

# CHARTIST

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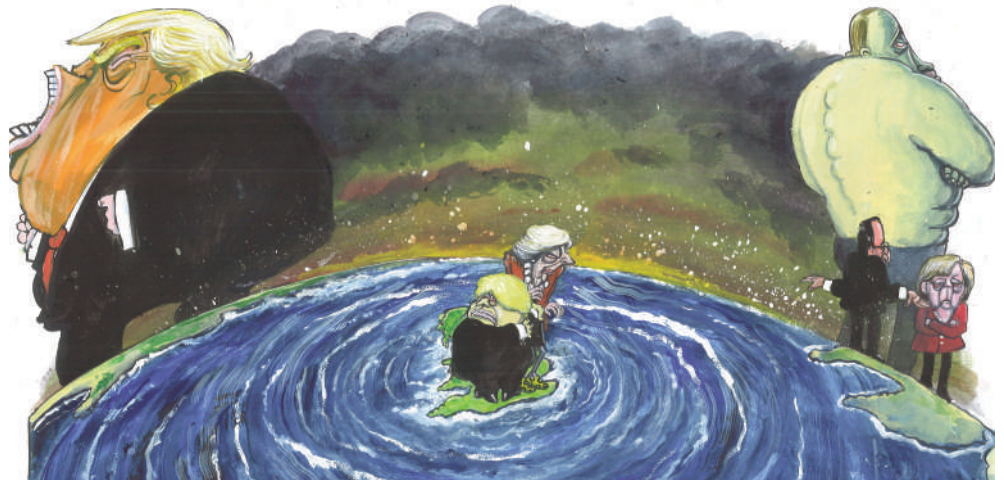
## Global crisis needs global answers

**W**e have now lived through forty years of globalisation following the remit of the neoliberal policy agenda.

It has created a dangerous world for us all, with an economic and political system which transmits the turbulence washing across the world straight back into the lives of national and local communities.

The challenges exist on every front, from inflation and the cost of living crisis, the breakdown of global supply chains, the new threats of war emerging from regional conflicts in Europe's borderlands or the Eastern Pacific, a renewed epoch of Cold War as the West struggles to deal with the challenge of China's rise from poverty and underdevelopment, through to the existential threat posed by climate change.

In this Chartist Supplement our contributors ask crucial ques-



tions about what response is needed from the democratic left as a response to the multiple sources of global crisis which threaten us all.

The magnitude of the task now facing the left arises from past complacency about Britain's place in the world and the assumption that what is called 'foreign policy'

is a policy brief dealt with in the second tier of political concerns.

The contributions in this Supplement set out to challenge this idea and call for a complete reordering on priorities to make a commitment to internationalism the radical core of democratic socialist politics.

## 'Foreign policy' will not save us

**Don Flynn** explains why the Left needs an active Internationalism

**T**he withdrawal of British military bases east of Suez, announced by Harold Wilson in 1968, was seen at the time as opening a new direction for the UK state, with its colonial period now definitively behind it and the way open for a progressive politics that would concern itself with building Jerusalem in the green and pleasant land of the British island.

It never worked out in quite that fashion. Though the union jack was being hauled down from government buildings and army barracks across the world what still needed to be maintained and defended was the influence of commerce and corpora-

tions that continued to feed on the territories they once ruled. As Tony Blair once put it, Britain was a small country that punched above its weight. It had to. With around one quarter of its GDP being dependent on trading in foreign markets Britain is a nation in which the lineaments of its imperial past continue to show in the distinct form of its mundane present.

To preserve these interests British governments have, until recently, relied on two pillars of a single strategy: the transatlantic commitment to partnership with the United States and its membership of the European single market. As long as these could be made to support the overar-

ching goal of ensuring a form of global capitalism conducive to the interests of British corporations and the City of London all would be well.

Preserving this structure has meant that what is called foreign policy functions in a densely technocratic manner seeking to ensure that what are considered moral and ethical issues are kept in the shade. A deep division rooted itself into British politics, with the 'domestic' agenda being a place where the political parties could define themselves against each other on the basis of their stands on things like the provision of public services versus the freedom of citizens from the burden

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# Does Labour have a foreign policy?

**Denis MacShane** finds little evidence in the affirmative

**W**hat is Labour Foreign Policy? Since Sir Keir Starmer became Leader the answer has been 'we would do things differently'. Simply being non-Johnson has been enough for Labour's rare sorties into international policy.

That era is now over. We have a new prime minister and the time will soon arrive when Labour will need to have a serious international policy offer to put to the British people.

This is easier said than done. In 2016, the Fabians set up an international policy network. Its last post was 2020. The Labour Foreign Policy Group, set up by London activists, has produced one paper on China advocating the eternal wish list of cooperation and criticism. This doesn't take account of the flight from China of British firms as President Xi seems intent on full dictatorship mode with a massive military build-up, torture of Uighurs, a violation of

the 1997 Treaty on Hong Kong and wanting to pull 23 million Chinese enjoying full democratic rights in Taiwan into a Chinese Gulag.

Another new outfit is the British Foreign Policy Group. It seeks to promote "Global Britain", the official Boris Johnson anti-European latter day isolationism. One of its leading luminaries is Gisela Stuart who sided with ultra-nationalists and rightist anti-Europeans since 2016 and was duly rewarded with a peerage by Boris Johnson.

There are not many lessons from the past. In the 1930s Labour supported the policy of non-intervention in Spain, leaving the Democratic Republic without military and political support, against Franco's fascist uprising supported by Italian arms and Nazi Germany's Condor Legion. Yes, Labour finally wised up to the threat of German nationalism but only after 1945. Meanwhile, Attlee exported white settlers from Britain to boost the white colonial

presence in Africa and Asia.

Worse was Labour's refusal in 1950 to join in any discussion with continental states on partnership to place steel and coal industries under joint control with a strong role for trade unions and MPs from national parliaments.

Labour got Europe badly wrong in the 1950s, 1960s, had a short-lived truce with the 1975 referendum and then by 1983 had moved into full anti-European mode with a Brexit promise in the 1983 election manifesto.

Labour turned Europe as an issue against the Tories after 1992 with a pledge to sign the EU Social Chapter and work fully as a European partner. Robin Cook used his rhetoric as Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary to demolish Tory isolationism.

The problem for Labour in devising foreign policy in opposition is the classic divide between Realpolitik and Moralpolitik – the divide between promoting British interests, mainly economic, and Britain's

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of taxation. Many battle royals were waged across these segments of policy concern, but on the detail of foreign policy there was seldom much difference between Labour and Conservative.

