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U.S. imperialism unleashes global war on workers

written by Sharon Black
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Protest against U.S./NATO intervention in Ukraine at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, Feb. 9.

Time to declare war on capitalism

March 10 - One only has to look at who immediately benefits from the war.

As we write, oil and gas billionaires in Texas are clinking their champagne glasses. They are giddy over the price-gouging on gas and oil and the resulting avalanche of profits lining their pockets.

Ditto for the U.S. arms dealers, who drool over the destruction of weapons stockpiles and the rise in their stock prices.

The same is true on the political side.

Biden's State of the Union address before Congress turned into a frenzied war party, including the shameful chanting of "Fund, fund, fund the police" – their bipartisan answer to the Black Lives Matter movement's call for defunding murderous police departments across the country.

And while they weep in their media about the tragic deaths of workers and misery of refugees in Ukraine, not a word was said about the 14,000 people murdered by Ukraine in the Donbass region since the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup, let alone the rest of the world.

But be assured that through their manufactured tears, they are finding time to celebrate, regardless of how many lives are lost.

Of course, this global war is not a brand new development. Ask the people of Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Western Sahara, the Philippines and others who have suffered bombings, sanctions, destruction and death at the hands of the U.S. and the Pentagon – either directly or through proxies.

Sanctions have choked and strangled workers and children in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea and dozens of other countries.

But the capitalist celebration may turn out to be short-lived.

This is not the same U.S. imperialism that emerged triumphant from the Second World War, but rather an imperialism with a contracting capitalist economy that faces a new world situation. The potential for this war to become broader should not

be lost on anyone. And the onus must be placed at the feet of the U.S. rulers.

What is celebrated today, in an economy marked by runaway inflation, may usher in a more significant global capitalist recession. There is a tipping point where sanctions will become deleterious to Western capitalism, especially if they strengthen the relations between those struggling against the stranglehold of the U.S. dollar on the world market.

Today may become a turning point for imperialism and the world's working class.

Lessons of Iraq War forgotten

As for the mainstream anti-war movement, it has forgotten the lessons of the Iraq War.

When the first Gulf War started in 1990-1991, with its attendant lies and demonizations, the anti-war movement was split. Significant sections called for "sanctions, not bombs," wanting to distance themselves from the embattled Iraqi government.

It turned out that as murderous as U.S. missile strikes were, more people died from the decade of sanctions that followed, designed to bring the Iraqi people to their knees. It would take a more expansive and continuing war, fueled by the lies of "weapons of mass destruction," to ultimately accomplish that.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was labeled a devil, as one lie after the other mounted to justify murderous U.S. bombings and the use of depleted uranium weapons.

This writer clearly remembers speaking at a debate against the Gulf War organized by Congressperson Kweisi Mfume, who at that time was a TV host. Mfume supported the war.

In the adjoining room sat a member of the royal family of Kuwait, who was being prepared to go on in a separate broadcast to build up the false narrative of herself as a nurse who witnessed Iraqi troops turning over baby incubators and throwing babies on the floor.

There are similarities but also important differences between that war and the current one.

The imperialists' goal is to plunder Russia's vast resources, just like in Iraq. They were happy, even if briefly, when Boris Yelstin was doing their bidding in the 1990s, selling off Soviet assets and restoring capitalism. But it soon became apparent that the capitalist West had no intention to allow another competitor into its ranks; rather they viewed Russia's oil, gas and mineral resources as loot and Russia as a vassal state.

President Vladimir Putin, who followed Yelstin, represented a block to these plans in the same way that Saddam Hussein did in Iraq, regardless of the capitalist character of Russia.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established as a military alliance to contain and threaten the Soviet Union. So why wasn't it dismantled after the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic and other Warsaw Pact countries? Instead, NATO has grown and grown.

But there are also significant differences between Iraq and Russia. Russia has a population of 144 million people. Its landmass is close to 40 times larger than Iraq. Most importantly, it inherited nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union and has developed formidable defenses.

Without these differences, the Russian Federation would likely have already shared the fate of Libya and Iraq.

(For more, see [“Is Russia imperialist?”](#) by Gary Wilson.)

War is continuation of politics by other means

Imperialism forces other countries to defend their borders. Russia not only shares a border in Eastern Europe with Ukraine, but it also shares an extensive 2,615-mile border with China.

These facts are not lost on the People’s Republic of China. To weaken Russia, potentially overthrow Putin, in the guise of putting in a more “democratic regime” (meaning friendly to the West), would place China in an untenable military situation.

This also cannot be divorced from the Sept. 15, 2021, trilateral security agreement between the U.S., Britain and Australia, referred to as AUKUS, which included the delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia. It undercut a deal worth \$90 billion for France. So much for Washington’s NATO allies!

At the same time, the United States Africa Command, AFRICOM, was busy involving itself in coups from Mali to Guinea and, more recently, Burkina Faso. Flooding the continent with billions of dollars in military hardware and training through AFRICOM is U.S. imperialism’s answer to China’s “Belt and Road Initiative,” which has taken up building needed infrastructure in Africa.

