

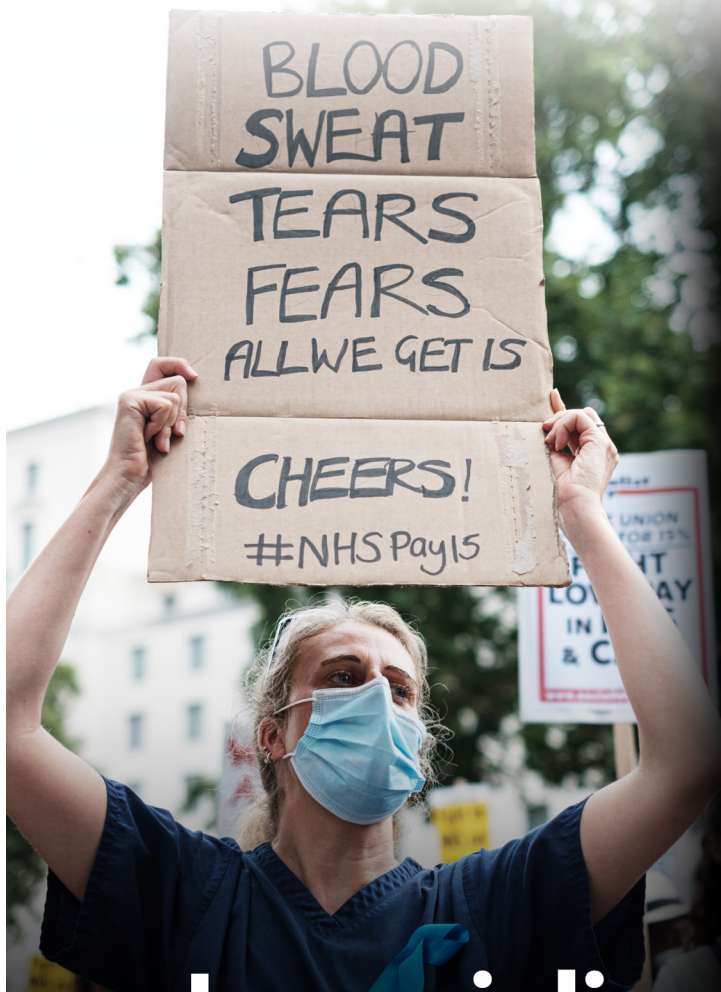
Proletarian



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!

FALL OF THE WEST

RISE OF THE EAST



**Imperialism in decline
means poverty and war**

No wonder everybody wants to join the Brics!

Social



The cost of living crisis is a capitalist crisis

Economic crises are an inescapable feature of life under the market system. Socialist planning is our only way out.

Apart from the tiny minority of superrich exploiters who live in a tax-free bubble of privilege and ignorance, just about everyone knows in practice what is meant by the 'cost of living crisis'.

The rapidly rising cost of living – or, indeed, of barely surviving – is imposing itself on ever wider circles, whether in the form of swingeing energy bill hikes, rising inflation, low wages, job insecurity, the housing crisis, food bank queues, hospital waiting lists, ambulances that don't arrive, GPs who can't be seen, schools that don't educate, and the general trashing of the various social services on which workers depend.

People are right to be angry, and increasing numbers are joining the fight-back against the attempt to make workers pay for the crisis. Postal, rail, Amazon workers and dockers have all been taking determined strike action in pursuit of wages that keep pace with

inflation; doctors, nurses and teachers are preparing to join the fray; and protest groups like Don't Pay UK and Enough Is Enough are gaining traction.

The root of the trouble

It is right that workers should demand short-term fixes to keep them from falling into the jaws of dire poverty NOW. But we also need to look deeper and understand where this crisis has actually come from, so we can understand what we need to do to address not only its most pressing and immediate symptoms, but also its root causes.

What, after all, is the point in organising a movement capable of forcing significant concessions from our rulers – a feat in itself given the current disorganised state of the British working class – if we don't at the same time do something to address the social and economic forces that brought us to this emergency in the first

place? Aren't we just dooming ourselves and our children to fight the same battles over again in a few months' or years' time?

What we need to understand is that this specific crisis is only the latest episode in the life-history of the capitalist system – part of a saga of cyclical boom-and-bust crises that stretches back nearly 200 years, to the first general crisis of 1825. These crises are rooted deep within the contradictions of capitalist production – that is, of unplanned production for the market, which 'regulates' by letting producers know (too late) whether or not there is a 'market' for their goods at the point of sale (not production), and in which a 'market' only exists where those who want or need something *also have the ability to pay for it*.

The fundamental problem at the heart of the system is that capitalists make their profits by taking from the workers a part of the wealth that they produce *without paying them for it*. Which ultimately means that *more goods are produced than*

workers have the money to buy back. At the same time, the capitalists try to increase their profits by paying workers as little as possible – meaning, in most cases, the bare minimum needed for survival.

And they try to win the battle of competition against other producers by modernising their machinery, which means employing still fewer workers as more processes are automated.

All of this exacerbates the fundamental problem, which is that the working class can't afford to buy the multitude of products that were created by its own labour. *On the one hand are products that can't be sold; on the other are workers going without for want of the means to buy them*.

The interaction of these iron laws of capitalist production mean that, although the workers produce an incredible, and constantly increasing, amount of wealth, that wealth is not available to society as a whole, but is concentrated in the hands of the owners of capital (vast sums of which are needed to set up modern means of production and employ the workers which make them go).

The number of workers employed is reduced. Competition among them for work is high. Wages are forced lower and lower. Workers live in deepening penury although they are surrounded by plenty.

When capitalist enterprises are left with goods that can't be sold, they try to solve the problem by selling overseas. Eventually, however, even the world market is glutted and all they can do is to cut production and put even more workers out of work – thus taking more 'demand' out of the market and fuelling the downward spiral.

This is what scientific social-

Social

ism calls an 'overproduction crisis', and it's absolutely incapable under capitalism – *it is baked into the DNA of the system of production for profit; for the market.*

Since the capitalist economists can't admit that Marx was right about their system, they have to call things by other names. Hence, the chaos brought by the overproduction crisis in 2008 was known as the 'banking' or 'financial' crisis. When the next shock came around in 2020 and sent markets into a tailspin it was labelled a 'Covid' crisis (although the stock markets crashed *before* western governments abruptly opted for lockdowns).

The current downward turn of the crisis, exacerbated in its effects by rampant inflation, has been branded the 'cost of living' crisis, and is being blamed variously on the Ukraine war, Covid disruptions and volatile energy markets.

Global markets mean global crises

Since the development of capitalism into monopoly capitalism more than a century ago, the system has become global, and thus its economic crises affect every country that is in any way connected to the world market. Since that time, the periods of relative prosperity have been fewer and further between, and the contradictions of the system have become even deeper and more intractable.

The protracted boom that followed World War 2 was fuelled partly by the need to rebuild all that had been destroyed and partly by the need for the imperialist powers to stand together and provide a meaningful social safety net to their workers, *who were calling for socialist revolutions across Europe* after the experience of two world

wars and the great depression.

But how many British workers understand that we owe the council houses, old people's homes, national health service, free education etc of this period to the threat of the Soviet example? Or that the accelerated pace of their de-

ing the welfare state as the product of British 'civilisation' and the good old 1945 'socialist' Labour government. (You know, the one that founded Nato, suppressed Malayan and Kenyan liberation fighters, and took Britain to war in Korea.)

Today we are seeing once

Urgent measures needed

Meanwhile, with the crisis deepening by the day, we must demand urgent measures to address the cost of living for workers and stop ordinary people from bearing the burden of a crisis that was not of their making.

WE DEMAND:

- **Nationalisation of ALL utilities (without compensation) along with monopoly producers, manufacturers and distributors of food, so as to ensure a secure supply of all necessities at affordable prices, free from the vacillations and disruptions of the world market.**
 - **Requisition and building of social housing and introduction of a rent cap to address the housing crisis.**
 - **Leaving Nato, bringing all troops and military contractors home, and ending all aspects of British involvement in aggressive wars abroad.**
 - **Lifting the minimum wage to a level providing a decent family existence.**
 - **Legislation for pay/benefit rises that keep pace with REAL inflation.**
 - **An end to currency devaluation through endless money printing.**
 - **An end to the self-defeating sanctions war against Russia, which is fuelling both the energy and the inflation crises.**
 - **An end to all subsidies to monopoly corporations and banks. Any business considered 'too big to fail' or 'necessary to the national economy' that cannot make an adequate profit out of ordinary operations should be nationalised without compensation and run according to a plan based on meeting the needs of the people.**

struction followed the collapse of the USSR? Most of those who call themselves 'socialist' or even 'communist' certainly don't publicise this important fact – they're too busy claim-

again how the most powerful monopoly-capitalist powers – the imperialists – use their vast economic and military might to try to save themselves at the expense of others – at the ex-

pense of their own workers, at the expense of the oppressed countries abroad, at the expense of their rival imperialist powers, and by attempting to break down all resistance to their unfettered looting of the globe.

It is important to remember all this when our rulers try to fool us into accepting responsibility for a crisis which is solely the fault of their own rotten system. It is not 'inflationary wage claims' that are to blame for the cost of living crisis. When a worker asks for his pay to be adjusted in line with the current inflation rate, all he's really asking for is to keep his *real wages stationary*.

In fact, most if not all of the current hotly-disputed pay claims are predicated on *lowering* real wages! Meanwhile, the exploiters conveniently forget about the frantic money-printing that has been stoking inflation ever since the unresolved crisis of 2008 – of which the present crisis is merely a deepening and an extension.

Crisis and the war drive

Nor is the cost of living crisis in Britain to be laid at the door of Vladimir Putin, though by fuelling the USA's proxy war against Russia by every means possible, our rulers have indeed exposed the country to the backfiring consequences of their own aggressive sanctions regime.

Britain's dangerous war rhetoric serves two purposes. On the one hand, it provides a useful distraction, misdirecting workers' anger at their rapidly worsening conditions: whipping up Russophobia whilst the bosses are picking their pockets and robbing them blind via a never-ending stream of subsidies (arms and 'advisers' to Ukraine; profit guarantees to failing rail franchises; yet more private contracts to **▶ page 4**

Industrial



Support our nurses' struggle for decent pay

It is not our hard-pressed medical staff who are greedy, but the privateers who are pushing down their wages in the interests of profit.

Way beyond breaking point, nurses across the NHS have finally voted to take strike action. The last time they had a real-terms pay increase was back in 2010, since when pay settlements have fallen further and further behind inflation.

Throughout that time, many have descended into poverty, as is evidenced by the fact that over a quarter of NHS trusts are now running food banks for their staff. Most nurses can no longer afford childcare or travel costs and are opting for longer, more dangerous shifts to try to balance their books.

Such has been the decline in real pay that today *one in three nurses cannot afford to heat their homes or feed their families.*

Clearly, something has to change. Now nurses are demanding a 17.6 percent pay rise to set against this devastating decline, raising wages by 5 percent over *official* inflation (and let us not forget that real inflation is considerably higher

than official statistics suggest, and is highest on the goods most relied upon by the poorest).

