Two years of war : Statement of Fourth International on Ukraine

This statement was adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International on 25 February 2024.

a) In the context of the anniversary of 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, we express our global internationalist and systematic support for Ukraine's right to self-determination and right to resist occupation and oppression, as we express it for all peoples whoever be the colonial oppressor.

b) We affirm our political independence from the neoliberal Zelensky government. That is why we aim to develop direct internationalist links from below with the left, feminist, LGBTQ+, social and environmental struggles and currents within the popular resistance to build a free, democratic therefore pluralist, independent nation.

c) Therefore we continue to give our support to the demands expressed by left political and trade-unionist Ukrainian currents:

· An immediate end to shelling, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine;

· to increase the resources consolidating the public services and social protection so much needed in the context of war and for the future independent Ukraine, and resist the ongoing attempts by the neoliberal government of Ukraine to use the war as an excuse for dismantling public services and destroying social protection

· The need to abolish all forms of "aid" conditional on

privatizations;

· The support for material and financial aid which does not increase the Ukrainian foreign debt, in line with our support for the demand of cancellation of the existing debt;

· A general orientation to use funds devoted to help Ukraine resistance and reconstruction in order to contribute to building a social and democratic European project, which means the reduction of inequalities and therefore opposition to the logics of fiscal and social dumping and "competition";

· The increase of Ukrainian wages – individual and social income – as an outlet for Ukraine industrial and agricultural production is to be radically opposed to the ongoing dominant policy (which is trying to increase Ukrainian "competitivity" in exports by reducing taxes and wages)

d) Our support to Ukrainian armed and non-armed resistance against the Russian invasion also means our solidarity with all citizens of the Russian Federation who refuse that war and are repressed because of their democratic stance.

e) We oppose the logic of 'Great Russian power' and domination over neighbouring countries. The victory of the free and democratic Ukrainian people is organically favourable to the emergence of a pluralist, peaceful and democratic Russian Federation and union of the peoples of Europe.

The Russian aggression and threats against its neighbours creates more support for NATO in those countries. The defeat of Russian aggression would therefore facilitate the struggle against NATO. We oppose the use of the Russian invasion of Ukraine as an excuse to increase military budgets. We have always been, and continue to be against any logic of counter-posed military blocs or zones of influence. We struggle for the dissolving of military blocs that are in the service of imperialism such as NATO and the Russian-led CSTO alliance. In our struggle against imperialism and for the self-

determination of all peoples we fight for the defeat of Putin's project.

We reaffirm such a programme for the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine helping to combine our full support to Ukrainian resistance to the war and to neoliberal policies with promoting new European and international progressive projects integrating eco-socialist anticapitalist dimensions.

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Interview with Ukrainian and Russian socialists

At the recent International Committee of the Fourth International, held at the IIRE in Amsterdam, two delegates from Ukraine and Russia attended. The interview below is with Vasylyna, a member of Sotsialnyi Rukh/Соціальний Рух, and Mia, an activist in the Russian Socialist Movement/Российское социалистическое движение, about the war and their organisations' activities.

How did you get involved in politics?

Vasylyna: My interest in political activism emerged during my studies in urban studies, where we often used Marxist theory to analyse different processes that affect our living spaces. Surrounded by lots of young progressive people from all over

Europe at the university and united by similar struggles of being international students, we initiated a union for the students of our department, fighting for equal tuition fees for European and non-European students. I joined Sotsialnyi Rukh because theory alone is not enough, driven by an urge to be active on the ground. Facing devastating current challenges, Ukrainian society is extremely vulnerable but definitely more open to change. Obviously, things cannot go on in the same way as they did before. For instance, there is a lot more discussion on corruption, and journalists are uncovering examples at the highest levels of power, so it feels like things are starting to shift.

Mia: I became interested in politics during my school years. When I was 14 years old, the annexation of Crimea happened. This was a moment when I really started to dive into news reports and listen to political commentators. However, I was almost unaware of differences on the political spectrum. The opposition field in Russia is predominantly liberal, so for many, the words “liberalism” and “democracy” are often equated. Like many people my age, I was anti-Putin, anti-conservative, pro-free elections, civil rights, and anti-corruption. I suppose my time spent at the university was important in this sense. I started reading a lot more about history and politics, and I was able to engage in political debates from a much more critical perspective. Since 2021, I have engaged in politics outside of the Student Council and university settings. I served as an election observer for the parliamentary and municipal elections of 2021 and started to participate in the activities of RSM. Soon after this, I became a full member.

What is Sotsialnyi Rukh’s position on the Zelensky government?

Vasylyna: The government’s stance is clear about fighting for the sovereignty of Ukraine, and this gets a lot of support from people. But we as an organisation are extremely critical of the political direction of the government, accompanied by

neoliberal reforms and massive cuts to public spending. In Sotsialnyy Rukh, we are finding ways to organise around these issues. People stand united to defend the country, but this does not mean that Zelensky has unanimous support.

Unfortunately, oligarchy and foreign capital have a significant influence on our current president. The current government was not capable of transitioning from an economy based on profit to a war economy that would work for providing defence capacity and solving humanitarian problems. Seeking allies amongst international partners, mostly among the richest states that have their own imperialist interests (like the USA), could cause harm to the support of Ukraine and bring out confusion in the countries of the Global South. We do not believe that our government is capable of fixing mistakes. That's why there is a strong urge for mass grassroots pressure and political critique from a leftist perspective. The key priorities of the state should be based on the protection of people's interests, fostering social cohesion, and promoting global solidarity against oppression.

What campaigning work is the Revolutionary Socialist Movement doing?

Mia: Campaigning work is difficult for our comrades in Russia due to the repressive regime. We try to work within the law because we don't want to endanger activists. Our main goals now are to shift the oppositional political conversation to the left and provide practical support for people. For instance, we have been doing work with independent trade unions in Russia. There is a union for delivery workers, which we have been helping to organise and support. When the activists and independent trade union leaders are imprisoned, we organise help—financially and via media campaigns.

We are actively working within the "University Platform" that unites professors and students to defend their rights and freedoms. We try to build communities and provide a space to

discuss politics to overcome the atomisation of Russian society. Even inside repressive regimes, there are still struggles and problems that are fought on the ground. When possible, we align with grassroots initiatives to defend people's rights against construction companies' lobbying and resist the destruction of nature. We are also prioritising the feminist platform as well as anti- and decolonial work within our movement; this is particularly important to us given the invasion of Ukraine. What is often overlooked is that while our government wages a colonial war against Ukraine, indigenous people in Russia are dying out. Indigenous populations often live in poor outlying areas of Russia's periphery, where people are mired in poverty and debt. Mobilisation occurs disproportionately in poor regions of the country, where people are pressured to join the army to pay off debts, often lack the ability to resist, and have fewer sources of information than the rest of the population.

What about the war?

Vasylyna: We support the Ukrainians' right to resist the invasion and colonisation. Some Sotsialnyi Rukh members have joined the armed forces and are fighting the Russian army. There are not really other viable options in terms of separate fighting militias and units at the moment.

Some on the left say that the conflict is primarily a proxy conflict between imperialists; do you agree?

Vasylyna: We do not see this as a proxy war. It is, first and foremost, a people's war for national liberation. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, people were self-organising, doing anything they could to resist the occupation, speaking to soldiers, and older women making homemade explosives. People from all walks of life—LGBT+ people and women, artists, workers, and academics—joined the army to fight for the Ukrainians' right to self-determination.

> *“We do not see this as a proxy war. It is, first and foremost, a people’s war for national liberation.”*

Mia: Some on the left have this false pacifism, and they put an ideological lens on the war that obscures rather than clarifies, but actually obscures the situation for real people on the ground. Of course, the Ukrainians have the right to defend themselves; they are the main victims in this conflict. This label of ‘proxy war’ doesn’t give any agency to the Ukrainians themselves. People calling for negotiations and a ceasefire need to be clear on what basis. The problem is, no one would dictate to Russia the price they would demand for peace. But some on the left want to dictate conditions to the Ukrainians and say they need to sacrifice their national sovereignty by accepting annexations. Why?

What is the strength of the far right in Ukraine?

Vasylyna: The far-right can still be a threat to some individuals and social movements, but in general, Ukrainian society stands against authoritarian and chauvinistic ideas, as those ideas are at the base of Russian imperialism. Moreover, the influence and visibility of far-right movements in Ukraine are less strong compared to Western societies, for instance, Germany. Currently, far-right activists are not represented in big politics, but we need to be prepared to resist far-right interests in the future. History shows that wars, unfortunately, shape the favourable base for spreading hateful ideologies. Nevertheless, Ukrainian society demonstrated that it’s empowered by its diversity and not by cultivating ethnic nationalism and national isolation.

> *“Ukrainian society demonstrated that it’s empowered by its diversity and not by cultivating ethnic nationalism and national isolation.”*

Will Ukraine win the war?

Vasylyna: Of course! It is the only way to liberate the country. We have to end the Russian invasion as a priority. We definitely need more arms because this is an actual fight, and these things matter.

How can the international workers movement and left help?

Vasylyna: We have the European Network of Solidarity with Ukraine, which meets weekly. There have been international visits by delegates from different countries. There was a good campaign to cancel Ukraine's debt and, recently, to free the Ukrainian human rights activist Maksym Butkevych, who was captured by Russian forces and tortured before being sentenced to 13 years in prison. Anything that people can do to help spread information about people like Butkevych and put pressure on Russia to release him would help. We would very much like the international left to offer Ukraine progressive solutions that would allow us to implement a just reconstruction and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ukraine want to live in peace and decent social conditions, and for this, it is necessary to eliminate the influence of the oligarchy, transfer all economic resources to public ownership, and write off the foreign debt.

Mia: We urge comrades around the world, but especially in the Western world, where politics is more open and you can have more public discussions: We don't want the Russian regime to win; it will be a disaster in Ukraine and Russia. There has been a precedent for lifting sanctions from Russian oligarchs in Europe (for example, the head of "Alfa Bank," Mikhail Fridman). We claim that sanctions against Russian capitalists should be maintained, and the money should be directed towards the Ukrainian resistance, Russian civil society organisations, and helping reconstruct Ukraine after the war. We also call for international solidarity with political prisoners. Among them are leftists, anarchists, anti-fascists, and trade union organisers. We welcome direct actions to help us raise money to help those needing political asylum and those already

imprisoned. Prosecuted activists often escape, but they end up fleeing to places like Kazakhstan and other countries under Russian influence, where they are detained and then face deportation back to Russia. At the same time, the visa regime is very restrictive, and the procedures take a very long time. Land borders with EU countries are effectively closed, and the simplified procedure for obtaining visas has been canceled. There is a need to support those needing political asylum—those who refuse to be sent to war and escape. It is necessary to demand that the European Commission and the European Parliament adopt a unified approach to providing international protection for Russian citizens who are at risk of persecution.

What was your view of the International Committee meeting?

Vasylyna: It was very important to come and hear the arguments from different organisations. There are certainly some contributions that my organisation would disagree with. But also, I am interested in discussing within SR how to develop our policies and ideas based on some of what I heard.

Mia: There were some positives, but also some negatives. On the positive, everyone is open to hearing other positions and wants to know more about the positions of the RSM and what is going on in Russia. But my criticism is that we merely exchange political opinions; the left spends so much time arguing over concepts like whether something is imperialist or not. But where is the practical solidarity? We need to do more to share what we are doing on the ground. It cannot just be ideological positions.