The consensus on foreign policy began to fray when, from the 1980s onwards, tension between the interest of the United States and the then European Community became more apparent. The preference for regulation on the part of the Europeans was interpreted as a move to restrict US access to their large markets. As this developed the UK government, in both its Labour and Conservative guises always the most transatlantic of the European nations, acted increasingly on its preference for its supposed special relationship with Washington.

Under Tony Blair this expressed itself as a deep commitment to the version of globalisation promoted by the US government combined with opt-outs against a set of economic and social policies being brokered in Brussels to bring about the completion of the single market. New Labour's fierce advocacy of participation in the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan deepened the rift with Europe further.

It took the Conservative-led governments from 2010 onwards to complete the process of breaking with its continental neighbour. From that moment onwards the international order in which the UK saw itself prospering relied on the goodwill and strength of Washington for its preservation. Yet it was precisely at this point that the United States took a deep dive into becoming a nationalistic MAGA-land, with a diversion into Biden's efforts to rally American leadership which seems doomed to failure.

Progressives in the Labour Party have long wanted to see an 'ethical foreign policy' as the basis for its relationship with other countries. The Left has seen this as requiring a much stronger commitment to development and the ending of inequality across the planet, with currently levels of poverty being correctly seen as the major source of instability and conflict.

A more radical perspective on these issues would have to acknowledge that global poverty is not a mere 'failure' of current international policy, but an outcome that arises from the dominance over the world economy of the interests which both the US and the EU are, by different

strategies, pledged to uphold.

This is a global system that is breaking down at every point. The disruption of the supply chains on which the rationality of neoliberal globalisation depended, worsened by the Covid pandemic but already in crisis with the rise of Chinese bargaining power and nationalism in general, is threatening the prosperity which the global north nations have considered their right. New wars, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine being just one, seem to be offering an unwanted glimpse of the future. Meanwhile the possibility of a just transition to a zero carbon world is diminishing as governments threaten to suspend promises of fossil fuel reduction because of a gamut of emergencies which beset their countries.

As the world of conventional 'foreign policy' collapses into chaos the question for the Left is whether this holds out opportunities for a genuine internationalism which overcomes the false division between domestic politics and obligations to people in other parts of the world. What is needed to be done to get us into the active practice of this internationalism, or transnationalism, is explored in this special Chartist supplement.



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desire to be a force for good in the world.

Realpolitik imposes a search for strong allies and since the rupture with Europe there is only one, the USA which requires accepting a subordinate, almost vassal status, purchasing their arms and supporting most US foreign policy.

Realpolitik also closes British eyes to human rights abuses in authoritarian or barely democratic countries where the UK makes much money like China, or hopes to make much money like India.

Moralpolitik took shape in the creation of DfID and it is a welcome pledge from Starmer that Labour will return to an independent DfID with its specialised knowledge on how to make aid work.

Moralpolitik was Robin Cook's creation of the International Criminal Court and getting the FCO to publish an annual report on Human Rights.

Moralpolitik now might be an international campaign for the abolition of the death penalty, starting with the Commonwealth where the majority of states have hanging as the ultimate punishment and several have executed people in recent years with Pakistan sanctioning the state killing of 100 prisoners.

Labour could look at strengthening the International Labour Organisation by joining in a campaign for a social clause in all trade agreements. Most pay lip service to human rights but so much of what we buy in supermarkets, on high streets, or have delivered by Amazon is made under conditions of quasi slave labour.

Labour is home to any number of single issue campaigns – on Palestine, Kurds, Chagossians, British Kashmiris who think India Hinduvata ideology is hostile to them and to Islam (it is) and British Indians who just wish Kashmir would stop moaning and stop sponsoring terrorism.

A Labour Foreign Secretary will have to deal with these hot issues for the many communities of British citizens with links to regions of the world where such identity questions are difficult to handle.

But the big problem remains our relationship with Europe, the one region in the world where states have combined to outlaw the death penalty, support women and LGBTIQ+ rights, and uphold trade union rights. Even if fewer workers are joining unions EU law mandates worker consultation and works councils managed by trade unions.

All these rights have disappeared not as a result of the 2016 plebiscite which it is worth recalling was



**Robin Cook 's Moralpolitik should motivate Labour's foreign policy**

accepted in two general elections in 2017 and 2019. Soon after the 2016 vote Boris Johnson wrote that the UK 'would stay in the Single Market and Customs Union' and the right of British people to 'to travel, work or settle in Europe would not be affected.' Many senior Tory MPs campaigning for Leave in 2016 made similar pledges.

When Labour's leadership says Brexit cannot be challenged do they mean the 2016 version (Single Market/Customs Union and travelling freely in Europe) or the 2022 version which is seeing growth and investment slump, or people pulling their teeth out with pliers as we have expelled the 6,000 European dentists who used to work here. Sectors from farming to fishing to young mothers who can no longer have au pairs, report on the damage Brexit is causing.

The Shadow Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, once the most powerful orator on platforms in Trafalgar Square denouncing Brexit, has had to toe the line laid down by the Leader's office.

He has tried to square the circle arguing in a June speech that:

"A Labour government would seek an agri-food agreement to improve the flow of food, and help our exporters.

"We would seek regulatory equivalence for financial service and strengthen mutual recognition of professional qualification.

"We would also aim to maintain

Britain's data adequacy status. So that our data protection rules would continue to be deemed equivalent to those in the EU.

"We would negotiate an improved long-term deal for UK hauliers to ease the supply chain problems that are holding us back.

"We would secure association to the Horizon funding programme, so we restore our leading role in scientific collaboration.

"And restore visa-free touring for musicians."

These are noble aims though all British cultural workers, artists, actors, film-makers and so on (not just musicians) have lost their access to participate in European arts festivals thanks to the ultra hard Brexit imposed by Theresa May and Boris Johnson.

But either individually or taken together Lammy's wish list is a demand for a partial return to the Single Market and freedom of movement which have been categorically ruled out by the present Labour leadership.

Foreign policy often requires doing the splits or facing two different ways simultaneously. But voters are not dumb. The worry for Labour should be that its new line of an unambiguous rejection of even something like the relationship non-EU nations like Switzerland or Norway enjoy with their neighbours (given polls show a majority believing Brexit to be a mistake), could cost Labour its hopes of winning a majority.

