 June 2019)

Europe



Czech people take to the streets in record numbers to oppose Nato's war in Ukraine

Is this huge demonstration in Prague a sign of things to come across the European Union?

On Saturday 3 September, as many as 160,000 protesters (more than double the 70,000 admitted by imperialist media) came out onto the streets in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic.

Their demands were simple: end Czech involvement in the war in Ukraine and restore trade with the Russian Federation to resolve the soaring cost of living.

This demonstration was followed by another on 17 September, with a further mass mobilisation planned for Wednesday 28. Organisers are predicting that as many as 300,000 protesters could thus be mobilised for the upcoming event, which will take place in eight cities simultaneously, with big screen link-ups to Wenceslas Square.

Increasingly, the core demand of the protestors is the removal of the current comprador regime and its replacement by one that is willing to serve the national interest.

It is difficult to overstate the

importance of this development in the consciousness of the masses. Whilst it may be obvious to our regular readers that skyrocketing energy bills and rampant inflation are being hugely exacerbated by European sanctions on Russia, most ordinary working-class people throughout Europe are unaware of this fact.

The corporate media, as always, has done its best to obscure the cause of the suffering, regularly claiming that President Vladimir Putin has cut off trade relations from his side in order to "hold Europe to ransom".

In reality, the opposite is the case: following the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine, the European Union – in aid of the interests of its US imperialist allies – cut itself off *voluntarily* from access to Russian commodities – assuming that this cessation in trade would hurt Russia's economy so badly as to bring the country to its knees and its government crashing down.

This proved to be a major miscalculation. Russia has been steadily building new trade links with China and other, more reliable, partners to the east for some time, and has easily been able to replace its lost European buyers.

Meanwhile, EU countries are now running out of natural gas and other crucial supplies that they are unable to source elsewhere – leading to massive energy price spikes that in turn look like tipping already crisis-ridden imperialist economies into deep recession, accompanied by a wave of bankruptcies and all the accompanying human misery that comes with what bourgeois economists euphemistically refer to as a 'market correction'.

Nonetheless, in spite of all the anti-Russian media propaganda, many Czech workers have been able to identify the real source of their suffering: the pro-US stooge regime that runs their nation – and the EU and Nato institutions that enforce US imperialist hegemony over them.

The result is beginning to look like a reverse version of the so-

called 'Prague Spring' of 1968, this time with the protest movement directed against Nato – the Czech people's real class enemy – instead of against their Soviet allies.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia was one of the few voices from the left that mobilised for the protest, with the party's former vice-chair and current presidential candidate Josef Skála speaking from its platform and attempting to bring some much-needed socialist understanding to this broad popular movement.

Needless to say, the corporate media has vacillated between ignoring the demonstrators entirely and trying to dismiss them as extremists and 'Kremlin agents'.

The Guardian ran an article characterising the protest as a "coalescence of far-right and extreme left elements", playing on the threadbare 'red-brown alliance' trope so beloved of western anticommunists.

Most often used by US Democrats to tarnish all opposition, the aim of this label is to scare socialists into isolating themselves from the working masses by railing against any engagement with supposed 'nazis' – ie, with working-class people who may once have voted for a right-wing party or otherwise hold some conservative social views.

The irony will certainly not be lost on our readers, well aware of how the activists hurling such slurs at poor workers are almost invariably fanatical supporters of a stooge regime in Kiev that is riddled with and dominated by *actual* (rather than imagined) nazis.

The significant involvement of certain right-wing and anti-immigrant elements in the Czech demonstration led many so-called leftists to dissociate themselves from the protest.

Europe

The Guardian article rammed this message home with a quote from a liberal Czech commentator who claimed that the protestors' aims were "suspiciously reminiscent of Donald Trump's agenda"; not the most subtle reference to the US ruling class's 'Russiagate' and 'fascism' fake storms.

How exactly demanding an end to weapons deliveries to Ukraine is 'suspiciously reminiscent' of a president under whose watch the USA was merrily arming the Kiev junta is not explained – except that, until he was forced to drop this approach, Donald Trump made himself odious to US monopolists by suggesting that it might be possible for the USA to take a friendly (instead of implacably hostile) attitude towards Russia.

Despite this very predictable line of attack from the Prague regime and its western supporters, the protestors seem unfazed and promise to hold more demonstrations until their demands are met.

In another encouraging sign of increasing consciousness amongst Czech workers, a counter-protest in defence of Nato and in support of continued Czech aid to the Kiev regime was a total flop, attracting just 50-100 die-hard liberal ideologues.

Seemingly inspired by the Czech example, protests appear to have spread to Austria and Italy. These have been reported by Iran's Press TV but largely ignored by western imperialist media.

As winter sets in and the cruel boomerang effects of Europe's sanctions bite deeper on the workers at home, we can expect to see such outpourings of rage spread across the European Union, calling into question the rule of Europe's decadent US-allied imperialist ruling classes.



