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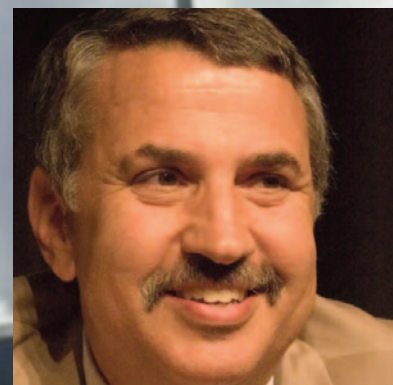
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IMPERIALISM MEANS WAR!



“The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas . . . And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.”—**Thomas Friedman**, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999).

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Imperialism and Ukraine

The politics and complex history of eastern Europe are not the focus of the Western media's attempt to explain the war in Ukraine. Instead the personality of Russia's president is the focus. **Graham Harrington** argues that a latent Russophobia has existed since the end of the Cold War, supplemented in the past three decades by the Russians managing to be the evil villain in almost every film, video game, and series, except after 9/11, when Muslims became the focus.

What is the truth?

PROPAGANDA

JIMMY CORCORAN

QUID EST VERITAS? What is the truth? A question that has echoed down the centuries has increased relevance as we live through the greatest propaganda assault of all time.

Western "news" media have mounted such a constant barrage of anti-Russian propaganda that it is almost impossible to hold an alternative view. Sports, the arts, education have all been co-opted into US imperialism's struggle to maintain its hegemony. To ensure total adherence to the US world view, RT (formerly Russia Today), the Russian media channel, has been banned from western airwaves. US imperialism has declared Putin a war criminal and stated that the war is the

result of Russian expansionism.

There is no room in this narrative to look at the eastward expansion of NATO, the coup in Ukraine in 2014, or the attacks on the Donbass. This is not to support or justify the Russian military action but to acknowledge that the causes of the conflict have much to do with attempts by the United States to maintain its position as the leading world power against China and regional powers such as Russia.

In the Irish media, from the smallest newspaper to RTE, the US position has been repeated ad nauseam. RTE went so far as to use footage provided by the Nazi Azov Regiment (formerly Azov Battalion) in its news bulletins. Most of the content could have come straight from US and NATO press offices (and in truth it probably did). The air waves are full of "experts" with links to NATO and the arms industry.

The Irish media reflect the world view of the Irish ruling class, which is one of dependence and subservience to British, US and EU imperialism and automatic support for all imperialist wars. The leading media personalities are united in their opposition to a non-aligned Ireland, which they try to portray as backward-looking and insular. They mainly support US hegemony, though some may look for a "nicer" imperialism; but all are agreed that the EU and NATO are the good guys.

But how is the "truth" they peddle manufactured? In the *Sunday Business Post* on 27 February, Lucinda Creighton mentioned one of these "truth-makers." She stated that she was an adviser to the Counter Extremism Project, an American NGO that says it wants to build "a more moderate and secure society by educating the public, policymakers, the private sector, and

PROPAGANDA

THE ATTEMPT At cancelling prominent Russians such as Yuri Gagarin, Dostoevsky, Shostakovich—all of whom died decades before the Russian attack on Ukraine—and the banning of Russian media such as RT reflect a propaganda war that has already been won. Many left-leaning people seem to have just discovered that they are anti-war activists since Russia's invasion. This is positive only if it is against all wars, not just the ones started by the enemies of the West.

Since 2001 France has made military interventions in Mali, Ivory Coast, Chad, Somalia, Central African Republic, Syria, and Iraq. Portugal at present has a military deployment in Mozambique. Fourteen countries in Africa are forced to link their currency with the euro. Ukraine itself sent thousands of soldiers into Iraq. Britain has thousands of troops in countries such as Ireland and Kenya; and this is not to mention the United States, which has its military and intelligence forces involved in every continent, with at least 750 military bases around the world.

The question "Is Russia imperialist?" misses the point of what imperialism is. Imperialism is not when one country invades another. If this were the case Poland would be imperialist, as it annexed parts of western Ukraine and Belarus in 1920; Ukraine would also be imperialist, as it participated in the war in Iraq.

civil society actors about the threat of extremism."*

Dealing with Ukraine, Creighton said that thousands of right-wing fighters went to Donbass to fight against Ukraine. Hardly likely when one considers the left-wing leadership in the two People's Republics that make up the Donbass. Nowhere in her article was there any mention of the Azov Regiment or the celebration of the memory of the Nazi collaborator Stefan Bandera.

The BBC, hardly a radical organisation, broadcast an item on the Azov Regiment in 2018 in its current-affairs programme "Newsnight." In 2019 the *Guardian* also covered it. In 2016 a report from the Office of the UN Human Rights Commissioner accused the unit of raping and torturing Donbass detainees. In 2015 the Simon Wiesenthal Centre condemned the decision to name Kiev streets after Nazi collaborators. Plenty of evidence for those who were looking for it.

Why did the Counter Extremism

Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism: it is a world system, represented today by the United States and the European Union and the countries subordinate to them.

Russia falls far short of being the leading exporter of capital in the world; neither does it represent an alternative to imperialism, as the USSR did. Russia does give support to such countries as Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela and is a partner of People's China.

In Russia itself the opposition to Putin is led by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and this is a big incentive for Putin to oppose the West. It is the CPRF that suffers most when elections are rigged and activists are repressed by the Russian authorities. Yet Western media ignore this and instead spotlight pro-Western figures who are on the fringes of Russian politics.

It was imperialism that created Putin, with the counter-revolution in the USSR and the brutal imposition of capitalism in the Yeltsin years. The rise in poverty, drug addiction, prostitution, homelessness, premature deaths, rampant inequality, the two brutal wars in Chechnya and the rise of Islamic extremism were Russia's reward for embracing capitalism.

Ukraine undeniably has a problem with the extreme right. Those who say that we should listen to the "Ukrainian left" opposed to Russia surely must not mean the likes of the Communist Party of Ukraine, banned since 2015. Neither do they mean the eleven opposition parties recently banned by

Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism: it is a world system, represented today by the United States and the European Union and the countries subordinate to them.

*Alexander Rubinstein and Max Blumenthal, "How Ukraine's Jewish president Zelensky made peace with neo-Nazi paramilitaries on front lines of war with Russia," *Grayzone*, 4 March 2022 ([tinyurl.com/y98kde8x](https://www.tinyurl.com/y98kde8x)).

Zelenskiy's government—and this while fascist groups such as Azov, Svoboda and Right Sector are permitted to exist.* Statues to the Red Army are destroyed, yet statues commemorating the Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera are allowed to exist.

In what democratic country are neo-Nazis brought in as an official unit of the national guard, as the Azov Battalion was? At the same time the Ukrainian government arrests the Kononovych brothers, leaders of the Ukrainian Communist Youth. President Zelenskiy's main financial backer, Igor Kolomoisky, was also a financier of the Azov Battalion.

Ukraine is not the only country in Europe with a strong right wing—far from it. However, it is exceptional in that the most extremist of them have been brought in as an official part of the state apparatus, their ideology has been encouraged by the state, their main political opponents have been repressed, and they were the best-armed and best-trained fascists in Europe.

Russia's war could not have happened were it not for the encouraging of fascism by the West, the war in Donbass, which took 14,000 lives, and Ukraine moving to join NATO. This is not to say we should support its operation—which arguably has created more unity among the West and NATO than existed before—or see the Russian state as heroes, but we should not join those who want to use Ukraine as our generation's "Little Catholic Belgium." Their enemies are not necessarily our enemies. ★

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formed in 2014 by former senior US government officials, including a former Homeland Security adviser, Francis Townsend, former Senator Joseph Lieberman, and a former US ambassador to the United Nations, Mark Wallace. In 2017 the US Department of Homeland Security gave it a grant of \$298,760.