The Tories will want the next election to be a refight of 2016. Labour must avoid this trap. "Make Brexit Work" briefly emerged as a slogan to sum up Labour's foreign policy line on Europe. It was ridiculed and quietly dropped.

Labour tacticians are right to avoid being the party branded as one that rejected the referendum on 2016. But equally Labour must find new language on Europe that does not sound identical to the Europhobes holding all top positions in the Tory government.

There is big constituency of Brits who want to see a better world, however that may be defined. Is Labour speaking for them? Not yet. In 1964 and 1997 Labour had an imaginative offer on foreign policy. In 1964 Wilson committed to a cabinet rank minister who would campaign for nuclear disarmament and banned arms sales to apartheid South Africa. In 1997, Labour set up DfID and reversed Tory appeasement of the Serb genocidist Slobadan Milosevic.

In 2023 or 2024 what will Labour's foreign policy offer be?



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# New wars stalk the future

**Glyn Ford** on the threat of war and emergence of a new global power asking can the left shift focus?



**P**owers grow from the bottom up. Industry is the foundation for economic and financial strength that begets political domination and military hegemony, as they seamlessly cascade down from one to another. They rot in the same direction, collapsing like dominoes in order. Hiroshima and Nagasaki sounded Washington's final victory in the thirty year wars with Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan over who was to succeed Britain after its all too pyrrhic victory in 1918 put its Empire on notice. The US was ever the favourite with the sheer scale of its industrial muscle and the passing of the baton was comparatively painless, more sibling rivalry than clash of civilizations as London settled for White House first friend.

Washington won the Cold War in the West, but not the East. Military Keynesianism was the master stroke that drove economic growth in America and the collapse of the Soviet Empire in Eurasia. The Soviet Union was pushed into an arms race that simultaneously underpinned and strengthened the US while it sucked the life out of

the living lie of the Soviet civilian economy, driving the population to drink, despair and indifference. This hollowing out was fatal for Moscow. But the US's win in the West saw it overlook the sleeping giant in the East. Beijing learnt the lesson. Strength is built on industrial and economic foundations. As Deng Xiaoping said, 'hide your capabilities, bide your time'.

China not only survived the madness of Mao, but under Deng's dictum hid for a long quarter century in plain sight avoiding becoming the stumbling and stunted economic creature US policy created of the Soviet Union. In contrast, now Beijing's industrial muscle threatens to choke American global economic hegemony and challenge its military muscle. Washington has been its own worst enemy. A flawed and flailing democracy on the brink of collapsing into dysfunction ruled by billionaires and bigots. While illiteracy adds up at home it does not export. Numeracy tells as America's growing weakness engages with China's growing strength. Those economic ships will pass in the night in the coming decade.

On the military wing the last

decades have seen Washington progress from catastrophic success to humiliating failure. Iraq - at the second time of asking - Libya and Syria saw murderous dictatorships turned by Islamic berserkers into bloodbaths with societies collapsed into brute chaos. Afghanistan was just unadulterated disaster. Millions brought out from darkness to hope were savagely abandoned to their persecutors as Biden cut and run at US public behest. Now Washington is deploying a new, economic and military, lesson plan for Beijing in Ukraine's Russian war. Here savage sanctions and surrogate soldiers will drive Putin from office and Russia from the field as warning to Xi's revanchist ambitions.

Economically it's been worse. America's industrial economy has been hollowed out leaving manufacture's last survivors to vent their rage by voting for a clown, while China's economy was overtaking in the fast lane. A growing antipathy had long been America's direction of travel. Now there is to be the launch of a two front political war against Beijing. A creeping economic isolation and neo-protectionism as the tide of globalisation was



**Glyn Ford was leader of the European Labour Group. His autobiography is *Riding Two Horses***



to be turned. Supply chains were to be broken and their links forged anew with partisan mettle, with onshore favoured over offshore. Where re-shore was not possible, near-shore and friend-shore come second best. The pandemic was the point when the true state of American - and European - dependence on China became manifest. Washington wants and needs to break its dependency on Beijing. To do that it must turn back the process of globalisation and put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Yet the European Union (EU) is to be in the van as the language of economics takes a militant timbre, despite the EU-China trade relationship being the world's biggest with €700 Billion in goods and services flowing between the two. In December 2019 Brussels and Beijing signed, after five years negotiation, their Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) that saw EU companies match the conditions for inward investment given to their US counterparts and China to commit to the ratification of key International Labour Organisation conventions. Real concerns in the European Parliament (EP) about human rights violations by Beijing against the Uygher in Xinjiang came to take pride of place over all other considerations. With Trump bested by Biden, Washington used its born again leverage against the CAI and got the EP to kill the deal. They should not be forgiven for the fact they do not know what they are doing.

At the same time, Brussels is under continued pressure from Washington - as economic self-interest covered in a veneer of principle is brought into play - to persuade the EU not only to dramatically change its terms of trade with Beijing, but to further subvert its 'One China' policy and court Taiwan. Further, to convert sanctions on Beijing - for its undoubted human rights abuses that go unremarked among the US's subordinate dictatorships in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere - into core trade policy. The EU, shadowed by London, is going beyond managed self-protection to weaponization. A series of measures - often pressed by Washington - designed to limit China's trade with the EU are on the books or on the way - an anti-coercion instrument, restrictions on international procurement, foreign subsidies and foreign direct investment, toughening dual-use export controls, and a ban on forced labour.

Separation - if not divorce - is

likely looming, but better amicable rather than hostile, a smooth sliding apart rather than the brutal tearing of the economic fabric. The cost to Britain of a brutal Brexit is all too obvious for those that have eyes to see. Brussels, and Britain, must learn the right lessons from the experience. A precipitate exit from the world's largest and most important trading relationship will impose its own charges. Combined with the expensive dance of inflation, Covid recovery, Ukraine re-arming and rehabilitation these can twist together to create a whirlwind dragging the globe into recession, if not depression.

All this made worse by the military dimension with the US starting the count down to the second Cold War. If Washington well won the first against the Soviet Union, victory against China is far from assured. When elephants fight - or make love - those in the way are in danger of being crushed. Collateral damage will be heavy. As alongside the economic encirclement of China begins its military analogue as Washington again assembles a coalition of the willing and those for whom it is an offer they can't refuse.