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NOTE: The Fourth International is a worldwide organisation of revolutionary ecosocialists. Defending the self-organization of the exploited and oppressed, towards the abolition of capitalism and the building of ecosocialism, the Fourth International brings together organizations convinced that this is not possible without a root and branch, revolutionary, transformation of society. Read more here: https://fourth.international/en/166



Building International Solidarity for Ukraine: Three Perspectives

The Russian left wing website Posle (После – 'After') recently published three perspectives on Building International Solidarity for Ukraine, from the UK state, from Poland and from the USA, that ecosocialist.scot is republishing below. You can find about Scottish solidarity with Ukraine from the website of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland.

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine the Western left split into two camps. Yet, attempts to build a broad solidarity movement with Ukraine have been underway since February 24. International activists talk about their work:

Simon Pirani [UK], honorary professor, University of Durham

His most recent book on Russia is *Communist Dissidents in Early Soviet Russia* (2023)

I have always believed that support for people resisting imperialist violence is central to socialism. It was the US war in Vietnam that first moved me to political action, when I was a teenager. Supporting Ukrainian resistance to Russian imperialism is consistent with supporting Vietnamese resistance then, and supporting Palestinian resistance to Israeli apartheid. For me, the difference is that Ukraine is closer, in the sense that I have been travelling there, and to Russia, for the last thirty years. (I worked in both countries as a journalist and doing academic research.)

After the invasion in February last year, the most effective responses from the labour movement and social movements in which I am involved were the direct ones. Some young people from the UK and other European countries travelled to Ukraine to join volunteer units; a much larger number of people organised material aid for front-line areas. Personally I supported those efforts, and played a small part in trying to highlight the situation in the Russian-occupied areas.

In the labour movement, perhaps the clearest voice in support of Ukrainian resistance was that of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). We have no deep mines left in the UK, but the union – which historically was one of the strongest, until its defeat in the big strike over pit closures in 1984-85 – continues to support former miners and their communities. It has a historical connection to Ukraine: links were established in 1990 between the miners union in Durham, in north east England, with the Independent Miners Union of Ukraine, in the

first place in Pavlograd, in the western Donbass.

Straight after the invasion, the NUM and other unions sent more than £20,000, and supported trade unionists who drove vehicles full of medical equipment and other supplies to Ukraine, and left them with miners' union activists there. There have been at least seven deliveries of that kind. Along with the NUM and the train drivers union ASLEF, a strong source of support has been a cross-party group, Senedd Cymru [Welsh parliament] Together for Ukraine. The chief legal officer of Wales, Mick Antoniw, is a labour movement activist of Ukrainian family background, and has travelled several times to deliver vehicles, with fellow parliamentarians and trade union representatives.

Other unions have participated in, or at least declared support for, such solidarity actions, including those representing civil servants, teachers, university staff and health workers: efforts to win them over have been coordinated by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, which works with the Confederation of Independent Unions of Ukraine (KVPU).

The USC last month also organised a conference, Another Ukraine is Possible, at which labour, feminist and anti-capitalist perspectives on the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine were advanced, in contrast to the neoliberal slant of the government-level talks also held in London. Another initiative, that I have myself been involved in, has been to raise the profile of Solidarity Zone, the group supporting Russians who take direct action against the war, for example by translating and circulating material.

In terms of actual material aid delivered, all these initiatives by labour movement and anti-capitalist movements are smaller than the mountains of support given to Ukrainian people by civil society in a wider sense. Community groups, churches, voluntary associations, charities, and e.g. Ukrainians living in the UK and their friends have not only

raised very large sums of money but also taken vehicles and other aid to Ukraine. On the other hand, the UK's support for Ukrainian refugees, or for Russians fleeing war and repression, has been very limited. While the government, for cynical political reasons, made it easier for Ukrainians to get to the UK than it is for most refugees from other wars, it is still difficult. The number of Ukrainian refugees here is negligible compared to Poland, Germany or other countries in continental Europe.

In my view, in the UK there are two problems that we face, in building a broad Ukraine solidarity campaign. The first is that, for reasons we all understand about inter-imperialist rivalries, the UK government has steadfastly supported Ukraine militarily, e.g. with weapons supplies. This has given the most right-wing UK government in decades the opportunity to pose as lovers of freedom. And this has its effect on society: the media reports Ukraine sympathetically; president Zelensky appears smiling for the cameras with our ministers, who to people here represent austerity and racism. The hypocrisy of the British ruling class, who for so long prevailed over an empire that dripped with blood (and who have spent the last thirty years gearing its financial system to the benefit of Russian kleptocrats), is obvious – especially to migrant communities whose suffering has been shaped by British and other western imperialism.

There is a danger that this hypocrisy can cause resentment and division. People in the UK who face constant pressure from the state for supporting Palestinian rights, or who deal daily with the consequences of the state's racist migration policies, can not fail to be struck by the state's "favouritism" towards Ukrainians, or, for another example, political refugees from Hong Kong. Socialists and labour movement activists who support Ukrainian resistance have answered this in the best way possible – by seeking to build alliances between Ukraine's struggle and others resisting

other imperialism. This is a work in progress.

The other issue is that, as in other western countries, there are post-Stalinist tendencies that in practice oppose solidarity with Ukraine. A tiny handful of pro-Putin extremists issue soundbites à la Solovyev or Rogozin. But more numerous groups describe themselves as "anti imperialists", seeing the Kremlin as the lesser evil and Ukraine as a tool of the western powers, or "pacifists" who issue disingenuous calls for peace talks, without e.g. withdrawal of Russian troops, and repeat Kremlin talking points about NATO being to blame for the war. So in the Labour party, the left minority is divided: John McDonnell (effectively deputy Labour leader when Jeremy Corbyn was leader), has supported "the provision of weapons to Ukrainians to defend themselves"; Corbyn himself is against that.

> ***Just as the sore of the illegitimate, Russian-supported "republics" festered in the body of Ukrainian society, so reactionary forms of ideology that supported them gnawed away at the labour movement across Europe***

Looking back, I think that, collectively, those in the labour movement with connections to Russia and Ukraine did far too little after 2014 to explain our case. This socalled "anti-imperialism" was already vocal, with regard both to Ukraine and Syria. Like others, I made individual efforts to oppose it (see e.g. here, here, here and here) but these efforts were inadequate. Just as the sore of the illegitimate, Russian-supported "republics" festered in the body of Ukrainian society, so reactionary forms of ideology that supported them gnawed away at the labour movement across Europe.

> ***Hopefully the very widespread, and very human, feeling among ordinary people in the UK, that Ukrainians deserve solidarity against a brutal, violent onslaught, will serve as the***

> ***background for a new clarification of what socialist anti-imperialism actually means***

One good thing that has happened in the last 18 months is that these issues have come out into the open and been discussed more widely. Hopefully the very widespread, and very human, feeling among ordinary people in the UK, that Ukrainians deserve solidarity against a brutal, violent onslaught, will serve as the background for a new clarification of what socialist anti-imperialism actually means.

Zofia Malisz [Poland], Razem International Office

Razem is a left party in Poland with six members of parliament and structures at home and abroad. We support the sovereignty of Ukraine as well as the efforts of the Belarusian and Russian people to democratise their countries since our party was formed in 2015 (see "Polityka wschodnia"). After the Russian invasion we launched and co-organised several campaigns, often in cooperation with Sotsialnyi Rukh, to gain support on the European and global left for sending weapons that the Ukrainian people needed to defend themselves.

We co-founded the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU), which is so active today. There we worked within the feminist "right to resist" group. Our co-leader Magdalena Biejat and other female left coalition MPs filed a motion in the Sejm to expedite access to abortion for Ukrainian refugees who had been raped. Unfortunately the right-wing parliamentary majority rejected it. Other initiatives of ENSU also include a visit to Lviv in 2022 with various left parliamentarians. Right after the invasion we gathered members of Nordic and Eastern European left parties in Warsaw and issued a statement in support of Ukraine, condemning the invasion and appealing for sanctions against Russia. Our cooperation on a range of

issues including cancelling Ukrainian external debt has made a difference, in the form of several legislative efforts in Europe and the US in favour of supporting the cancellation. This was a result of broad social media campaigns, meetings, press conferences and articles on the topic that we took direct part in, initiated or co-ordinated.

We took part in countless meetings, live and remote in 2022, with the global left, to challenge Russian propaganda regarding the invasion and Ukrainian statehood. We confronted falsehoods embedded on the left, particularly within the Western "peace" movement. We did our best to explain the complexities of our regional situation that many were disappointingly ignorant about or chose to ignore – despite decades-long relationships. As a consequence of such unwillingness to engage with the challenges facing the Eastern European left and to support Ukrainian sovereignty, we decided to leave Progressive International and Diem25 shortly after the invasion.

We do feel the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian opposition left movements have unique contributions to make to the global left. Our traditions and the challenges we face, be it geopolitical or stemming from the transformation, are different, so are our solutions and ways of communication. Much can be learned from us. One of the hardest challenges is the neoliberal ideologisation in our societies. Due to that we see the great risk that rebuilding Ukraine entails – we believe, together with our partners in Ukraine, that it should be rebuilt for the benefit of the people, not foreign corporations or domestic oligarchs, with great focus on social infrastructure and support for workers, women as well as on nurturing bottom up communal organising that grew strong during the war. Our politicians have been communicating this constantly: there can be no sell-out of Ukraine to corporations in exchange for weapons. These days we put most of our efforts for Ukraine into campaigning for socially

oriented rebuilding.

> ***We do feel the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian opposition left movements have unique contributions to make to the global left***

Razem also wants to offer to millions of Ukrainian refugees in Poland our vision of a safe, environmentally sustainable welfare state for everyone. A vision that we believe we can realise together both in Poland and in Ukraine. We want to show that Ukraine, in order to rebuild itself, needs its workers to return to stable working conditions with expanded labour rights. It needs its veterans to heal and to receive support from a well funded public services sector. Its children need to be able to grow up with the prospect of a planet that is not only livable, but thriving. We need Ukrainian victory for that, as well as a great deal of left cooperation and campaigning together for social Ukraine. We continue paving the way for that with our partners, both within the Central-Eastern European Green-Left Alliance organisation including Ukrainian partners that we have been building (that is launching at the moment). We also work with partners on the Western left who are willing to engage and to develop concrete proposals of rebuilding plans that challenge the liberal plans (e.g. many activists in the UK and some Labour politicians).

There is broad consensus in Poland, as you know, regarding condemning the invasion as well as political and military help for Ukraine. There are no disagreements on that within the left in Poland. We are a political force though that keeps a watchful eye on the government’s attitude and possible emerging far right threats to Ukrainian refugees. We also criticize any attempts to sacrifice human rights, the right to due process etc., regarding whatever issue concerning Russian citizens on Polish soil.

John Reimann and Cheryl Zuur [USA],

co-chairs Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign

Supporting Ukraine is the concrete expression of the number one responsibility for any socialist. That responsibility is international working class solidarity. But that is not just some moral responsibility; it is directly connected to the class struggle at home.

We see Putin's invasion of Ukraine as a decisive step in the general world process of the rise of extreme right wing nationalism, bigotry and counterrevolution. The more Putin succeeds, the more that process advances. We saw that with the Assad/Putin led counterrevolution in Syria which played a big role in the setback of the whole Arab Spring. And the Arab Spring did, in fact, inspire workers and young people around the world. The result of its defeat (for now) has been, among other things, the increase of religious reaction – Islamic fundamentalism in this case.