Closure of Nord Stream 1: another own goal for Europe

It is not Russians but European who are facing hunger and blackouts as a result of the EU's failed sanctions war.

On 31 August, Russia announced the closure of its Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline to Europe pending essential maintenance work.

The giant German company that engineered the pipeline, Siemens, would normally undertake this regular maintenance work, operating out of Canada. The snag is that Germany and Canada have both signed up to the US economic war against Russia and are bound by their own sanctions regime not to trade with the enemy.

The west has sought to exit this dilemma by crossing its collective fingers and hoping that the pipeline would continue indefinitely to function safely without expert maintenance. Speaking as the only adult in the room, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov pointed out that "the Europeans absolutely absurdly make a decision to refuse to service their equipment", contrary to their contractual duties (let alone basic common sense).

The result of this accident

waiting to happen is that all Nord Stream 1 operations have now had to close down completely until such time as a leak in the main turbine has been sorted out, with potentially disastrous consequences for the supply of gas in Europe.

Sooner than admit that their own economic aggression against Russia is to blame for the plight now facing Europeans, Russia is now being accused of "weaponising" the gas supply. It seems that imperialism wants to have its cake and eat it. It openly conspires to weaken and destroy the Russian economy by the imposition of sanctions, yet when those sanctions instead backfire against their authors they cry foul.

Of course, if the German bourgeoisie had not chosen to sacrifice its own advanced and fuel-hungry industrial economy on the altar of Washington's proxy war against Russia, things might have been very different, with Nord Stream 2 supplementing Nord Stream 1 in the supply of Russian gas to Germany and its neighbours.

Instead, Berlin is reducing itself to the status of a tin can tied to the tail of a feral cat. As the deputy chair of Russia's safety council Dmitry Medvedev commented on Telegram, Berlin is "acting as an enemy of Russia" by supporting sanctions towards Moscow and supplying Ukraine with weapons, adding bitterly: "They have declared hybrid war against Russia – and this old man [that is, German chancellor Olaf Scholz] acts surprised that the Germans have some little problems with gas." (Mirza Shehnaz, Business Insider, 5 September 2022)

If imperialism was hoping that by prolonging its proxy war it could bankrupt the Russian economy, consider this report of a survey carried out by Finnish think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

"Russia has earned more than enough from President Putin's energy war on the west to cover the cost of the Ukraine invasion, researchers said. The Kremlin has brought in £141bn from oil, gas and coal sales since the Russian leader sent tanks across the border six months ago ...

"In comparison, it has spent an estimated £86bn on the war ... Soaring energy prices meant that the Kremlin was able to swell the coffers of its war machine even as it slashed gas deliveries to Europe in retaliation for the sanctions levelled against it." (Marc Bennetts, The Times, 6 September 2022)

Meanwhile, China has announced that it will henceforth be paying for its Russian gas in roubles and yuan. Gazprom regularly pipes gas to China through its 1,865-mile Power of Siberia pipeline. The day before Russia began its special military operation, the two countries signed a £32.5bn extension to the deal. Go China.

British politics



Comrade Ella tells Chinese conference: 'A decent future is ours for the taking'

How can we bring the weapon of Marxism to the people as they face the growing crises of poverty, hunger and war?

The following speech was delivered by our party chair, Ella Rule, to the CPC and World Marxist Political Parties forum 2022, on the topic of 'Indigenising and contemporising Marxism in the 21st century: achievements and prospects'.

The CPGB-ML is strongly based on the classic tenets of Marxism, and considers that the writings of the great Marxist leaders of the past are as relevant today as ever they were. This is not to say that there have not been important changes that any Marxist party needs thoroughly to analyse and understand, so as to adapt their strategy and tactics in an appropriate manner.

For us, the most important point to note since the end of the second world war is the change in the mechanisms used by imperialism in order to enforce its domination. Occupation, colonisation and day-to-day military enforcement are no longer the order of the day, having been replaced in the

main by debt servitude.

The oppressed countries from which imperialism continues to extract tribute are for the most part nominally free independent countries, but the reality is that their relationship with their imperialist creditors forces them into abject slavery, with a large proportion of the proceeds of sale of the fruits of the labour of their population being taken by the imperialists by way of service of the enormous debts owed to them, which are virtually unrepayable.

What is left to the producers is generally insufficient to meet their most basic needs, so the oppressed countries have no choice but to obey the imperialist diktat, because to disobey is to risk not being able to borrow enough to meet the shortfall, although of course increasing their indebtedness means further tightening of their bond of service.

The position of the oppressed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America can be likened to the position of China's peas-

antry before liberation, who toiled day and night to make their landlords rich, but because of their debts and their perennial need to borrow were in a situation akin to slavery.