Is it an independent source of information? Imagine if it had been set up by former Russian government officials and was financed by the Russian state. It would now be viewed as an unreliable source, and it would be banned throughout the west as an arm of the Russian government.

CEP may be an NGO, but it is not an independent source. It was created, is staffed and is financed by the US government, and it pursues US interests globally.

What is truth? It seems it is whatever US imperialism deems it to be. ★

(*www.counterextremismproject.org.)

Project not notice the Azov Regiment and the hero worship of Bandera and other Nazi collaborators? In the world view of the CEP, an extremist is someone who is opposed to the US domination of the world.

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, Bandera and his supporters collaborated with US and British intelligence to sustain a fascist military campaign against the Soviet Union. The Azov Regiment also supports, and is supported by, the US and other NATO powers. Therefore the CEP would not see them as extremist.

The CEP web site has a section dedicated to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Surprise, surprise! Only Palestinian resistance organisations are deemed to be extremists. No Israeli political groups, no settler organisations, no mention of Beitar Jerusalem, a football club whose supporters are notorious for their right-wing, racist anti-Arab views.

The Counter Extremism Project was



An urgent need to fight for neutrality

“Gallant little Belgium must be saved from the swinish Hun” was the cry in 1914. So intense was the propaganda deploring and berating the Kaiser’s Germany, and so heart-rending the story of a small European country being violated, that millions enlisted to fight and to die.



TOMMY MCKEARNEY IMPERIALISM

AMONG THE FALLEN in “the war to end war” were 50,000 Irish, many of whom were encouraged to join up in order to secure freedom for small nations.

The reality of the situation was qualitatively different, though. The Great War was in fact a struggle for imperial supremacy. Even little Belgium was not so pure after all, with its barbaric, genocidal behaviour in Congo.

Although more than a century has passed since that conflict ended, it is worth reflecting on, if only because those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat its mistakes. This is important when analysing current events in eastern Europe. The war in Ukraine is bloody, brutal, and an affront to civilisation. What it is not, though, is a straightforward battle between good and evil, between a plucky little David and a dictatorial Goliath, where outside intervention is based purely on humanitarian considerations.

People fleeing from the ravages of war deserve assistance and refuge. By the same token, those who offer such help are worthy of acknowledgement. Yet, just as with gallant little Belgium, there is more to the conflict in Ukraine than mere Russian expansionism.

To get a proper picture it is important to put what is happening in

context; and, as so often, the economic determinant is vital. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and its European allies, two crucial elements emerged over the following decades. On the one hand, the United States assumed the role of single global superpower or empire. Secondly, with huge numbers of skilled eastern European workers suddenly becoming available, the price of labour fell, encouraging American and western European employers to offshore production. The incentive for these companies to outsource manufacturing accelerated as Chinese facilities became available.

The result was increased profits for American-led finance houses but at the cost of surrendering manufacturing advantage, mainly to China. Inevitably, the balance of economic power has begun to shift in favour of China, aided by its huge and educated population.

Alarmed at this prospect, and in order to resist the Chinese advance, the US and its allies (dependencies) resorted to old-fashioned protectionism. Hence the ban, for example, on the use of goods and services manufactured by Huawei.

In spite of these trade barriers, China continues to expand its economy and, with it, its global influence. A crucial element in this process is China’s unhindered access to raw materials available through its near neighbour Russia. Moreover, a close

Neutrality in today’s world

EUGENE MCCARTAN HYPOCRISY

NEVER MISS the opportunities thrown up by a crisis to advance long-held goals! The Russian invasion of Ukraine has provided such an opportunity for the Irish establishment and the establishment media to push forward their long-held agenda to ditch Irish neutrality and to use the Ukrainian crisis to push for even greater military and political co-operation and co-ordination with the European Union.

Neutrality was in many ways a genuine desire not to get involved with the imperial powers but was also a legacy of the War of Independence and the role played by the British in the war against republicans in 1922–23. There was no stomach to back the British or to allow British forces back or to use any part of the 26-County state.

Irish neutrality has a long history and was a vital position of the more radical

forces within the national independence movement, from Wolfe Tone in the 1790s to James Connolly and the Neutrality League of 1914. Even during the bleak 1930s and during the Second World War the 26-County state stayed out of the conflict.

Not alone did partition fracture our people, in particular the working class, with a significant section of the people divided by the imposed British border, but also the Six Counties remained within the British imperial military strategy and of critical strategic importance, given its relation to the North Atlantic. So part of the Irish people have been and still remain part of NATO.

The Irish establishment, particularly that section whose economic interests lay in retaining maximum economic relations and subservience to the needs of imperialism—Fine Gael—have always had a hostile attitude to neutrality. Both Fianna Fáil and the Labour Party have had an ambivalent attitude, using

neutrality when it suited them but never fully embracing it. They never supported the demand for neutrality to be enshrined in the Constitution. Nor was there ever any attempt to join the Non-Aligned Movement but instead they studiously avoided having any relationship with it.

There was never any effort to establish anti-imperialist or even anti-colonial credentials by the political leadership of this state. Their economic subservience to imperialism was of primary importance to their own material interests.

There have been a number of important occasions when this state used its international standing. It played a central role in securing the support of the United Nations for the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in July 1968. Because of his role in promoting non-proliferation during the period 1958–1961 the then minister for external affairs, Frank Aiken, was the first person to sign the treaty.

alliance with Russia helps secure China's western frontier, not to mention admission to a very large market.

It takes little imagination, therefore, to guess why the United States and its allies (dependencies) would seek to destabilise this arrangement by whatever means available. It is in this context, therefore, that the question of Ukraine's membership of NATO should be viewed.

With good reason, Russia is extremely sensitive to any potential threat on its western borders, 2,000 kilometres of which it shares with Ukraine. The horrors of the Second World War are still within living memory, after all. That NATO's expansion eastwards would cause grave concern in Moscow has never been a secret, or something that Washington is or was unaware of.

Among many senior US policy-makers urging caution, the creator of the "containment of the USSR" strategy, George Kennan, famously described the expansion of NATO into central Europe as "the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era."¹

In spite of this realisation, when Ukraine's new president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, approved a national security strategy in September 2020 "with the aim of membership of NATO," the alliance refused to reject the proposal or to guarantee neutrality. Instead NATO arms manufacturers supplied Ukraine with a vast arsenal of sophisticated weaponry.² That the Kremlin would respond to this situation was as inevitable as day following night; and, as

But since Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1973 this position has been steadily eroded. During the campaigns for all the treaties promoted by the EEC (later EU) in its strategy of building a unified political, economic and military bloc the Irish establishment have consistently denied that our membership, or the adoption of this or that treaty, would have any effect on our neutrality.

That has clearly not been the case. The foreign policy of the 26-County state is in step with the European Union and its global imperialist strategy. With the adoption and support of PESCO this state has committed itself to benchmarking EU military spending requirements.

Under the "triple lock," if the number of military personnel is greater than twelve an overseas operation has to have the support of the Government, the Dáil, and the United Nations; any smaller number does not need to be made public or put before the Dáil. That is why Irish military personnel were able to take part in the war and the occupation of Afghanistan, and why we were able to

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we now know, it broke international law and invaded.

As a consequence, the United States has been able to rally its allies (dependencies) and lead an enormous hostile campaign against Russia. A media storm has been generated to demonise Russia, sanitise Ukraine's shady relationship with far-right elements, and rehabilitate unsavoury regimes in Poland and Hungary.

Trade sanctions have been imposed on Russia, which also have the effect of freezing commercial relations with western Europe in particular. Significantly too, China has been threatened with economic consequences if it offers support to Putin.