This dysfunctional colossus is engaged in a life-and-death struggle to preserve the global mastery it has wielded for a short century. With wasting strength, it presses its friends into joint enterprise. The US-China passage is between civilisations. Here yellow racism intermixed with an outdated better red than dead ignorance and intolerance will paint the future in martial colours. New axes and pacts are being aligned and assembled, while the old is repurposed. First it was the Quad with the jig-sawing together of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, which is enroute to Quad+, while NATO in Asia was born in all but name at NATO's Madrid Summit in June 2022 by presence and policy. The Prime Ministers of Japan, Australia and New Zealand were in attendance along with the President of South Korea.

NATO consummated the opening of a Second Front in Asia with a closing statement to contain and confront China, that also had a venomous nod in the direction of Pyongyang. Yoon Seok-youl, in bending the knee to NATO, has guaranteed Beijing's total antipathy to Korean unification. NATO troops on the Yalu River will be as welcome as the prospect of Ukrainian membership of NATO to Moscow. Yoon wants a wider lock against America's next President

folding the umbrella of extended deterrence leaving Seoul to find its own shelter. Already in Seoul public opinion favours Seoul's unilateral nuclear armament. Such a step would bring Japan and Taiwan with it and smash the restraints of the Non-Proliferation Treaty around the world. Already Washington is pre-empting for the prospect Moscow or Pyongyang will consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons when cornered adding, in the latter case, a rung to a very short escalatory ladder.

Apparently China is a challenge to NATO's 'interests and security'. It is always best to get your retaliation in first; after all Beijing might legitimately ask which of NATO's interests in the North Atlantic it is interfering with. Putin's desperate adventurism has been the enabler. As the UK eagerly marches down the road to war, the EU in the West is more reluctant, even if its eastern block from the former Soviet Empire girds others loins for war.

The EU's battlefield promotion by Washington sees the growing Brussels wing of NATO charged with delivering their war aims stretched from Russian withdrawal to retreat and then defeat. The US economy will cheer as Europe pays a heavy price and the cash registers of their military-industrial complex chime with EU member states buying 'almost' state-of-the-art weaponry to arm and re-arm their national forces while they offload previous generation equipment on Kyiv. The danger is Brussels will bear the brunt of the war's collateral economic damage along with the hungry in Africa and the Middle East. In the meantime NATO's North Atlantic footprint becomes global and new wars stalk the future.

The European interest lies absolutely with the political, but not the military wing, of strategic autonomy with respect to China. It lies with defending its own near abroad from Moscow's advances, while recognising its mistakes played a part in Putin's paranoia. On security and defence, the EU needs to develop its own independent capacity for action. Our interests in Europe overlap with those of Washington, but are over time growing less congruent. The decision of note in that regard was not Finland and Sweden joining NATO, but Denmark's voters endorsing by a two-thirds majority joining the EU's Defence Union. A European Strategic Compass will be a surer guide than any US lodestar. Aggression would serve the world worse than depression.

# Reviving transna

**Mary Kaldor** on how transnational campaigning helped end the Cold War and



**I**n the aftermath of the Cold War, there was a brief period when many hoped that an era of international co-operation would supplant geo-political competition between states and, indeed, an emergent machinery for peace and human rights was developed within existing institutions such as the UN, the EU or the Council of Europe, as well as new institutions like the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or the African Union(AU). These hopes were the outcome of transnational organising in the 1980s and 1990s. They were dashed by the events of 9/11, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the expansion of NATO. But is it possible in the current context of the war in Ukraine, to revive these hopes through new forms of organising? To answer this question, I draw on two examples from my own experience.

The first example is European Nuclear Disarmament. In 1979, the US took the decision to deploy a new generation of intermediate nuclear weapons in Western Europe – the cruise and Pershing missile. A mass movement sprang up all over Western Europe out of fear that this could provoke a nuclear war and renewed polarisation between East and West. European Nuclear Disarmament (END), inspired and led by E.P. Thompson, took the view that to get rid of nuclear weapons, we needed to end the Cold War and, to do that, we needed to make links with human rights groups in Eastern Europe. It is often said that no one predicted the end of the Cold War. However, in his Not the Dimpleby lecture of 1982 (the BBC had withdrawn an invitation to Thompson to give the annual Dimpleby lecture), Thompson made the argument that by opposing the Cold War itself (the ideological and security structures that kept the Cold War going on both sides) instead of opposing the ‘other’, the Cold War could be brought to an end. Indeed, he claimed that the ‘cold war roadshow’ is now ‘lurching towards its terminus’.

Over time, numerous links were established between the Western peace movement and the East European human rights groups. The dialogue was not easy; there were vociferous discussions about which came first peace or human rights, both within the movements and across the East-West divide. But it can be

argued that the dialogue influenced what happened in three main ways:

- First, it created political space on both sides. In the 1950s and 1960s, it had been possible to marginalise the peace movement as ‘fellow travellers’ – people who were sympathetic to the Soviet Union. Peace movement support for human rights meant that the anti-nuclear argument was taken much more seriously. On the Eastern side, western peace movements were able to put pressure on official peace committees, to publicise crack-downs, and to provide material support to opposition groups. By the end of the 1980s, a new generation of groups emerged out of the Dialogue, for example, the Young Democrats in Hungary, Freedom and Peace in Poland and the John Lennon Society in Czechoslovakia. And it was these groups that provided an infrastructure for the demonstrations that brought down Communist regimes in central Europe.

- Second, the dialogue contributed to the strengthening of international legal norms. Both the peace movement and the human rights movement could be viewed as a product of the Helsinki agreement of 1975 that established a détente process. The commitments to human rights in that agreement provided a tool for opposition groups in eastern Europe and, by the same token, increased the significance of the agreement. Likewise the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987 would never have come about had it not been for the anti-nuclear movement and would never have had the same public significance.

- Thirdly, the dialogue produced a new discourse that was to become very important in the 1990s. It was a language about the coming together of peace and human rights, and the idea of transnational civil society, that came to be echoed in international institutions, in progressive foreign policies adopted by Robin Cook in the UK, Gareth Evans in Australia or Lloyd Axworthy in Canada, and among NGOs campaigning on new transnational issues.