Here in the United States, Trump used Islamic fundamentalism and Islamophobia as a major tool to get elected in 2016. Once in office, his first major initiative was to, in effect, bar Muslim people from entering the United States. This is an example of how the Putin-led counterrevolution had an effect on politics here in the United States.

Trump supports Putin not only because he served as a money launderer for the Russian oligarchy for many years. His support is also because of political affinity. That is also why extreme right wing politicians, even outright racists and fascists like *America First* and individuals like Matt Heimbach, support Putin. If Putin's imperialist invasion succeeds even in part, it will strengthen these forces and further drive forward global reactionary movements.

Finally, if we as socialists and as working class activists ignore this massive attack on the Ukrainian people, what are we saying to US workers? We would be telling workers "think only of yourselves in the most immediate sense. Think only of your own paycheck. Don't think about the wider issues that directly affect our lives." It would be no different from saying that oppression of women, or people of color or LGBTQ people is not a matter for all workers to oppose. It would be impossible to help strengthen the working class with that attitude, never mind to build a truly working class socialist movement.

As a result of this, a small group of us founded the Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign shortly after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine started. (In reality, Putin's military invasion of Ukraine started in 2014!). We base ourselves on several points of unity, including the demand that in order to fight the invaders Ukraine should receive all the weapons it needs and with no strings attached. That means we criticize Biden not because he is sending arms to Ukraine but, on the contrary, because he is too hesitant and putting too many handcuffs on Ukraine, on how it may use these arms. That is an unusual position for socialists to take, but it is not unprecedented. During the Spanish Civil War, US socialists called on the US to send arms to the Spanish republicans who were fighting fascism, and during WWII no socialist in the U.S. would have opposed the US's sending arms to the Soviet Union to fight the Nazis.

The Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has a lively presence on social media, including a Facebook group with over 630 members and almost 2,000 followers on Twitter. Both of these present news and analyses related to the war in Ukraine. We have a linktree with quite a few public resources. We also have regular public Zoom forums on topics such as the environmental aspects of the war in Ukraine, the Iranian revolution, whether Russia is fascist (with Ilya Budraitskis),

the present political situation in Ukraine, and coming up a presentation on the Holodomor. Recordings of those forums are available on our youtube channel.

One of the most important discussions we had was a two part series on "fascist ideas on the left". That was a discussion on how and why the ideas of the far right, including even fascist ideas, have come to permeate the socialist movement. This is vitally important because – we have to admit it – the majority of the socialist movement and the "left" in general supports or at least apologizes and makes excuses for Putin's invasion of Ukraine. We explicitly decided to include "Socialist" in our name because we believe it is vital to reclaim socialism from this betrayal.

This betrayal is not accidental. It relates to the generally low political level of the US working class, a working class that has never had its own political party and that has been under attack, both ideologically and practically, for many decades. This ideological attack has been carried out not only by the capitalist class, but also from our very own leaders – every wing of the union leadership – who have also collaborated in helping the capitalists drive down the living conditions of US workers.

So, while the majority of US workers support Ukraine, they do so passively. "It's not for me (us) to play an active, independent role in politics," is the attitude.

In addition to our regular forums, the Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has mobilized in the streets where and when we can. We have participated in wider street mobilizations in support of Ukraine, for example a unity march organized by Iranian Americans in San Francisco. We have also mobilized to counter the pro-Putin propaganda of the "left", such as Code Pink and various "socialists." We also have done some fundraising for Ukraine, including selling t-shirts we designed, and a member of ours actually carried medical

supplies to Ukraine last year. We are currently encouraging unions to pass a resolution we produced calling for full support – including arms – for Ukraine and we also have a petition calling for the IAEA to take over operation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (you can sign it here).

We are still a very small group of activists and, can hardly have a major effect on objective events. What is needed is a renewed uprising of the working class in the United States and globally. We hope to help prepare the way by trying to clarify some of the most vital political issues of the day, many of which revolve around the fascistic imperialist invasion of Ukraine. That and building support for Ukraine to the maximum degree we can.

It is an honor and a privilege to work with and be associated with those brave Ukrainian and Russian comrades (as well as others) who are fighting against the Putin-led counterrevolution. We think that, together with a renewed worker uprising, this sort of collaboration in both the ideological and the practical realms will be the basis for the rebirth of a new, healthy, working class oriented socialist movement.

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“Prigozhin’s March”: What Was It All About?

The Posle Editorial Collective assess Wagner’s mutiny and its consequences:

The events of June 23-24 are already being described as the most serious domestic political challenge to Putin’s regime. In a matter of hours, Wagner units managed with little resistance to take control of Rostov-on-Don and Voronezh, major cities in southern Russia. They even got a few hundred kilometers outside of Moscow. By announcing the start of a military rebellion, Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin openly challenged the necessity for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, demanded the removal of Russia’s military leadership, and claimed his goal was the restoration of “justice.” And while the conflict was resolved with little blood it seems to have forever undermined Putin’s promise of stability and regime’s unity.

There’s no doubt Prigozhin is a war criminal and an opportunist pursuing his personal interests. In the months leading up to the mutiny, Prigozhin made numerous statements bashing the Russian military leadership trying to take control of Wagner units staffed by both former Russian prisoners and retired army officers. Yevgeny Prigozhin, who owes his career to Putin’s patronage and has extensive connections in the state security apparatus, has turned out to be the most aware of the regime’s weaknesses and the vulnerability of Putin’s “chain of command.” Generals Surovikin and Alekseev, who have played key roles in the so-called “special military operation” in Ukraine, publicly called on Prigozhin to “come to his senses” and “resolve the matter peacefully.” Most of the army stood in silent neutrality toward the rebels. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov, whom Prigozhin demanded to meet, never commented on what was

happening and disappeared. Note that the leaflets distributed by Wagner not only called for their resignation, but also for an immediate court martial for Shoigu and Gerasimov on accusations of the brutal treatment of soldiers, poor supplies to the army, and concealing the truth about the course of the war.

On the morning of June 24, Vladimir Putin delivered an urgent five-minute address to the nation. He called Wagner's rebellion a "stab in the back" of the Russian army but did not mention any specific actions to crush it down. Putin highlighted the moral and political dimensions of the mutiny and called it a betrayal deserving of the harshest response. He blamed the mutineers for putting Russia on the brink of civil war and military defeat. Yet, the Russian president did not mention any names, revealing his poor preparedness and uncertainty about the situation. Several thousand-armed columns of the Wagner fighters crossed a vast distance in less than a day and voluntarily stopped 200 kilometers short of Moscow. At the same time, President Putin, presumably, rushed out of the capital, recording his addresses from his remote country residence in Valdai. Regional governors and pro-Kremlin politicians swore allegiance to the president and the constitutional order on social media only a few hours after the mutiny's outbreak.

Predictably, some forces, factions, and citizens did not follow the president's call to resist the traitors and expressed their support for the rebels. These include neo-Nazis on both sides of the front: the Russian Volunteer Corps fighting alongside the Ukrainian armed forces and the Rusich sabotage group, which has been engaged in armed conflict with Ukraine since 2014 as a Russian proxy. Prigozhin responded unambiguously to Putin's message. He stated that the president was "wrong" about Wagner's betrayal, called himself and his fighters "patriots of the motherland," accused Moscow officials of corruption, and refused to back down. Seeking to

expand his support, Prigozhin voiced two hallmark claims of the anti-Putin opposition: Russian regions should oppose Moscow for expropriating the country's resources and the Russian leadership is made up of crooks and corrupt officials and should be exposed and brought to justice.

Despite Prigozhin relying solely on the armed units, the program he announced was supposed to lend popular legitimacy to the coup d'etat. People in Rostov-on-Don cheered Wagner's fighters as heroes, demonstrating that Prigozhin's slogans could gain mass support. The attempted Wagner mutiny also revealed the unwillingness of the security services to actively intervene in the situation.

Prigozhin's "march of justice" ended as unexpectedly as it began. The Belarusian dictator Lukashenko brokered an agreement between Wagner and the Kremlin. According to its terms, Prigozhin was to withdraw his units and the mutineers were to be spared punishment for their alleged "feats of arms." The agreements with Lukashenko also seem to include secret provisions granting Wagner certain autonomy and defining the framework for further relations with the military leadership. The deal was guaranteed by the "word of the President of Russia," as Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov later stated. In other words, the public is kept in the dark as to the terms and content of these unofficial agreements. Although all Russian military units and ordinary citizens were called upon to participate in the mutiny and to resist the rebels, the crisis was resolved by a conspiracy between two war criminals with the Belorussian autocrat playing the role of both a broker and an umpire.

While the consequences of these events are difficult to predict, it's already clear that they have forever changed Putin's political system. If this attempted military insurgency was so successful, why can't this example inspire future attempts to build on its success? Contradictions within Russia's elites have spilled over from the media into the

reality of Russian cities and the armed forces. The whole world has witnessed that they were (temporarily) resolved outside any legal framework with the compromise guaranteed by Putin's "word." In Russia, the rule of law has given way to mafia codes. Words backed up by violence are stronger than the prosecutor's office or even the president's declarations of imminent punishment. The war unleashed by Putin's regime is becoming an ever more apparent threat to its stability and will inevitably result in its eventual collapse. What form will this breakdown take? And could Russia's intimidated and disempowered masses come to the fore? These questions remain open.

26 June 2023

*Republished from **Posle**.*
Posle [после – After' in Russian Language] is a website in Russian and English created in May 2022 to reflect on questions raised by the war in Ukraine for Ukraine and Russia.

ПОСЛЕ

Call for solidarity actions with anti-war activists in Russia: To remember is to fight! Against imperial

aggression in Ukraine and political terror in Russia!

Statement of the Russian Socialist Movement.

For over a decade, Russian antifascists have commemorated January 19 as their day of solidarity. This is the date when in 2009, in the center of Moscow, the human rights and leftist activist Stanislav Markelov and the journalist and anarchist Anastasia Baburova were gunned down by neo-Nazis.

The murder of Markelov and Baburova became the culmination of the ultra-right terror of the 2000s, which killed hundreds of migrants and dozens of anti-fascists. For many years, while it was still possible, Russian activists held antifascist demonstrations and rallies on January 19 under the slogan “To remember is to fight!”

Today, when the Putin regime has invaded Ukraine and unleashed unprecedented repression against its own citizens who oppose the war, the date of January 19 takes on a new meaning. Back then the danger was posed by neo-Nazi groups, often acting with the connivance of the authorities.

Today, the ideology and practice of right-wing radicals have become the ideology and practice of the Russian regime itself, which is rapidly turning fascist over the course of its invasion of Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin is waging war not only against the Ukrainian people, but also against the Russian civil society resisting aggression. The brutal repressions hit, among other things, the left-wing movement: socialists, anarchists, feminists, labor unionists.

Before the New Year, the most famous left–wing politician in Russia, the democratic socialist Mikhail Lobanov, was arrested

and beaten. The platform “Nomination” he created united the anti-war opposition in the municipal elections in Moscow in September 2022.

Kirill Ukraintsev, the leader of the Courier labor union and a well-known left-wing video blogger, has been in custody since April. The reason for the arrest were the protests and strikes the couriers organized as they sought to improve their working conditions.

A feminist, artist and anti-war activist Alexandra Skochilenko, who distributed anti-war symbols, faces a long prison term.

Six Anarchists – Kirill Brik, Deniz Aydin, Yuri Neznamov, Nikita Oleinik, Roman Paklin, Daniil Chertykov – were arrested in the so-called “Tyumen case.” They were brutally tortured, seeking confessions in the preparation of sabotage.