Only the wilfully blind could fail to see how useful this conflict is proving to be in shoring up Western imperialism in general and US interests in particular. Whether this objective is sustainable in the long run is another question, but for now it will endeavour to maintain the US-led position. And maintaining position is also uppermost in the minds of the Irish ruling class as it engages with this issue. Notwithstanding the fact that the 26-County state is a minnow on the global stage, the Dublin government has been aggressively supportive of the West's position. Not only is it leading the campaign to have Ukraine admitted to the European Union but the South's governing coalition is openly discussing formally ending neutrality. This latter issue is particularly odd, as Ireland's global military capacity can only ever be insignificant.

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back up France in its recent military adventures in Mali and its other former colonies in Africa.

Over the course of the conflict in Ukraine there has been a consistent assault on what remains of the neutrality of this state. Some commentators and politicians, particularly from within Fine Gael, openly state that it should join NATO, while the more realistic recognise that joining NATO would be a step too far for Irish people, but they see the main prize as pushing forward and securing maximum political and military co-operation or subservience within the EU. It would be NATO by the back door.

The leaders of both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have shown that they put the interests of the EU ahead of those of our people. They are involved in the EU military escalation strategy rather than developing a peace strategy to bring the Russians and Ukrainians together.

This state won a seat on the UN Security Council on the grounds that it was neutral and that it understood the issues raised by the global south as a former colony itself. Neutrality does not

One very likely explanation for this new-found enthusiasm for military adventurism is a calculation that the long-standing status quo in Ireland is under threat. A well-documented housing crisis, and a disgraceful two-tier health service starkly illustrating a society of gross inequality, are crying out for fundamental change.

There is also the ever-present matter of an increasingly endangered partition. Sinn Féin riding high in opinion polls is evidence that many are no longer content with the way things are. If covid-induced inflation were to cause workers to seek an even more radical solution than what is being offered by parliamentary republicanism, wouldn't it be great for the ruling class if it were able to call upon NATO, or PESCO, to save the day for capitalism.

Just think for a moment of how powerful would be the image on RTE of a virus-free Micheál joining Leo at Woodenbridge to wave young men off to fight in a conflict that certainly would be the war to end all war.³

To avoid that scenario, there is a great and immediate need to fight for Irish neutrality. ★

1 Office of the Historian, US Department of State, "Kennan and containment, 1947" (<https://bit.ly/3DcV8Q8>).

2 See North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with Ukraine" (tinyurl.com/bddxza5j).

3 On Sunday 20 September 1914 John Redmond spoke to a meeting of the Irish Volunteers at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, and urged them to join the British army and fight for the empire in the World War.

mean doing nothing but rather being active in the struggle for peace, in nuclear disarmament, in the struggle for global economic and social justice.

The Irish people support neutrality by a large majority. They also support the demand for boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against the Zionist state of Israel; yet the Government refuses to activate the Occupied Territories Act. Yet it has supported, and continues to support, either actively or passively, the imposing of sanctions on countries and individuals.

We need to be fighting for a progressive neutrality, which would include taking action on

- demilitarisation and de-escalation of the war in Ukraine
- global nuclear disarmament
- promoting the United Nations as the vehicle for negotiating an end to conflicts
- campaigning for global economic, social and environment justice
- promoting measures to challenge racism and all forms of discrimination. ★





The ugly face of war

SAJEEV KUMAR
RACISM

ALL WARS BRING out the worst in humans. The war in Ukraine has shown us two ugly faces. One is the calamity of war itself; the other is racism.

When European countries are welcoming Ukrainian refugees (with white skin and blue eyes) with open arms, the world also witnesses with

shock how refugees of African and Indian origin are treated as lesser humans.

Racism is not inherent in human beings: it is a creation of capitalism. Capitalism needs racism to justify slavery, genocide, aggression, and the extortion of resources from the land of coloured people by degrading them to sub-human level.

We see a lot of protests against Russian aggression and solidarity

with Ukraine, which is welcome from a humanitarian viewpoint. Of course white people don't deserve to be bombed; but neither do Iraqis, Afghans, Libyans, Yemenis, or Palestinians.

So why is the outrage selective? Why not a similar outrage against the bombing of a poor country such as Yemen? or against the US aggression against Afghanistan, where 58 per cent of the population

British and US weapons in the war in Yemen

MIRANDA LYNCH
ARMS SALES

IN MARCH 2015 a Saudi-led coalition of ten countries, backed by the United States, invaded Yemen, with the goal of restoring power to the government of President Hādī. This would be the start of a brutal war, which has been going on for the past seven years.

As a result of bombing campaigns by the Saudi coalition, as well as a Saudi blockade of borders and ports, the Yemeni people have suffered immensely.¹

The United Nations considers the situation the largest humanitarian crisis in the world,² with 80 per cent of the population (24 million people) in need of humanitarian aid.

Between 2015 and 2019 Saudi arms imports more than doubled compared with the previous five years.³ This has made the country the largest arms importer in the world, spending more than 9 per cent of its GDP on foreign arms.⁴ American and British arms dealers have been the driving force behind this increase, with 73 per cent of

Saudi arms imports coming from the United States and a further 13 per cent from Britain. In contrast to other European countries that banned the sale of arms that might be used in Yemen, Britain has ignored strong public demands to restrict arms exports.

Saudi Arabia is by far Britain's largest customer for weapons. British-produced weapons sold to the Saudi government include aircraft produced by BAE systems, which the British government has confirmed have been used in operations in Yemen.⁵ Amnesty

“It was abominable to listen to reporters talking on television about the refugee crisis happening in “civilised” Europe among people with “blond hair and blue eyes.”

The global increase in oil prices caused by the war creates an advantage for the United States: its exports of shale gas to the European Union will become more profitable.

live in abject poverty? or against Israel’s apartheid against Palestinian people?

Why don’t the media that broadcast attacks in Ukraine 24 × 7 allot a fraction of the air time to show the bombings in Yemen, where 377,000 people have been killed so far by the Saudi attack, with the backing of the United States?

Why don’t the media even mention the word “apartheid” in relation to Israel—a fact that has finally been acknowledged by Amnesty international? Why has it no effect on our humanitarian values? Is it because their skin colour is different?

Does the colour of their skin make them less human, not worthy enough of space in media reporting? Does the difference in skin colour make their misery less painful?

It was abominable to listen to reporters talking on television about the refugee crisis happening in “civilised” Europe among people with “blond hair and blue eyes.” What does it even mean? Does it imply that people of colour are born to run around as refugees?

These are the people who preach about “civilised” Europe. This is the moral degradation that capitalism has caused to the human psyche through racism: that people of colour can be treated differently, even if they are refugees like the white people.

The Indian author and activist Arundathi Roy said, “Once weapons were manufactured to fight wars; now wars are manufactured to sell

weapons.” Wars are essential for capitalism to capture markets and resources and to maintain hegemony; and the consequence of the wars is the creation of refugees—which exposes the racism in accepting the refugees.

The actual war is not between Ukraine and Russia, it’s between NATO and Russia plus China, with Ukraine as the battleground. The United States is realising that its global hegemony is eroding and desperately needs a war to restore it. That is the reason for breaking its promise not to progress eastwards after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The United States is already engaged in an economic war by means of sanctions, which will prevent the supply of natural gas from Russia through the Nord Stream project. The global increase in oil prices caused by the war creates an advantage for the United States: its exports of shale gas to the European Union will become more profitable. The United States will also supply Ukraine with weapons that it manufactures—which could end up in the hands of the neo-Nazi Azov Regiment—because of the escalating war; and once the war is over it can get the contracts for rebuilding the infrastructure demolished by war!

So it is a war instigated by the United States for the creation of profits for its monopolies.