The second example was the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (hCa) that was founded on the basis of the END dialogue of the 1980’s. The idea conceived when many of us were arrested in Prague in 1987 was to establish a permanent organisation to



# ational activism

and hasten the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and why we need a new initiative today



Credit: Victoria Pickering/ Flickr

help civil society in difficult places. It was founded in Prague at a meeting hosted by the then President Havel. Almost immediately wars broke out in the Balkans and post-Soviet space and local peace and human rights groups also sprang up in those places. The hCa enabled sometimes difficult dialogues to take place across all the new divides. It also pioneered a new way of working; instead of focussing on reporting and alerting states and international organisations to human rights violations, it was about civic action, what people can do, especially in conflict contexts, to change their situation and how civic activists in other places could contribute. The organisation still exists in some places (Turkey, the South Caucasus, Bosnia, for example) but it failed to manage the transition from movement to professional organisation and so no longer has a central office. Nevertheless, it did have an important influence in two respects:

- First the very existence of an international network was a form of protection, a way of creating political space. To be chairperson of the Azeri branch of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly is very different from being chairperson of the Azeri Human Rights something or other. Just being part of an international platform provides a certain protection and space. In Bosnia, for example, hCa became an implementing partner of UNHCR, enabling hCa activists to acquire blue cards and travel around Bosnia under UN protection.

- Secondly, through the network, local groups were able to transmit proposals to governments and organisations like the EU, OSCE or UN. Proposals for local protectorates, safe havens, humanitarian corridors, or war crimes tribunals came out of the local hCa groups. hCa ran a mass postcard campaign, for example for safe havens and for local protectorates in Mostar and Sarajevo. And this further contributed to growth of multilateral missions during this period.

Is now the time to revive this type of transnational activism? Currently the West European peace movement is divided along lines similar to the divisions of the 1980s. Many on the left oppose the supply of arms to Ukraine and argue that NATO expansion explains Russian behaviour so that what is needed is

a diplomatic solution from above. There are parallels here with the position of peace activists in the 1980s who argued that making peace with the Soviet Union took precedence over human rights. Even though I think that NATO expansion was a mistake and that we should do everything we can to prevent escalation and promote ceasefires, I am sceptical that a peace deal can be reached with a criminalised, misogynistic, extreme nationalistic and repressive regime like that in Russia – a regime that has been involved in war after war (Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, and now Ukraine) against civilians. What is needed is dialogue with the Russian anti-war movement to find out what is happening and what might be done to help; dialogue with the Russian and Ukrainian civil society to prevent the ethnicization of this conflict, which is about democracy versus autocracy not about Russians versus Ukrainians. Additionally, dialogue among a wider network of activists to put forward proposals for renewing the peace and human rights machinery of the 1990s and developing it in a way that might in the future contribute to peace-making in different conflicts around the world and prevent wars of aggression, whether we are talking about Russia or Western adventures in Iraq.

Peace-making has to be global and not just European. A new peace and human rights machinery would need to emerge out of the global resistance to authoritarianism whether we are talking about India, Brazil or China. The role of China is particularly dangerous, given its support for Russia, albeit ambiguous, its crackdown in Hong Kong, and its threatening behaviour over Taiwan as well as on the Indian border and in the South China sea. This has led to talk of a new Cold War with Russia and China. We need a similar dialogue with Chinese human rights defenders starting perhaps with activists in Hong Kong. How could we move towards a global framework for peace and human rights that can eventually include both China and Russia?

**Mary Kaldor is emeritus professor of global governance at London School of Economics and Political Science**

# Don't overreact to China

How should western socialists react to the rise of China? Chartist spoke to leading activist **Lijia Zhang**

## What has been driving China's push for development in recent decades?

There has been debate among academics/experts about what is exactly the China development model. Some call it the 'Beijing Consensus' (an alternative to the 'Washington Consensus') or the 'Chinese Economic Model'. From what I can gather, it is a development model that combines an authoritarian political system with a market economy of some kind where there is selective government intervention.

## Does this development inevitably require the aggressive stance now being taken by President Xi?

Under President Xi's leadership, China has become more assertive. When he became the president, he obviously believed that China was powerful enough to take a higher profile. He introduced his grand strategy of 'major power diplomacy' - not diplomacy of dealing with major nations, but to regard China as a major power and its need to behave as such.

One of his signature programs is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global development project that is reaching deep into Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. Developing China's economy is one important driving force but not the only one. The project is seen as Xi's effort to expand China's power and influence in the world at the expense of the US.

Xi has also significantly increased military spending as he believes that a major power needs a powerful and modern army. China's tension with the US and its hope of catching up with the hegemony has pushed up military expenses. But the BRI itself doesn't require a powerful military, let alone a hardline rhetoric, but they are all part of Xi's China's Dream - its road to rejuvenation. He wants to project a strong China image.

## From what you say, it seems that Chinese nationalism is being asserted as the fundamental ideological stance of the Beijing government. Is there any dissent from this among the general population?

Xi has tightened social control. The internet is harder to police but there is, of course, censorship.



Before a critical post on social media platforms such as Weibo or WeChat gets taken down, one does get to hear some different views. For example, writer Fang Fang started to publish an online diary during the first lockdown in Wuhan. Plenty of people read this diary before it was taken down. But on important issues like democracy in Hong Kong or the independence of Taiwan, the vast majority of the mainlanders stand with the government, I am afraid.

## The West's response to China's assertion of its interests to date has been that of the Triad and AUKUS - what are the dangers this will escalate tensions?

AUKUS, the trilateral pact between Australia, the UK and the US, is designed to counter China's military expansion. Beijing warns that it may lead to an arms race. The escalating tension between China and the West, and the US, may inch towards a crisis.

Taiwan is the great worrying flashpoint for confrontation. Xi's so-called 'Russia-leaning neutrality'

has damaged its reputation in the West but it is a bad idea to lump China and Russia together, or worse still, to further antagonise China when the war is raging in Ukraine. The US should work together with China in trying to bring peace. If the US wants China to play a positive role on the issue, it shouldn't make threats. The Americans have swung their sticks too readily without offering enough carrots.

## From the perspective of the democratic left, what should the British Labour Party be doing to take the tension out of the military buildups and open channels for dialogue around an alternative progressive approach? Are you concerned that the Party leadership seems to want to take its cue from the US in these matters?

That's a million-dollar question. Engagement is always a good idea. The Labour Party should try to understand China and its history better, including the 'century of humiliation under foreign powers'. Don't place the Party on a self-appointed high-moral ground, accusing China of this and that, as the Americans have been doing and demonstrating that it has not come to terms with China's rise. And finally, do not provoke China unnecessarily, such as sending a delegation to Taiwan, an act that might provoke China's military aggression.