Daria Polyudova, an activist of the Left Resistance group, was recently sentenced to nine (!) years in prison for “calls to extremism.” Leftist journalist Igor Kuznetsov has been in prison for a year now, accused of “extremism” for his anti-war and anti-Putin views.

This is a far from exhaustive list of Russian leftists recently imprisoned or persecuted for their beliefs. As Russian activists forced to leave Russia for political reasons, we ask our foreign comrades and all those who care to support the antifascist action on January 19 under the slogans:

No to Putin’s war, fascism and dictatorship!

Freedom to all Russian political prisoners!

Solidarity with to Russian antifascists!

To remember is to fight!

We ask you to send us information about any solidarity actions during the week of January 19-24 – pickets, open meetings, online discussions, and even personal photos with posters – by e-mail at: rsdzoom@proton….

The Russian Socialist Movement

This appeal is also available in French, Spanish, Dutch and Turkish.

Originally published at: https://fourth.international/en/europe/495

Solidarity with Ukrainian and Russian resistance to the war – Statement of 37th Fourth International youth camp

Having met this week with Ukrainian and Russian socialists committed to the defeat of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we, activists gathered at the 37th international revolutionary youth camp in solidarity with the Fourth international in Vieure (France) from the 23rd until the 29th of July 2022, declare our opposition to Russia's imperialist war in Ukraine.

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine since the 24th of February 2022 marks a clear escalation of the war which had been going on since 2014 in the country. It is aimed at satisfying Great Russian expansionism; it has resulted in numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity; tens of thousands of Ukrainians have already been killed, 15 million

have been forced to flee their homes and many of them had to seek refuge abroad. The immediate withdrawal of Russian troops is necessary to stop the sufferings and ensure the democratic self-determination of the people in Ukraine.

We express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people who are the victims of this unjustified assault and support their resistance against the invading and occupying power. We also stand in solidarity with opposition to the war as expressed by Russian activists, many of them having had to flee abroad to escape the authoritarianism of Putin’s regime. We remind Europe that this regime is hailed by many far-right movements which have been on the rise throughout the continent.

We warn against any direct inter-imperialist war between NATO and Russia, all the while striving for the defeat of the Russian invasion. A nuclear conflict would be a disaster the world has only had horrifying glimpses of before.

We call for the cancellation of all Ukrainian foreign debt held by Western powers as well as international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. This debt has only helped develop a neoliberal regime of capitalist accumulation in Ukraine at the expense of the Ukrainian working class. Freeing these funds would help Ukraine resist the Russian assault and rebuild the country without the interference of Western neoliberal markets.

So far, the sanctions have targeted a limited number of members of the Russian ruling class; they clearly are ineffective in stopping the war.

Furthermore, Western companies continue to trade military components with Russia. We support the expropriation of Russian millionaires’ assets in foreign banks and their redistribution to rebuild Ukraine and support the victims of the war. This requires an international public register of wealth; such a register would also be a necessary first step

to impose any meaningful tax on the capitalists of our own countries to make them pay for the economic and social crisis which the war in Ukraine has aggravated while allowing for even more delirious profits for capitalists such as in the spheres of energy and arms sales.

We thank our Ukrainian comrades from Sotsialniy Rukh for dedicating time to come to this camp and share their experiences; we will stay in solidarity with them and with our Russian comrades to contribute to the defeat of the Russian invasion in any way we can and help rebuild an independent and democratic Ukraine. We hope our exchanges and discussions during and after this camp can help inspire a world free of military blocks and all neo-colonial relations.

29 July 2022

War in Ukraine: solidarity with Ukrainian resistance, against all imperialisms

Statement of the Fourth International Executive Bureau, 24 May 2022

1. State of the war

. Today, three months have passed since the invasion of Ukraine by Putin’s troops. The Russian army has occupied parts of the territory, particularly in the East and South of the country, while suffering a serious defeat in the region of Kiev.

. Ukrainians have opposed phenomenal and massive resistance, involving armed and non-armed struggle, the army, territorial defence forces, civil society organizations, and new forms of self-organization. They have received arms deliveries, humanitarian aid and intelligence from EU and NATO countries. The first successes of such resistance have radicalized Ukrainian hopes for a defeat of the Russian aggressor. Citizens in occupied regions continue to demonstrate against occupation, there are reports of partisan activities in some areas.

. The soldiers killed on both sides can be counted in tens of thousands, as can Ukrainian civilian victims. The war crimes committed by the Russian forces are multiple and proven, as in Bucha, Irpin and other cities. The siege of the cities by the Russian army has deliberately caused thousands of inhabitants to die of deprivation and starvation, particularly in Mariupol. Twelve million inhabitants have been displaced, five million to other European countries.

. The conflict has caused massive material destruction by indiscriminate bombing of civilian and military areas, some cities have been almost razed to the ground.

. A readjustment of the offensive was decided by Vladimir Putin at the beginning of April, aiming to annex the whole of Donbass and the industrial and port city of Mariupol, as well as the largest possible territory in the south, on the Black Sea. But in these regions also, Ukrainians continue to resist.

2. Our position: support for the Ukrainian struggle for

self-determination and independence against a background of inter-imperialist strife.

. Putin’s invasion is a war of aggression, aiming to submit Ukrainian territory to Russian control, as part of the return of a Great Russian imperialist project.

. Ukrainians are fighting a national liberation struggle against the invasion. We support their right to resist, including militarily, and stand in solidarity with their choice to do so. We defend their right to arm themselves and thus to receive the arms necessary to resist against a much more powerful army,

. This war is carried in the context of a renewed inter-imperialist strife. In this war, Western imperialism – represented by NATO and the EU – has taken sides, and is supporting Ukraine’s resistance financially and materially. This has clearly reinforced the resistance and improved its prospects.

. We denounce the obvious aim of US and EU leaders to transform the war according to their own interests: the prospect of a second Afghanistan nightmare for Russia already opens huge opportunities for increased military budgets, the deployment of new military technologies, the expansion of NATO and the improvement of the US world geo-strategic position. They aim to use the battlefield of Ukraine for the realization of their geopolitical goals.

. For now, both imperialist powers, Russia and NATO, have avoided any direct confrontation that could escalate into an inter-imperialist war. No one is interested in such an

escalation, but it could be the result of uncontrolled spiralling. Such a scenario of world war is an objective danger in the imperialist phase of capitalism. It would be catastrophic for humanity and the planet, and we oppose any escalation that could transform this war into a direct inter-imperialist confrontation.

. As revolutionaries and internationalists, we affirm that the way out of the logic of inter-imperialist conflict and escalation is the resistance of peoples from below: for self-determination and against foreign invasions. The choice of Ukrainians to resist has blocked the quick annexation that Russia was aiming for. The defeat of the Russian invader at the hands of Ukrainian people would be the best scenario for struggles for self-determination and against imperialisms of all kinds. The reinforcement of the Ukrainian resistance and of anti-war movements in Russia (and Belarus) are two necessary factors for this scenario to be realized.

. Putin’s invasion has provided a huge boost to NATO’s agenda of expansion, with Sweden and Finland requesting their entry. We oppose this dynamic: we reject the logic of military blocks and work for a new trans-European concept of security based on self-determination, egalitarian relations between peoples, including Russia, urgent treaties of denuclearization and the dissolution of NATO and CSTO.

. In the same way, we reject EU treaties and financial institutions and policies, and denounce the way in which they are used to subject countries in Europe’s periphery to neo-colonial relations. The contradictions between the Ukrainian demand for “fast and just” European integration and the reality of the EU’s criteria should help us raise the issue of new treaties for European relations based on cooperation and not market competition, fiscal and social dumping.

. We aim to build a movement from below, for a just and lasting peace, in solidarity with the struggle of Ukrainian

and Russian people against Putin’s invasion and NATO strategies, for a just peace and for the self-determination of Ukraine.

. We demand the urgent transfer of military budgets towards the vital needs of an ecosocialist transformation of the world based on social and environmental justice and against all neo-colonial relations.

3. Political trends in Ukraine.

. Zelensky and his government are a neoliberal force, tied to sectors of the Ukrainian oligarchy. His unexpected electoral success in 2019 came on the basis of criticism of corruption and hopes for a peaceful settlement of the hybrid war producing more than 15000 deaths since 2014, and in the context of a deep crisis of all political parties associated with growing social conflicts and activities of the civil society.

. The Ukrainian population is united in resisting the Russian invasion by all means. Many socialist and anarchist militants have joined the Territorial Defense forces. As internationalist militants, we support comrades who have made this choice.

. At the same time, Ukrainians are self-organizing to provide support for victims of the war. Popular initiatives have been launched to provide shelters, social housing and childcare for refugees and internally displaced people, to provide free mental and other health care, transport and much else. These initiatives are an experiment in new ways of social organization, which could break with the neoliberal regression of the last 20 years; but they are still confronted with the dominant political and economic regime which protects

oligarchs.

. In the current stage of the war, it is Russian-speaking Ukrainians that are suffering the most at the hands of the Russian army. They are massively engaged in the armed and civilian resistance. This debunks any claim by Putin that the “operation” aims to protect national minorities. We support the right of populations to democratic self-determination in the absence of national or foreign coercion.

. The building of a Ukrainian national identity is a dominant political trend, a historically progressive resistance against centuries of Russian domination. This sentiment has also often taken the color of anti-communism, also due to oppression during the USSR period. This can only be overcome by a radical democratic movement to consolidate a peaceful Ukraine. The popular resistance and victory against Russian national oppression should allow for a collective appropriation of conflicting interpretations of black pages of Ukrainian history by historians and different political currents, dealing with all past oppressions and crimes. But that also needs the consolidation of a post-war Ukraine free of oligarchic capitalism and socially destructive policies.

. It is clear that the context of violence and increased national sentiment provoked by the invasion is favourable to “anti-Russian” and far-right nationalist ideology. At the same time, the massive engagement of Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Rroms in defence of the country, as well as the direct mobilization of the citizens in armed and unarmed resistance, creates potential for a more progressive resolution of the cultural and linguistic issues that have been exploited by the far right in recent years.

. Many women have volunteered for armed service. As Ukrainian feminists say, they know what kind of future Putin’s regime offers to feminists and LGBT. That is why their first choice is to fight for his defeat.

. In the context of war and bellicism, the gender regime tends to shift to more patriarchal forms, which place women in the field of care and men in the frontline and increases sexist, violent and reactionary behaviours (against women and LGBT). Since 2014, the burden of social reproduction in a deeply neoliberal society has fallen more and more on women as social provision has been stripped away. This is a part of the context for the massive surrogacy industry that has developed in Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion the use of rape and sexual violence as war weapons has left women with traumatic after-effects, including unwanted pregnancies, for which they cannot access appropriate care. We support the feminist collectives that are working to help women in all the complex trauma they are facing.

. It is in such a context that the new socialist NGO Sotsialnyi Rukh ("Social Movement") was established. We support their orientation, which includes their open criticisms of wartime emergency measures and labour law reforms that make it easier to dismiss workers, non-enforcement of labour law, and a corrupt legal system and civil service which enables oligarchs and other capitalists to avoid paying wages and taxes or respecting environmental legislation. They are building a popular resistance against the invader which is rooted in solidarity with workers' struggles and egalitarian (feminist, anti-racist, anti-sexist) relations amongst the people. They are promoting an important campaign for the cancellation of Ukraine's external debt.

. Independent workers' unions are also a key factor in building resistance as well as an alternative to the bourgeois and neo-liberal project for Ukraine.