A ray of light appeared on the horizon of the downtrodden countries when China became strong enough to offer them an alternative source of loans – loans that would help them loosen the ties of imperialist bondage. And, indeed, Chinese loans have brought about a transformation in very many oppressed countries, enabling them to build modern infrastructure and facilities, and take steps towards genuine sovereignty and independence.

However, this has at the same time enraged imperialism by weakening its political and economic domination of those countries, driving it to wage incessant wars to try to bring to heel any countries trying to exert their political independence and/or trying to ensure that a larger proportion of their resources is made available for the benefit of the people of the countries concerned rather than being syphoned off by imperialist bankers and multinationals.

This is why China is seen as being the number one threat to the interests of imperialism. This is why China is the target in the imperialist countries of unremitting hostile propaganda, and why attempts are being made to encircle it militarily in preparation for possible war, despite the Chinese leadership making it as clear as clear can be that it is only interested in peaceful development and mutual cooperation.

Marxist parties will recall that in the run-up to the start of the first world war, the dominant imperialist powers at the time – Britain and France – were being warned that the cost of war would severely weaken all

participants, including themselves. However, in defence of their imperialist domination of the world these countries were driven, contrary to all the best advice, to wage war on Germany on the principle that it was necessary to crush German designs to grab a 'fair share' of the imperialist booty before Germany got too strong to be beaten.

In the event, the cost of the war to all the participating European powers was far greater than anybody had foreseen. Today, US imperialism, along with European and Japanese imperialism, feel that its domination is again under a threat to which it cannot possibly afford to submit, being itself in considerable economic difficulties.

This time, the threat is not coming from a rival imperialist but from a liberating force. From the point of view of the imperialists, that difference is not important. Whatever the threat, they know they have to quash it – regardless of the price in lives and treasure.

The only hope, therefore, for averting a third world war is that communists in every country should mobilise their own people against war – not simply by passing resolutions to be duly ignored when war breaks out (just as such resolutions were ignored by most of the supposedly Marxist parties of the Second International at the time the first world war), but by organising the masses to frustrate all war preparations, arms build-ups, arms transportation, military enrolment, etc, etc, and overthrow the ruling class that seeks to mobilise them for war.

All communist parties in imperialist countries and in countries allied to imperialism need to work flat out to counter the image of China or Russia as an enemy, and all communist parties in oppressed coun- ▶

Social



Reactionary Malthusianism is alive and well as feminists celebrate declining birth rate

Since they cannot admit to a solution lying outside of capitalist production relations, 'women's rights' advocates are reduced to prettifying their chains.

In recent years, much has been made of declining birth rates around the world, particularly in western countries. Whilst occasionally some fears are expressed about how this may impact social care for pensioners, the most common reaction tends to be a dismissive: "So what? The planet has too many people anyway."

Such Malthusian sentiment is almost a public prejudice amongst the population today, much like the fear of being 'overcrowded' by immigration. A recent article by one Martha Gill in the I newspaper carried the provocative title 'Declining birth rates are a cause for celebration' provided an insight into the 'logic' of modern liberal anti-natalist thought.

Gill claimed that the advance of what she calls "women's

rights" has made declining birth rates inevitable. Defining 'women's rights' simply as women entering the workforce and having access to abortion on demand, Gill claims that the only way to deal with falling birth rates and simultaneously protect 'women's rights' is to import immigrants from countries which lack such 'rights'.

In her words, the supply of immigrants will not run out "until the patriarchy is smashed worldwide" – ie, until the adoption of her so-called 'women's rights' everywhere causes a global shortage of working-age people.

She fails to see that the 'right' to choose abortion is no right at all. The vast majority of people who 'choose' abortion do so because they feel they have no choice: the advent of a child,

or another child, would impact negatively on their ability to earn a living, condemning not just the mother but her whole family to such a lowered standard of living that they would find it intolerable.

Not many people would 'choose' to be a single mother living on benefits, either for themselves or for their children. Interestingly, it is rare indeed for anti-abortionists to advocate the provision of *abundant social facilities* such as affordable nurseries and after-school facilities that would make a real difference to whether or not a woman felt she had to 'choose' abortion.

Just like all capitalistic ideologies that sanctify personal short-term profit over the long-term collective interests of humanity, liberal feminism and its individualist conception of 'women's rights' is no different. Abortion is viewed by the bourgeoisie as a cheap alternative to providing decent social facilities that enable child-rearing to be combined comfortably with working in social production.

The aim of liberal feminism is to tell women how lucky they are to have the 'choice' of having an abortion!

The fact of the matter is that as long as capitalist relations of production remain, women face a binary choice between career or children. When private profit is the main motivator of production, hiring mothers will always be unattractive to employers because they work fewer hours (since no government will fund high-quality childcare at affordable prices).

Essentially, the lack of good-quality, freely-available and affordable childcare comes down to the fact that paying for it means reducing profitability. Either employers would have to pay more tax, or they would have to pay higher wages so that workers could be taxed more. Either way, profits would go down.