This would by no means make good all that has been lost, but it would go some way to addressing the poverty crisis now besetting our nurses.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt sheds crocodile tears and admits that there are “massive pressures in the NHS, with doctors, nurses on the frontline under unbearable pressure”, but at the same time says that the service receives a lot of money and “we need to do everything we can to find efficiencies”.

He forgets to mention that most of the funding directed at the bottomless bucket marked ‘NHS’ is actually being siphoned off as profits by the private sector; it is not paying doctors, nurses and cleaners, improving staffing levels or maintaining buildings.

Nor does this efficiency-lover mention that the *most efficient*

way to rescue the NHS would be to *renationalise* it, kicking out the privateers and running the service for the public good, not for private greed.

Not for nothing does tiny socialist Cuba run a more effective health service (more consistent outcomes, higher life expectancy, lower infant mortality) than that of the mighty USA for less than a quarter of the cost.

Instead, Hunt tells the nurses off for failing “to recognise a difficult truth: that if we gave everyone inflation-proof pay rises, inflation would stay, we wouldn’t bring down inflation, and that’s why I’m not pretending there aren’t some difficult decisions.”

In reality, inflation is not caused by workers seeking to preserve the value of their pay, but by capitalist governments printing money to postpone the economic collapse of their own system of capitalist production for profit. It is further exacerbated by monopoly price gouging (witness today’s energy market).

Since the breaking up and privatising agenda laid out by our rulers in the 1980s has been followed religiously by Tories, LibDems and Labour governments alike, we can’t expect a solution via parliament. The only use Labour has made of its ‘pro-NHS’ credentials has been to take over and subvert the energies of various protest groups into channels that are entirely futile as far as *actually saving the NHS* is concerned.

The working class needs a decent health service, properly funded and staffed, whose employees are decently paid and supported in performing their essential roles.

Full support to the just struggle of Britain’s nurses!

Cost of living

◀ **page 3** ‘help’ schools and hospitals ‘catch up’ after Covid; unlimited subs to the energy giants via the ‘price cap’ for residents and businesses ...)

On the other hand, our rulers seek to hide the fact that only through war can they find any way out of the crisis which their own system has created. *They hope to escape the trap by destroying, breaking up and looting the territories and peoples of all those countries that currently defy their diktat, Russia and China in particular.*

Neither ‘greedy workers’ nor foreign ‘dictators’ are to blame for the cost of living crisis that is now causing such widespread misery.

We should rather look at the giant energy companies maximising their profits by screwing every last farthing out of their ‘customers’; or at the private health companies making a fast buck by hastening the collapse of the NHS; or at the privatised water authorities that won’t fix leaks but will poison our rivers whilst paying their CEOs and shareholders handsomely.

The market has proved itself to be totally unable to meet the needs of the people. The capitalists have shown themselves to be entirely unable to run their own system for the benefit of society.

Ultimately, only socialist science can enable us to understand the root causes of this crisis of capitalist production. And only socialist science can enable us to create a real working-class party that will let workers bring their power to bear to create a society that not only solves the problems that press on us so heavily and urgently today, but actually offers us the prospect of a bright and fulfilling future.

Industrial



Are Britain's union bosses interested in helping their members fight back?

As the crisis deepens, the ruling class is looking far more determined than the unions, where lions continue to be led by loyal Labour donkeys.

The decision of both the postal and rail workers to cancel planned strikes in defence of pay and conditions raises serious questions about the ability of the present union structures to fulfil their role of directing the struggle over the terms of exploitation for Britain's put-upon workers.

Nobody with an ounce of class-consciousness could fail to have been cheered by the wave of militant and spontaneous resistance against the efforts of government and bosses to make workers carry the burden of a cost of living crisis not of their making. The sight of posties, rail workers, dockers and others all putting two fingers up to the establishment has been a tonic for suffering workers everywhere.

And it may well be too soon to declare that the current wave of strike action is at an end. After all, even the ludicrous display of forelock-tugging occasioned by the death of the queen, quite needlessly disrupting the

flow of the industrial action, registered only as a regrettable blip, so deep is the wellspring of workers' anger at their rapidly descent into poverty.

Members demand a fight while leaders hoist a white flag

But the suspension of rail strikes in exchange merely for a dubious promise of 'unconditional talks', and even more the capitulation of the CWU at the first legal hurdle, cannot but reveal the fatal ideological weakness of a working-class movement that has for so long been starved of decent class-conscious leadership and has instead been force-fed an unleavened diet of class-collaborationist Labour party politics.

When unionised Royal Mail workers voted by 98 percent in favour of strikes, they handed their leaders a bullet-proof mandate for action. Yet at the first legal challenge the CWU's officials ran for cover. The legal challenge was a blatantly pro-

vocative exercise in nit-picking, with Royal Mail raising phony objections about the information given to them by the union concerning which members had been balloted in just *three out of 1,500 workplaces!*

Shamefully, CWU general secretary Dave Ward compounded the betrayal by playing devil's advocate, insulting members' intelligence by pretending that the abrupt retreat was in fact a clever tactical manoeuvre, even suggesting that the cancellation of strikes could be good thing, as it allowed both sides to "focus on negotiations". He further suggested (entirely spuriously) that "attempting to negotiate when you're also striking can be difficult".

Members' responses to this nonsense in an online meeting were excoriating. The bureaucrats running the CWU were roundly condemned as "amateurs" and "sell-outs" who had "bottled it", presiding over a "shambles" and a "farce" and earning the dubious title of the "shittiest union going".

Frustrated members used graphic language to describe the class-collaboration of the union leadership, complaining

that the "union bent over and took it from behind again" and "these guys are in bed with the Tories". (Strike cancellation provokes workers' fury as UK's Royal Mail declares war by Laura Tiernan, WSWS, 31 October 2022)

The answer to Ward's claim that this was all for the best was supplied the very next day, when Royal Mail announced a derisory below-inflation pay offer of 7 percent, spread over two years and conditional on workers sucking up 'productivity' measures that will put a further squeeze on an already hard-pressed workforce.

And just to add insult to injury, Royal Mail announced that *with immediate effect* new employees will be hired on worse terms than existing employees and the company will bring in 'owner-drivers', similar to the way Uber works – all measures designed to divide and weaken the workforce.

No meaningful opposition to new scabs' charter

In declaring class war against its own employees, Royal Mail will be assisted by ▶ **page 8**

Social



Hungry schoolchildren: another sign of a failed system

When an economic system can't provide basics like food and warm shelter to its people, it is time for it to be replaced.

Is Britain rich? Taking gross domestic product (GDP) from 2021 as a measure of a country's wealth, Britain is sixth in the world rankings. If we take gross national income (GNI) as the measure, Britain is the 23rd-richest in the world. Pretty wealthy!

Then why is it that, as of 2021, after housing costs are taken into consideration (a consideration that has more and more impact as this cost rises), 3.9 million (27 percent) of Britain's children live in poverty? (Table 1.4b, Households below average income report for financial years ending 1995 to 2021, DWP, 31 March 2022)

There is plenty of wealth in Britain's economy, but it isn't reaching masses of workers, or their children. With food bank usage on the rise, the number of workers unable to meet mounting housing and energy costs, we are now witnessing the growing phenomenon of children trying to gain an edu-

cation while hunger gnaws at their insides.

Learning to be hungry

According to the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) 800,000 children in England live in households that qualify for universal credit but miss out on free school meals. A family on universal credit must earn less than £7,400 a year (£617 a month), excluding their meagre 'benefits' to qualify for a free meal.

Moreover, and quite ludicrously, *this rule doesn't consider the number of children* a low-income family is trying to provide for. Many children in poverty simply don't qualify for free school meals provision.

This leads to children arriving in school hungry – so hungry that they are eating rubbers or hiding in the playground because they can't afford lunch, pretending to eat from empty lunchboxes to hide their pover-

ty from friends. To try and feed themselves, pupils are cleaning the canteen to earn food (!) and, according to reports from headteachers across England, stealing.

A CPAG spokesman said: "This low threshold means that many children from working families in poverty aren't entitled to free school meals, despite their parents being unable to meet the costs of food."

The repercussions don't just stop at a lack of focus in class, they extend to every part of life. An assistant secondary headteacher in south London told the Evening Standard of the lengths some pupils are driven to:

"Students stealing food has grown to around 15 incidents a day. Typically, they take a drink or several cookies, usually something with high sugar content. I challenged a kid once and he looked like he was going to cry. Now I turn a blind eye.

"They are taking a big risk because to be caught in front of your peers is humiliating. Around 30 percent of our

students get free school meals, but a further 50 percent are in poverty but miss out. They are the ones I worry about."

She added: "You feel those kids who steal are desperate and haven't eaten since the night before. I regularly observe students, including our prefects, taking on jobs cleaning the canteen so they can be allowed a free meal at the end of lunch by the catering staff.

"It's outrageous that children should have to do this. People outside schools have no idea how bad things are, and in my 28 years in this profession, it's never been as bad as it is now."

This desperation isn't confined to the pupils; parents are also resorting to stealing or drug dealing to feed their children. (Stealing to eat: Hunger crisis for children not eligible for free school meals by David Cohen, 10 October 2022)

The Evening Standard article continues by quoting 23-year-old Ellie Williamson, a youth worker from Lives Not Knives who supports children at schools in Croydon who highlights one young person's struggle:

"Take Anton. He is 14. He doesn't get free school meals because his single mother earns above the threshold, but the cooker doesn't work at home and if his nan can't give him pennies, he's going hungry.

"I have seen him go from a lovely, balanced and respectful young man to being obsessed about money. It's led to him stealing and taking big risks with his future. I read him the riot act but he turned to me angrily and said: 'I'm not stupid, I know what I'm doing.' Then he started crying. He knew I was right.

"He was trying to weigh up his options and he said: 'But if I do

Social

it your way, I won't have money for food or things, so what must I do?' It broke my heart. He's concluded, age 14, that food is not guaranteed for him — that he has to turn to crime to eat."

A right to education?

People in Britain are allowed the right to a free education. But what is a right if it cannot be exercised owing to a lack of funds? You can walk through those doors for free, yet dozens of small economic barriers either limit, or even exclude, poor workers from accessing what's available inside.

Not being able to afford sufficient food to maintain concentration; the correct clothing to be allowed access to school grounds; easy access to computers and the internet to keep up with homework or fill a young, inquiring mind ... And, of course, poverty brings worries about homelessness and family strife, alongside parents without time or education to supplement learning at home.

All these present serious barriers to being able to fully grasp the 'right' to an education.

And this is before pupils even sit down in front of a teacher (many of whom are facing the same issues) in an oversubscribed class to try and make sense of the world and prepare for a future that isn't theirs.

This author was informed by one such pupil that they were made to remove a non-approved sweater and so sat shivering in an unheated classroom — unheated owing to the school's inability to meet soaring energy costs. Approved uniform is sometimes only available from an approved vender, which can charge as it pleases thanks to their school-granted monopoly status.

Children are often punished

or excluded for not having this mandated clothing — clothing that is simply unaffordable for many workers. These punishments are obscured under the term 'sanctions' — a term that is normally reserved for use by the DWP to deny workers much-needed financial support, or by imperialists to obscure economic warfare.