. The links of these progressive forces (in particular trade unions and feminists) with the anti-war movement in Russian and Belarus will be essential to open progressive alternatives to the dominant inter- imperialist conflicts and settlements.

4. The political climate in Russia and the anti war movement

. The reactivation of Great Russian imperialism has also political consequences within the Russian state. Putin is also taking advantage of his Orwellian “special operation” to further stifle Russian society. His policy is as much aggressively ideological (Great Russian nationalist and “anti-Nazi”) as it is systematically repressive. He wants to put an end to any internal opposition in the long term.

. Education and media have been reformed to promote authoritarian, imperialist values and suppress dissent. Independent labour unions and activist networks, LGBT and environmental activists all face increased repression.

. These regressive tendencies are shifting Russia’s regime into neofascism, in which formal democratic procedures are gradually suppressed.

. Despite this, some sectors of Russian society have shown great courage in opposing Putin’s war. In the initial days of the war, spontaneous demonstrations gathered in many Russian cities to oppose the invasion. These were severely repressed. Individuals continue to protest, and have been fined, imprisoned, and intimidated in their places of work and study.

. Some soldiers are refusing to take part in this so-called “special operation”, and desertion and breaks in discipline afflict the Russian army. Most soldiers serving and dying in Ukraine come from Russia’s ethnic minorities, who have fewer employment opportunities, and are less able to avoid military service.

. Today, the small feminist movement is playing a key role in

denouncing the invasion and standing in solidarity with Ukraine, contributing to the coordination of initiatives nation-wide.

. The movement of mothers of soldiers is also an important factor, giving voice to those critical of Putin’s war and propaganda.

. In the meanwhile, sabotage actions, not clearly attributed, are also making it difficult for the Russian state and showing there is more opposition to the war than what is expressed publicly.

. There has also been impressive sabotage of Russian logistics in Belarus. The Minsk regime has reclassified such sabotage as terrorism, carrying the death penalty. Belarus activists are also supporting Russian deserters and demonstrating against Belarus collaboration or future participation in the Russian invasion. Independent trade unions, which have been leading anti-war protests, have been severely repressed, and their ability to function is in question.

. The socialist and revolutionary left in Russia, and in particular the Russian Socialist Movement, have an important role to play, building a militant opposition to the Putin regime, building solidarity links with Ukrainian militants and around the world. They face increasing repression and have to work in a semi-clandestine fashion.

. Some socialists, feminists and other activists have had to leave the country but continue to work from exile to build a radical alternative in Russia. We are committed to supporting them.

5. Our tasks outside Ukraine

and Russia.

. As radical left forces, we express and organize our support for Ukrainian armed and unarmed resistance while staying independent from, and critical of our governments and their imperialist programme and motivations. We do not stand in the way of any initiative that helps to reinforce the autonomous resistance of the Ukrainian people.

. We participate in mobilizations in solidarity with Ukrainians and against Putin’s invasion, trying to connect with Ukrainian refugees and people outraged by the aggression, bringing our slogans and ideas against all imperialisms, for socialism and self-determination.

. We support and build initiatives from below that bring material and humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

. We denounce policies that aim to take advantage of Ukraine’s war to further the interests of Western imperialism. We oppose all conditionalities imposed by Western governments in order to make profits and subordinate Ukraine to their economic and military sphere of influence.

. We oppose the rise of military expenditure, part of an agenda of increased militarism that precedes Putin’s invasion. We stand against NATO and CSTO, for their dissolution, for each country to leave these alliances and we resolutely oppose their expansion.

. We express and organize our solidarity with refugees from Ukraine, calling for the end of all discriminations and a policy of open borders for migrants and refugees of all origins. The forced exile of the Ukrainians has been met with a great deal of popular, self-organized solidarity in the neighbouring countries, in particular Poland. The current EU’s treatment of Ukrainian refugees should be adopted as the standard practice for all new asylum seekers.

. We support direct actions taken against Russian oligarchs. They are protected by the opacity and unfairness of the global financial system, bank secrecy and institutionalized capital flight and tax evasion, of which all oligarchies take advantage, including the Ukrainian. We do not support long term sanctions aimed to “bleed” or “weaken” Russia, which result in increased poverty within the Russian population.

. We combat any Russophobia, which conflates Russia’s people or culture with the actions of its government.

. We point out the contradiction between the support for Ukrainian struggle by Western governments and their complicity with Turkey’s oppression of the Kurdish people and Israel’s oppression of the Palestinian people and all other oppressed nations across the world.

6. Our main slogans and demands

. For the defeat of the Russian invasion. Russian troops out of Ukraine.

. Support for Ukrainian resistance, in all its forms.

. For the immediate cancellation of Ukrainian debt.

. Down with Putin! Support the Russian anti-war movement. Solidarity and refugee status for all deserters from the Russian army.

. Against NATO and the Russian-led CSTO expansionism and interventionism. Against all imperialist blocks.

. Solidarity with Ukrainian refugees of all origins, and provision of the practical short and longer-term aid necessary, taking into account the fact that the vast majority

are women and children.

. For a transition to renewable energies to end-up with dependencies and blackmails from oil and gas producers. Transfer of military budgets to investment into a quick decarbonization of the economy under popular control.

. For a socialist Europe free of military blocks and all neo colonial relations. For an ecosocialist revolutionary alternative to capitalist exploitation and the destruction of life on our planet.

Reproduced from: https://fourth.international/en/566/europe/447

Faslane Peace Camp 40th Anniversary 10-12 June 2022

The Faslane Peace Camp celebrates its 40th Anniversary on 12 June 2022 and is holding three days of events at the camp to commemorate and talk about getting rid of nuclear weapons, *reports Mike Picken*.

The camp, approximately 40 miles west of Glasgow on the Clyde estuary, was one of a number of direct action protests against nuclear weapons set up across Britain in the 1980s – of which the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common came to prominent world attention at the time when US nuclear-armed Cruise Missiles were based there.

Faslane is now the sole location for the deployment of the UK state's huge nuclear arsenal (there are manufacturing and storage facilities elsewhere and convoys regularly cross

Britain's road).

There are four Trident submarines based permanently there, and the UK government has recently announced a unilateral increase in the number of nuclear warheads deployed to over 200. One of the reasons why the UK state and establishment so fears Scottish independence is because there is a clear commitment in the independence movement to remove Trident nuclear weapons from Scotland.

Trident means that the Camp has therefore continued for forty years to act as a focus for action against nuclear weapons across the UK state and is deserving of support from across the labour, trade union, peace and Scottish independence movements.

The programme of events is still being finalised, and ecosocialist.scot will publish and support it as soon as we have details – so keep a lookout on our Twitter account and this website. Supporters will be welcome at any time 10-12 June, whether just for a few hours or for the whole period.

The Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) voted at its Annual General Meeting to support the anniversary and can also be approached; details here: https://www.banthebomb.org/

You can contact the camp by email: faslanepeacecamp@protonmail.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/faslanepeacecamp/

The best way of getting to the Camp for most people is to travel to the nearby town of Helensburgh first, there is a regular train service from Glasgow. For travel to the Camp itself from Helensburgh, the following advice is given:

> *The Peace Camp consists of a line of caravans and buses along a short stretch of the A814 approaching Faslane. Visitors, and potential new residents, are always welcome, and the Camp*

is child- and dog-friendly. Please be aware that alcohol and drugs are not allowed in the communal spaces to which visitors have access.
The Camp is most easily reached by bus from Helensburgh; the 316 service travels between the train station and Peace Camp twice an hour through most days, and the fare is £2.15 at the time of writing. Alternatively, it's a 20-minute cycle or hour's walk along the coastal road to the west of the town.

Step up opposition to nuclear weapons!

Russia's appalling actions in invading Ukraine, a state that voluntarily gave up nuclear weapons, have put pressure across Europe on governments to increase support for the NATO nuclear alliance and nuclear weapons. We need to oppose this and say loudly and clearly that nuclear weapons are no defence against imperialist actions like Russia's and that more than ever we need to remove nuclear weapons from Europe and the world.
Supporting the Faslane peace camp anniversary 10-12 June, opposing Trident, and calling for more states to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) (which finally holds its postponed first conference of signatories and civil society in Vienna late June) are among the best ways of bringing an effective future world free from weapons of mass destruction.



CND banners at the Faslane nuclear base (Pic: Sept

2021 M Picken)

Defend Ukraine, defend the planet

Red-Green Labour Editorial Board response to the war in *Ukraine*.

We stand with the Ukrainian people in their remarkable resistance to Putin's brutal invasion of their country driven by Great Russian chauvinism and imperialist ambition. They are facing tanks, artillery, cruise missiles launched from ships in the Black Sea and aerial assaults by Russian paratroopers. Cluster bombs have been used against civilian districts of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city. A 24 mile column of Russian armour is heading towards Ukraine's capital city with the aim (we can assume) of blasting the Ukrainian government out of office and instituting regime change by force.

We strongly support Ukraine's right of self-determination: i.e. its right to determine its own future free from interference or intimidation from East or West.

We also support Ukrainian demands for arms and military assistance from the international community and for economic measures to be taken against Putin's regime and its billionaire backers. Demands that are echoed by sections of the socialist and progressive opposition within Russia.

We are in awe at the mobilisation of popular resistance which appears to have slowed down the Russian advance. Weapons have been distributed on the streets and volunteers are joining the resistance in large numbers. The government website is not only urging people to join the resistance but is giving instructions on how to make petrol bombs for use in street fighting. New recruits are going straight to the front lines with no military equipment other than a rifle a machine gun or a grenade launcher in their hands.

We welcome the decision of the EU countries to open their borders and to provide safe haven for refugees and we demand that the racist Johnson government in Britain follows suit – which it is still refusing to do. Also that it drops its racist *Immigration and Nationalities Bill*, which would impose further and draconian restriction on refugees trying to enter the UK.

We stand in solidarity with the remarkable demonstrations that have been taking place around the world – not least in Russia itself where thousands have been thrown into jail – in support of the Ukrainian resistance. A victory for Putin in this war would not only strengthen right-wing forces globally, but would strengthen imperialism both East and West.

The driving force behind Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, we should be clear, has little to do with NATO’s ambitions, which he hides behind, but his long-held ambition to promote Great Russian chauvinism with its own spheres of influence – including Ukraine.

We demand the withdrawal of all Russian and Byelorussian troops all the regions of Ukraine including from the Donbass region and Crimea.

The ecological dimension

The Russian invasion of Ukraine took place a few days before the publication of the IPCC's *Sixth Assessment on Climate Change* which has issued its starkest warning yet on the future of the planet. Catastrophic climate change, it says, is now "widespread, rapid, and intensifying".

This reminds us that a Putin victory against Ukraine would not just have a reactionary impact on world politics, but would dislocate the struggle against global warming and climate change making the future of life on the planet even more precarious.

The struggle against Russian aggression and the struggle to save the planet from catastrophic climate change are now indivisible. The dangers posed by the petrochemical industry are not 'just' about carbon emissions – catastrophic as they are. They are also about the role of the petrochemical industry in geo-politics, and the drive it generates towards resource conflict and wars. Many of the wars that have taken place since WW2 have had this behind them.

In fact Putin sees Russian oil and gas reserves, and the vast profits that they generate for him, as his trump card in his invasion of Ukraine and his ongoing imperialist ambitions. The reliance of much of Europe, Germany in particular, on Putins oil and gas, has meant that the most effective measure against him, which would be to close down his oil and gas market, is very difficult to take.