The only societies to have fully escaped from this 'Sophie's choice' situation are those that transitioned to a socialist economy in which profitability is no longer the criterion for production. Rather, all production is planned for the benefit of society as a whole.

As anyone who wants to get ahead as a mainstream media columnist is, of course, ideologically forbidden from acknowledging the successes of the socialist countries in this or any other field, the only options left are either to wind the clock back to Victorian-style domestic slavery or to go full Malthusian and try to prettify the gradual decline of populations.

Given the current overproduction crisis and capitalism's tendency to seek to destroy the excess productive forces to extricate itself – and remembering that humans themselves are also productive forces – it is likely that the glorification of childlessness by the lackeys of imperialism will only grow louder.

Meanwhile it is left to socialist societies to put children back where they belong – at the very heart of society, as both our greatest treasure and our hope for the future.

◀ tries must propagate to the masses the need to break the chains of debt servitude and reclaim the right to benefit from their own labour, and to organise their productive forces to meet their own needs rather

than imperialist requirements.

In so doing, communists will restore the good name of communism among the exploited and oppressed people of the world that was tainted when the Soviet Union was brought

down by Khrushchevite revisionism.

The masses of the people must be helped to understand that the future must be communist, that communism stands for progress and greater

happiness, that the future lies in their hands and in theirs alone, and that with the leadership of a genuine communist party the future is theirs for the taking.

Americas



Protests erupt against corrupt comprador government in Haiti

Ruthless political suppression and rampant superexploitation by US monopoly capital continue to drive social unrest in the island nation.

Social unrest in Haiti, never far from the surface, has exploded again in recent weeks, with inflation hitting 30 percent, a lack of fuel and a spike in the prices of basic goods on the one hand, and an increase in gang-related kidnappings and killings on the other.

Some background

When France moved from revolution to reaction under Napoleon Bonaparte, so too did the French government go from being an ally to an enemy of San Domingo's black government.

Napoleon was to declare: "The freedom of the negroes, if recognised in St Domingue and legalised by France, would

at all times be a rallying point for freedom-seekers of the new world." The same attitude towards Haiti has been displayed ever since by imperialist powers, the main mantle of suppression having been passed from France to the USA in the meantime.

US imperialism regularly puts just the same supremacist thinking on display. In this Washington Post article, for example, the author opines: "Many in the Haitian American community also blame US foreign policy for spurring Haiti's humanitarian crisis, saying successive administrations have failed to nurture stable Haitian governments willing to embrace human rights and fight

corruption, poverty and criminal gangs." (Charges of racism swirl as Haitian Americans, allies unite to protest migrants' treatment by Tim Craig, Sean Sullivan and Silvia Foster-Frau, Washington Post, 22 September 2021)

The assumptions this makes about the supposed 'rights' and 'responsibilities' that the USA has in its relations with Haiti are obvious nonsense. Firstly, the USA is itself the greatest *destabiliser* of Haitian governments, regularly installing comprador leaders who are willing to do its bidding.

Secondly, what gives the USA either the right or the duty to 'nurture' the government of Haiti? And in whose interest? It is US corporations' pursuit of maximum profit that has led to the overthrow of so many Haitian governments – in large part so as to *suppress mini-*

mum wages – and which have built a private army to enforce this agenda.

"Drawing on almost 2,000 classified US diplomatic cables on Haiti released by WikiLeaks, a partnership between The Nation magazine and the Haitian weekly *Haïti Liberté* exposes new details on how Fruit of the Loom, Hanes and Levi's worked with the United States to block an increase in the minimum wage in the hemisphere's poorest nation, how business owners and members of the country's elite used Haiti's police force as their own private army after the 2004 US-backed coup that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and how the United States, the European Union and the United Nations supported Haiti's recent presidential and parliamentary elections, despite concerns over the exclusion of Haiti's largest opposition party, Lavalas, the party of Aristide." (Haiti: Leaked cables expose US suppression of minimum wage, election doubts and elite's private army, Democracy Now, 24 June 2011)

US imperialists openly express derision towards Haiti, whether it is former president Donald Trump referring to Haiti and various African nations as "shithole countries" and asking: "Why do we need more Haitians? Take them out," or the criminal Clinton family stealing billions of donations to Haiti following a devastating earthquake.

"From January 2010 through June 2012, \$9.04bn in international funding was raised – \$3.04bn from individuals and companies, and \$6.04bn from bilateral and multilateral donors. Of the \$6.04bn, 9.6 percent, or \$580m went to the Haitian government, while 0.6 percent or \$36.2m went to local Haitian organisations.

"The lion's share, 89.8

Americas

percent of \$5.4bn went to non-Haitian organisations, including private contractors, international NGOs, and military and civilian agencies of donor countries, including the Pentagon, which charged the State Department hundreds of millions of dollars.