The US is overreacting to China's rise, driven by fear. I can understand why there is such a fear about China, an authoritarian regime with a poor human rights record. Its stifling of freedom in Hong Kong, its mistreatment of the Uyghur in Xinjiang, compounded by its ever louder nationalist rhetoric, all amplify such fear and reinforce the 'China threat' narrative. However, I think some of the fear is generated by ignorance.

It is wrong to assume that China has 'malign intention' towards the US. Its growing wealth and power does not necessarily mean that it will carry out military adventures. Besides, I don't think China has grown powerful enough to represent a real threat just yet. Yes, China has become the world's second largest economy, but its GDP per capita is much smaller than that of the US, so is its military capacity.



**Former Nanjing rocket factory worker Lijia Zhang is the author of *Socialism is Great!: A Worker's Memoir of the New China*. Her novel, *Lotus*, was published by Macmillan in 2017. Now based in Britain she continues her work as a journalist and commentator on affairs concerning her home country**



# Climate emergency– the clock is ticking

**Nigel Doggett** says the climate crisis needs transnational action from governments and corporations while British Labour needs to back civil society actions to force change

**T**he climate and ecological crisis constitutes a collective action problem, where individuals can act with little regard for the cumulative societal or global impacts they cause. Mainstream liberal economics calls this a 'market failure' to account for 'negative externalities' such as biodiversity loss, pollution and specifically carbon emissions, stressing the role of individuals and downplaying collective action in addressing our needs. We emit greenhouse gases directly by travel, energy usage and other consumption and indirectly by destruction of carbon sinks (eg forests and peatbogs) and purchase of goods produced with carbon emissions ('embedded carbon'). Instruments to reduce emissions (mitigation) include market-based carbon pricing and taxes, developments focussed on big business as well as inter-governmental agreements on emissions targets and financing low carbon projects. But these neglect a family of 'elephants in the room', as the drivers of the crisis are interwoven with class, gender and race, and, as we see in relation to Russia and Europe, subject to the twists and turns of geopolitics. Market-based measures can maintain or worsen social inequalities, whilst climate impacts tend to be worst on women, the marginalised and people of colour, due to location, employment type and poverty.

Marked climate changes are now unavoidable as global heating approaches the totemic 1.5C (in many places land temperatures have already risen well beyond that). So climate strategy must prioritise adaptation alongside mitigation. Poorer nations are often most vulnerable to heatwaves, drought, sea level rise and flooding; hence the campaigns for climate and environmental justice on a global scale, now joined by establishment bodies including the IPCC (publisher of scientific climate assessment reports) and UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC).

The concept of doughnut economics (see

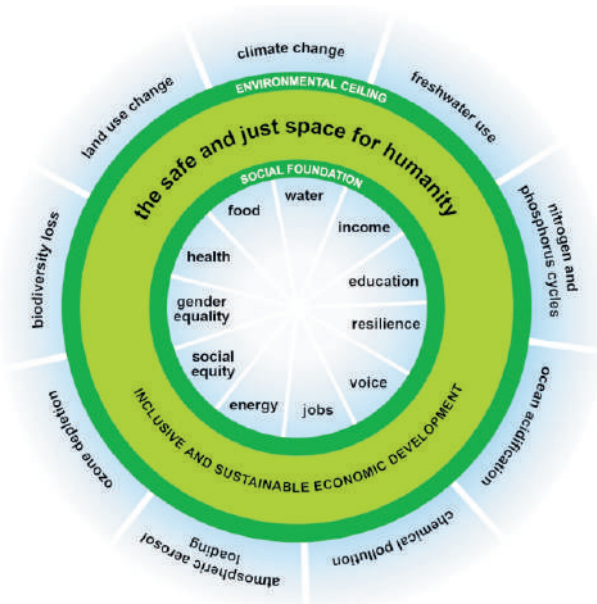
doughnuteconomics.org), with the aim of living within a sustainable ring-shaped zone) illustrates the international and intra-social factors. Whilst the richest people (and nations) exceed the outer ecological limit, causing multiple environmental impacts, most people in least developed nations lack essentials and cause much lower impacts, visualised as inside the ring.

Two major UN conferences this year concern the climate - COP27 (November in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt) and biodiversity - COP15 (December in Montreal, Canada). National governments have places at the negotiating table (albeit through groups such as the High Ambition Climate Coalition), fossil fuel corporations wield huge influence behind the scenes, and petrostates have an effective veto in the search for consensus. But environmental NGOs and local campaigners from the sharp end of climate breakdown only have fringe status.

The BRICS - emerging economies led by China and India - are rapidly becoming the largest carbon emitters, with development still largely fossil-fuel based, despite their climate impacts. Their assertion of the right to living standards rivaling the global north is belied by the fact that small elites benefit most, while the majority miss out.

So these themes should inform an eco-socialist climate strategy:-

- the global north's historical responsibility for fossil-fuel based industrial development;
- the continuing legacy of empire and the role of international capitalism in both social divisions and this crisis;
- the value of interconnections, through trade, exchange of ideas and culture, whilst rejecting aspects of 'actually existing' globalism that foster exploitation of weaker parties, shading into neo-colonialism (not just by former imperialist powers - Russia and China are responsible for land grabs in the name of development);
- support for international civil society - trade unions, radi-



cal/environmental NGOs (eg Extinction Rebellion) and popular left political movements - in building solidarity on trade, industrial and energy development and environmental protection; for example, exerting consumer leverage on polluters and networking with groups of employees of the same transnational companies, using modern communications and social media;

- low carbon development must be accountable to the community and its benefits shared. Large scale hydro, solar, wind or nuclear all require massive capital investment and concentrate power and benefits, leaving local people at best as passive consumers.

In the British Labour Party, the pendulum has swung back to a parliamentary focus where popular campaigning (and active support for both industrial and direct action) is shunned in a quest for electability. This narrow focus jeopardises the potential to lead a broad movement to safeguard our climate and biodiversity, especially in the current international crisis where the Russian invasion of Ukraine affects energy security, fossil fuel dependence and the low carbon transition.



**Nigel Doggett is a member of Chartist EB and Wealden CLP**

# Youth lead action on climate emergency

From school strikes to Sunrise Movements, **Julie Ward** reports on worldwide youth inspired to get political on climate change

In 2018 when 15 year old Greta Thunberg decided to stand in front of the Swedish parliament protesting about political inaction regarding the climate and ecological emergency instead of going to school, no-one imagined it would lead to the phenomenal global youth movement #FridaysForFuture. Thunberg was mocked and belittled by right wing politicians and media pundits wherever she went but she is now 19 and no longer a lone figure. Millions of young people around the globe have joined her call to action, setting up their own #FFF campaigns and connecting via social media. In the UK Labour MPs Nadia Whittome and Zarah Sultana (both in their twenties) have a strong connection with these young activists who are already mobilising support to ensure their political allies will hold onto their seats in the next General Election.