What place has such an ethos and such language in a school? If we say that such an environment is more likely to prepare young working-class children for the scrap-heap of unemployment than for a useful and meaningful life in which they can contribute to the development of society — are we exaggerating?

All these thousand cuts — hunger, cold, worry, social stigma and more — are impacting the ability of our young people to learn, fuelling the cycle of undereducation arising from poverty rather than from any lack of intelligence or desire to learn.

Misspending and penny-pinching

As our education system becomes increasingly privatised, schools are becoming cash cows for private capital.

To take just one example, a school will tender private firms to provide inadequate meals that cost the taxpayer a premium. Some schools, or should we say the companies that schools pay, provide a single slice of pizza or a small polystyrene cup of pasta and a blob of tomato sauce. Whatever isn't spent on food and wages by these companies goes to increase their profit margins.

Another example of this profiteering from poverty was the pitiful 'food parcel' scheme provided in the school holidays of 2021, which was only exposed as such as a result of the massive public outcry. In

that instance, the government ended up paying companies to supply food worth £30, yet the firms concerned only provided around £5 worth.

That 'bounty' was expected to provide the equivalent of school dinners for a week. Pocketing the difference, the companies trusted with our tax money walked off with a huge profit.

Meanwhile, some parents said they received a pot of flour and instructions on how to bake eight bread rolls in a food parcel. The intention, according to Impact Food Group was to help parents create "an interactive cooking experience" with their children, and to help with some food education at home. Apparently *education* is now the focus?

"It's very humiliating," one parent said. "Why would you decide for us? Why not give us the money?" The argument often given is that money won't be spent on food. As if a parent wouldn't automatically feed their child.

As if those children and their parents forced to resort to crime to get the money for food are showing their true characters. As if the crimes were, in fact, the end, and not merely the only available means to feed the hungry.

This is how our government sees workers. Truly they believe in Victorian values.

Instead of seeing a victim of a system that cannot meet its people's basic needs, poor children and their parents are viewed as being responsible for their unenviable situation — responsible for the crime of not being able to tame market forces or rein in the unfeeling stampede of profit-driven production.

Bourgeois economic 'experts' with a comfy lifestyle, decades of economic education under

their belts and hands firmly grasping the levers of the economy, fail to wrestle with that beast daily. How can a Mum or Dad, working multiple jobs on insufficient sleep and food, expect to do something that someone with all the resources and know-how can't?

Profiteering in schools

According to the Food Contract Manufacturing Global Market Report (2022) published by The Business Research Company, the size of the global food contract manufacturing market is expected to grow from \$126.82bn in 2021 to \$141.62bn in 2022, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.7 percent. By 2026, the market for meal provision is expected to grow to \$207.79bn — an annual growth rate of 10.1 percent.

One large company that is commissioned to provide school meals in Britain is Sodexo, whose turnover grew from £1.19bn to £1.36bn between 2020 and 2021 (a 15 percent increase) and whose profits increased 200 percent from £16.5m to £45.7m.

As more and more capitalists smell profit in this sector, there will be a race to the bottom as wages are slashed and the service (in this case, food provided to schoolchildren) is reduced in amount and quality in order to maintain these profits.

Schools are tax funded, which allows companies to secure long-term contracts at incredibly generous (to them, not the taxpayer) terms. If the services are inadequate, the government is pressured to increase funding to those sectors, thus fuelling further shareholder bonanzas.

A better way

Food, like affordable housing, access to warmth, ▶ page 8

Social

Hungry children

◀ **page 7** water and power, is a basic need, essential to workers' survival. The poverty that leads workers to rely on handouts – handouts that become an avenue of further profiteering to our ruling class, the capitalists – shouldn't exist in a country that has an industrial and agricultural base like Britain's.

With our factories and fields taken into ownership by workers, organised in such a way that the resultant surplus can be distributed and reinvested in a scientifically planned manner, our country would not only be able to increase its productive capacity, but our production would be directed to meet the needs and interests of the working people, with better welfare support systems and higher consumption by the people who create this abundance – all without the need for exploitation.

We can, and we must, do away with capitalist anarchy of production, the boom-and-bust cycles that leave increasing numbers of workers unemployed, underpaid, over-exploited, insecure and empty-bellied.

Socialism will pave the way for all our children to achieve the highest levels of culture, productivity and education, thanks to the way our collective work for the benefit of society and production will be organised – allowing the fruits of workers' labour to satisfy workers' needs, first and foremost.

While we allow capitalism to reign, the reverse will always be the case: the fruits of our collective labour, privately appropriated, will remain the very means the billionaire class uses to exploit and oppress us further.

Union fight-back

◀ **page 5** new government regulations under which companies have the right to use agency workers to fill in for striking workers. This scabs' charter is sufficiently outrageous to stir even the mummified TUC 'leadership' to go through the motions of opposition, reportedly coordinating the efforts of 11 different unions (not including the CWU to date) in beginning legal proceedings to protect the right to strike.

Coordinating litigation is all well and good, but what the TUC obstinately refuses to coordinate is a *class-wide offensive to resist the class war waged by capital against the workers* right across the board. Yet if coordinating trade unions in a united push-back against capitalist aggression is not a job that even registers on the Transport House radar, then is it naive to ask what really is the purpose of this august body?

In reality, the TUC, in lockstep with the Labour party, has an unbroken record of *disorganising and demobilising* workers, consistently impeding their attempts to coordinate decisive united action against the class enemy and instead using its power and prestige in the labour movement to *undermine* any real progress of labour against capital.

Who can forget the part played by the TUC in 1984, when it used its power to rein in and undermine the spontaneous wave of sympathy strikes in support of the miners? Not for nothing did the miners attending the TUC's annual congress feel moved to sling a rope noose over the rafters when TUC head Norman Willis took the rostrum.

Nor was this a novel role for the TUC, which had plumbed the lowest depths of class treachery when it shamefully

sold out the general strike of 1926.

Organised resistance desperately needed

But the blatant attacks on the conditions of existence of ever wider circles of workers, including erstwhile privileged sections of the class driven into the lower proletarian depths

Coordinating litigation is all well and good, but what the TUC obstinately refuses to coordinate is a class-wide offensive to resist the class war waged by capital against the workers right across the board.

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by the cost of living crisis, are threatening to stir up long-dormant class hatreds against the minority of exploiters in whose interests Britain is currently run.

Already workers, despairing of any real leadership coming from the TUC, are instead turning toward social movements

like Enough Is Enough to do the job the TUC has so signally failed to perform.

The class of exploiters, for its part, is well aware that it is playing with fire, and for that reason is hastening to make its own preparations to deal with the social revolt coming down the line. Capitalism is preparing – indeed, has already begun – a ruthless class war against workers.

Workers need to reciprocate by organising the take-over of their existing union structures or by building new ones that are both willing and able to wage the class struggle effectively in defence of pay and conditions for as long as crisis-ridden capitalism continues to control our economic and political life. In the battle for the division of profits, every penny for the workers comes out of capitalist profits, while every penny on the profit-margin comes out of workers' bellies.

Meanwhile, the crisis is revealing once more the urgent necessity of ending once and for all the irrational and irreformable wages system.

To that end, all those who have woken up to this necessity must focus their energies on waking up their fellows likewise, and on building the vanguard party of scientific socialism that alone is capable of leading the working class to the overthrow of capitalism, the common ownership of the means of production and the establishment of a planned socialist economy under the control of the proletarian dictatorship (of the workers' state).

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British politics



Tribute to Avtar Jouhl from his comrade-in-arms Harpal Brar

Above all, he was a fighter for socialism.

The text below summarises the main points in a recorded video address by Comrade Harpal Brar that was played at the memorial meeting held to honour the life and work of our departed Comrade Avtar Jouhl on 19 November 2022 in Birmingham.

You can see the whole video on our party website, on YouTube, Odyssey and Rumble.

When Comrade Avtar first came to Britain, said Harpal, racism in Britain was rampant and extremely overt. Non-white workers were insulted to their faces on a daily basis, facing discrimination at work, in housing and in wider social life.

From the moment of his arrival, Avtar was vigorous in organising his fellow workers against these discriminatory practices, helping to found a Birmingham branch of the Indian Workers Association (IWA). It is thanks in no small part to their fearless and tireless work that many of the the pubs which once refused to serve workers

of Indian origin are now owned and run by British Indians.

Harpal points out that while Avtar has been rightly commended for his antiracism and trade union activities in many obituaries, this narrow focus presents a distorted and very limited picture of Avtar and his life's work and political vision.

Avtar, along with fellow leaders of the IWA like Jagmohan Josh and Teja Sahota, was guided by three core principles in all the work he undertook:

1. The need to mobilise not only black but also white workers against discrimination and racism. In this, they recognised that the struggle against racism was not a question of humanitarianism, but was in essence a class question. Race was (and continues to be) used as a weapon by the British ruling class to divide workers and keep them impotent in their struggle against capitalist exploitation. Racism must be fought by all workers because it weakens their movement. This was Avtar's message and the principle that guided his an-

tiracism work.

2. The recognition that immigrants came to Britain not because of the warm welcome that was extended to them but because their homelands had been so ravaged by the depredations of colonial and imperialist looting that it was impossible for many of them to make a living if they stayed where they were. Understanding this, Avtar and his comrades struggled not only against racism but against imperialism itself, which is the root cause of all workers' ills in the modern world.

To that end, Avtar sought to join the struggle of workers in Britain with the struggle of the oppressed people's abroad for liberation and self-determination, and there was not a single struggle for national-liberation that Avtar did not support, from Vietnam to Palestine to southern Africa and more.

3. The understanding that under the conditions of capitalism, no struggle for better rights, for trade union organisation, or for decent pay and conditions, will ultimately be successful in solving workers' problems, since they stem from

the system of capitalist production itself.

Avtar was always and above everything a fighter for socialism and the salvation that only a planned economy can offer to the workers of the world.

Avtar never shrank from bring Marxism-Leninism to the working class. He never succumbed to the opportunist calls to abandon Marxist language because it might 'put people off'. Recognising that British workers have historically been very backward in embracing theory, he stressed the importance of the achievements made by workers who had grasped this theory and made revolutions by implementing its powerful tenets.

That is why he continued all his life to give vocal and firm support to the USSR, to people's China, to Cuba, to north Korea, to Vietnam, and to the people's democracies in eastern Europe. He supported the work of the Stalin Society and upheld the legacy of great builders of socialism like VI Lenin, Josef Stalin and Mao Zedong, among others.

Our party was proud to count Comrade Avtar as a member, one who despite health problems in his last years continued to support our work and to put his faith in humanity's socialist future. In particular, he actively fundraised to help establish our independent press, which he so greatly valued.

Farewell to Comrade Avtar, brother, friend and comrade-in-arms.

Long may your memory be cherished by all those who knew and worked with you.

Long may your example remain as an inspiration to those who follow.

World



Imperialist aggression hastens the demise of US hegemony and the rise of Brics

As history moves on, new alliances are being formed that are more in tune with the real balance of forces in the world.