“Critics have pointed at the Clinton Foundation, alleging the charity had control over the billions of dollars in aid to Haiti.” (What really happened with the Clinton Foundation and Haiti? by David Love, Atlanta Black Star, 24 January 2018)

Not only did the Clinton Foundation wash money through Haiti – and immediately back out again – but the few shelters it actually built were actually found to be hazardous to the health of their occupants.

“Lab tests conducted as part of our investigation in Haiti discovered levels of the carcinogen in the sixth-grade Clinton Foundation classroom in Léogâne at 250 parts per billion – two and a half times the level at which the CDC warned Fema trailer residents that sensitive people, such as children, could face adverse health effects.

“Assay Technologies, the accredited lab that analysed the air tests, identifies 100 parts per billion and more as the level at which ‘65–80 percent of the population will most likely exhibit some adverse health symptoms ... when exposed continually over extended periods of time’.” (The shelters that Clinton built by Isabel Macdonald and Isabeau Doucet, The Nation, 11 July 2011)

Here we see the two sides of bourgeois dictatorship in the USA. On one side there is the ‘bad cop’ expressing open contempt for the Haitian nation, whilst on the other side the ‘good cop’ offers the hand of ‘philanthropy’ – seizing the opportunity to wash its dirty

money, rinse US tax payers and scoop up well-meant donations, recycling all that money back out of Haiti via private contracts, international ‘NGOs’ and the Clinton family’s ‘charitably’ deep pockets.

Fuel prices further diminish Haitians’ lives

The comprador president’s decision to end fuel subsidies will wreak further havoc on the lives of Haitians. It should be noted that Haiti’s president was assassinated last year by US/Columbian mercenaries. (Haiti judge claims two US ‘mercenaries’ arrested over assassination of Jovenel Moïse by Rachel Sharp, Daily Mail, 9 July 2021)

The prime minister who replaced him had close links to the assassins, but this did not deter the USA from supporting him, even as the country has descended into anarchy. (Haitian prime minister had close links with murder suspect by Anatoly Kurmanaev, New York Times, 10 January 2022)

Black Alliance For Peace noted that this was typical behaviour by the USA, the United Nations and the Organisation of American States. (Haiti’s white rulers have spoken on Haiti’s political future by Black Alliance for Peace, Greenville Post, 9 July 2021)

The United Nations’ special envoy for Haiti, Helen La Lime, declared in a statement only a day later that Claude Joseph would be the new president – a decision that was made after a

closed-door UN security council session. This was all very reminiscent of the role played by the ‘UN peacekeepers’ who oversaw Haiti’s government after the 2004 coup.

Meanwhile, policemen in Haiti are reportedly no longer showing up for work, unwilling to risk their lives in defence of such a deeply unpopular government. (Fuel hike plunges Haiti into near anarchy by Milo Milfort, Anatoly Kurmanaev and Andre Paultre, New York Times, 16 September 2022)

What gives the USA the right to ‘nurture’ Haiti’s government? And in whose interest? It is US corporations’ pursuit of maximum profit that has led to the overthrow of so many Haitian governments, and which have built a private army to enforce their low-wage agenda.

to drive the Haitian nation into perpetual slavery to monopoly capitalism.

Haiti is routinely presented in the bourgeois press as a kind of soap opera – an endless saga of natural disasters and social violence to which it seems to be randomly and uniquely cursed. Far less is said about the real causes and consequences of colonial and post-colonial abuse by imperial powers, a legacy that continues to stunt the development of oppressed nations everywhere.

But as the Haitian people struggle against the latest round of abuse being heaped on their heads, they can draw inspiration from their own proud history of resistance. Let them remember the audac-

ity shown by their ancestors in staging the first revolution led by black men and women, establishing the first independent republic of America and emerging as the first nation on the American continent to abolish slavery.

Banditry unleashed on the Haitian proletariat – to maintain class rule

As of May this year, young men started raiding towns on motorcycles armed with assault rifles. By June, they were seizing control of entire areas. By July, the bandits held sway, kidnapping children and raping women as a form of warfare.

Children as young as one have been executed and their bodies burned. Young teenagers are executed in public ‘for spying for the other side’. (Luke Taylor, The Guardian, 18 September 2022)

The USA has long used bandits, drug dealers and other lumpen scum capable of any violent or heinous act as its reserve army of anticommunism. Peter Dale Scott in his book American War Machine made the following point when analysing the ‘Golden Triangle’ (the heroin trade of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos) that the CIA had a central role in creating, using the profits in its war against communism.

“Thus, the restoration of an opium supply in Burma to replace that being lost in Yunnan had the result of sustaining a social fabric and an economy that was capitalist and anti-communist. I would add today that the opium traffic was an even more important element in an anticommunist strategy for southeast Asia as a source of income.” (2010)

“NGOs like Viva Rio, AVSI Foundation, and Concern Worldwide have been the privileged associates of Haiti’s security apparatus. ▶ page 23

South Asia

Afghanistan

◀ **page 24** former American officials said.” (Helene Cooper, Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Eric Schmitt, 13 April 2021)

The USA recently launched a strike on the Afghan capital in which the White House claimed to have “killed an al-Qaeda leader”.