Politicians ignore young people at their peril. The young are voters in waiting whose adult lives are shaped by their experiences as children and teenagers. Young people all over the world are increasingly angry and frustrated by rigged political systems and policies that narrow their life choices and threaten the future of the planet. Conservatives know that, in the main, their narrative does not impress young people and so they refuse to lower the voting age in a forlorn attempt to delay the inevitable. However, young people also become foot soldiers for political parties especially during election periods. Their boundless energy can help turn a marginal seat red/green and in the case of the last U.S. presidential elections prevented the re-election of a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, climate-change denying extreme-right populist, thereby paving the way for the Biden administration.

The American Sunrise Movement, launched in 2017, grew out of an education project funded by the Wesleyan University and the progressive longstanding environmental organisation, the Sierra Club. Sunrise activists were trained



in community organising by Momentum, the grassroots UK campaign established to support Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. The movement was initially focussed on supporting proponents of renewable energy in the 2018 U.S. midterm elections. Since then Sunrise activists have been focusing on shifting the Overton window on climate policy to put the Green New Deal at the centre of government discussions.

During the 2018 midterms, Sunrise activists worked tooust candidates who would not refuse funding from the fossil fuel industry. Half of the group's first 20 endorsements won their elections. Deb Haaland, Rashida Tlaib, Ilan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) won election to the House of Representatives and six other endorsed candidates won election to state House or Senate seats. The Sunrise Movement continues to work closely with the Justice Democrats, a political committee that emerged from Bernie Sanders' campaign which aims to remove the pernicious influence of money from political campaigns, especially the funnelling of funds derived from fossil fuel companies. The organisation officially endorsed 79 candidates in the 2018 election cycle, seven of whom won general elections (three were incumbents). The four first-time officeholders in the U.S. House became known as 'The Squad' and

have since been joined by two further electoral successes. All were under 50 when first elected, five are women and all are people of colour. They are media savvy, both individually and collectively, and face down the incessant stream of online hate with courage, truth and humour, garnering millions of followers. Ocasio-Cortez alone has 13.2 million twitter followers and posts simply as @AOC.

Labour for a Green New Deal openly admit they took their inspiration from the Sunrise Movement and AOC, demonstrating the continuing exchange of radical ideas, inspiration and strategies across the Atlantic despite the over-cautious centric leadership styles of Biden and Starmer.

Elsewhere in the world youth have been picking up the baton given to them by Thunberg - after all they have nothing to lose. As Thunberg repeatedly says, 'Our house is on fire'. In Brussels during the early days of the #FFF movement student climate strikers lay down in the European Parliament and had to be removed by security who failed to identify which friendly MEPs had signed them in. They also occupied Schuman Square immediately outside the European Commission HQ, where, ironically, many of their parents worked. The Brussels' climate strikers continue to have easy access to power and a sympathetic ear in Frans



**Julie Ward was a Labour MEP and is a member of Chartist EB**



Timmermans, the Social Democrat EU First Vice President. Timmermans has pushed the agenda on ending fossil fuel subsidies in order to achieve carbon net-zero by 2050, attempting to face down opposition from Eastern European countries such as Poland and Romania. He helped to put the European Green Deal at the heart of the EU agenda, making it a horizontal cross-cutting policy instrument which his fellow commissioners are required to address.

The worst effects of climate change will be most keenly felt in the global south and in less developed countries who are least able to deal with the crisis. However, youth are fighting back. In Brazil Gaby Baesse, a transgender activist and Regional Director for Youth4Nature, is battling the deforestation policies of right-wing populist and climate-change denier Bolsonaro. In Uganda, Leah Namugerwa of #FFF is a leading voice continuing to press her government to fully implement the Paris Climate Agreement - perhaps a damning indictment that the subsequent Glasgow COP was a political failure. Meanwhile, young

Ugandan lawyer, Heizal Nagginda, has applied her legal knowledge to grassroots' community-based action, founding Climate Operation which educates children and communities on how they can act to protect the environment and why this matters. Nagginda was active in COP 26 as part of Youth4Climate alongside scores of other articulate young people (especially young women) from around the world who often ran the media gauntlet in order to approach politicians with direct questions about their climate commitments. Needless to say they were generally given the obfuscating 'blah, blah, blah' so aptly described by Thunberg.

The youth voice has, however, shifted the debate and sustained a focus on the consequences of political failure to address the root causes of climate change. Rightly so, as more than a quarter of the world's population are under 15 with a further 16% (1.2 billion) aged 15-24. These young people did not make the climate crisis but they will have to live with the consequences. As Leah Namugerwa said, "I noticed adults were not willing to offer leadership and I chose to volunteer

myself. Environmental injustice is injustice to me."

COP 27 is just a few weeks away and the stakes are higher than ever. As global temperatures continue to break records, with drought, wildfires, floods and further melting of polar ice, future voters will be watching to see what politicians have to offer regarding stronger commitments on reducing the deadly emissions which threaten to take us over the tipping point into an apocalyptic future. Australians already showed the way, kicking out the Conservative government who practised a 'deny and delay' approach, electing instead candidates with a clear commitment to tackling climate change, including many Greens and independents, giving the Labor Party a mandate to form a progressive government. Under the premiership of Anthony Albanese, Australia now plans a 43% emissions reduction this decade and is reportedly seeking to host COP 29 in partnership with the Pacific. Social Democrats everywhere need to take note and sharpen up their climate credentials.

**Editor's note: You can join the Global Climate Strike on Sept 23**

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to some very good economic news in Northern Ireland which has for decades been the poorest and economically disadvantaged region of the UK. The north of Ireland, is now booming with a growth rate of 9 per cent a year (fastest in the UK) and rapidly rising foreign trade and investment. Unlike the rest of the UK, NI uniquely shares Ireland's full participation rights in the EU Single Market and Customs Union which was secured as part of the Belfast peace agreement.

Johnson style Tory Jingoism has long been hyper toxic in Scotland. A Truss Tory party leader will ensure this continues. London may drag its feet on agreeing a new independence referendum but increasingly it seems only a matter of time. The Scottish government has made it clear that after independence Scotland will re-join the EU as a full member. That will pose a major challenge for the existing English/Scottish trade border which will add to the pressures of the rump UK re-join the Single Market and Customs Union if not the EU itself.