As the imperialist crisis continues to play out through unwinnable war and self-defeating sanctions, there are unmistakable signs that the long drawn out saga of the United States of America's decline is now speeding to an irreversible climax. This is nowhere more starkly revealed than in the rush of applications to sign up to Brics, the alliance founded by Russia and China and incorporating Brazil, India and South Africa.

Brics takes centre stage

Since Brics was founded in 2009, it has gathered increasing clout in the developing world. From May this year, China has been agitating to welcome other countries to join the fold, and successful applicants could be enrolled next year.

This has aroused a host of eager applications, especially from those countries who have been failed by one or other imperialist-oriented alliance. Many would echo the sentiments of one applicant,

Algeria, which dismissed its 2005 association agreement with the European Union as a "failed bet." Other potential candidates include Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Argentina and Iran.

The stats on GDP growth racked up collectively by Brics are impressive. "According to World Bank data for 2019, the five current members of Brics represent 42 percent of the world's population, 24 percent of the world's GDP and more than 16 percent of global trade. Between 2009 and today, Brics has managed to increase its coverage of the global GDP to just over 25 percent." (Ahmed Adel, Infobrics, 8 Nov 2022)

Undoubtedly, there will be large disparities in development between different member states, but the strength and unity of Brics resides precisely in its emphasis on reciprocal trade and development deals that do not put countries at a disadvantage or come with political strings attached.

Ditching the dollar

Most worrying from the impe-

rialist viewpoint are the plans, already far advanced, to get out from under the cosh of the yankee dollar.

Together with the related Shanghai Cooperation (SCO) alliance (led by China and Russia and incorporating 'the Stans' of central Asia), Brics is overseeing a joint exercise to bypass the mighty greenback. The State Bank of India is dodging anti-Russian sanctions by funnelling its Russian business through special rupee accounts, whilst Turkey, another applicant for Brics membership, is buying Russian gas in rubles and lira.

Meanwhile, Russian banks, barred from the Swift system of international money transfers, are conducting their Chinese business in a combination of rubles and yuan. For their part, Iran and Russia have found a way to conduct business in a mix of rubles and rials, whilst Egypt (another Brics hopeful) is trading in a mix of different currencies, including some gold.

Breaking imperialist monopoly

Saudi Arabia's application for membership of Brics could prove to be a tipping point in international relations, marking a decisive moment in the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world.

Coming at the same time as the Saudi-led Opec+ decision in October to cut oil production by another 2m barrels a day, bumping up Russia's oil revenues and opening the prospect of sky-high pump prices, Riyadh's application to join Brics can only add salt to the US wound.

Not surprisingly, President Joe Biden declared that he had no plans to meet with the de facto Saudi head of state, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (aka MBS) at November's G20 summit. By

contrast with this snub, China's president Xi Jinping trekked halfway across the planet to visit MBS in Riyadh itself.

Implicitly commenting on the refusal to flood the market with Saudi oil to bring down prices (thereby helping to cushion the sanctions mongers whose own economic aggression is directly responsible for the upward pressure on oil prices), Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi praised Riyadh's "pursuit of an independent energy policy and its active efforts to maintain the stability of the international energy market".

Brics, if it goes ahead with its planned expansion, will include members with a history of mutual antipathy, drawn nonetheless to participation with an alliance which aims to be inclusive and affords a space for developing economic and political relations away from the domineering influence of the USA. So we find Iran jostling in the same Brics entry queue with Saudi Arabia, observing a pragmatic truce founded on a shared disinclination to truckle to US diktat and the practical recognition that Uncle Sam no longer calls all the shots.

One recent report cited diplomatic sources as confirming that "the day after the US pulled out of Afghanistan, MBS's envoys started seriously negotiating with both Moscow and Beijing". (Pepe Escobar, The Saker, 28 October 2022)

In the early years of MBS's ascendancy, Riyadh was eager to strengthen its ties with Nato, happy to have the USA cover its back whilst it committed genocide against the Yemeni people and murdered dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi. In exchange for this unconditional support, the US war industry enjoyed unrivalled access to the Saudis' insatiable demand for its products.

But now, with the ► page 12

Europe



Liz Truss's message to the USA seconds after the attack on Nord Stream: 'It's done.'

The former prime minister's leaked iPhone messages convince Russia that British forces blew up the Nord Stream gas pipelines.

The following article is reproduced in slightly edited form from finance twitter.

After the Nord Stream gas pipeline was blown up last month (26 September), questions have been raised over who did it. Both the west and Russia agreed it was sabotage, which means it was not an accident. It was a pre-planned terrorist attack to permanently terminate any hope of Europe going back for Russian gas. And it's safe to conclude two countries were not involved – Russia and Germany.

It can't be Germany because sabotaging the pipeline would freeze the Germans to death during the coming winter. It can't be Russia because it can easily switch off the flow of gas to Germany if it wants to. As expected, the west was quick to point fingers at Russia even though it can't offer a decent justification for blaming the Kremlin.

Cui bono?

The culprit that blew up the Nord Stream pipeline would benefit the most from the sabotage. There's only one country which fits the bill: the United States. After Nord Stream was crippled, Europe is now at the mercy of the USA for the supply of gas. French president Emmanuel Macron has just gone ballistic, complaining that Europe is left paying four times higher prices for its natural gas.

The steel pipe itself has a wall of 4.1cm (1.6in) and is coated with steel-reinforced concrete up to 11cm thick. Each section of the pipe weighs 11 tonnes, which increases to 24-25 tonnes after the concrete is applied. The undersea pipelines are designed in such a way that they are not accidentally damaged and leaks are rare. Nord Stream was deliberately blown up with explosive devices.

But that doesn't necessarily mean the USA has to do all the dirty work itself. On Saturday

(29 October), Russia's defence ministry finally revealed that America's sidekick Britain was involved in the attack. Moscow said "British specialists" who blew up the pipeline were the same British navy team that had attacked the Russian Black Sea fleet in Crimea earlier on Saturday using Ukrainian drones.

Russia said: "According to available information, representatives of this unit of the British navy took part in the planning, provision and implementation of a terrorist attack in the Baltic Sea on 26 September this year – blowing up the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines." Nine UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles) and seven autonomous marine drones were involved in the attack.

Interestingly, Sweden and Denmark have both concluded that four leaks on Nord Stream 1 and 2 were caused by explosions, but have refrained from saying who might be responsible. Strangely, Sweden said on 14 October that it would no longer take part in a joint investigation of the pipeline leaks and does not

want to share results of its own investigations with other countries.

If Russia was indeed responsible for blowing up its own pipeline, exactly why was it so difficult for Sweden and Denmark to blame the sabotage on the Kremlin? The only explanation is that not only is there no proof that Moscow was involved, but all the leads were actually pointing towards US and British intelligence or military involvement in the terror attacks.

Backfiring sanctions war against Russia

The Nord Stream 1 pipeline between Russia and Germany is 51 percent owned by St Petersburg-headquartered Gazprom, while Nord Stream 2 is owned by a Swiss subsidiary of the same company. So what would be the point for Russia of destroying its own pipeline?

Gazprom, which had cut gas flows to just 40 percent in July, had recently further cut it to just 20 percent in an effort to punish Germany – the EU's biggest economy – for imposing sanctions on Russia. Nord Stream 1 effectively stopped pumping gas to Europe "indefinitely" from 31 August after maintenance work, reducing the pipeline's load to zero. President Putin has said that Russia will not resume gas supplies to Europe until sanctions are lifted.

So Russia's plan appeared to be just to wait for Europe to lift its sanctions, betting that the European Union would eventually blink as the coming winter cold brought the possibility of peoples' uprisings. And there are signs that the plan was working. High energy prices and mounting costs of living have fuelled civil unrest across Europe as winter approaches, including street protests and strikes.

Europe

Nord Stream attack

◀ **page 11** Moscow has repeatedly said that western allegations blaming Russia for the attacks were “stupid” because it had nothing to gain but everything to lose by destroying its own pipelines. On the other hand, Russian officials have pointed out that Washington does have a motive as it wants to sell more liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe. Of course, both Washington and London have denied involvement.

Liz Truss provides the smoking gun

On Sunday (30 October), it was revealed that former British prime minister Liz Truss had sent a text message saying “It’s done” to none other than the US secretary of state Antony Blinken – just one minute after the Nord Stream attack. Kim Dotcom, a self-proclaimed ‘internet freedom fighter’, said that the text message is the reason Russia believes the USA was involved.

Britain’s Daily Mail newspaper also reported on Sunday that private messages between Truss and other international foreign ministers, including some about Ukraine, have fallen into foreign hands because many dumb government officials, including Truss, still prefer using iPhones over the military-encrypted phones issued by the NSA (National Security Agency) or British intelligence GCHQ.

Kim Dotcom, who was born Kim Schmitz in West Germany, said: “Liz Truss used her iPhone to send a message to Secretary Blinken saying ‘it’s done’ a minute after the pipeline blew up and before anybody else knew.” Because iPhones use iCloud, Russian and Chinese hackers could easily access Apple iCloud to obtain the information.

Immediately after it was exposed that Truss’s iPhone might have been hacked, leading to the embarrassing leaks, chair of the defence select committee, Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood, told Sky News on Sunday that Russia is “getting better and better at these cyberattacks and hacking”. However, British opposition parties have demanded an investigation into the reported claims.

Back on 7 February, President Joe Biden had promised to prevent Nord Stream 2 from becoming operational if Russia invaded Ukraine, saying: ‘If Russia invades, then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.’

Sources said that up to a year’s worth of messages were downloaded from Truss’s phone, and that they included criticisms of then-prime minister Boris Johnson by Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng. Truss’s phone also contained secret details of talks about the war in Ukraine, including arms shipments, as well as private messages with Kwarteng, the chancellor during Truss’ 44-day administration.

Almost immediately after Nord Stream 1 and 2 were blown up, former Polish defence minister Radek Sikorski set tongues wagging. A fierce critic of Vladimir Putin, Sikorski, who was minister of national defence from 2005-07 and has also served as deputy minister of national defence and deputy minister of foreign affairs, posted a tweet that read: “Thank

you, USA”.

Currently an elected member of the European parliament, Sikorski was pointing his finger at the USA as the culprit behind the sabotage of Nord Stream 1 and 2.

Back on 7 February, President Joe Biden had promised to prevent Nord Stream 2 from becoming operational if Russia invaded Ukraine. The US president said: “If Russia invades, then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.”

When a reporter asked: “But how will you do that, exactly, since the project is in Germany’s control?” Biden confidently replied: “I promise you, we will be able to do that.” Interestingly, a day after the sabotage, German magazine Der Spiegel reported that the CIA had warned Germany weeks ago of a coming attack on the pipelines.

Time to make some hay

Asking ourselves who benefits, the accusation that Britain was responsible for the bombing is far more credible than the claims of Russia rendering inoperable tens of billions of dollars’ worth of key infrastructure it has developed over almost three decades since 1997. Given Britain’s intimate relationship with the USA, it’s hard to believe that London would have blown up Nord Stream without Washington’s approval.

It’s worth mentioning that right after Nord Stream was attacked, Blinken stated happily: “It’s a tremendous opportunity to once and for all remove the dependence on Russian energy and thus to take away from Vladimir Putin the weaponisation of energy as a means of advancing his imperial designs.”

