

Durham Miner's Gala and Ukraine

# Jeremy Corbyn fumbles and evades where Ukraine is concerned

Tuesday 14 May 2024, by [KOPYTKO Natalie](#) (Date first published: 29 August 2023).

**Dear Jeremy Corbyn,**

**We met outside a hotel at the Durham Miner's Gala. I told you about my disappointment regarding your stance on Russia's terrorism in Ukraine. Your responses caused me to become even more concerned.**

From: Natalie Kopytko  
Sent: 29 August 2023 13:30  
To: jeremy.corbyn.mp parliament.uk  
Subject: Durham Miner's Gala and Ukraine

**You declared that all wars end in some form of negotiation.** I replied "really, how did World War 2 end?" You mumbled something and then exclaimed we don't want another world war. It was striking to me that you and others with the same viewpoint keep repeating this line about all wars ending in negotiation. You and the likes of "Stop the War" compare Ukraine to other wars but ignore the most comparable war in your analysis.

You also ignore the fact that Russia along with the UK signed the Budapest Memorandum. If we ignore the genocide of Ukrainians in Russian occupied territories for a moment, ignoring that these 'peace negotiations' means they will live in terror and in fact their peace is sacrificed, this idea of peace negotiations still leaves the rest of the world less safe.

**Questions to you:** Why would any country ever give up nuclear weapons now after seeing what happened in Ukraine? Please explain to me how the US and UK could stop supporting Ukraine and go back on this agreement. How does this not harm future non-proliferation agreements?

**You spoke of the great western hypocrisy of the west over Palestine [1].** Yet you fail to see your own hypocrisy. Why is it an occupation in Palestine, while in Ukraine it is giving up territory? Ukrainians live on that territory, Crimean Tatars live on that territory, other ethnic minorities, LGBT+ community etc. all these people suffer at the hands of Russian occupation.

**Question to you:** Why is a foreign occupation okay in Ukraine but not Palestine?

**Another hypocrisy since we met in Durham.** Correct me if I am wrong, but not once have you or "Stop the War" called for protests outside of the Russia Embassy. I even found this video where Chris Nineham 'explains' that they do not want to contribute to "Russia hysteria" . Yet now after

Kagarlitsky's arrest this same group of people have a petition for his release.

**Question to you:** Why was it not effective to protest Russia or petition Russia before this arrest? My friends are currently living under Russian occupation in Kherson oblast. My friends are effectively in prison too, so why do they not matter? Why do they not get a petition?

**You said, why would NATO expand east if it were not planning to invade Russia.** This question/comment was shocking. It reveals that not only have you never listened to Ukrainians, but you have not listened to the concerns of any Eastern Europeans. People with Eastern European ancestry live in the UK and this matters to them. NATO does not expand east like a monster gobbling up countries. Neighbouring countries feel threatened by Russian Imperialism due to history both past and recent. Russia's involvement in Georgia started in the early 1990s. Russia threatening neighbours happened before NATO enlargement. This argument made about NATO expansion threatening Russia is a logical fallacy of correlation implying causation.

**Questions to you:** Have you been to Ukraine? Have you had in-depth conversations with Ukrainians about the war? [2] What have you done to intellectually challenge your own assumptions and stance? Have you read/listened to any works on Ukrainian history?

The repeating of the lie, all wars end in negotiations does not give me much confidence that you have taken a serious look at the issue from Ukraine's side.

White Man's burden should be renamed Western European Man's burden. The Ukrainian voice is consistently ignored from these debates and that is an act of imperialist/colonialist mindset. The most upsetting is the pretending to care about Ukrainians while ignoring their agency.

A few months ago, I hastily wrote a thread about Stop the War that you can read here <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1664998991832948737.html>

I mentioned in our discussion that the "Stop the War" Coalition regularly says they want to be part of the debate, but when I politely engaged with them in debate, they blocked my account on Twitter. I hope you can find time to begin to answer some of my questions before the Trade Union Congress. I realise that doesn't allow for much time and I do apologise for not sending this sooner.

Please excuse any mistakes in grammar. I am an exhausted UCU rep and have written this in a rush.

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**Dr. Natalie Kopytko** teaches at Leeds University

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## **P.S.**

Having recieved no reply from Jeremy Corbyn, who is usually very vocal on international relations issues, Nat Kopytko decided to publish this letter on Twitter. We reproduce with her kind permission, in the hope that this will clarify the issues facing the British left, and the failure of leadership from leaders like Jeremy Corbyn, in whom so many placed their hopes.

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## **Footnotes**

[1] This whataboutism is a tactic straight out of the Kremlin playbook. I had a Twitter user write that to me and I responded with a photo of the Palestinian dates I was eating at the time. The assumption that those who support Ukraine did and do not support Palestinians is just ridiculous. "That is not to diminish the brave resistance in Ukraine or the widespread support they have received. It is refreshing to see such steadfast opposition to imperial invasions and the illegal occupation of land."

<https://www.islamchannel.tv/blog-posts/there-are-obvious-parallels-between-ukraine-and-palestine-despite-the-mainstream-media-coverage>

[2] I mean conversations with people other than Yurii Sheliazhenko. It speaks volumes that he is the only Ukrainian to share that can be found who shares the views of Stop the War and similar groups in the US. If he was really threatened in Ukraine, he wouldn't still be speaking so freely after a year and half.