Replacing the gas from Russia through a pipeline with liquefied gas from the United States is more damaging for the environment, because the technology for

liquefying gas increases carbon emission. Therefore this war will take us in an opposite direction from the carbon emission control agreed by developed countries, with disastrous effects on the planet, which may create refugees from climate change in addition to refugees from war.

Many developed countries that lacked the money for tackling the climate crisis or for investing in “green energy” to reduce carbon emission are now ready to invest in war and strengthen NATO, because war provides rich dividends.

This reckless behaviour by world leaders to engage in war when the world has to unite to fight against climate crisis is shocking and doesn’t provide hope.

While we fight to end wars we should also fight to win the war against racism, because the pain of death and destruction is the same whatever the colour of the skin. And the fight against war and the fight against racism will succeed only if it is also a fight against capitalism, because capitalism as a system needs both in order to sustain itself.

The solution can be achieved only when the working class of Russia oppose the war against Ukraine, the working class of Ukraine fight for autonomy in Donetsk and Lugansk, and the working class of Europe fight to dismantle NATO.

Wars are never fought for the sake of the working class. As Jean-Paul Sartre said, “When the rich wage war, it’s the poor who die.” ★

Between 2015 and 2019 Saudi arms imports more than doubled compared with the previous five years

International has also published evidence of British-made cluster bombs being used in Yemen. The British government at first denied but later confirmed this. Because unexploded sub-bombs can cause civilian harm long after a conflict has ended, cluster bombs are considered illegal according to international law; yet the British High Court declared in 2017 that the arms exports were lawful, arguing that civilian casualties would be unintentional.

Between 2015 and 2020 the United States has sold more than \$64 billion worth of weapons to the Saudi government, with sales to other members of the coalition,

such as the United Arab Emirates, also rising. Joe Biden when a candidate for the presidency of the United States promised the end of arms sales to the Saudis and the UAE but has since approved them. This includes a \$500 million contract for attack helicopters, which have previously been used in the conflict.

In conflicts like these it is important to remember who benefits. Mass public opposition to arms sales is ignored in favour of profits. The clear winners are the arms manufacturers of the American and British capitalist class, with ordinary Yemeni civilians paying a massive price. ★

Notes

1. United Nations Association, “Yemen crisis: Key facts” (<https://tinyurl.com/5n834m5m>).
2. United Nations, “The United Nations in Yemen” (<https://tinyurl.com/b7v6s43r>).
3. Brookings Institution (Washington), “It’s time to stop US arms sales to Saudi Arabia” (<https://tinyurl.com/bdeu622c>).
4. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, “The conflict in Yemen and EU’s arms export controls: Highlighting the flaws in the current regime” (<https://tinyurl.com/bdbyb4fp>).
5. Campaign Against the Arms Trade, “UK arms used in Yemen” (<https://tinyurl.com/mrxr2jap>).



Back to ‘normal’

JIMMY DORAN
CAPITALISM

THE RULING CLASS around the world have decided that the global economy must get back to normal, and that restrictions introduced to protect people in the so-called “developed world” from the covid-19 pandemic must be abandoned, despite the onset of a new wave of the virus.

Governments have gone back to their “normal,” blaming everything for the latest crisis in the boom-and-bust cycle of capitalism other than their policies and capitalism itself. Once again, as crisis hits, we see them subsidising the creators of the crisis and leaving the citizens to pick up the tab.

Fuel costs, which had already risen steadily by 50 per cent since last May, increased by another 35 per cent since the invasion of Ukraine. What is not mentioned is the bonanza in profits for the oil producers. In times of crisis the poor always pay the price, and the rich cash in. Big Oil has hit a gusher, and the world’s poor drown in a sea of debt.

Last year the biggest oil companies—Shell, Chevron, BP, and Exxon—made profits totalling \$75 billion. This year, by courtesy of another imperialist war, they are on the way to an even bigger bonanza. The oil companies could absorb the higher costs of crude oil, but they won’t: the Big Oil cartel are so big and powerful they don’t have to. It’s the same old story: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

How are the oil companies using this massive increase in profits? Are they reinvesting in research into renewable energy to undo some of the damage they have done to the planet over the last hundred years of ceaseless drilling and exploitation? No, they are

not. Will they increase supply to lower the price? Once again the answer is No.

The CEO of Chevron, Mike Wirth, didn’t hide their motives when he said, “We could afford to invest more, but the equity market is not sending a signal that says they think we ought to be doing that.”

In other words, the equity markets are telling him and his ilk that the best way to maximise profits is to limit supply—not to produce more. Maximum profit is their only purpose: they care not for the plight of people who can’t afford to heat their home, for the environment, or for the people of Ukraine.

So what is our government doing to appear to be helping hard-pressed consumers? They cut VAT by 20c for six months, at a cost of €320 million to the exchequer, which actually subsidises the price of oil, and props up the sale of oil for the producers.

If they were serious about helping the citizens, and had genuine concerns for the environment, for €600 million they could have made all public transport free for everyone for a full year. This would be of huge assistance to those who cannot afford a car, or fuel for a car, particularly the poorest of society, who always struggle to find the fare, and a major help in reducing carbon emissions for the country at the same time.

With free public transport along with the unexpected extra cost of sky-high prices for fuel, even more people would abandon their car for public transport. This could lead to a sea change in how people travel and think about travel—another opportunity to make meaningful changes to emissions, where government policy supports business rather than people or the environment.

This change could be introduced globally to reduce emissions in a

Fuel costs, which had already risen steadily by 50 per cent since last May, increased by another 35 per cent since the invasion of Ukraine. What is not mentioned is the bonanza in profits for the oil producers. In times of crisis the poor always pay the price, and the rich cash in. Big Oil has hit a gusher, and the world’s poor drown in a sea of debt.

people-friendly initiative, slashing the use of private cars in a transformative shift in the mode of transport to build a more sustainable world. The winners are the people, the environment, and the planet; the losers, of course, would be Big Oil and the motor industry.

Therein lies the reason these changes will not be made now, and not until the owners of these industries are forced to change. Neither climate catastrophe nor war will force them; they will use them as a method of making even more profits. Only a mass movement of people can and will bring about change.

Oil is a natural resource, a gift of nature, that has been abused and exploited by a tiny elite since its discovery. There is no consideration for humanity or for the planet that we all share. Why are these resources owned by a small group of people? The extraordinary amount of wealth extracted from the exploitation of natural resources is owned and controlled by a tiny elite, while half the world is starving.

Oil is a finite resource and could be used in a sustainable manner if used conservatively for maximum benefit to the citizens of the world. Many people around the world are receiving no benefit from the oil industry while living in oil-rich countries or areas most affected by the oil industry and the catastrophe of climate change that it has brought upon us. We should be managing all the earth’s resources in a global fashion.

Free public transport could provide unimagined freedom for people all round the planet, if only these resources were shared for the common good, instead of gas-guzzlers clogging up cities that have, or can afford to have, excellent public transport systems and no need for private cars.

The owners of these resources have more money than they could spend in five hundred lifetimes.

These companies are an affront to humanity. Oil should not be in the ownership of private individuals or corporations. Imperialism had no qualms about invading Iraq or Libya to control their oil resources. Natural resources of the world should be owned by the peoples of the world and managed for the betterment of humanity, not for the greed of a tiny elite.

“Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.”—Hunkpapa Lakota leader *Thátháŋka Íyotake* (Sitting Bull). ★



Trade unions call for control of covid

AISLING JOYCE
UNIONS

A GROWING NUMBER of trade unions are joining the call for measures to control the increasing numbers being infected by the omicron variant of covid.