Rise of Brics

◀ **page 10** likelihood of Saudi membership of Brics and the development of closer economic and political relations with China, that relationship could be compromised. Beijing has already signed memoranda of understanding on nuclear energy projects with Riyadh and supplied it with ballistic missile technology and drones.

Whilst this will account for only a tiny fraction of Riyadh’s gigantic arms budget, it already puts a dent in the implicit deal whereby Washington acts as guarantor of the Saudis’ national security – so long as the Saudis remain in lockstep with US imperialist aims, which most certainly do not include entering alliances led by China and with Iran on the waiting list of hopefuls.

Another Brics hopeful, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has President Putin’s personal seal of approval for his proposed installation of a gas hub on Turkish territory, linking with the existing Turk Stream network to pump gas from Russia to Germany. It is doubtful whether those persons unknown who wrecked the Nord Stream pipelines will still be cheering if it turns out that the supply of Russian gas to western Europe is henceforth to be turned on or off under the watchful eye of fellow Brics member Turkey.

As the creeping decline of the USA accelerates to an acute stage, the system of enforced alliances that once staked out the hegemonic control of the world – Nato, the EU, ASEAN, the OAS etc, etc – are still hanging around as decaying reminders of the USA’s glory days.

But history has moved on, requiring the formation of a different set of acronyms more in tune with the real balance of forces.

Europe



British armed forces planned terrorist attack on the Crimean bridge

Like the fool of ancient Chinese fable, the imperialists continue to lift rocks that merely break their own feet.

The bombing of the Crimean bridge was the latest in a string of terrorist attacks committed against Russian civilians this year.

Around 6.00am on 8 October, a truck full of explosives was detonated as it drove across the road section of the bridge. Its fire spread to a goods train that was carrying fuel on the parallel tracks, and the bridge was closed as emergency services rushed to quench the flames and assess the damage to what has become an iconic structure in modern Russia.

Until the recent referendums and incorporation of Kherson, Zaporozhe, Donetsk and Lugansk into the Russian Federation, the bridge – crossing the Kerch straight between the Black and Azov seas – was the only land link between Russian Crimea and the Russian mainland.

A magnificent feat of engineering, the bridge has regu-

larly featured on Russian postage stamps and coins since its construction. The largest structure of its kind in Europe, spanning 19km, it was built after the Crimean people made their almost unanimous decision to leave Ukraine and join the Russian Federation in 2014 – a reaction to the imperialist-backed ‘Euromaidan’ coup d’etat in Kiev which instituted a fascistic anti-Russian apartheid across the former socialist republic.

It is still not known whether the truck driver knew what he was carrying, or how he was able to get past security. By great good fortune, however, not only were very few people harmed, but the damage to the bridge turned out to be superficial, so that the undamaged part of the roadway and rail tracks had been reopened to traffic by the evening of the same day.

Despite some ludicrous suggestions that the attack had been the result of ‘Russian

infighting’, it was evidently *not* carried out by the Russians themselves, since the successful destruction of the \$4bn bridge would have been a financial and logistical blow, potentially cutting off important supply lines and damaging the morale of soldiers and civilians alike.

Whodunnit solved as western media look the other way

The general consensus quickly arrived at was that Ukrainian armed forces were behind the attack – indeed, Ukrainian media admitted as much on the day. But an exclusive report by the Grayzone has revealed that the situation was not nearly so clear cut.

Details of documents and emails that circulated between British intelligence officials earlier this year clearly reveal that *British special forces planned the attack*. It is perfectly possible, of course, that Ukrainian secret services were tasked with executing their British instructors’ orders, but of Britain’s overall directing role there can now be little doubt.

Those of us who are waiting for outraged calls for heads to roll now that this information has become public are likely to be waiting a long time, however – as the orgy of gloating that followed the news made all too clear.

Indeed, within hours of the explosion, the Ukronazi regime had even issued a new postage stamp ‘celebrating’ this not-quite-as-destructive-as-they-had-hoped act of vandalism. Whether the blatant celebration of a criminal attack on civilians will ultimately prove a PR win or a PR gaffe we will leave our readers to judge.

The stamp’s appearance certainly spoke volumes about the supremacist mindset with which the Ukrainian state seeks to inculcate its people – as did the uncritical repetition of Ukrainian jibes that the explosion was a “birthday present” for President Putin.

Despite the circulation of the leaked British documents, Ukraine’s attempts to take credit for the operation, and the initial and very high-profile flood of acclaim with **▶ page 14**

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Crimean bridge

◀ **page 13** which western politicians and media personalities greeted this 'victory', many imperialist media outlets have since backtracked over the question of responsibility. Sources such as the BBC are now branding the attack an 'unsolved mystery', and even speculating about possible Russian involvement.

One can only assume this abrupt volte face has been brought about by a rather belated realisation that openly organising and endorsing acts of naked terrorism might not be the best look for those who are trying to retain or win back the favour of their increasingly nervous satellites.

Russia's response

Following the Saturday morning attack, repair work began immediately, and by Sunday morning the cars crossing the bridge were able to use two lanes, while the number allowed to cross simultaneously had increased from ten to 50 to 100. Traffic by car and rail was back to normal levels by the Monday morning.

Whilst the mobilisation of 300,000 Russian reservists is ongoing, with those called up undergoing the necessary training and gradually being incorporated into the ranks of the fighting force in Ukraine, Russia launched its biggest barrage of missile strikes since the start of the special military operation in response to the attack on the bridge.

The strikes hit ammunition depots and other types of military infrastructure. Most notably, they hit the SBU (secret services) offices in Kiev as well as crucial power and communications infrastructure all over the country – leading to widespread power outages and growing fears of a refugee

crisis in the European Union this winter.

The muddy conditions created by autumn rains is impeding the movement of ground troops, which is particularly hard for Ukraine's forces, with supply lines that stretch all the way back from the front line in eastern Donbass to Poland in the west, exposed all the way to Russian artillery, missile and drone strikes.

Drone strikes regularly hit targets in Kiev, and the cheaper drones that Russia has been using in large quantities since the bridge attack have proved extremely effective against Ukraine's depleted and scattered air defences.

Meanwhile, the gradual expansion of the Russian force is being met with an increase of Nato troops in Ukraine, including from the US army itself (despite repeated assertions of 'non-involvement'), which is supplying a host of 'inspectors' to boost the Ukrainian army's capabilities.

These 'inspectors' are supposedly there to see where all the weapons being poured into Ukraine are going, but are far more likely there to kill Russians. Clearly keen to avoid admitting to their direct role and an open confrontation with Russia, nevertheless the number of 'advisors', 'inspectors', 'trainers' and 'volunteers' from western imperialist countries continues to grow.

Accelerating collapse of Wolfowitz doctrine

The Wolfowitz doctrine was

the unofficial name given to the US defence planning guidance document produced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the under-secretary of defence for policy Paul Wolfowitz and his deputy Scooter Libby.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union – the only force with the strength to hold US imperialism in check after WW2 – the now dominant superpower was flexing its imperial muscles with gleeful anticipation of the loot in store.

This document laid out the foreign policy the USA aimed to follow in the years 1994-99. Supposed to be kept confidential, it

came to public attention after it was leaked to the New York Times in March 1992.

The 'American exceptionalism' espoused in the document has roots that are centuries old and deeply buried in the foundations of the American nation, as was highlighted by abolitionist senator John P Hale in his ironic castigation to the US senate back in 1850:

"At the commencement of this year, the American senate, the highest legislative body of the world, the wisest, greatest and most magnanimous people that ever lived or ever will live, forgetting and neglecting the trifling local affairs which concerned their own limits, constituted themselves into a high court and proceeded to try the nations of the earth for atrocious acts of despotism."

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union – the only force with the strength to hold US imperialism in check after WW2 – the now dominant superpower was flexing its imperial muscles with gleeful anticipation of the loot in store. Accordingly, Wolfowitz's paper stated:

"Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new

rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defence strategy and requires that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.

"We continue to recognise that collectively the conventional forces of the states formerly comprising the Soviet Union retain the most military potential in all of Eurasia; and we do not dismiss the risks to stability in Europe from a nationalist backlash in Russia or efforts to reincorporate into Russia the newly independent republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and possibly others ...

"We must, however, be mindful that democratic change in Russia is not irreversible, and that despite its current travails, Russia will remain the strongest military power in Eurasia and the only power in the world with the capability of destroying the United States."

So there the matter is summed up in a nutshell: Russia has too many natural resources that we want to control, and it combines these with a military potential to destroy the USA. Therefore, a strong united Russia that acts in its own interests remains the ultimate anathema as far as the US imperialists' hegemonic, monopolistic goals are concerned.

The document also asserts that "The USA must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order that holds the promise of convincing potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect

Europe

their legitimate interests.

“In non-defence areas, we must account sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership or seeking to overturn the established political and economic order. We must maintain the mechanism for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.

“While the USA cannot become the world’s policeman, by assuming responsibility for righting every wrong, we will retain the preeminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations.”

This passage seems particularly ironic in the light of what his happening to western Europe today. Germany’s political leadership has been going along with everything the USA has demanded since Russia launched its defensive military operation in Ukraine – even to the point of breaking the German economy in broad daylight.

Will the German ruling class find a way to break free of this suffocating embrace, or must the red banner be hoisted over the Reichstag before Germany’s people are allowed any respite from their precipitous decline?

It is interesting to note Wolfowitz’s *rejection* of the idea that the US would become “the world’s policeman”. As we have seen, what the US imperialists preferred instead was to take all the impunity and privileges associated with a policeman’s role, while rejecting its responsibilities – that is: to behave like gangsters with a police badge.

The best-laid plans

So how is this doctrine working out for the USA? The strongest powers that the imperialists couldn’t control so well after the 2008 crisis formed the Bric group (Brazil, Russia, India and China); South Africa joined soon after turning it into the Brics. This year since the start of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine, Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Mexico and Indonesia have all shown an interest in joining, and more countries are rumoured to be making quiet enquiries.

A growing number of alternative economic, political and security blocks have been formed over the last 20 years, and in direct response to the USA’s belligerent attitude – the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) of former Soviet states in particular. None of these developments bode well for the Wolfowitz doctrine, resting as it does on the assumption that no-one in the global playground has either the will or the ability to stand up to the rampaging US bully.

Meanwhile, outside the upside-down world of the imperialist-controlled western media bubble, the imperialists’ open gloating over the Crimea bridge attack has not played well. After all, what signal does such an attack on a country’s vital infrastructure send to the people of the Brics and other developing nations?

As the imperialists’ base and insatiable greed is exposed for all to see, it is hardly surprising that increasing numbers of workers and peasants across the world are waving Russian flags and calling for the removal of west-aligned governments.



Germany is under pressure. Something’s got to give

As the economic crisis deepens and political panic spreads, the future of a unified European imperialist block is looking ever more shaky.

The combination of overproduction crisis and soaring fuel prices is putting the German economy under such intolerable pressure that sooner or later something will have to give – maybe even the European Union itself.