The rapid transition to renewable energy that we need, therefore, is not 'just' to reduce carbon emissions and curb global warming, but to protect life on the planet by breaking the strangle-hold of the petrochemical industry and the conflicts and wars it generates. Renewables on the other hand can be developed anywhere in the world and offer a more equitable access to energy resources than the lottery of oil

and gas deposits.

Nuclear power should also be rejected since it also locks us into the military industrial war machine since the existence of a nuclear power industry is an integral part of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. In Ukraine we have the nightmare of 15 soviet-era nuclear reactors in all (as well as the Chernobyl disaster site) now being contested in a war zone where anything could happen to them, either by accident or design.

Our immediate task, however, is to stop Putin destroying the fragile gains made in Glasgow in November and to start the fight for better outcomes from COP27 to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt later this year. To do that we have to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

3 March 2022

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No to Putin's invasion of Ukraine! Support to the Ukrainian resistance! Solidarity with the Russian opposition to the war!

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

1. Before dawn on 24 February 2022 the Russian army began its invasion of Ukraine, bombing the interior of the country and crossing the northern, eastern and southern borders of the country, heading for the capital Kiev. This aggression has already resulted in many deaths, both civilian and military. The Ukrainian army and population are defending themselves, several cities are holding out against the aggressor. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have gone into exile, but the resistance continues. The Ukrainan people are resisting, with and without arms.

The Kremlin's recognition three days earlier of the "independence" of the so-called "people's republics" of Donetsk and Lugansk and the official entry of the Russian army into their territory was only the prelude to the invasion aimed at the total submission of the neighbouring country.

It is a military invasion of the territory of a former oppressed nation by a capitalist oligarchic, autocratic and imperialist regime whose aim is the reconstruction of the Russian empire.

2. Putin has made no secret of his Great Russian nationalism and since 2014 he has taken concrete steps to attack Ukraine's sovereignty. His chauvinistic pseudo-historical narrative, blaming the October 1917 Revolution for having constituted "three distinct Slavic peoples: Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, instead of the great Russian nation" is not a recent invention.

The invasion of Ukraine follows a Great Russian chauvinist and imperialist policy that began in different contexts and phases since the break-up of the USSR: from the use of an "energy

war” (playing on prices and alternative pipelines), up to the instrumentalization of national minority conflicts such as in Moldova (with the formation of the “Republic of Transnistria” with the support of the Russian army in 1990-91) and in Georgia (with the formation of the “Republic of Abkhazia” in 1992), and later the war with Georgia for control of South Ossetia (2008); but also direct oppressive wars like the war of occupation of Chechnya (1994-1996 and 1999-2009). Each time it is a question of preserving the interests of the Kremlin or seizing territory. But globally, the Putin decades (2000s) corresponded to the (re)building of a strong state (controlling its oligarchs) modernizing its military apparatus, establishing a Euroasiatic economic union – with its military dimensions. A new phase started in 2014 with the Ukrainian crisis and the fall of Yanukovitch (described as a “fascist coup” under NATO’s umbrella) followed by the annexation of Crimea and establishment of separatist “republics” in Ukraine’s Donbas controlled by pro-Russian mercenaries. The military support for Lukashenko in Belarus against the popular uprising in 2020 and the military intervention (through the OTCS – Organization of the Treaty for Collective Security under Russian hegemony) to “normalize” Kazakhstan in January this year made Putin feel stronger in the context of US defeat in Afghanistan and open divisions within NATO’s members on energy (gas pipeline) issues.

Ukraine is an independent country which has preserved a regime of formal democracy. Russia has an authoritarian, repressive parliamentary system with far-right members in the Duma. In Ukraine far-right and fascist forces were very visibly present during the Maidan protests in 2014. The Russian invasion risks strengthening existing far right forces in both Russia and Ukraine. Leading figures of far-right and neo-fascist forces internationally openly support Putin.

The invasion of Ukraine is clearly aimed at imposing a puppet regime, subservient to the Kremlin and Vladimir Putin.

3. Putin’s propaganda tried to justify the aggression by saying that NATO’s expansion to the east would endanger Russia’s existence. NATO (which we opposed from its foundation) is a tool for US imperialism and its allies, initially built against Soviet Union and Communist China. Logically it should have been dissolved with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in July 1991, but successive US governments have not only kept it going, but they have also continued to expand it. We reject the competitive logic of capitalist power-states leading to the accumulation of ever more powerful weapons. This is what motivates the opposition to NATO of large parts of the population in the world – and this is not Putin’s preoccupation! However, in some countries, which had been colonized by tsarism or subjugated by the USSR, joining NATO was supported by their populations in the hope that it would protect their independence. We stand instead for the eradication of inequalities, and the necessary social, environmental and democratic development as the means to defend peace.

The fight against the extension of NATO to the East passes today through the uncompromising defence of the national and democratic rights of the peoples threatened by Russian imperialism.

We demand the dissolution of NATO, however this is not the question posed by the attempted annexation of Ukraine by Russian imperialism, which denies the very existence of this nation – Putin claims that it is a pure invention of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. US imperialism is only taking advantage of the headlong rush of the new Kremlin tsar.

We support the right to self-determination of the Ukrainian people and the protection of the rights of the country’s national minorities. Neither Russia nor NATO will defend these rights. We demand the dismantling of all military bases

outside their home countries, the liquidation of the US-led NATO and the Russian-led CSTO. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons must be firmly rejected at every level.

At a time when the absolute urgency at the global level should be the fight against accelerated climate change, the development of military adventures and ever more sophisticated weapons systems by the imperialists shows the need for the peoples to dismiss their irresponsible leaders and change the functioning of society: against the generalized competition that capitalism carries, let us impose the logic of solidarity and peace!

4. Whereas in 1968, when Czechoslovakia was invaded, the courageous Russian opponents of the invasion were counted on the fingers of one hand, on the same day that Ukraine was invaded, thousands of people took to the streets of some 50 Russian cities, braving the authorities to protest against Vladimir Putin’s attack on Ukraine. “No to war!” the demonstrators, mostly young people, chanted in the afternoon and early evening in the streets and central squares of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnodar and Murmansk.

In 2014, there was widespread support for the annexation of Crimea among the Russian population, today there is contestation even within the establishment, this could lead to Putin’s downfall.

One hundred and seventy Russian journalists and foreign policy experts have written an open letter condemning the Russian Federation’s military operation in Ukraine. “War has never been and will never be a method of conflict resolution and there is no justification for it,” they wrote.

Since the first day of the protests, the regime has made thousands of arrests and the police has brutalized the

arrested protesters. It has also ordered the limitation of access to social networks, accused of “violating human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens”!

Despite the repression, an anti-war movement is continuing to develop in Russia! It merits the solidarity of the world labour movement.

5. In the face of the war in Ukraine, it is the responsibility of all activists in the labour and social movements, of those who have mobilized against the war, to support the resistance of the oppressed Ukrainian nation. To stop this war, Putin’s regime must be sanctioned and Ukraine supported in resisting the aggression.

• Immediate withdrawal of Russian armed forces from all Ukrainian territory, including areas occupied since 2014.

• Solidarity and support for the armed and unarmed resistance of the Ukrainian people. Delivery of weapons on the request of the Ukrainian people to fight the Russian invasion of their territory. This is basic solidarity with the victims of aggression by a much more powerful opponent.

• Support to all forms of self-organization for mutual aid and resistance of the Ukrainian population.

• Support for sanctions against Russia, as called for by the Ukrainian resistance, that limit Putin’s ability to continue the ongoing invasion and his warmongering policy in general. Rejection of any sanctions that hit the Russian people more than the government and its oligarchs.

• Open the borders and welcome the populations who have to flee the war by providing the practical short and longer-term aid necessary, especially taking into account the fact that

the vast majority are women and children.

• Cancellation of the Ukrainian debt, direct humanitarian aid to civil, trade union and popular organizations in Ukraine!

Internationalist solidarity

We affirm our full solidarity with those who are mobilizing against the war in Russia and those who are fighting to defend the independence of Ukraine.

The interests of the peoples, their right to peace and security are not defended by US imperialism or NATO or by Russian and Chinese imperialism. These extremely serious events remind us more than ever of the need to build an internationalist mobilization to give the peoples a voice different from that of the states, and in solidarity with the Ukrainian people against all the policies that attack and oppress them. Governments will not initiate this march towards peace. We must organize it ourselves.

• No to the repression of the anti-war movement in Russia. Build active and visible solidarity with this movement. Call on Russian soldiers to refuse to participate in the invasion and organise solidarity with them, including political asylum if they request it.

• Support the progressive forces fighting for democracy and social justice in Ukraine. Build all the links possible to develop a dialogue with them on the way forward to a just peace.

• For international solidarity with our own social camp! Build links between working peoples' and popular movements fighting for democracy and social justice in Russia, Ukraine and other countries in the region as well as internationally.

• Only the international working class, fighting together with all oppressed and exploited people, for peace and against

imperialism, capitalism and war, can create a better world.

1 March 2022

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A letter to the Western Left from Kyiv

"The 'anti-imperialism of idiots' meant people turned a blind eye to Russia's actions"

We republish below an important open letter from Taras Bilous a leading activist of the Ukrainian democratic socialist organisation Social Movement, republished from Ukraine Solidarity Campaign and originally published by Open Democracy.

I am writing these lines in Kyiv while it is under artillery attack.

Until the last minute, I had hoped that Russian troops wouldn't launch a full-scale invasion. Now, I can only thank those who leaked the information to the US intelligence services.

Yesterday, I spent half the day considering whether I ought to join a territorial defence unit. During the night that followed, the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyi signed a full mobilisation order and Russian troops moved in and prepared to encircle Kyiv, which made the decision for me.

But before taking up my post, I would like to communicate to the Western Left what I think about its reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

First of all, I am thankful to those Leftists who are now picketing Russian embassies – even those who took their time to realise Russia was the aggressor in this conflict.

I am thankful to politicians who support putting pressure on Russia to stop the invasion and withdraw its troops.

And I am thankful to the delegation of British and Welsh MPs, unionists, and activists who came to support us and hear us in the days before the Russian invasion.

I am also thankful to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in the UK for its help over many years.

This article is about the other part of the Western Left. Those who imagined 'NATO aggression in Ukraine', and who could not see Russian aggression – like the New Orleans chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Or the DSA International Committee, which published a shameful statement failing to say a single critical word against Russia (I am very thankful to US professor and activist Dan la Botz and the others for their critique of this statement).

Or those who criticised Ukraine for not implementing the Minsk Agreements and kept silent about their violations by Russia and the so-called 'People's Republics'.

Or those who exaggerated the influence of the far-Right in Ukraine, but did not notice the far-Right in the 'People's

Republics' and avoided criticising Putin's conservative, nationalist and authoritarian policy. Part of the responsibility for what is happening rests with you.

'Campism'

This is part of the wider phenomenon in the Western 'anti-war' movement, usually called 'campism' by critics on the Left. British-Syrian author and activist Leila Al-Shami gave it a stronger name: the "anti-imperialism of idiots". Read her wonderful 2018 essay if you haven't done so yet. I will repeat only the main thesis here: the activity of a large part of the Western 'anti-war' Left over the war in Syria had nothing to do with stopping the war. It only opposed Western interference, while ignoring, or even supporting, the engagement of Russia and Iran, to say nothing of their attitude to the 'legitimately elected' Assad regime in Syria.