At the end of March the general secretary of the Irish Nurses' and Midwives' Organisation, Phil Ní Shéaghda, in a letter to the ICTU, explained how our public health system is experiencing overcrowding and severe pressure, partly because of the removal of the requirement to wear face coverings. "Since the mask mandate was removed on February 28th, we have seen 8,953 patients without a bed in Irish hospitals. 27% of those who have been without a bed in our hospitals since the mask mandate was dropped have presented at our hospitals since last Monday [21 March]. This is staggering."

She explained that many health workers are not receiving basic workplace entitlements, "with recent surveys showing 98% of members in Emergency Departments were unable to leave work on time, and 91% stating they were working or available during their scheduled breaks."

In a challenge to all trade unionists, Ní Shéaghda said: "The links between mask-wearing and decreasing COVID transmission are well established. In absence of government taking action and responding to the calls of the INMO, we believe it is imperative now for the trade union movement to do what the Government will not and call on people to go back once again to basics: wear masks when indoors, on public transport, and in a crowded setting."

Decades of under-investment and giving priority to private medicine over public has led to this health crisis. The current government health strategy is to further promote private medicine and run down the public health system.

The need for a fully funded free public health service, from Derry to Kerry, has never been more exposed as it has been over the course of the covid pandemic. We need to take into public ownership all private medical facilities, and to exclude all private medical services from the public health system.

We won't be going away!

The monthly protest at Dáil Éireann by the People's Movement against EU militarism will continue. The next protest is at 1 p.m. on Wednesday 20 April.

The minister for foreign affairs and defence, Simon Coveney, said last week that Irish troops could participate in a new rapid reaction force sponsored by Ireland and envisaged as part of the EU's long-term military posture. "As regards a rapid reaction force, yes, I think there's a good chance that we'll be involved in that."

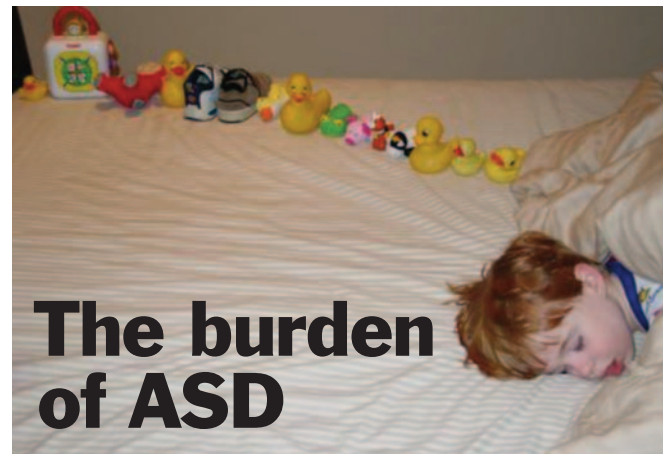
It's a big step towards the formation of an EU army.

Please try to get along, even if only for a short time.



CONNOLLY COLUMN TEE SHIRT
On the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War the Irish socialist, Peadar O'Donnell, urged the formation of volunteer regiments to support the Popular Front government. O'Donnell established the Connolly Column, named after his hero, James Connolly.

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MICHAEL DEVLIN
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

I MAGINE YOUR child who you love so much suffering mental distress. You would literally do anything for them. Their anxiety reaches a point where they become so frustrated it turns to anger and rage.

Violence erupts. You act in self-defence, and the family home is up-ended, debris everywhere. The Gardaí are called for your protection, and the family's protection. They are empathetic, as they have siblings suffering the same anxiety. They know the pain.

Yet gardaí barely receive one hour's training in dealing with mental health and the turmoil, and they tell you that. Some gardaí are not so empathetic, but it seems they are in the minority, and you hope they don't call to your home the next time.

You busily search for answers. You cannot understand how the school didn't point out instances when things happened and you as a parent were not told. The teachers are burdened with so much paperwork and form-filling, they are worked to the bone, and their job has become too much. The burden of mental health in the school environment is torturous.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are understaffed, and they cannot find the professional expertise to cover all the vacancies. You eventually find a space at CAMHS, and the burden is lifted a little. The doctors engage and understand, and they help to answer unanswered questions.

"Autism-spectrum disorder—what is that?" a barrister asks when approaching a case dealing with an adult who happens to appear in court. The courts are filled with people being tried who suffer huge mental health issues. Most have no family support, and they end up in prison and the continuous cycle of imprisonment. Nothing is being done to care for these people, and they become pawns in the criminal underworld, used and abused.

Those who supposedly know better think that most of these teenagers and young adults who have mental health issues have serious learning issues. They just don't understand how to handle a person with a high intellect and who suffers with ASD, as described in a letter from Dr Yolande Ferguson, clinical director and consultant psychiatrist for Dublin South-Central Mental Health Service at Tallaght University Hospital in November last year, where she stated: "Unfortunately there are no specific psychiatric services available for adults with ASD. This is a national issue."

It is only if your child has a famous parent, as for example with the recent publicity over Dr Tom Clonan's child, that you might be lucky and get some deserved medical help. This state may cherish the children of the nation equally, but some more equally than others. ★





Socialist revolution and women's rights

After the revolution Kollontai was elected commissar for social affairs in the new Soviet government. She said "In my opinion the most important accomplishment of the People's Commissariat, however, was the legal foundation of a Central Office for Maternity and Infant Welfare."

JENNY FARRELL
ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI, born 150 years ago on 31 March 1872, was an outstanding figure in the Russian communist movement.

Kollontai's active political work began with workers' evening classes, through which she became part of the Political Red Cross, an organisation supporting political prisoners. She participated in leafleting and fund-raising campaigns in support of a mass strike in the textile industry, an experience that consolidated her certainty of the need for proletarian revolution. In 1899 she joined the illegally operating Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

In 1905 she began to turn actively to the women's question. Her work *The Social Basis of the Woman Question* was the first major exposition by a Russian Marxist on the subject. In it she not only advocated the overthrow of the capitalist system but also explained the need to restructure the family itself in order to achieve true emancipation.

Like many Russian socialists, Kollontai remained neutral during the

split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1903. In 1904 she joined the Bolshevik faction and gave courses on Marxism for them. In 1905 she joined Trotsky and in 1906 left the Bolsheviks over the question of boycotting the elections to the undemocratically elected Duma, where she believed it was nevertheless possible to stand up for left-wing demands and expose the government's machinations.

Between 1900 and 1920 Kollontai was considered the RSDLP's leading expert on the "Finnish question." She wrote two books and numerous articles and was an adviser to RSDLP members in the Tsarist Duma as well as a liaison with Finnish revolutionaries. In 1908, when she advocated Finland's right to armed insurrection against the Tsarist Empire, she was forced into exile.

In 1918, she resigned as commissioner for social affairs in the Soviet government in protest against the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The treaty meant the loss of large European territories, including Finland and Ukraine, for Soviet Russia. With this position she opposed Lenin, for whom peace was a priority.

From the end of 1908 until 1917 Kollontai lived in exile. In the period before the First World War she travelled to the United States, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, and Switzerland. In Germany she met Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and Zetkin, whose work on women's rights she greatly admired.

Long before the war Kollontai began to agitate tirelessly against the threat of war and became involved in the anti-war movement in Germany and Austria. She was in the Reichstag when the war credits were voted for in August 1914. Devastated, she left Germany for Sweden, where she was imprisoned for anti-war propaganda. After her release, in February 1915, she went to Norway, where she served as a link between Switzerland, where Lenin and the Central Committee were staying, and Russia.

In June 1915 she broke with the Mensheviks and officially joined the Bolsheviks. In September 1915 she was centrally involved in the organisation of the Zimmerwald Peace Conference. Her paper "Who Needs the War?" (1915) was translated into several languages and circulated in millions of copies.

