

‘Revolutionary Marxists look below surface’ to understand war crisis

written by Greg Butterfield

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On March 30, Ukrainian forces barraged the Kirovskiy district of Donetsk, partially destroying a nine-story apartment complex. One person was killed and at least four were seriously wounded. Ukraine's war of the Donbass republics has continued for eight years at the cost of more than 14,000 lives.

Presentation by Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield on behalf of the Socialist Unity Party at the international online forum "[Marxists Speak Out on the Conflict Between Russia and Imperialism](#)" on March 26. The event featured representatives of communist and socialist organizations based in Argentina, Australia, Britain, Greece, South Korea, Turkey, the U.S. and more.

I want to thank the organizers for inviting us to participate in this important event.

There are turning points in history where the principles of organizations and individuals are tested and clarified. This is one of those moments. In the past month we have seen so many anti-war and left formations bow to the intense pressure of imperialist propaganda at the expense of anti-imperialism and the interests of the workers and oppressed.

The other side is that the war crisis is separating the wheat from the chaff. Leaders and organizations that have coasted through recent years on past accomplishments are now forced to show where they really stand. At the same time, groups separated by historical differences and secondary issues may now find a new basis to work together and learn from each other.

The Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper call for the [victory of the Donbass republics and Russia](#) in their defensive joint military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine. What this really means is: to end the eight-year genocidal war against the people of Donbass; to remove the neo-Nazi bootheel from the neck of the Ukrainian people; to reverse Ukraine's transformation into a NATO war base that poses a threat to Russia; and return it to the formally neutral status before the

U.S.-backed coup of 2014.

We call for the defeat of U.S. imperialism, which instigated this war and is a combatant as surely as it is in Yemen or anywhere else Washington's proxy wars are carried out. After this week's NATO summit, the imperialists are moving closer to direct intervention, which could precipitate an unprecedented global war.

We believe it is very important to elevate the struggle of the people of the Donbass region, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Too often their struggle is ignored by the left or, following the lead of the corporate media, written off merely as "Russian separatists" or "Putin's proxies." Such a view can only be argued by people who are completely ignorant of the Donbass and the anti-fascist struggle of the people there for the last eight years, or by those who know better but are adapting their views to the needs of imperialism.

The people of Donbass have resisted through eight years of constant terror by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and neo-Nazi battalions, and a blockade that has deprived the people of food, medicine and the essentials needed for the maintenance of basic industry. This resistance draws upon the deep traditions of internationalism and anti-fascism of the Soviet people and it found an echo among people in Russia.

Marxist view of Russia's contradictions

Revolutionary Marxists look below the surface to understand the class forces and contradictions at work. Those who focus on President Vladimir Putin's and Russian capitalists' reactionary ideology ignore the dialectical relationship between Russia's struggle to maintain its sovereignty against the U.S. and NATO, and the anti-fascist struggle in Donbass and Ukraine.

The same dynamic exists on a global scale. Looking at it purely on the surface level of Putin's domestic pronouncements, you could come to the conclusion that there's

little difference from Bolsonaro in Brazil or Modi in India, whose ruling classes are fundamentally subservient to the U.S. But the life-and-death struggle of Russia to not be dissected and swallowed by Western imperialism has pushed it into the camp of countries and movements resisting U.S. imperialism, including Venezuela, Cuba, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Syria, Yemen and Iran.

With our modest forces and resources, we are doing what we can to clarify the issues and bring a genuine anti-war position to the working class. We have launched a campaign called "[Stop the War Lies](#)," aimed at exposing the U.S.-NATO role in Ukraine and imperialism's cozy relationship with Ukrainian fascists, educating about the cause of Donbass, and explaining how Wall Street, Big Oil and the military industry profit from the war at the expense of people here.

We and allied groups have been getting out into communities with fact sheets, holding picket lines and speak-outs. Last night, our comrades in Baltimore held a rush hour banner drop and leafleting action. Today folks in New Orleans and San Diego are doing community outreach. Next weekend, on April 2, we are building protests in New York and Los Angeles.

On March 27, we will hold a webinar featuring speakers from the Donbass republics, to help inform the anti-war movement and the left about the reality of the U.S.-Ukraine war.

We invite the organizations here to join this effort. We are open to collaborating with groups here in the U.S. and internationally. This is the moment to overcome secondary differences and build a united front against imperialism and war that can lay the foundation for future revolutionary struggles.

Victory to the Donbass republics and their allies! U.S.-NATO out of Ukraine!



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