"A number of anti-war organisations have justified their silence on Russian and Iranian interventions by arguing that 'the main enemy is at home,'" Al-Shami wrote. "This excuses them from undertaking any serious power analysis to determine who the main actors driving the war actually are.

Unfortunately, we have seen the same ideological cliché repeated over Ukraine. Even after Russia recognised the independence of the 'People's Republics' earlier this week, Branko Marcetic, a writer for American Left magazine Jacobin, penned an article almost fully devoted to criticising the US. When it came to Putin's actions, he went only as far as remarking that the Russian leader had "signal[led] less-than-benign ambitions". Seriously?

I am not a fan of NATO. I know that after the end of the Cold War, the bloc lost its defensive function and led aggressive policies. I know that NATO's eastward expansion undermined efforts directed at nuclear disarmament and forming a system of joint security. NATO tried to marginalise the role of the

UN and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and to discredit them as 'inefficient organisations'. But we cannot bring back the past, and we have to orient ourselves on the current circumstances when seeking a way out of this situation.

How many times did the Western Left bring up the US's informal promises to the former Russian president, Mikhail Gorbachev, about NATO ("not one inch eastward"), and how many times did it mention the 1994 Budapest Memorandum that guarantees Ukraine's sovereignty? How often did the Western Left support the "legitimate security concerns" of Russia, a state that owns the world's second-largest nuclear arsenal? And how often did it recall the security concerns of Ukraine, a state that had to trade its nuclear weapons, under the pressure of the US and Russia, for a piece of paper (the Budapest Memorandum) that Putin trampled conclusively in 2014? Did it ever occur to Leftist critics of NATO that Ukraine is the main victim of the changes brought about by the NATO expansion?

Time and again, the Western Left responded to the critique of Russia by mentioning US aggression against Afghanistan, Iraq and other states. Of course, these states need to be brought into the discussion – but how, exactly?

The argument of the Left should be, that in 2003, other governments did not put enough pressure on the United States over Iraq. Not that it is necessary to exert less pressure on Russia over Ukraine now.

An obvious mistake

Imagine for a moment that, in 2003, when the US was preparing for the invasion of Iraq, Russia had behaved like the US has in recent weeks: with threats of escalation.

Now imagine what the Russian Left might have done in that situation, according to the dogma of 'our main enemy is at

home’. Would it have criticised the Russian government for this ‘escalation’, saying that it ‘should not jeopardise inter-imperialist contradictions’? It is obvious to everyone that such behaviour would have been a mistake in that case. Why was this not obvious in the case of the aggression against Ukraine?

If the US and Russia reached an agreement and started a new Cold War against China, would that really be what we wanted?

In another Jacobin article from earlier this month, Marcetic went as far as saying that Fox News’s Tucker Carlson was “completely right” about the “Ukrainian crisis”. What Carlson had done was question “Ukraine’s strategic value to the United States”. Even Tariq Ali in the New Left Review approvingly quoted the calculation of German admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach, who said that giving Putin “respect” over Ukraine was “low cost, even no cost” given that Russia could be a useful ally against China. Are you serious? If the US and Russia could reach an agreement and start a new Cold War against China as allies, would that really be what we wanted?

Reforming the UN

I am not a fan of liberal internationalism. Socialists should criticise it. But this does not mean that we have to support the division of ‘spheres of interest’ between imperialist states. Instead of looking for a new balance between the two imperialisms, the Left has to struggle for a democratisation of the international security order. We need a global policy and a global system of international security. We have the latter: it is the UN. Yes, it has plenty of flaws, and it is often the object of fair criticisms. But one can criticise either to refute something or to improve it. In the case of the UN, we need the latter. We need a Leftist vision of reform and democratisation of the UN.

Of course, this does not mean that the Left should support all

of the UN's decisions. But an overall reinforcement of the UN's role in the resolution of armed conflicts would allow the Left to minimise the importance of military-political alliances and reduce the number of victims. (In a previous article, I wrote how UN peacekeepers could have helped to resolve the Donbas conflict. Unfortunately, this has now lost its relevance.) After all, we also need the UN to solve the climate crisis and other global problems. The reluctance of many international Leftists to appeal to it is a terrible mistake.

After Russian troops invaded Ukraine, *Jacobin's* Europe editor David Broder wrote that the Left "should make no apologies for opposing a US military response". This was not Biden's intention anyway, as he said multiple times. **But a large part of the Western Left should honestly admit that it completely fucked up in formulating its response to the "Ukrainian crisis".**

My perspective

I will finish by briefly writing about myself and my perspective.

Over the past eight years, the Donbas war has been the main issue that has divided the Ukrainian Left. Each of us formed our position under the influence of personal experience and other factors. Thus, another Ukrainian Leftist would have written this article differently.

I was born in the Donbas, but in a Ukrainian-speaking and nationalist family. My father became involved in the far-Right in the 1990s, observing Ukraine's economic decay and the enrichment of the former Communist Party leadership, which he had been fighting since the mid-1980s. Of course, he has very anti-Russian, but also anti-American views. I still remember his words on 11 September 2001. As he watched the Twin Towers falling on TV, he said that those responsible were 'heroes'

(he does not think so anymore – now he believes that the Americans blew them up on purpose).

When the war began in Donbas in 2014, my father joined the far-Right Aidar battalion as a volunteer, my mother fled Luhansk, and my grandfather and grandmother stayed in their village which fell under the control of the 'Luhansk People's Republic'. My grandfather condemned Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution. He supports Putin, who, he says, has "restored order in Russia". Nevertheless, we all try to keep talking to each other (though not about politics) and to help each other. I try to be sympathetic towards them. After all, my grandfather and grandmother spent their whole life working on a collective farm. My father was a construction worker. Life has not been kind to them.

The events of 2014 – revolution followed by war – pushed me in the opposite direction of most people in Ukraine. The war killed nationalism in me and pushed me to the Left. I want to fight for a better future for humanity, and not for the nation. My parents, with their post-Soviet trauma, do not understand my socialist views. My father is condescending about my 'pacifism', and we had a nasty conversation after I showed up at an anti-fascist protest with a picket sign calling for the disbanding of the far-Right Azov regiment.

When Volodymyr Zelenskyi became president of Ukraine in the spring of 2019, I hoped this could prevent the catastrophe that is unfolding now. After all, it is difficult to demonise a Russian-speaking president who won with a programme of peace for Donbas and whose jokes were popular among Ukrainians as well as Russians. Unfortunately, I was mistaken. While Zelenskyi's victory changed the attitude of many Russians towards Ukraine, this did not prevent the war.

In recent years, I have written about the peace process and about civilian victims on both sides of the Donbas war. I tried to promote dialogue. But this has all gone up in smoke

now. There will be no compromise. Putin can plan whatever he wants, **but even if Russia seizes Kyiv and instals its occupational government, we will resist it. The struggle will last until Russia gets out of Ukraine and pays for all the victims and all the destruction.**

Hence, my last words are addressed to the Russian people: hurry up and overthrow the Putin regime. It is in your interests as well as ours.

25 February 2022 Republished from Ukraine Solidarity Campaign https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org/2022/02/25/a-letter-to-the-western-left-from-kyiv/

[Кампанія Солідарності з Україною (ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org)]



Oppose Russian Occupation – Solidarity with an Independent Ukraine!

ecosocialist.scot joins the worldwide condemnation of the Russian occupation of Ukraine and declares its solidarity with the resistance and its support for an Independent Ukraine.

Below we are publishing statements by two Scottish organisations – from Colin Fox of the Scottish Socialist Party and from Lynn Jamieson of Scottish CND; both organisations support Scottish independence and are opposed to NATO and its nuclear weapons being based in Scotland. We also welcome the support given to the UK-wide Ukraine Solidarity Campaign by organisations such as Republican Socialists and call for affiliations and support from across the labour and independence movements in Scotland for this campaign. Finally in order to help our readers keep up with events in Ukraine from a radical and ecosocialist perspective we are providing a link to the English-language Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières ("Solidarity Europe") website, which is compiling reports from the labour and radical movements across Europe and the globe on opposition to the Russian occupation. Further coverage of the situation in Ukraine and the solidarity movement will follow.

Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Statement on theRussian Invasion of Ukraine

Scottish CND unequivocally condemns Russia's military actions in Ukraine and the threat to use nuclear weapons.

For the UK to apply the use of force, individually or through NATO, would escalate conflict and increase the likelihood of nuclear misadventure through weapons use or involving the15 nuclear power stations in Ukraine. We urge respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and accession, and compliance with international treaties to reduce nuclear weapons risks, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.The international community must stand united in ensuring that we protect and support civilians, and Scotland must strongly reject the violations of international law by Russia and the disregard for Ukraine's sovereignty as an independent state.

Nuclear weapons do not deter conflict but make the world more dangerous, elevating the risk of a massive humanitarian catastrophe. We ask people in Scotland to help find ways of providing humanitarian support to the people of Ukraine and of enhancing dialogue with people in the Ukraine and Russia.

Lynn Jamieson (Chair) on behalf of Scottish CND 25 February 2022
https://www.banthebomb.org/statement-on-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/



Colin Fox Statement on Russia and Ukraine

In response to the conflict in Ukraine, SSP National Co-Spokesperson Colin Fox has said:

“The Scottish Socialist Party felt it necessary to record our opposition to the developments that have taken place overnight in Ukraine.

“The country has been invaded.

“It’s necessary for us to put on record that we think that behaviour is reprehensible. It is utterly unacceptable for Russia to invade a sovereign country against the wishes of its people.

“It is an affront to the idea that nations like Ukraine are entitled to determine their own future.

“We call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine. We call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the fighting on all sides.

“We believe that the people of the region are entitled to peace, and we believe that a negotiated way forward has to provide for the security of everybody in the region.

“We do not support the behaviour of the Russian state. We support the rights of Ukrainian people to self-determination, as indeed we do for those in Scotland and elsewhere.

“We want to see international treaties to guarantee the right to live in peace and prosperity for everybody.

“That is the view that the Scottish Socialist Party puts forward today.”

The Scottish Socialist Party affirms its support for the

right to self-determination for all nations, including Ukraine.

The Scottish Socialist Party reiterates that an independent Scotland should be free from the presence of Nuclear weapons, and that it should not be a member of NATO.

24 February 2022

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

Кампанія Солідарності з Україною

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org/ seeks to organise solidarity and provide information in support of the Ukrainian labour movement

Affiliate to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

If you would like more information about affiliating to USC contact us at: ***Ukraine Solidarity Campaign*** *write to: USC c/o PO Box 2378, London, E5 9QU Email: ukrsocsolidarity@aol.com*

Affiliation rates for Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

National Trade Union £150

Regional Committee £40

Trades Council £25

Trade Union Branch £20

Political organisation/community organisation

National £25

Local £10



Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières

Solidarity Europe (ESSF) articles on Ukraine

http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?rubrique1785

Against NATO and Russian military escalation in Eastern Europe

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

We must mobilize against the looming military (and nuclear) threats, in the context of political instability, economic disorder and inter-imperialist collision; in defence of the

rights of the Ukrainian people.

A serious and dangerous situation with a worldwide geopolitical dimension

For the past month or so, we have been witnessing a military escalation around Ukraine that constitutes a serious threat to Europe and the world, and which takes us back to the most serious crises at the height of the Cold War, such as the Korean War (1950-53), the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 or the deployment of the Euro-Missiles (and the Soviet SS20) in the early 1980s, when Ronald Reagan contemplated the possibility of resorting to tactical nuclear armaments on the European theatre.