Having bullied Berlin into stopping the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline and facilitated the terrorist sabotage of most of the rest of the Nord Stream network, US imperialism has for the moment secured Germany and France as a captive market for US liquified natural gas (LNG). It is taking maximum advantage of the block on Russian gas to force EU members to pay through the nose for LNG shipped from the USA.

It costs only \$60m to fill up a big tanker in the USA, the contents of which can be sold in Europe for as much as \$275m, thanks to the gap which yawns between the US and the European market prices. The USA has Germany on the rack and keeps on turning the screw, unperturbed by the longer-term political consequences of treating an ‘ally’ in this way.

The stability of the EU is largely founded on Germany’s strong industrial base. It is that strength that is now being fatally undermined as industry is starved of affordable energy, resulting in many factory closures or relocation to the USA.

Fearful of losing market share to its own European rivals, Germany has been trying to bolster industry and soften the blow to consumers by a generous subsidy package. German chancellor Olaf Scholz recently announced a €200bn subsidy measure to cushion German households and businesses from soaring energy prices. And this is in addition to a subsidy of over €100bn already granted over the last year, plus €85bn specifically to bail out energy companies.

If Germany’s neighbours adopt similarly bold subsidy schemes in a blind panic to defend their own national economies, the inflationary consequences could even hasten the demise of the EU itself.

Europe



Neo-nazis smash up Yugoslav communist party headquarters

British communists in solidarity with comrades under attack from EU-backed fascist thugs.

We reproduce below a letter received from comrades in the New Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the response sent to the NKPJ and to the Serbian government by our party.

Dear comrades

The New Communist Party of Yugoslavia informs you that neo-nazis recently organised an attack on our headquarters in Belgrade. They demolished our windows and wrote anticommunist and neo-nazi slogans. Reactionary forces attacked our headquarters five times last year. In the last few years this has become standard. But the most recent attack on our party was the biggest.

In the last few years neo-nazis have been very active, regularly destroying antifascist monuments and other symbols of socialism in our country. The NKPJ is the most active party in defending socialist and antifascist symbols in our country. The Serbian police and authorities did not want to do anything. Our security services and police are very familiar with the neo-nazi groups and actually created many of them.

Anti-people government and reactionary forces are disturbed by our political programme. Pressure on our party

has intensified in the last few years. The attack on our party has taken place in the context of a huge anticommunist hysteria in Serbia and contradiction in the world.

The anticommunist campaign in Serbia is being conducted side by side with an offensive against workers' and people's rights, which has been ongoing for many years. Many films, series, and 'science programmes' are being made to discredit the socialist construction that existed in our country. These are being shown every day.

The media portray communists and revolutionaries as criminals and adventurers, and on the other hand they portray collaborators as patriots and 'saviours of the nation'. They want to show that the struggle for social justice is an absurdity, while treason is something to admire. By order of the European Union, Serbia enacted the law of rehabilitation, and 3,000 second world war collaborators were 'rehabilitated'.

By their latest actions, the reactionary forces in Serbia hope to scare communists in our country. The members of NKPJ are followers of the partisans, who, led by the communists, defeated fascism and the collaborationists who served the Nazi occupiers and slaugh-

tered their own people.

Communists are proud of that struggle, because after that glorious victory, a more just world was built, which was tailored to humanity, foresaw a future worth living in, and spread brotherhood and unity among nations, instead of a policy of hatred and exploitation.

The NKPJ sends a warning to the cowards who are hiding behind the neo-nazis that communists will not back down in the face of their threats. Communists are people of a special kind who are not afraid of cowardly neo-nazi attacks.

The communists will unreservedly and ruthlessly fight to the last breath and the last drop of blood for a world without exploitation, racism, fascism, chauvinism, inter-ethnic hatred, and all other reactionary forms of government.

The NKPJ asks our sister communist and workers' parties to organise demonstrations in front of the Serbian embassy in the next two weeks or to send protest letters against the discrimination of NKPJ to the president of the Republic of Serbia by email: kontakt.predsednik@predsednik.rs

We thank you in advance for your solidarity!

Aleksandar Banjanac

General Secretary

British solidarity

The Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) resolutely condemns the neo-nazi attacks against the New Communist Party of Yugoslavia's headquarters.

These attacks, of which there have been several in the past year, are one part of a wider trend of European imperialism

to allow and encourage the resurgence of fascist ideology and forces as the imperialist economic crisis deepens.

Fascists across eastern Europe, equipped and supported by Nazi Germany during World War 2, were roundly defeated by the heroic local partisan forces and the Soviet Union, but not before inflicting mass casualties and terror against workers and minorities. The survivors and descendants of these fascist groups became useful tools for western imperialism in their fight against socialism.

In the most blatant and terrible recent example, neo-nazi forces were unleashed on Ukraine in the 2014 Euromaidan coup. They targeted the most progressive elements of the Ukrainian working class to facilitate the acquisition of Ukraine by western imperialism and prepare the ground for its proxy war against Russia.

As the working class of Serbia becomes more conscious of its exploitation, and more dissatisfied with the ruling class and its cronies in government, the ruling class will tolerate and support reactionary forces to try to keep the working class in line.

The imperialists' hypocritical talk of 'democracy' and 'freedom of speech' is being exposed for what it is – talk, and nothing more. We must expose all cooperation between the state and fascism, fight against fascist ideology, and most importantly build an anti-imperialist working-class movement in order to defeat fascism!

Solidarity with the NKPJ

Solidarity with the progressive, anti-imperialist forces in Serbia

Solidarity with the working class of Serbia!

Europe



Czech communist leader on mass movement against Nato's war

The following interview with Josef Skála, vice-chairman of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) and the party's candidate for the upcoming presidential election in the Czech Republic, was given to Greek anti-imperialist journalist Panagiotis Papadomanolakis.

We are seeing huge demonstrations in the Czech Republic. Could you explain the people's demands?

People are protesting against the Czech Republic's involvement in the war in Ukraine – and against the policies of the government, which are dramatically worsening the living conditions of most of our compatriots.

The very logic of both issues highlights the submissive, vassal role of the Czech elites vis-a-vis the 'eurocrats', as well as towards Washington and its Nato instruments.

How are the economic and energy crises impacting people in the Czech

Republic?

We are suffering from even more severe effects than most other European Union member states. This is partly owing to the industrial nature of our economy, which depends on export sales and on imports of competitively-priced energy and other raw materials. Partly, it is owing to other governmental policies, which have completely subordinated our country to foreign capital and to the interests of western 'strategic partners'.

During the socialist past, we were able to substantially boost our dignified sovereign position within the 'Champions' League' of global industrial markets. Let me give just one example: as one of only five countries with such a capability worldwide, we built 24 nuclear power plants, installing them not only at home but also in other Comecon countries and even in Finland.

Today, most of our productive capacities are owned by foreign capital, which is 'milking' us to the utmost and using our manpower as Gastarbeiters (guest workers), playing the role of completely subordinated 'sub-contractors'.

How are the economic and energy crises in your country related to the sanctions against Russia?

These 'sanctions' have been causing much bigger troubles to our own country than to the Russian Federation. From the late 1960s, socialist Czechoslovakia was the first European country to benefit from an unlimited supply of Siberian gas at very cheap prices – and, moreover, from the transit income earned by assisting in the passage of gas to the Federal Republic of Germany and to Austria.

Nowadays, we buy the self-same gas from Germany, paying the highest prices within the EU, and are right now facing the very real risk of a severe gas deficit during the coming winter.

Socialist Czechoslovakia built a very powerful and competitive system of electricity self-supply. Thanks to that system, we produced much more power than we needed for our own purposes, at a cost of just 2-4 cents/kWh. Within the neo-colonial scheme of the Leipzig energy stock market, we have now been forced to buy the

self-same Czech electricity for €0.50.

This tremendous robbery has nothing to do with Russia.

What is the Czech government's role in the war in Ukraine?

Our present government is striving for a leading position amongst those who intend to 'defeat' the eastern nuclear superpower. This is really a historical first.

There were much bigger bloodsheds in the past – eg, the war in Vietnam with 4 million Vietnamese victims and 60,000 US soldiers returned home in coffins. Even at that time, however, nobody would have shouted about 'winning over' the involved nuclear superpower.

Such policies are extremely dangerous both to our economic and security interests.

The corporate media dismiss the demonstrations in your country as being made up of extremists and 'far-right Kremlin agents', describing the leadership as a 'red-brown alliance'. How do you respond to these accusations?

These media and politicians are extremely nervous, facing massive and growingly powerful protests. Wenceslas Square, the very centre of Prague, was filled by more than 100,000 participants at anti-government rallies on 3 and 28 September, and again on 28 October.

Those of us who had the honour to address these gatherings do indeed represent an extremely wide political and professional spectrum, ranging from communists on ▶ **page 19**

Central Asia



Azeri chauvinism used by the imperialists to set Russia's borders on fire

War has broken out again between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but who does it really benefit?

Armenia is a small landlocked country with few resources and under constant threat from Azeri chauvinism. The recent resumption of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan cannot be taken in isolation from the world international situation, however, especially since Armenia is aligned with Russia, and is in a collective security pact with other former Soviet nations.

Azerbaijan has been obtaining weapons from Turkey and Israel. If Russia is drawn into a conflict on Armenia's side, this could complicate Turkish/Russian relations, which is very much in the imperialists' interests. As to is the extending of the war flank from Ukraine all the way to the south Caucasus.

The imperialists have been kind enough to publish a complete blueprint for their plan of "over-extending Russia". Written by the Rand Corporation in 2019, this document reads like a timetable for events that have taken place since.

Imperialist intentions writ large

"Providing lethal aid to Ukraine would exploit Russia's greatest point of external vulnerability. But any increase in US military arms and advice to Ukraine would need to be carefully calibrated to increase the costs to Russia of sustaining its existing commitment without provoking a much wider conflict in which Russia, by reason of proximity, would have significant advantages.

"Increasing support to the Syrian rebels could jeopardise other US policy priorities, such as combating radical Islamic terrorism, and could risk further destabilising the entire region. Furthermore, this option might not even be feasible, given the radicalisation, fragmentation, and decline of the Syrian opposition.

"Promoting liberalisation in Belarus likely would not succeed and could provoke a strong Russian response, one that would result in a general deterioration of the security environment in Europe and a setback for US policy.

"Expanding ties in the south Caucasus – competing economically with Russia – would be difficult because of geography and history.

"Reducing Russian influence in central Asia would be very difficult and could prove costly. Increased engagement is unlikely to extend Russia much economically and likely to be disproportionately costly for the United States.

"Flip Transnistria and expel the Russian troops from the region would be a blow to Russian prestige, but it would also save Moscow money and quite possibly impose additional costs on the United States and its allies." (J Dobbins, RS Cohen, N Chandler et al, *Overextending and Unbalancing Russia*, 2019)

Right on cue, we have since seen the Ukrainian conflict grow, the attempted 'Slipper revolution' (US-sponsored coup) in Belarus in August 2020, the current conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the imperialist attempts to ignite strife in Moldova. Georgia, too, has offered a referendum on whether to start a war with Russia.