US president Joe Biden announced at the beginning of August that US forces had “successfully concluded an airstrike in Kabul that killed the emir of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri”, and claimed that “now justice has been delivered”. According to CNN, and in a clear violation of the country’s sovereignty, the USA did not even alert Taliban officials ahead of the strike, never mind ask their permission to take action inside Afghanistan’s borders. Global Times, 2 August 2022)

Meanwhile, plenty of observers are taking the news with a hefty pinch of salt. After all, the last time a CIA drone was supposed to have struck an ‘ISIS-K fighter’, the attack actually killed an aid worker delivering water and his seven children. The only source backing up the claimed “striking of Zawahiri” is the White House.

It is perfectly possible that Mr Biden’s government has invented the whole story in order to give his failing administration a boost in advance of autumn elections in which his party is expected to do catastrophically badly.

The rebuilding of Afghanistan

In spite of the United States’ best efforts, the future of Afghanistan is beginning to look brighter. With the occupation ousted and imperialism no longer controlling the country, development can finally be kickstarted. Gwadar port in Pakistan is planned to be-

come a regional trading hub, able to move an annual capacity of 54,700 tons of goods up through Afghanistan and on into central Asia.

“With the stabilisation of the domestic security situation in Afghanistan, the Afghan transit entrepot trade has also become the main business of Gwadar port.

“Zhang Baozhong, chairman of China Overseas Ports Holding Company, said that, in the future, his company will further develop the access to the sea for central Asian countries, and build Gwadar port into an important port for the transit trade of central Asian inland countries.” (Global Times, 28 July 2022)

Conversely, the United States has nothing to offer the world anymore but a face of death. Its rulers have long feared that “population growth [in the developing world] is a threat to US national security” that could “undermine US economic power”. This was stated explicitly in national security study memorandum (NSSM) 200, otherwise known as the Kissinger report of 1974, which, among others, made the following headline observations:

1. Population growth in developing countries provides those nations with more geopolitical power and fuels possible opposition to US interests.
2. The United States relies on countries being underdeveloped in order to easily obtain natural resources.
3. High birth rates result in more young adults who oppose established governments [ie, stooge regimes].
4. US businesses are vulnerable to interference by foreign governments, which need to provide for their growing populations.

Imperialism needs to retard

the world’s technical development and productive forces if it is to maintain its parasitism and monopoly status. It should not be a surprise, therefore, that the USA has for some time already been promoting unrest and separatism in Balochistan, a Pakistani region bordering Afghanistan.

In fact, the US’s agents are sowing terrorism and separatism in the province that just happens to be home to the aforementioned Gwadar port, whose development has so much potential to improve the lives of the masses in Afghanistan and across the region. This is almost a rinse-and-repeat replay of the attempt to weaponise jihadis in China’s Xinjiang region.

Of course, when China does anything to crack down on this subversion, it immediately runs into a barrage of western slander and lies. On the other hand, there has been little to no coverage or outrage regarding recent terror attacks against Chinese engineers working on Belt and Road infrastructure projects in Balochistan:

“In April, a terrorist bombing targeted a hotel in Pakistan’s southwest Balochistan province hosting China’s ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong. Ambassador Nong Rong was not at the hotel at the time of the bombing, but the attack still ended up killing four and wounding several more.

“In July, an explosion targeted a bus carrying Chinese engineers working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China’s wider Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This attack killed 13, including nine of the Chinese engineers.” (US fingerprints on terrorism aimed at China-Pakistan Economic Corridor by Brian Berletic, New Eastern Outlook, 22 July 2021)

Selig Harrison, director of the

Asia programme at the Centre for International Policy (a US-funded think tank) has been cooking up a ‘Free Balochistan’ operation for some years.

“Most important, it should aid the six million Baloch insurgents fighting for independence from Pakistan in the face of growing ISI repression. Pakistan has given China a base at Gwadar in the heart of Baloch territory. So an independent Balochistan would serve US strategic interests in addition to the immediate goal of countering Islamist forces.” (Free Balochistan, National Interest, 2011)

Can a multipolar world exist?

It is clear what the imperialists hope to achieve by their relentless and ruthless sabotage operations, which are taking place in some form or another at almost every node on the Belt and Road’s routeways. What is not clear is whether their bloody provocations will have the desired effect.

China, for example, has put in place a very effective programme for combating US-sponsored separatism in both Tibet and Xinjiang, which involves effective security measures combined with meaningful social and economic actions to improve the lot of the poor so that they no longer fall for the siren songs of imperialism’s jihadi gangs.