The danger of the ongoing verbal and military spiral and the risk of sliding into armed conflict, whether low-intensity or far-reaching, localized or generalized, conventional or also including some form of nuclear threat, is greater than in the episodes already mentioned. While the Ukrainian people are the first to be affected, the threats concern all the actors involved in the verbal and bellicose spiral of the current crisis, in particular all the peoples of Europe.

We are therefore faced with a double challenge:
• to respond to the fears expressed in Ukraine regarding the Russian troops on its borders, allegedly aimed at preventing Ukraine’s integration into NATO;
• to take the measure of the real dangers produced by the escalation of warmongering declarations and behaviour whose stakes go beyond the Ukrainian question.

Our overall position on NATO is twofold: in the aftermath of the Second World War the Fourth International opposed NATO at its inception and, a fortiori, demanded that this military

alliance should be disbanded in 1991 along with the Warsaw Pact. We also condemn Russia's imperialist rhetoric and behaviour, which has led a growing section of the Ukrainian population to turn to NATO. The withdrawal of foreign forces (Atlantic and Russian) and the military neutrality of Ukraine are the only protection of its independence. But it is up to the Ukrainian people – and not to blackmail and negotiations between great powers – to decide on their membership or not of NATO.

The main factors that contribute to the danger of an unstable geo-political situation are

• Major energy issues (especially associated with the problems of the transition to renewable energy) with Russian power able to exploit the different energy situations (and dependencies) of the EU and the US – in the context of enormous economic volatility and the very real risk of a new financial crash; problems of scarcity and inflation, energy difficulties and major problems of the transition to renewable energy.

• A series of armed conflicts in the former Soviet Union, from Ukraine since 2014 to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, via Chechnya and a long process of rebuilding Russian military power and making up for the setbacks and humiliations suffered since the end of the Cold War – and a relative consolidation of Russia's grip on Belarus and Kazakhstan encouraging Putin's great power posturing;

• And, more specifically, the crisis of the political system and the internal instability of the United States – barely a year after the coup-style assault on Capitol Hill promoted with impunity by a Trump who sees himself returning to the White House very quickly – the European Union and, above all, Russia itself, after two years of widespread pandemic and revolts against authoritarianism, corruption and repression.

• The stalling of the "Normandy Format" (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine) of conflict management in Ukraine after Russia's occupation of Crimea since 2014.

Both Putin and Biden need to present a strong and aggressive image on the one hand to regain domestic credibility and legitimacy and on the other to discipline what they consider to be their respective areas of influence: Putin to recover from the biggest wave of anti-authoritarian protests since Perestroika, which Russia has been experiencing for several months, and the revolts against corruption, inequalities and post-Stalin paternalism in what he believes to be Russia's area of influence (Belarus, Kazakhstan, etc…); Biden, who is on the verge of midterm congressional elections, after a humiliating withdrawal from Afghanistan and weighed down by a disappointing domestic policy that has brought him a level of unpopularity comparable to that of Trump in the last months of his presidency. Putin's position inside Russia also depends directly on his foreign policy stance. His fourth presidential term ends in 2024, after which he will have to retain power (in the face of his declining popularity) or hand it over to his "successor". This process of "transit of power" in a situation of complete degradation of all political institutions depends only on Putin's own decision and his ability to rally the bureaucratic and financial elites around him in front of internal and external threats.

First threat of nuclear war in sixty years

The arrogance of their respective statements is proportional to their political weakness: "I hope Putin is aware that he is not far from a nuclear war". "Putin wants to test the West and he will pay a price for it that will make him regret what he has done", said Biden during a press conference on 20 January. But bellicose declarations of this type, even if they are the result of gesticulations and a game of lying poker, are never harmless and without the risk of uncontrolled spiralling.

The determining factor behind the massive concentration of its

troops on Ukraine's northern and eastern borders is Russia's fear of a hypothetical Ukrainian entry into NATO, which would allow the deployment of hostile nuclear weapons next to its country.

30 years after the end of the USSR and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact: between NATO enlargement and the reconstruction of Russian imperialism

When Mikhail Gorbachev decided to dismantle the Warsaw Pact 30 years ago, NATO leaders agreed to dissolve the Atlantic pact and pledged that the future reunified Germany would be a neutral country, as Austria had been since the end of World War II. As we know, not only did the reunified Germany join the Atlantic Alliance, but the Alliance has since expanded eastward, integrating most of the countries that for 45 years had belonged to the Soviet Bloc: in 1999 Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. In 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia followed. Albania and Croatia in 2009, and in 2020 it was the turn of North Macedonia.

The maintenance and expansion of NATO, far from pacifying the continent's relations, is actually straining them – and can only encourage a grand Russian expansionist logic to the detriment of the countries situated between the EU and the Moscow-dominated Eurasian Union.

Russia's military mobilization along the Ukrainian border explains why Biden has announced that he is willing to negotiate that strategic weapons will not be deployed in Ukraine and that Ukraine's NATO membership is not on the agenda. However, we cannot forget that, according to the FBI's own reports, since the overthrow of the Yanukovich government in Ukraine, the Russian annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the secession in the Donbass, Ukraine has become a training ground for the international fascist movement, which has recruited anti-Russian fighters to be integrated into

Ukrainian militias in much the same way as Islamic fundamentalism used the war in Afghanistan first (with the formation of Al Qaeda at the time by the CIA and Pakistani military intelligence), then the war in Bosnia and, more recently, in Iraq and Syria (the origin of Daesh terrorism). But the so called “People’s Republic of Donetz” is also recruiting fascist and ultranationalist Slav forces.

Logically, despite the Russian escalation and the mobilization of NATO troops and US armaments stationed in the Baltic republics, there is fortunately room for negotiation, but it will be difficult to reach a flexible solution when both sides have made the situation very tense and are starting from positions of political weakness and internal institutional instability.

From military follies to economic follies: on the “sanctions” threatened by Biden

Despite Biden’s and NATO’s aggressiveness, European powers are divided over what to do. While some countries such as France and Germany are very reluctant to engage in military deterrence, the subservient attitude of the “progressive” Spanish government is particularly pathetic. Logically, Germany is a key country in this scenario, as its economic vulnerability and energy dependence on Russia is enormous. Biden threatens never-before-seen sanctions, such as expelling Russia from the global SWIFT payments system or cutting the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, to which Putin responds by saying that this would mean the “complete severance of relations” with the US. If Russia, which has been deliberately raising the price of its gas exports to Europe as a geopolitical pressure measure for months, were to decide either to further escalate the price or to cut off supplies directly, we are talking about a drastic reduction in industrial activity and the

supply of electricity and heating to much of Central Europe with its consequent socio-economic impact, which would undoubtedly be dramatic. On the other hand, if Russia were to be expelled from the SWIFT system, the $56 billion in Western financial assets and 310 billion euros placed in Russian companies would most likely be severely jeopardized by an immediate targeting of the Russian response (in fact, even some Western officials also state that this is not realistic). There is no doubt that an energy, financial and trade war of this calibre would be lethal for a global economy dragging with it two years of pandemic and all the accumulated destabilizing effects of forty years of long wave of recession, financialization and neoliberal deregulation and, last but not least, it would favour further geo-economic and geopolitical rapprochement between Russia and China, the biggest nightmare imaginable for Washington strategists.

Uncertainties of the situation

US and British authorities are ordering their citizens to leave Ukraine, citing the danger of a Russian invasion of the country. These actions help to create a war psychosis and further strain the situation. However, Germany has vetoed the delivery of former GDR (East Germany) arms to Ukraine that some Baltic republics were seeking. British military flights carrying arms to Ukraine these days avoid flying over German territory. Paradoxically, the few sensible comments on the current situation come not from politicians or journalists, but from some military personnel: “The media are adding fuel to the fire of a conflict, I have the impression that nobody realizes what a war really means,” says General Harald Kujat, a former Bundeswehr inspector general. “It can’t be that we only talk about war instead of how to prevent war”.

The Russian political situation and Putin’s intentions

Russia, with a military budget equivalent to 3% of world military spending (let us not forget that we are talking about the world’s second largest conventional army, land forces on a par with those of the US and a nuclear arsenal almost equivalent to that of the US), is playing a very dangerous destabilizing game in a context of strategic division and internal crisis in NATO, which could provoke a very aggressive reaction from that military alliance. Contrary to the claims of the Cold War nostalgic left-wing campists who confuse Putin’s neo-Tsarist, oligarchic and nationalist policies – which have contributed to crushing genuine rebellions and popular revolutions in Syria, Belarus and Kazakhstan and to muzzle, repress and intimidate the democratic opposition and popular forces in the Russian Federation – with the revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist policies of Lenin, Russia’s foreign policy is undoubtedly reactionary.

Nowadays Russian society suffers massive poverty and inequality (even higher than the US). In fact, the “new architecture of the world” that Russia advocates is the old-style imperialism of the early 20th century, where the world is divided into “spheres of interests” of big powers and small countries are denied any right to control their own destiny. Russia’s main claim to America from this perspective is that it has built a “one sovereign” world (in Putin’s famous phrase) and is unwilling to share it with the rest of the global players.

However, for most of the Western media Putin and the “fearsome” Lavrov are the only villains in the film. But the truth is that, in the words of someone as unsuspicious of Bolshevik radicalism as Oskar Lafontaine, “there are many gangs of murderers in the world, but if we count the deaths they cause, Washington’s criminal gang is the worst”. What the

Russian people needs is détente, a chance to develop a democratic and popular opposition capable of fracturing the fragile alliance between post-Stalinist bureaucracy and mafia oligarchy that forms the basis of the authoritarian regime embodied by Putin, of defusing the nationalist hysteria that binds this reactionary bloc together, and of relaunching the demands of youth, women and the toiling classes in an internationalist key.

What can we expect?

That Russia is going to "invade Ukraine", occupying the whole country, is completely out of the question. In the streets of Budapest, traces of the Soviet occupation of 1956 can still be seen today. What happened then in Hungary would be child's play compared to what would happen in Ukraine today.

What is much more likely is that Putin will install "tactical" nuclear missiles in Belarus, Kaliningrad and other nearby territories. Nor can the possibility of an annexation of the Donbass be excluded. The current rising oil and gas prices, and the expectation that they will continue to rise, could allow the Kremlin to cover the economic costs of such operations. And, although less likely and much riskier – and certainly much bloodier – a Russian military operation to seize the area south of Donbass (Mariupol) in order to organize a security belt in a south-westerly direction and connect two rebel areas with the Crimean peninsula cannot be ruled out either.

The tasks of revolutionary, pacifist and democratic forces in Europe and the world

The current developments are serious and extremely dangerous for peace in Europe. As we know, in situations of maximum

tension no actor has absolute control over events and any accident can trigger uncontrollable situations. An international mobilization is urgently needed to lay the foundations for a global anti-militarist and anti-nuclear offensive. Tensions in the Asia-Pacific area are also linked to the ongoing escalation in Ukraine and imperialist temptations in times of economic, social and institutional crisis of the great powers are particularly dangerous. For all these reasons, we call on political, social, associative, national, regional and international organizations to seek major international mobilization occasions to link up again with the internationalist and solidarity impulse of the left.

Let's organize the mobilization for de-escalation, peace, the dissolution of the blocs and the self-determination of the peoples!

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

30 January 2022

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See also: **Ukraine: for peace and de-escalation – Statement of the Russian Socialist Movement** **30 January 2022** [The Russian Socialist Movement (RSD) is an organization of the radical left in which members of the Fourth International in Russia are active.]