With the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917 Kollontai returned to Russia and advocated a clear policy of non-support for the provisional government. She was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. She continued to agitate for revolution in Russia and began her involvement with the

Bolshevik women's newspaper *Rabotnitsa* (Woman Worker), urging the Bolsheviks and the trade unions to pay more attention to the organising of women workers.

After the revolution Kollontai was elected commissar for social affairs in the new Soviet government. She comments: "In my opinion the most important accomplishment of the People's Commissariat, however, was the legal foundation of a Central Office for Maternity and Infant Welfare."

In 1918 Kollontai opposed the ratification of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and resigned from the government so as not to jeopardise the unity of the Commissariat by her opposition on such a crucial question. She remained active as an agitator and organiser, however, and played a central role in organising the First All-Russian Congress of Women Workers and Peasants, serving in leading posts and in 1919, together with Inessa Armand and Nadezhda Krupskaya, founding the Women's Committee (Zhenotdel) of the Communist Party. This directed its work towards improving the living conditions of women throughout the Soviet Union, combating illiteracy and educating women about the new marriage, education and labour laws.

In Soviet Central Asia the Zhenotdel sought to improve the lives of Muslim women through literacy, education, and "unveiling" campaigns. In November 1920 the Zhenotdel also introduced the legalisation of abortion for the first time in history.

In 1921 Kollontai came into conflict with the Communist Party and Lenin directly when she publicly declared her support for the Workers' Opposition, a grouping against party centralism. The group was dissolved, and Kollontai remained in critical opposition within the party.

In 1922, at her own request, she entered the Soviet diplomatic service, first in Norway, then in Mexico, then again in Norway and Sweden. She comments: "I set myself the task of effecting the *de jure* recognition of Soviet Russia and of re-establishing normal trade relations between the two countries, which had been broken by the war and the revolution . . . On 15 February 1924, Norway in fact recognised the USSR *de jure*."

Alexandra Kollontai also acted as a negotiator of the Finnish-Soviet peace treaty of 1940 and served the USSR with great sensitivity. Until her retirement in 1945, on health grounds, Kollontai lived abroad as a diplomat. Thereafter, and until her death on 9 March 1952, she served the Soviet Foreign Ministry as an adviser. ★





The importance of political theory

CLOVER CARROLL
MARXISM

ON THE 14TH OF MARCH we observed the 139th anniversary of Karl Marx's death. Marx devoted much of his life to writing about the social and economic problems that plague the working class of the world, and his words still hold true more than a hundred years later.

But why was Marx so important? His works, along with those of Friedrich Engels, led to Lenin leading a revolution in Russia against the Tsar and forming the Soviet Union. Lenin later went on to write further theories that expanded on Marxism; in Poland, Rosa Luxemburg wrote her own theories for the struggle of the working class; and here in Ireland James Connolly led the struggle for a 32-county socialist republic.

The works of these and many others throughout the world have led to revolutions in Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, China, and many other countries, although not all succeeded. The ideals of the revolutionaries can be traced back to Marx's theories. In *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin wrote: "Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolution." History has shown that Lenin was correct, as those countries that had a revolution were putting the theories to the test.

But while reading theory is important for any socialist, it's more important to understand those theories.

Marx's most popular work, jointly written with his close friend Friedrich Engels, is the *Communist Manifesto*. This work has shaped many people's understanding of Marxism. This is an issue more than anything. Those who uphold the manifesto as all that is Marxism do not have an understanding of

what they are talking about. The Manifesto of the Communist Party (as it was originally titled) was a summary of much of the work and thoughts that both Marx and Engels had up until that point, but Marx would later go on to write two pamphlets, *Wage Labour and Capital* and *Value, Price and Profit*, that both show Marx's growth in understanding of political economy and the development of his own ideas.

These two pamphlets are a much-needed read to even begin understanding Marxism. The more complicated and arguably more important *German Ideology* and *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* give some insight into dialectical materialism, the core philosophy of Marxism. Marx and Engels called this philosophy scientific socialism, as they saw that the theories they would write and of those that influenced them must be tested, the outcome studied, and new theories written.

We can see this after the revolution in Paris that established the Paris Commune in March 1871. Marx's *Civil War in France* gives some insight into how the commune worked politically, and a new preface was added to future editions of the *Communist Manifesto*. The idea of the workers taking the state as it is and making a workers' state by seizing the old state was shown to be wrong: a smashing of the existing state and the creation of a new workers' state was what was truly needed.

Marx's *Capital: A Critique of Modern Political Economy* was his most important work and brought his previous theories to full maturity. It's simply not possible to get a clear understanding of Marxism through one pamphlet that was written twenty years before Marx's most important work.

Engels said in 1874: "The indifference towards all theory is one of the main reasons the English working-class movement crawls along slowly in spite of splendid organisation." The political and economic struggles are equally important, but the theoretical struggle is just as important.

This is where the understanding of theory for Marxists comes in. Those who understand Marxism can wage an ideological struggle against the neoliberal views that are pushed by the modern state. These three struggles must be pushed for equally, as we cannot have one without the other. But to do this we need an organisation, and revolutionaries to lead. That organisation is the party, and the revolutionaries are those who apply Marxism to the three struggles.

The need for this can be shown through history. The success of the Paris Commune was an extraordinary moment in history for revolutionaries. The mistakes they made were not repeated in the Soviet Union, the first socialist state, because Marx and Engels learned from the Commune's mistakes. The need for an organisation led by—as Lenin called them—professional revolutionaries and for organising the working class is a must.

This is the importance of theory: to show the working class that there is an answer to the question "Why does my boss make more than me when I do all the work?" Active revolutionaries cannot stop at political and economic struggle but must wage an ideological struggle as well. In the words of Rosa Luxemburg, "The entire strength of the modern labour movement rests on theoretical knowledge." ★

Engels said in 1874: "The indifference towards all theory is one of the main reasons the English working-class movement crawls along slowly in spite of splendid organisation."





Venezuela doubles its oil production

Venezuela is close to reaching its maximum petroleum production capacity, since it has managed to double its crude production in recent months, thanks to Iran and other countries that have helped it evade US sanctions, reports the **Alliance for Global Justice**

SANCTIONS

OIL INDUSTRY sources confirmed to the Spanish-language newspaper *El Nuevo Herald*, published in Florida, that Venezuelan crude production reached an estimated average of 900,000 barrels per day in December and could be about 850,000 in January.

This has happened mainly thanks to the regular shipments of diluents



Hobo Musician

by George Luks
(Transcreated in Irish
and English
by Gabriel Rosenstock)

Being There

(a found poem from *The Grapes of Wrath* by Steinbeck)

We'll be ever'where —
wherever you look.
Wherever they's a fight
so hungry people can eat,
we'll be there.

Wherever they's a cop
beatin' up a guy,
we'll be there.

We'll be in the way kids laugh
when they're hungry
an' they know supper's ready.
An' when our folks eat the stuff they
raise
an' live in the houses they build—
why, we'll be there!

Bheith Ann

(as *The Grapes of Wrath* le Steinbeck)

Beimid gach áit—pé áit a bhféachann tú.
Pé áit a mbíonn troid
chun go mbeadh greim le hithe ag ocracháin,
beimid ann.

Pé áit a mbíonn leaid á bhscadh ag póilín,
beimid ann.

Beimid i ngáire an pháiste agus ocraas air agus a fhios aige go bhfuil suipéar réidh.
Agus an stuif a fhásann siad á ithe ag daoine agus cónaí orthu sna tithe a thógann siad—
m'anam, beimid ann!

coming in from Iran, which has helped compensate Venezuela for deficiencies in its production.

A former executive director of planning for the state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), Juan Fernández, claimed that Venezuela “has indeed increased production, and several things indicate this. A large part of this is due to the arrival of Iranian diluents which have gone directly into production.”