By providing vocational training, jobs programmes and huge infrastructure development to raise the prosperity levels of the areas concerned, China is cutting off the ability of the USA’s provocateurs to make trouble at the root, effectively killing off the human fuel for terrorist death squads even as the USA and its satraps are working overtime to sow discord, poverty and death.

The countries and peoples

Americas

on the BRI's routes desperately need the peaceful development that is being offered to them. The only question is whether China can help regions such as central and southern Asia develop fast enough to outpace US-sponsored destabilisation attempts.

With economic problems mounting in the west (resulting from the capitalist crisis and made exponentially worse by the failed economic war against Russia), and with yet another military defeat looming for the USA/Nato (in the form of collapse of the Ukrainian army in the Donbass), China has many reasons to feel optimistic that its rational model may yet prevail.

But the imperialists' determination to hang on to their dominant position remains a very real threat, for imperialism is a global economic system that must expand and dominate or die.

As China and Russia grow in economic and military strength and independence, the help they can offer to poor countries with trade, development and self-defence is becoming ever more reliable and attractive. It is no wonder the imperialists are so terrified – and so desperate to stop the emergence of a strong anti-imperialist camp while they retain any ability to do so.

The rulers of the USA, Britain et al have made it clear that they will go to any lengths to stop the people of the world breaking free from their control and becoming the masters of their own destinies. The more threatened they feel, the more bloodthirsty and desperate they will become.

In the end, only complete destruction of their bloodthirsty economic system will allow humanity to prosper in peace and plenty.

Haiti protests

◀ **page 21** With huge financial resources, these actors work in concert with local associations they call 'partners', but which are essentially non-governmental subcontractors.

"NGOs focus on neighbourhoods such as Cité Soleil, Martissant (Grand-Ravine, Ti-Bois, Cité de l'Eternelle, Village du Dieu) and Grand Bel-Air (Rue St-Martin, La Saline, Fort Tournon, Bas Delmas, Fort National, Solino, and others). These are areas historically marked by economic and social inequalities caused by globalisation, as Marc Abélès has documented.

"Haitian geographer Jean-Marie Théodat describes these marginalised neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince as 'sans' places – those 'without'. That is, they are neighbourhoods where the state is absent and where the population does not have access to basic social services.

"In these places, NGOs are forced to come to terms with deviant groups, and their actions contribute to the ghettoisation of poor and marginalised neighbourhoods." (Djems Olivier, 2 April 2021)

As the bourgeois press circulates articles that feign concern at "more foreign powers being involved in Haiti's sovereignty" and the "intervention dilemma", we should see through the imperial facade built up to misrepresent the situation. (Evan Dyer, CBC, 22 September 2022)

This alleged concern for Haiti's sovereignty should be met with the utmost scepticism. After the western-backed coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, a generalised chaos has reigned in Haiti, with neo-Duvalierists, mafia networks and drug traffickers working in concert. Armed

groups work as death squads, spreading terror on the streets to intimidate supporters of Haiti's social movements.

This generalised chaos has been the *aim* of the so-called 'donor nations' – a more honest term for which might be simply 'imperialist powers'.

In stark contrast, since Cuba started its medical cooperation with Haiti in 1998, more than 6,000 Cuban health cooperation workers have worked in the country, providing more than 36 million outpatient consultations, almost 9 million of them to children.

Cuban medical staff have performed more than 721,000 operations and assisted more than 194,000 births, helping to save more than 429,000 lives in the process. More than 1,649,000 vaccine doses have been administered via disease prevention campaigns.

Moreover, 1,129 Haitian health workers have been trained in Cuba. More than 448,000 Haitians have learned how to read and write thanks to the Cuban literacy programme 'Yes, I Can'; and 1,595 Haitian students have graduated from Cuban universities.

In 1998, Fidel Castro stated bluntly what Haitians needed and what they didn't: "Haiti does not need troops. It does not need invasions with troops ... Haiti needs invasions of medical doctors. Haiti also needs invasions of millions of dollars for its development." (Cuban News Agency, 17 February 2022)

The people of Haiti are capable of running their own affairs. Imperial powers sending waves of NGOs and propping up drug lords to ensure Haitians cannot raise their minimum wage to a sufficient standard are the ultimate causes behind the social violence that plagues the country.

Britain's Road to Socialism?