Stoking Azeri chauvinism

The Azeris have been displaying great chauvinism toward Armenia, with President Ilham Aliyev stating: "Yerevan is our historical territory, and we, the Azerbaijanis, must return to this historical land. This is our political and strategic goal, which we must gradually move towards." (Ilham Aliyev wants to 'return' Yerevan to Azerbaijan, Belsat TV, 9 February 2018)

The imperialists have cunningly used Azeri chauvinism to engender hostility towards Russia, with Azerbaijan's government saying it will increase gas

exports by 30 percent whilst expanding the Southern Gas Corridor.

"In July, the European Union and Baku signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan to double imports of gas to at least 20 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year by 2027.

"The agreement also provides for the expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor running through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, and Greece." (Azerbaijan says will increase gas exports to Europe this year by 30 percent, RFE, 12 September 2022)

Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu warned the Azeri government in Baku that the Russian military can conduct large-scale operations in multiple theatres – a thinly-veiled warning against allowing Azeri chauvinism to become any more bellicose.

The recent 'setbacks' (particularly in Kherson) of the Russian military have provided an opening for Azeri chauvinism, cheered on by imperialism.

"Over the years, the oil-rich Caspian nation has cultivated a network of allies in mostly hawkish Washington think-tanks, such as the Foundation for Defence of Democracies, Hudson Institute, the Heritage Foundation and even some relatively more centrist outfits like the Atlantic Council.

"Neoconservatives appreciate Azerbaijan because it is friendly to Israel and assumed to be hostile to both Iran and Russia. Since such positions are deemed to favour Washington, Azerbaijan deserves, according to these circles, particularly strong US support – or a degree of dispensation at the very least." (Caucasus conflict highlights US hawks' reckless support for Azerbaijan by Eldar

Central Asia

Mamedov, Responsible Statecraft, 16 September 2022)

Overestimating Russia's difficulties

The 'setbacks' in Kherson have been a trade-off. Ukraine has traded countless men's lives and equipment to advance over abandoned territory in Kherson whilst Russia has been destroying Ukrainian forces and preserving the lives of its own soldiers.

The US regime of Joe Biden has ordered these advances because it is desperate for some semblance of a 'victory' to show to the American people in advance of next month's elections – something to justify the billions and billions of dollars sent abroad in the name of 'Standing with Ukraine'. The narrative portrayed is: "Look, Russia is on its last legs, it's retreating in Ukraine; it has all been worth it!"

Well, if that is as the imperialist media say, then so be it. But Opec+ just decided to decrease oil production, prompting the Biden regime to accuse the oil-producing nations involved of 'siding with' Russia and forcing the USA to eat into its oil reserves. (White House says Opec 'aligning' with Russia after production cut, will tap reserve by Steven Nelson, New York Post, 5 October 2022)

Meanwhile Europeans, Britons included, who are facing a very bleak winter, do so because they are saddled with a capitalist class that serves bourgeois cosmopolitans and imperialist domination instead of the broad masses of the workers.

Our only way out of the present economic catastrophe and reckless war drive is to end the economic and political rule of these bloodsuckers and replace it with a socialist state of our own.

Czech antiwar

◀ **page 18** the left wing to a patriotic and democratic right. The government and its foreign bosses received a more than convincing 'red card' against the policies they are pursuing, which are threatening the core interests of our country and the safety of our people.

The demagogy you refer to is a cowardly and nasty attempt to 'rewrite' the real story. We are neither 'far right' nor 'Kremlin agents'. It is those who are doing everything in their power to slander the demonstrators who are the real mercenaries of foreign capital and imperialist power. They are totally hostile to the Czech Republic's vital interests.

The far right is taking advantage of the political crisis in Europe by stealing the slogans of the left. But when they come to power, most right-wing extremists end up following Nato policies. How do you think there could be a left-wing response to the crisis?

In general terms, you are obviously correct. The situation in our country is, however, a bit different.

An extremism – of unprecedented dimensions and repercussion – has already been imposed by the government, as well as by its key media and various 'non-profit' creatures – all of them commanded by the 'deep state' beyond the Atlantic [ie, by US imperialism].

We can thus see quite a rare panorama: that today, key national as well as many endangered social interests, are being defended against the present power by numerous patriotic and democratic right-wing forces.

This is actually helping our efforts to overcome anticommunist stereotypes and psychological barriers among a growing range of Czech workers.

None of these forces is, however, capable of giving a genuine solution of any of the problems that are caused by the immense crisis of contemporary capitalism. The Czech left has accumulated a horrible debt in this respect over recent decades.

To overcome it promptly and in a convincing manner must be our top priority. Either we succeed, and restore our vanguard role – or the crisis may become a playground of empty illusions and give birth to a genuine far-right movement.

Fifty-four years have passed since the so-called 'Prague Spring'. Can you comment on the impact of the counter-revolution in the Czech Republic?

The drama at the end of the 1960s has been systematically used for spreading anticommunism and chauvinist hostilities ever since. Today, however, this demagogy has been harvesting growingly counterproductive crops.

When a broad spectrum of people, activated into opposing policies that threaten their core interests, are universally slandered as 'Russian agents', it helps to open their eyes to the lies told about our country's history, too.

This has even led some of our long-term opponents to apologise for their previously hostile attitude towards us [the communists] and to their proclaiming a sincere willingness to work together with us for a sovereign homeland – one which would once again be far more prosperous and just.

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.

Buy from our shop: shop.thecommunists.org

Or send cheques payable to CPGB-ML to PO Box 78900 London SW16 9PQ

> thecommunists.org

Environment



Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse: fracking is back on the agenda

.....
Whichever way they turn, the Tory government is tying itself in knots trying to escape the Gordian knot of the energy and inflation crises.

We are unsure just how many banana skins the latest cabinet is prepared to jump on in order to be considered 'hard' Tory, but many in the ruling party are becoming increasingly nervous as the disasters pile up and they wonder why they imagined the new chief clown would be any better than the one they just ditched.

Of course, the government cannot really do anything but fall into traps, given that the global overproduction crisis leaves them little room to buy their way out of their economic woes.

To add to their problems, the blind obedience (until now) of most of the European Union and British leaderships to the orders of US imperialism to destroy their own economies in

order to protect the USA's hegemonic position in the world has left them squarely wedged between a rock and a hard place – with massive pressure building all around.

Now the latest 'solve the energy crisis' / 'look like you have a plan' wheeze is: "Let's start fracking again!" What could possibly go wrong?

A recipe for disaster

In case anyone has forgotten, fracking basically consists in drilling into the earth in search of shale gas. Which sounds simple enough; even harmless – until you understand that mere drilling doesn't release the gas from the rock.

Instead, a toxic cocktail of chemicals and water has to be shot into the shale at incredibly

high pressure, smashing the rock to make the gas accessible.

There are two very important consequences of this operation.

1. That toxic cocktail stays underground. Along with the excess water that has been blasted into the substrata, it steadily seeps its way into the water table – and then on into the wider ecosystem, poisoning wildlife, crops (making its way to our food via farm animals as well as vegetable crops), and drinking water.

2. The extremely high pressure jets lead to underground ruptures. If these occur near a geological faultline, of which there are many, earth tremors are the natural result. In countries where fracking is still going on, earthquakes and cavernous holes have been caused around fracking sites alongside the pollution/toxicity problems outlined above.

After a magnitude 2.9 earthquake was caused in 2019 by Cuadrilla Resources (the only company that had been licensed for fracking), causing structural damage to local housing in Preston, Lancashire, Boris Johnson's government put a moratorium on fracking.

A report by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) published shortly afterwards concluded that it was "not possible with current technology to accurately predict the probability of tremors associated with fracking".

Of course, in 2019, there was an election in the offing, and the issue of fracking was creating a lot of anger amongst workers. Then-Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn promised that Labour would ban fracking forever. Whether he would have stuck to that promise in the present economic conditions we have no way of knowing.

Meanwhile, as the economic crisis deepens and the price of oil and gas rises inexorably, the potential profits to be made from shale gas are huge, so that politicians of the bourgeois variety, whether Labour or Tory, stand in the way of such opportunities for big capital at their peril.

Once again, it is left to socialists to explain to workers that the price to our environment and the threat to our health is certainly not worth the energy that might be obtained via fracking.

There are plenty of other, saner and safer, ways to produce the energy we need, including developing clean coal, investing in green technologies at scale, building small-scale nuclear reactors, and investing in nuclear fission (which surely would have been a reality by now if serious funding had been given to it).

All this, of course, requires state-level planning and invest-

Americas

ment – just one more proof that you need to be Red to be Green!

The true path to energy security

Meanwhile, real self-sufficiency and ‘energy security’ require the nationalisation of every part of the energy production and distribution sector, so that we can plan production to meet need – and provide what is needed at a price that can be afforded by all, as safely and cleanly as possible.

Although the fracking lobby is working hard to push the idea that its aim is ‘self-sufficiency’, ‘energy security’, ‘job creation’, etc, the lobbyists’ only real concern is maximising profit – and the carefully-obscured truth is that having a ‘locally produced’ source of energy will make no difference to workers’ ability to access the product.

The price of British shale gas, produced for profit by private companies, *will be set on the world market*, and sold to whoever in the world has the money to pay for it. It will not be used to warm up the workers who are shivering in cold houses for want of what it takes to feed their ever more extortionate meters.

Of course, if they want to ensure a secure and relatively cheap supply of oil and gas to Britain in the short term, the best thing our rulers can do is end their sanctions on Russia, stop stoking the proxy war in Ukraine (whether with weapons, training, mercenaries or propaganda cover), and start a genuine dialogue with Russia to secure peace and stability in Europe.

Meanwhile, the new ‘fracking plan’ looks like another potential banana-skin for a government that can’t seem to put a foot down on solid ground.

Oppose US ‘special measures’ against sovereign Nicaragua!

The following statement was initiated by the US-based Nicaragua Advocacy Network and has been signed by our party.

On 10 November 2022, an online White House statement announced that President Biden had invoked emergency powers on 24 October, declaring Nicaragua a continuing “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States”.

This renews for yet another year the executive order unjustly issued by Donald Trump in November 2018. It accompanies the biggest escalation of hostility toward Nicaragua – by the United States, but also by its allied nations and the media – since the Reagan administration made similar declarations in the 1980s.

Ronald Reagan applied US sanctions and illegally funded terrorists to overthrow the Sandinista government, using money from sales of cocaine to US citizens and weapons to Iran. Nicaragua’s economy was destroyed, and its people eventually voted the Sandinistas out of power in 1990 to stop the war and the economic embargo. Conditions for most Nicaraguans, however, only got worse during the three successive US-backed governments.

So the Nicaraguan people voted the Sandinistas back into office. On President Ortega’s first day in office in January 2007, he signed an executive order restoring the people’s constitutional rights to free and universal healthcare and education, rights that had been systematically denied during the previous 17 years of neoliberal governments. Since then,

Nicaragua has made tremendous social progress, and the economy has grown across social demographics.

But now the United States has returned to the hostility of the 1980s, pressuring its allies to follow suit, illegally escalating sanctions and funding violence to destabilise Nicaragua. Many news media promote the same falsehoods about Nicaragua that they used in the 1980s.