It is particularly because of these Iranian diluents, including the petroleum derivative naphtha, that Venezuela has managed to lighten its super-heavy crude.

The new production figures, compared with the 450,000 barrels per day that Venezuela produced at the beginning of last year, dissipate doubts surrounding the announcement a few weeks ago by the president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, that the country’s production was already at a million barrels per day.

For Fernández, industry estimates suggest that for every barrel of diluent that arrives in the country three barrels of Orinoco Belt oil are produced, and for this Iran’s help has been essential for the recovery in production. “Estimates of oil production in the belt now add up to 450,000 or 500,000 barrels per day, and that is due Iran’s help,” he stressed.

Fernández considers that this increase, together with the sharp increase in oil prices in the international market, is providing significant additional income that Venezuela did not have in the last few years, and is coinciding with the

forecasts that the country is about to register its first growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in six years.

Venezuela’s crude production has been gradually declining over the last years. In 1999, when the late President Hugo Chávez came to power, 3.2 million barrels were produced per day. This level was more or less maintained throughout the 2000s but began declining from the beginning of the last decade as oil prices began falling. By the time President Maduro took office in 2013 production stood at 2½ million barrels per day.

Beginning from 2017, financial sanctions imposed by the United States resulted in a sharp decline of the Venezuelan oil industry, and production level reached a low of an average of 1.34 million barrels per day in 2018. After the United States imposed sanctions on PDVSA in January 2019 and imposed a total financial blockade on Venezuela, production fell below one million barrels per day.

The Iranian supply, which is sent through veiled mechanisms in order to avoid the consequences of US sanctions, is essential for Venezuela to be able to produce crude oil in the Orinoco Belt, which must be diluted to be sold on the market.

The United States, apart from imposing sanctions on the Venezuelan oil industry, has made various accusations against foreign companies and other countries that have had business dealings with the Venezuelan oil industry.

On 20 January 2021 President Donald Trump, on his last day in office, imposed a series of sanctions against

The new production figures, compared with the 450,000 barrels per day that Venezuela produced at the beginning of last year, dissipate doubts surrounding the announcement a few weeks ago by the president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, that the country’s production was already at a million barrels per day.

individuals and companies related to this important industry.

Companies from third-party countries are also at risk of sanctions for violating unilateral US sanctions, as the blockade is extraterritorial, meaning it would close the access of third parties to the international financial system that operates mainly in the US dollar. The Russian oil company Rosneft was blocked by this mechanism, and in March 2020 it divested itself of its interests in Venezuela. However, Iran, which was already under US sanctions for four decades, continued to supply diluent to Venezuela.

Experts said that of the nearly 900,000 barrels per day now being produced, some 600,000 could be destined for export, despite the fact that the United States no longer does business with PDVSA and has also directly imposed sanctions on third-country companies that have dared to do business with the Venezuelan state company.

Most of the Venezuelan oil export is being shipped to Malaysian and Singaporean companies by tankers that turn off their satellite-tracking devices to avoid detection, and from there the oil is sold to China, which remains the largest customer of Venezuelan crude.

Iran’s condensate supply is helping Venezuela boost its crude exports, as the country needs the revenue to improve an economy that has been decimated by the US blockade.

Both Iran and Venezuela have been able to resist economic pressures, gradually finding ways around them. ★

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SOLIDARITY

Part 1



Cayo Hueso is a consejo popular (ward) in the municipality of Centro Habana, Havana, Cuba. A traditionally working-class neighborhood populated by Afro-Cubans, it is known for its many cultural landmarks such as the Callejón de Hamel, the Fragua Martiana Museum and the Parque de los Mártires Universitarios.

Notes on the ideology of the Cuban Revolution

EDUARDO TORRES CUEVAS
From *Granma*

REALITY

BELIEVE THAT what can give coherence to cultural, political, and ideological work is a definition of the ideology of the Cuban Revolution.

Our ideology is based on the guiding principles of Cuba's national liberation and social emancipation processes; on the development of our own thought characterised, as pointed out by José Martí, by placing universal thought within a relative, singular context, according to the specific demands of Cuba's reality.

Fidel Castro, deeply knowledgeable of Martí's thought, was the architect of

the Cuban revolutionary project and the person who gave it, in praxis and in his dialectical thought, both universal and particular content. As he stated, his contribution to revolutionary theory was uniting Marxist thought with Martí's. It follows that the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution contains two guiding components: Cuban revolutionary thought and Marxist thought, adapted to our reality.

This combination is absolutely necessary to understand Cuba's historical processes and current complexities, as well as those of Third World countries, which have evolved in a manner very different from that of countries in the First World. While the latter is the centre of developed capitalist modernity, the former

constitutes the periphery, the modern world's marginal areas.

This implies a complexity emerging from the domination and exploitation by imperialist countries which characterise our historical evolution and the current struggles we face.

In this regard Karl Marx writes in a letter to the Russian magazine *Otechestvennie Zapiski*, addressing N. K. Mikhailovskiy's attempt to schematically extrapolate contents of *Capital* to the Russian reality: "At all costs he wants to convert my historical sketch on the origins of capitalism in Western Europe into a philosophical-historical theory on the general trajectory to which all peoples are unavoidably subjected, whatever the historical circumstances that affect

Another unacceptable manoeuvre

**CUBAN NETWORK
IN DEFENCE OF HUMANITY**

IDEOLOGY

A SMALL GROUP of individuals of different origins, with dissimilar professional results, most of them residing outside Cuba, claim they represent the entire Cuban intellectual community, of millions of people who speak loud and clear for ourselves.

The web site La Joven Cuba serves as their voice, because their text is "received casually." In the pamphlet of the day, entitled *Manifiesto Against Silence, for Justice*, the revolutionary government is responsible for all the problems of Cuba, and the institutions of justice are attacked with particular viciousness. As the US government and its spokespersons in the world are well paid by that same government and by the disinformation market, this country,

small and harassed, is singled out and its professionals are manipulated.

The existence of the blockade and external aggression is omitted.

In a falsification condensed into a few lines, without a shred of serious analysis, the riots of 11 and 12 July are presented exclusively as a political fact, manipulated with hypocritical solidarity with the most humble sectors. All the sudden acts of vandalism, physical aggression against citizens and the



Marxism as revolutionary theory and practice, as well as Lenin's contributions, must confront the current stage of capitalism—considering, for example, the difference between financial capital and speculative capital or neoliberal domination under alliances of capitalist powers which can overcome a period of inter-imperialist war.

them, to finally take shape in an economic formation which, along with an expansion of the productive forces, of social labour, ensures the development of man in each and every one of its aspects. (This shows me too great an honour and, at the same time, too much contempt.)”

The characteristics of Cuban society and its evolution are based on elements very different from those of Europe and the United States, since our lot was coloniser-colonised, slave holder-enslaved, producer of raw materials within the north-south and east-west commercial network, according to Martí, “the fulcrum of America.”

The study of this complexity and the evolution of Cuban revolutionary thought allow us to understand why in our country, an uninterrupted process of national liberation and social justice has unfolded, and converged in socialism as a consequence of class, social and ideological struggles.

The component added by Martí differentiates this socialism from that of Eastern Europe, by introducing typical Latin American contradictions and paradoxes, as well as the humanist aspect, flowing from its confrontation with capitalist factors that structured a slave society, and later, a society that was dependent not only economically, but culturally, as well.

Lenin would call the Spanish-American War the first imperialist war. Martí, who knew the United States well, understood that Cuba would be decisive in the birth of US Imperialism, and devoted all the power of his thought and action by producing in our country the foundations of world equilibrium: “an error in Cuba is an error for America, an error for modern humanity. Whoever rises up for Cuba today, rises up for all time.”