There is no immediate prospect of Welsh independence. But the 'semi-independent' Welsh Labour government in Cardiff- and its

Plaid Cymru ally - make no secret of their wish for Wales to re-join the Single Market. Welsh and other north-western sea ports are suffering badly from the diversion of EU export trade from NI- through the Republic to the rest of the EU.

Cardiff is also determined to secure radical change in Wales' own subordinate devolved governance status within the UK. There is much talk of a campaign for a possible future 'federal' style union of Wales with England which would transfer much more power to the Senate in Cardiff.

Meanwhile pressure is also growing within 'England' for equally a far reaching devolution of government from London. Remarkably little attention has been paid to the demands of the Labour Mayors of Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and other big northern cities for sweeping constitutional change - including the abolition of the House of Lords and its replacement with elected regional members of an English Senate and a PR based electoral system.

Given the speed and radical nature of these developments the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, remains seemingly silent and politically immobile. Having dumped his original enthusiasm for EU membership - along with his support for

a Corbynite economic and social change - he now seems to have little of interest to suggest about anything. Having bought into the Peter Mandelson doctrine of 'Back to Blair' Starmer's response on the EU is now a pathetic mantra "Make Brexit Work" - whatever that means. The current mass strikes and the undeniable anger of people facing a tidal wave of impoverishment from the energy crisis triggered by the Ukraine war suggest that simply 'not being the Tories' will not be enough for Labour to win the next general election. Any credible Labour response to the threat of another right wing neo-Johnsonite government demands an urgent and radical change of direction.

This must include a commitment over time to reverse Brexit. An isolated and fragmenting 'Britain' cannot begin to prosper without being part of the EU Single Market and Customs Union. This should be a step towards fully rejoining the EU. The illusion that an isolated UK can somehow regain global power status is already a joke in poor taste among international diplomats. This is nowhere more so than in Moscow, Beijing and in Washington as they prepare for the likely election of another Trump (or Trumpite) President shortly.

# No future for isolated Britain

**John Palmer** asks what now for the pro-EU internationalist left after the Brexit disaster

**T**here has never been just one permanently defined debate about the European Union or Britain's place in it. Fifty years ago the first referendum about UK membership of the EU pitted a 'centrist' alliance of mainstream Tories, Labour and Liberals – against an eclectic alliance of marginal far right racists (pro-Enoch Powell Tories and the League of Empire Loyalists!).

The Labour Party was divided. Significant opposition to the EU came from a strange alliance of supporters of the former right-wing Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell. He had railed against EU entry as involving "the loss of a Thousand Years of British History." Many on the Communist Party influenced left took a similarly national-road-to-socialism approach. The small internationalist – pro-EU – left was limited to some New Left 'post-Trotskyists' and Maoists.

Half a century later the second EU referendum debate was dominated by the extreme right Populist/nationalist UKIP and their allies who now actually control the Tory party. They campaigned about the 'existential survival threat' which closer EU integration would pose to 'British' (read 'English')

national identity and 'Britain's historical world role' (read 'imperial role nostalgia').

Similar hard right populist currents have manifest themselves in other European countries – but nowhere have they colonised a major mainstream right of centre party as successfully as in the case of the Tory party. The political mutations of the anti-EU populist right elsewhere (think Hungary and Serbia but also France/Italy) have produced a bizarre new generation of electorally significant pro-Putin Russia, hard right racist parties unseen since before World War Two.

Any assessment of What Now? for those on the left who believe Brexit must eventually be reversed must begin with some facts. Brexit is already proven to be an economic disaster. The impact of stagnant economic growth, declining investment rates and reduced trade with our EU neighbours was obvious even before the full effects of Covid and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, could be measured.

The latest evidence (from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Resolution Foundation, the EU and even the Treasuries own statistics among others) points to a general

slowdown across Europe since the Covid epidemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But they show the slide to simultaneous inflation/recession and the decline of investment and productivity, to be faster and likely longer lasting in the UK than the in EU.

The decline in trade between the UK and EU is accelerating. Meanwhile the gross underinvestment in British infrastructure is showing up in terms of chaos at Dover and other Channel ports. To make matters worse, the haughty UK walkout from the EU common scientific research programme and the EU Erasmus programme (to facilitate students to study in other European countries) is leading to a flight of excellent science research expertise to the continent.

Something else – even more fundamental – also seems to have been set in train since Brexit. The already not very 'United' Kingdom is showing widening fissures and could be heading to disintegration. Perhaps the clearest case is Ireland where there is a growing consensus – north and south – that the re-unification of the island will slowly but surely become a reality.

Ironically Brexit has led actually



**John Palmer is a member of Greenwich CLP**

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## Solidarity with Ukraine

**R**ussian imperialism's assault on Ukraine has already led to tens of thousands of deaths with tens of millions fleeing or internally displaced, horrendous human rights abuses by Russian forces, a hike in fuel and energy prices and a global food crisis.

Western governments, including the Tories, have their own questionable reasons for supporting Ukraine. But we on the global left and in the labour movement must also support Ukraine as part of a commitment to progressive internationalism. For the sake of democracy, anti-imperialism and resistance in the face of growing authoritarianism around the world, Ukraine must win.

The inspiring resistance of Ukraine's people, working class and labour movement have denied Putin the fast victory he expected. But six months into the war, Russia continues its onslaught. More than ever, as winter is approaching, Ukraine

needs international solidarity; it needs more and better weapons in order to defend its people; it needs the cancellation of its foreign debt. The Ukrainian labour movement needs support to fight both Russia's war and internal attacks on workers' rights. Russia's anti-war, democratic and working-class opposition needs our solidarity too.

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign has mobilised UK Labour and trade union activists – from fundraising for Ukrainian unions to sending delegations, from passing policy to bringing trade unionists onto the streets of London and other cities. As the war grinds on, we are planning to redouble our efforts. You can help.

We will be campaigning at Labour Party conference at the end of September and would be pleased to meet you.

**Analysis and campaign materials on our website:**  
[ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org](http://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org). **Invite a speaker or get involved:**  
[ukrainesolidaritycampaign@gmail.com](mailto:ukrainesolidaritycampaign@gmail.com)

**This supplement has been edited by Mike Davis, Don Flynn, Glyn Ford, Julie Ward**

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