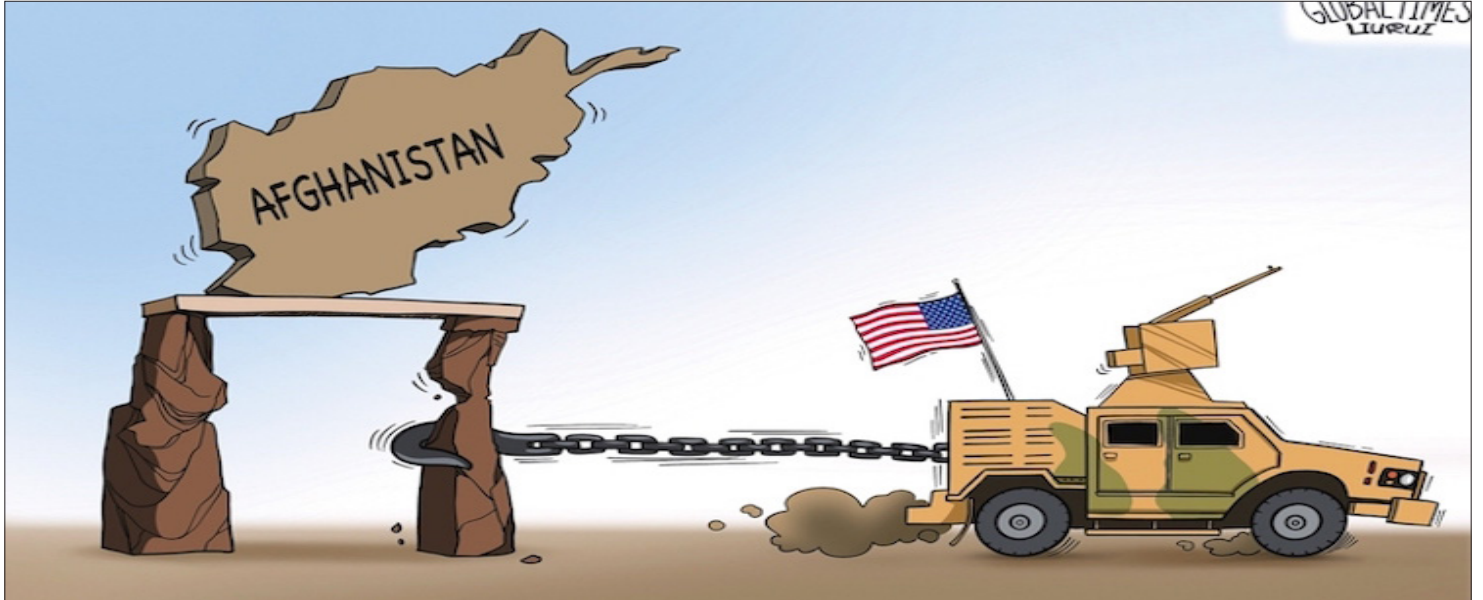
This book examines the history and ideas of the CPGB's (and now CPB's) 'British Road to Socialism', contrasting its ideas with the real history of the Labour party, in and out of power, to demonstrate that the British working class has made and will make no progress towards its liberation from capitalist wage slavery until it discards the practice, slogan and justifying 'theory' of voting for and supporting Labour.

The cost is £5 plus £3 p&p.

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One year on from the Afghan rout: collective punishment of a proud nation

Having been beaten militarily, the USA and its allies continue to use economic and terroristic means to try to keep the Afghan people down.

Seeing the Afghan resistance chase the US imperialists and their satraps out of Afghanistan warmed the hearts of every progressive-minded person on the planet. We got to witness another ‘Saigon moment’, with Americans and their puppets and collaborators being evacuated by helicopter from rooftops. Former president Ashraf Ghani was forced to flee, stuffing his helicopter full of looted cash as he left. (Yaron Steinbuch, New York Post, 16 August 2021)

Even as the Americans tried to come to terms with the debacle unfolding before their eyes, Britain’s imperialists were

wondering if they might independently retain some military presence in Afghanistan. In a farcical debate, British politicians considered staying in the country after the US forces had left. (Danielle Sheridan, The Telegraph, 4 July 2021)

But almost a year has passed since we witnessed this rout unfold in real time. As the west-created ‘Afghan army’ disappeared into dust and the Taliban calmly walked into power, where is Afghanistan now?

Collective punishment

By February 2022, even the imperialist mouthpiece the Guardian was forced to point

out that the west has been engaged in collective punishment against Afghanistan by freezing the country’s assets – a vindictive revenge against its people for having kicked out the US forces and their stooges in government.

“The price of basic foodstuffs has risen by 40 percent. More than half the population is in need of humanitarian assistance, and the poverty rate is in the region of 90 percent. By some distance, these are the highest levels of distress anywhere in the world.

“The UN children’s fund Unicef estimates that more than a million Afghan children are at risk of dying from malnutrition or hunger-related disease. That needs to change, because what the USA is doing amounts

to a humanitarian crime. And those who know what’s happening but keep silent are accessories to that crime.” (Larry Elliott, 6 February 2022)

Continued attacks on Afghan sovereignty

The attacks on Afghanistan did not cease last year. Even the withdrawal itself was a fraud. As the New York Times outlined, the USA had privatised its war in Afghanistan:

“Instead of declared troops in Afghanistan, the United States will most likely rely on a shadowy combination of clandestine special operations forces, Pentagon contractors and covert intelligence operatives to find and attack the most dangerous al-Qaeda or Islamic State threats, current and ▶ **page 22**