With regard to Marxist thought, it should be noted that this theory includes three parts: historical materialism, dialectical materialism and political economy. When communicating Marxist ideas, it is important that the

concept of political economy is not an economic technicality, but a vision, a method and an essentially political concept.

As far as historical materialism is concerned, it is an essentially theoretical-philosophical analysis that should not be confused with historical science, which, like all sciences, is governed by and evolves on the basis of rigorous methods and factual investigations to ensure the best possible understanding of reality. Scientific findings produce debate and abstractions that penetrate into meta-historical fields.

A fundamental concept guiding the study of specific societies is that of socio-economic formation, created by Marx, which allows the understanding of a specific economic and social complex, with an objective assessment of differences (like those between the Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean models as compared to the Cuban, considering their historical, cultural and social evolution). This is essential to understanding contemporaneity and the richness it possesses. Even beyond the base-superstructure scheme, which Marx himself used so effectively, but should not be used casually—as is the case with any binary hypothesis. The essential feature of social-economic formation is the interrelation and interdependence of all components of a specific society, hierarchically established, to configure its unique characteristics (Engels’ parallelogram of forces) Cuban complexity thus acquires cognitive coherence.

Another important aspect is that of the class struggle. It is absolutely necessary to study at first hand the characteristics of social classes and class struggles in a specific society.

In the case of Cuba, its history is linked to the presence of slavery, in its diverse modalities -ranging from patriarchal to intensive plantation slavery - and from this to a society that replaced legal slavery with racial

discrimination.

The structuring of republican society further complicated the issue of social classes. To understand this complexity, one must not only consider a class in and of itself but also intra-class divisions, among which is the racist division within the same social class.

Likewise, the influence on ideology of tastes and fashion that affect middle classes, fundamentally, which, in countries like ours, are often more a half-class than a middle class, must be taken into account.

Lenin contributed two fundamental elements to Cuban ideology: the study of the imperialist phase of capital at its birth and the state-revolution relationship, which addresses the structures of power and explains the emergence of revolutionary situations at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Marxism as revolutionary theory and practice, as well as Lenin’s contributions, must confront the current stage of capitalism—considering, for example, the difference between financial capital and speculative capital or neoliberal domination under alliances of capitalist powers which can overcome a period of inter-imperialist war.

Mastery of Marxist and Leninist theory, methods and concepts is fundamental to providing theoretical coherence to the Cuban Revolution’s ideology. Concepts that have been surpassed must be set aside, and experiences, new knowledge, contributed during the 20th century, and the 21st thus far, must be integrated.

Our ideological tools must be up to the task in current debates with new proposals being made, including the lessons learned through our experiences and the development of a political consciousness that has in José Martí and Fidel Castro its most profound and realistic creators. ★

■ Part 2 will be published in the May issue.

authorities are excluded, and above all any connection with the aggressive media machine directed against Cuba and its people.

The core of the lie is obvious: ignore the popular response to the incidents of last summer and ignore the actions that the Cuban government has been carrying out in favour of the most needy sectors. It is likely that the latter, together with the systematic dialogue of the leadership of the Revolution with broad social sectors, increasingly remarkable in the midst of disinformation about Cuba, are the real

reasons for this new provocation.

Cuban intellectuals oppose speaking on our behalf to promote, with crude lies, aggression against Cuba’s independence and our dreams of full justice and freedom. We can discuss any opinion about our reality, and we do so, with complete freedom. But we do not accept the manoeuvre of using reasonable concerns to serve as an instrument for the enemies of the fatherland. They are not interested in the humble, nor do they pretend in any way to solve the problems that affect their material and spiritual living

conditions.

The criminalisation of our institutions is articulated with the discourse of the promoters of hatred among Cubans, allied to external aggression; of the hatred that the signatories of the pamphlet claim to repudiate. We do not accept it.

We are willing to continue working for the well-being of our people and to be more critical every day about everything that prevents it. We condemn, therefore, all external interference in our affairs, any attack on our sovereignty. ★



FESTIVAL



James Connolly Festival 2022 Our culture, our politics

The theme of this year's festival is "Culture as a form of resistance and the environmental crisis." This year we will have our biggest line-up to date and bring together guests from around Ireland and beyond.

AARON NOLAN

FESTIVAL

THE JAMES CONNOLLY Festival is an annual, week-long series of events in radical arts, culture, and politics. It is a community-centred celebration of music, film, discussion and debate that brings together the ideas and thoughts of progressive and radical thinkers and organisations from around Ireland and beyond.

Since the festival's inception we have sought to promote progressive arts, culture, and politics, providing a platform of discussion and debate for those seeking alternatives in a world where the lives of the many are dominated by the few. We challenge social inequality and the class barriers with which the arts are fraught, encouraging an inclusive and collective approach to artistic expression. Our annual festival serves as a celebration of the rich working-class culture that exists in Ireland and provides a space for the people of our ever-evolving country to express the wealth of their culture and articulate their experience of life.

James Connolly remains Ireland's foremost working-class hero, founder of the Irish trade union movement. In his

humble introduction to *Songs of Freedom* (1907) he famously remarked that "no revolutionary movement is complete without its poetical expression." He noted that "if such a movement has caught hold of the imagination of the masses" they would "seek a vent in song for the aspirations, the fears and hopes, the loves and hatreds engendered by the struggle"; and he commented that until the movement is "marked by the joyous, defiant singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the most distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement; it is the dogma of a few, and not the faith of the multitude."

It is in this revolutionary spirit, and a recognition of the importance of culture to transcend society, that the festival finds its ethos.

As we enter our eighth year, the festival will take a hybrid form, returning to in-person meetings in the main but with some mixed and on-line events. The theme of this year's festival is "Culture as a form of resistance and the environmental crisis." This year we will have our biggest line-up to date and bring together guests from around Ireland and beyond.

The festival opens on Saturday 7 May with an event, hosted by the Trade Union Left Forum, featuring the newly

elected general secretary of Unite, Sharon Graham. A debate on public housing chaired by CATU Ireland will feature Sinn Féin's spokesperson on housing, Eoin Ó Broin, among others.

The New Theatre will be the venue for a discussion on "Traveller history, culture, and movements," with an array of speakers and performers from within the Travelling community. We will hear the Irish-speaker Ola Majekodunmi in conversation with the revered author Emma Dabiri.

This year's James Connolly Memorial Lecture is to be presented by the eminent Marxist thinker John Bellamy Foster, editor of *Monthly Review*.

PANA will host an event on peace and neutrality with Clare Daly MEP and Ed Horgan of Shannonwatch.

As the question of a united Ireland intensifies, the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum will hold a talk on sectarianism that will include Rev. Dr Mark Gray, Gerry Carroll MLA, and others.

On Friday 13 May the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign host a gig and Q&A with the musical duo Gazelleband (Palestinian oud-player Reem Anbar and musician Louis Brehony). The following night will have the actor Emmet Kirwan MC a show with the Irish rapper Rebel Phoenix and guests at Peadar Kearney's basement in Dame Street.

The Small Trans Library will host a screening of *Keyboard Fantasies*. The left-wing Irish-language advocates Misneach will host a poetry and conversational event in Connolly Books.

And, as is customary, the festival will close on Sunday 15 May at Arbour Hill by the graveside of our greatest martyr, James Connolly, followed by a drinks reception and traditional music session to close the festival in the Cobblestone. ★

● For more information on the festival you can find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using /ConnollyFest or the hashtag #JCF2022.

Information: James Connolly Festival (<http://jamesconnollyfestival.com/>).

Tickets: Eventbrite (www.bit.ly/JamesConnollyFestivalTickets).

Donate: Paypal (www.bit.ly/ConnollyFestDonation).

Aaron Nolan is the festival co-ordinator