All of this speaks to the global nature of U.S. imperialism’s war in Ukraine. It is aimed not just at Russia and Donbass but at China, Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua and any people on any continent struggling to determine their destiny for themselves.

The unintended consequence is that this may strengthen the ties between China, Russia, Iran and others. This is of no concern in the myopic vision of the imperialist rulers, who are driven by the inner workings of their own capitalist system to expand

or die.

Fascism, Russia and Ukraine

It is an error to forget the history of fascism and the Nazi advance into the Soviet Union.

Hitler's war – World War II – is etched into the psyche of the Russian people and all former Soviet peoples. The Soviet Union was left to bear the brunt of the German invasion. Hitler's forces were not only bent on exterminating Jews, Roma people and queer people, but also communists and leftists. It was aimed straight at the heart of the fledgling Soviet socialist revolution.

The heroic resistance and sacrifices of the Russian people and their partisan communist allies are undeniable. There is not a single person in Russia today who does not have members of their family tree who died in the fight to stop the Nazis.

The Soviet Union bore the brunt of casualties – over 15% of the population. Belarus lost over a quarter of its people. It's estimated that over 27 million Soviet people lost their lives.

The United States is at the very bottom in terms of World War II casualties. Seldom mentioned is that China lost over 20 million people, far exceeding U.S. losses.

The sympathy of the Russian people for the people of the Donbass republics, Odessa and others repressed inside Ukraine is not contrived but deeply felt. And the mass pressure on Putin on this issue should not be shoved aside.

It is a form of cynical, opportunist intellectualism for some who call themselves anti-imperialists or anti-war to dismiss the fascist threat inside Ukraine. One does not even have to go back to 2014, despite that being a mere eight years.

Days ago, on March 2, the U.S. puppet and created folk hero Zelensky named the fascist [Aidar Battalion's commander](#) governor of Odessa. Odessa is home to one of Ukraine's historic Jewish communities.

One month before Russia's intervention, the U.S. sent a specially-equipped satellite phone to allow Zelensky direct access to President Biden and, by extension, the Pentagon. He is receiving orders directly from Washington.

Why this is completely glossed over by so many is startling.

Even the shameful, racist sight of African and Indian medical students being blocked and abused by Ukrainians at the border did not stir the kind of protests it should have.

It should indeed serve as a lesson to those inside the U.S. who vehemently opposed the Jan. 6, 2021, white-supremacist coup attempt in Washington, D.C. The Democratic Party that has no problem quietly and not-so-quietly cozying up to neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine can hardly be depended on to dismantle them at home.

Imperialist-installed dictators and their murderous policies in oppressed countries, the growth of the repressive state apparatuses (the police and military, courts and prisons), including in the U.S., and the growth of neo-Nazi movements internationally, are all intertwined.

Ukrainian fascism, which is not only neo-Nazi but shares a lineage with the original Nazi movement through Stepan Bandera, is real and dangerous.

Lenin and Second International

In the early years of the 20th century leading up to World War I, the socialist and communist workers' movement, which was strong in Europe, was staunchly anti-war.

But when war was actually declared, it collapsed.

The political agreements and resolutions for comrades to oppose their imperialist governments dissolved under the war fever and patriotic jingoism. Those who did oppose it were jailed, killed or forced into exile.

But V.I. Lenin and his co-thinkers refused to capitulate. These political battles prepared the Bolshevik communist party for the 1917 socialist revolution under the banner of “Land, bread and peace.”

Lenin’s slogan, “Turn the imperialist war into civil war,” originated during this period.

It was not an abstract slogan, but rather a pragmatic preparation for 1917. Without that preparation, the Bolshevik Revolution likely would not have succeeded.

On this International Working Women’s Day, it’s essential to recognize Clara Zetkin, its founder, and Rosa Luxemburg. They played critical roles along with Lenin in opposing the capitulation of the social democrats.

Both were theoretical leaders in their own right. Zetkin later became a fighter against the rise of Nazism, and Rosa Luxemburg and her comrade Karl Liebknecht were executed during an uprising of German workers. Their heroism is etched in history.

It is critical for today’s movement to go over this history. We refer readers to the article “[Lenin: How to Oppose an Unjust War](#),” Lenin’s pamphlet “[Socialism and War](#),” and Sam Marcy’s book “[The Bolsheviks and War: Lessons for today’s anti-war movement](#).”

U.S. war on world’s people

This is not a Russian war on Ukraine – or even a war by the fascist-sympathizing oligarchs of Ukraine – but a war by U.S. imperialism on the world’s working class.

We dream of a world where people can lay down their swords and where borders separating humanity will dissolve. This can and will happen.

But it will take the dismantling of imperialism and capitalism and the building of revolutionary socialism to make that dream a reality.

Today’s first but essential step is to stand up to U.S. imperialism!