It’s time to set the record straight – to ask all our governments and media, wherever we live, to portray Nicaragua with greater accuracy and to stop interfering with its sovereignty. Nicaragua has been called “the threat of a good example”. This small country, with one of the world’s tiniest military budgets, may threaten some – but it is an inspiration to many!

Did you know that Nicaragua ...

- provides universal and free healthcare throughout the country, with 24 new hospitals, 181 maternity homes, and well over 3,000 health centres and health posts?
- adopted special measures to achieve among the lowest rate of excess deaths during the pandemic in Latin America, and the highest level of Covid vaccinations in central America, as certified by the World Health Organisation?
- has universal and free education from preschool through trade school, university and professional school?
- recently held its municipal elections with an impressive 57 percent turnout of voters, with candidates from five parties – and paper ballots secured and

counted by all party representatives?

- has several TV channels, numerous radio stations and well-used news websites expressing opposition viewpoints, alongside government-oriented media?

- consistently receives high ratings from international financial institutions for its transparency and execution of development projects, and for its prudent fiscal policies?

- is ranked seventh in the world for gender equality in 2022, with women in half of all government positions and 164 women’s police stations to attend to violence against women?

- is a world leader in renewable energies, with 70 percent of its energy from renewable sources?

- builds and provides thousands of good quality, low-cost homes annually?

- is a pioneer in defence of the rights of its indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, who have communal title to a third of the national territory?

- has an ambitious national plan to fight poverty that exceeds 2030 United Nations sustainable development goals?

- actively encourages citizen participation in government at many different levels?

- sponsors and helps develop thousands of cooperative businesses and agricultural enterprises?

More such examples of Nicaragua’s recent achievements and sources of information can be found here.

Nicaragua is not a threat to the United States. It deserves our recognition and support in affirming its national sovereignty.

Environment

Environmentalism

◀ **page 24** region” is further evidence of this.

Revolution and reform

Looking more closely at the method employed by Chenoweth and Stephan, one fatal error becomes glaringly clear. They have ‘analysed’ 323 uprisings between 1900 and 2006, determining each uprising’s success according to whether or not it achieved the goals it set out to.

The authors have not taken into account the magnitude of what each uprising was trying to achieve. To them, a revolution is the same as democratic reform. A short walk to the shop is the same as a 100 mile ultramarathon. In this piece of work, overthrowing capitalist economic rule and changing a few laws for palliative care of the people appear to be on a par with one another. What shoddy academia!

For example, in the late 1970s the Communist Party of the Philippines and its New People’s Army (NPA) lead a people’s armed struggle (unconventional).

State-sponsored military attacks on the NPA dispersed them and the Philippine government launched a concerted counterinsurgency effort (conventionally violent), which successfully prevented the NPA from taking power. Despite the fact that the communist party and its people’s army remain in existence and have clearly not given up their struggle, this was deemed a failure for violent uprisings.

However, after Ferdinand Marcos declared himself president in 1986 despite the counterclaims of election monitors, Cory Aquino led the Filipino people in strikes, boycotts and other non-violent protests. The military defected

and she set up a parallel government. The USA flew helicopters in to evacuate Marcos to Hawaii. Chenoweth and Stephan claim this replacement of leadership, a democratic reform, was a win for non-violent civil resistance.

To lay out plainly the difference between democratic reform and a revolution.

Democratic reform changes only the *terms and conditions of exploitation under capitalism*. Capitalism is the form our economy takes, accompanied by a state machinery that enforces the class rule of the capitalists; it is our mode of production.

Capitalism is the domination of production for sale on the market; the domination of money. It is the drive for maximum profit; the engine which drives humanity to pollute and ruin the environment.

As a system, it has no use for nature above what can be looted and sold. Only through the extraction of resources, their processing and sale, may profits and the power of money be realised for a small number of extremely wealthy people and their financially coerced, servile mandarins.

Reforms, won by the hard struggle of workers over many years, are always liable to be taken back – as we see today with the slow privatisation of our NHS.

The inherent right to rule of the bourgeoisie, as codified in its class-based laws and legal system, is never fundamentally challenged by the middle-class worthies of XR or by those in its more ‘extreme’ offshoots like Just Stop Oil. It is in recognition of this fact that the ‘radicalism’ of such movements is no barrier to their receiving sizeable grants from wealthy donors.

Revolution, on the other hand,

is the mechanism whereby the masses of people break free from the chains of this system of exploitation. They take back control from the systemic, greedy devouring of everything in exchange for money, and replace this obsolete economic order with socialist planning, whose triumph is rooted in the socialisation of all the means of production.

Reconnection with the natural environment can only be achieved through the shared ownership of the land and its resources, and by using them in a planned way for the benefit of all. Coercion is replaced with caring and sharing. Workers organise to ensure that society develops for the betterment of the people. We call this socialism, and socialism must be fought for and defended to be attained and retained.

Revolution and reform are not the same thing, and cannot be measured as equals.

Whose science?

The shame is that movements like Just Stop Oil and XR attract people who genuinely do care about the environment, drawing them down a sterile reformist track which can only end in disillusion and sullen scepticism towards the very idea of social progress. Yet many of them are instinctive communists, simply lacking the necessary scientific-socialist theory. They simply don’t know it yet.

In response to XR’s call to “follow the science”, now is the time to follow not just environmental science, but Marxist science. Now is the time to recognise that if we are to live in a world where we care for the environment in a holistic way, then we must break free of the capitalist system. That is: we must study the revolutionary science of Leninism.

To change the terms and

conditions of our exploitation through non-violent civil disobedience is not enough! Especially not at the rate of urgency with which the IPCC report implores us to act.

Let us finally address the global shape of the desperate need for capitalism’s replacement, of which environmental degradation is just one symptom. Every country that has successfully waged an armed revolutionary struggle and begun to overthrow its capitalist exploiters has had to endure persistent and determined attempts at counter-revolution, funded and equipped by foreign imperialists, led by the USA.

The USSR, China, Korea, Cuba, the Philippines ... In fact, the leading cause of environmental catastrophe and the leading consumer of oil is war, of which the USA is, by a long stretch, the world’s leading instigator.

In essence, Chenoweth and Stephan’s book, the bible of so many well-meaning people who really do want to fix the world’s problems, is one of many misleading psychological operations, funded by imperialism, to coerce, misinform and lead people into activity which is no more than an energy sink – a distraction, a societal cul-de-sac.

Media psyops

Meanwhile, the capitalists use their media to attribute to socialism all the characteristics and behaviours that they themselves embody and exude: it kills millions of people; it doesn’t work; it’s authoritarian ...

As Malcolm X put it: “If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”

Environment

Once our eyes are open to it, the barefaced duplicity of the imperialists is breathtaking. For the US ruling class to preach sanctimoniously about ‘non-violence’ and coerce its own people into infantile, ineffective forms of protest (which are duly ignored) whilst launching ceaseless violent conflicts that wreak untold havoc and devastation around the world, is the height of hypocrisy.

The only times in human history when workers have been able to really transform their conditions for the better have been through socialism.

Through establishing a centrally-planned economy, advised by a myriad of peoples’ committees and assemblies and overseen by the best technology science has to offer. With workers reorganised to become the ruling class. With merit and service taking the place of self-centred careerism. With the real needs of the masses in place of the endless quest for profit.

And the hard truth is that the only way socialism has ever been achieved is via Marxist-Leninist science giving direction to a socialist revolution – revolutions that were won by workers taking up arms and battling the violent attempts of the counter-revolution to cling onto, and later to reclaim, power.

If you want to follow the science, there it is: objective, observable, testable, re-testable.

So a struggle is necessary, and workers must prepare themselves for it if they are to achieve their liberation. Friedrich Engels wrote in 1847 that if there were indeed a peaceful route to socialism, then we communists would be the first to advocate it. But history has shown clearly that those who are in power are ferociously unwilling to

relinquish it.

In fact, our exploiters have consistently shown that they will sacrifice any number of workers in a hail of bullets to cling on to their privilege. To shy away from our opponents’ unhesitating willingness to use the most extreme violence, to refuse to stand up to that violence, means in practice to disarm the working class and leave it defenceless against the onslaught of a most vicious enemy.

To cling to the myth of ‘non-violent resistance’ is thus to perpetuate a situation that environmentalist protestors so often warn us against: that the burdens we are placing on the shoulders of our children are becoming ever greater with every day of our inaction.

We are indeed running out of time. We must stop wasting it on *playing* at changing the world and instead direct our energies at learning how to help bring to consciousness the only force capable of *really* making that change – the organised working class.

There is only one type of justifiable, *progressive* violence in this world, and that is violence directed at ending the present economic system for ever (or in defence of those who are targeted by its rulers). For the struggle for socialism to be effective, we must be prepared with the theory of how to conduct the fight so as to not allow genuine protest to fall into self-gratification or misguided failure.

As VI Lenin famously wrote: “Honesty in politics is the result of strength; hypocrisy is the result of weakness.”

Our enemies are weak with hypocrisy: now is the time to organise!

**You’ve got to be
Red to be Green!**

Join the communists

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

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

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

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

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

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Environmentalists: time to look your gift horse in the mouth

The misguided actions of the environmentalist movement are annoying workers and harming the roots of their cause.

Much of the modern environmental movement's confusion stems from an organisation calling itself the International Centre on Non-violent Conflict (ICNC). International in name only, the centre is based in Washington DC and gives no clue as to its funding. That such an outfit should exist in the front garden of American power reeks of the CIA lazily dishing out a little bit of 'Do what I say, not what I do'.

Some years ago, the ICNC invited a PhD student, one Erica Chenoweth, on an eight-day course. Who paid is unclear, but in her acknowledgements, Ms Chenoweth gave thanks to the cohort of scholars at the Belfer Centre at Harvard's Kennedy school of Government,

which "helped the project take off".

During this course, Ms Chenoweth became convinced that, though violent revolutions such as Russia's and China's had worked in the past, violent conflicts were on the decrease and forms of civil resistance were on the rise. She then collaborated with Maria Stephan to write several books. One released in 2011 was called *Why Civil Resistance Works – the Strategic Logic of Non-Violent Conflict*.

This book has provided the theoretical basis for Extinction Rebellion's (XR) non-violence policy, which, given five years of XR's mass direct action having failed to achieve anything

meaningful, is worthy of a closer examination.

When is violence 'normal'?

The book's central claim is that civil resistance works "more than twice" as effectively as its "violent counterpart". A very human trait is to unquestioningly accept that which corroborates your own opinion. And this book's message plays nicely into the values of those – mostly liberal, well-educated – environmentalists who are turned off by the idea of having to teeter over the edge from physical individualist self-sacrifice to organised, resolute, violent if necessary, game-changing action.

Violent resistance is characterised by the book as "a form of political contention ... that operates outside of normal political channels. While conven-

tional militaries use violence to advance political goals, in this book we are concerned with the use of unconventional violent strategies used by non-state actors. These strategies are exhibited in three main categories of unconventional warfare: revolutions, plots (or coups d'etat) and insurgencies." (p12)

According to this analysis, violence used by the state military is fine, normal, acceptable, but the moment ordinary people take up arms, their violence is 'unconventional'. When the global character of 'normal political channels' is taken into account, it becomes clear that this book is not much more than a veiled apology for US imperialism.

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