

The vast international network in charge of Ukrainian war propaganda

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 31, 2022



The key to the propaganda work lies in an international legion of public relations firms working directly with the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry. Photo: Military Times

29 March 2022

Translated by Walter Lippmann for CubaNews.

Since the Russian offensive inside Ukraine began on February 24, the Ukrainian military has cultivated an image of a small brave army facing the Russian Goliath. To bolster the perception of Ukraine's military mettle, Kyiv has

produced a steady stream of sophisticated propaganda aimed at stirring up public and official support from Western countries.

The campaign includes language guides, key messages and hundreds of propaganda posters, some of which contain fascist images and even praise neo-Nazi leaders.

Behind Ukraine's public relations efforts is an army of foreign policy strategists, Washington, D.C., lobbyists and a network of intelligence-linked news outlets.

Ukraine's propaganda strategy earned praise from a NATO commander who told the Washington Post: "They are really excellent at strategic communication: media, information operations and also psychological operations." The Post finally admitted that "Western authorities say that while they cannot independently verify much of the information that Kyiv publishes about the evolving situation on the battlefield, including casualty figures on both sides, it nonetheless represents a strategy very effective communication.

The key to the propaganda work is an international legion of public relations firms working directly with the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to wage an information war.

According to industry news site PRWeek, the initiative was launched by an anonymous figure who allegedly founded a public relations firm based in Ukraine.

"From the first moment of the war, we decided to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to help them distribute the official sources to show the truth," the unnamed character told PRWeek. "This is a hybrid war: the mixture of bloody fighting with a huge campaign of disinformation and falsification led by Russia [sic]."

According to the anonymous, more than 150 public relations companies have joined the propaganda blitz (bombing).

The international initiative is spearheaded by the co-founder of the public relations company PR Network, Nicky Regazzoni, and Francis Ingham, a leading public relations consultant with close ties to the UK government. Ingham previously worked with the British Conservative Party, sits on the UK Government's Communication Service Strategy and Evaluation Council, is the chief executive of the International Organization for Communication Consulting, and heads the body of communicators affiliated with local governments. of the UK, LG Comms.

"We have had the privilege of helping to coordinate support efforts for the Ukrainian government in recent days," Ingham told PRovoke Media. "The agencies have offered entire teams to support Kyiv in the communication war. Our support for the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry is unwavering and will continue as long as necessary."

With an anonymous Ukrainian figure joining two major PR figures in the Kyiv government's propaganda blitz, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry distributed an (archived) dossier of materials instructing PR agencies on "key messages," language approved, the content of discredited propaganda constructs, far-right and neo-Nazi propaganda.

The portfolio is managed by Yaroslav Turbil, described on his LinkedIn page as "Director of Ukraine.ua, Ukraine's digital ecosystem for global communications. Strategic communication and promotion of the country brand. Turbil has worked in multiple "civil society" organizations closely linked to the US government and was an intern at Internews, an organization linked to US intelligence that operates under the guise of promoting press freedom.



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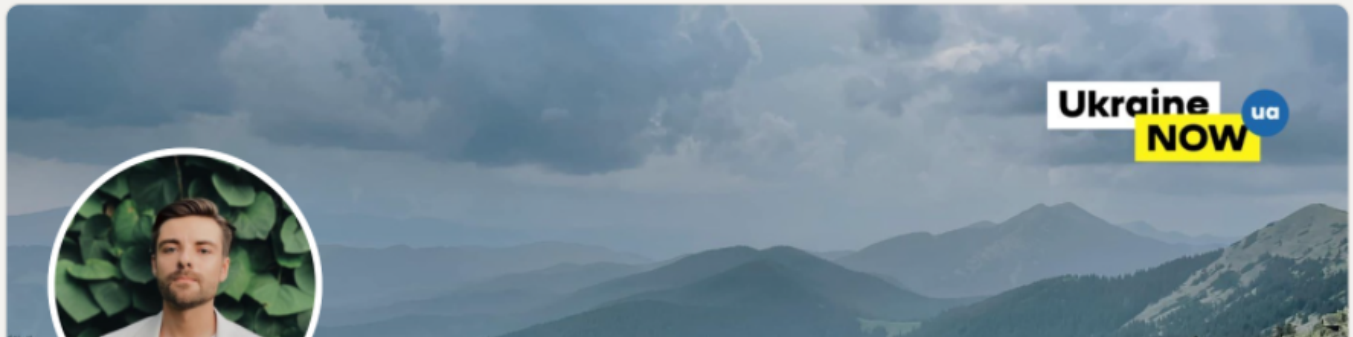
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Messaging



Yaroslav Turbil

Head of Ukraine.ua — Ukraine's digital ecosystem for global communications. Strategic Communications & Country Brand Promotion.

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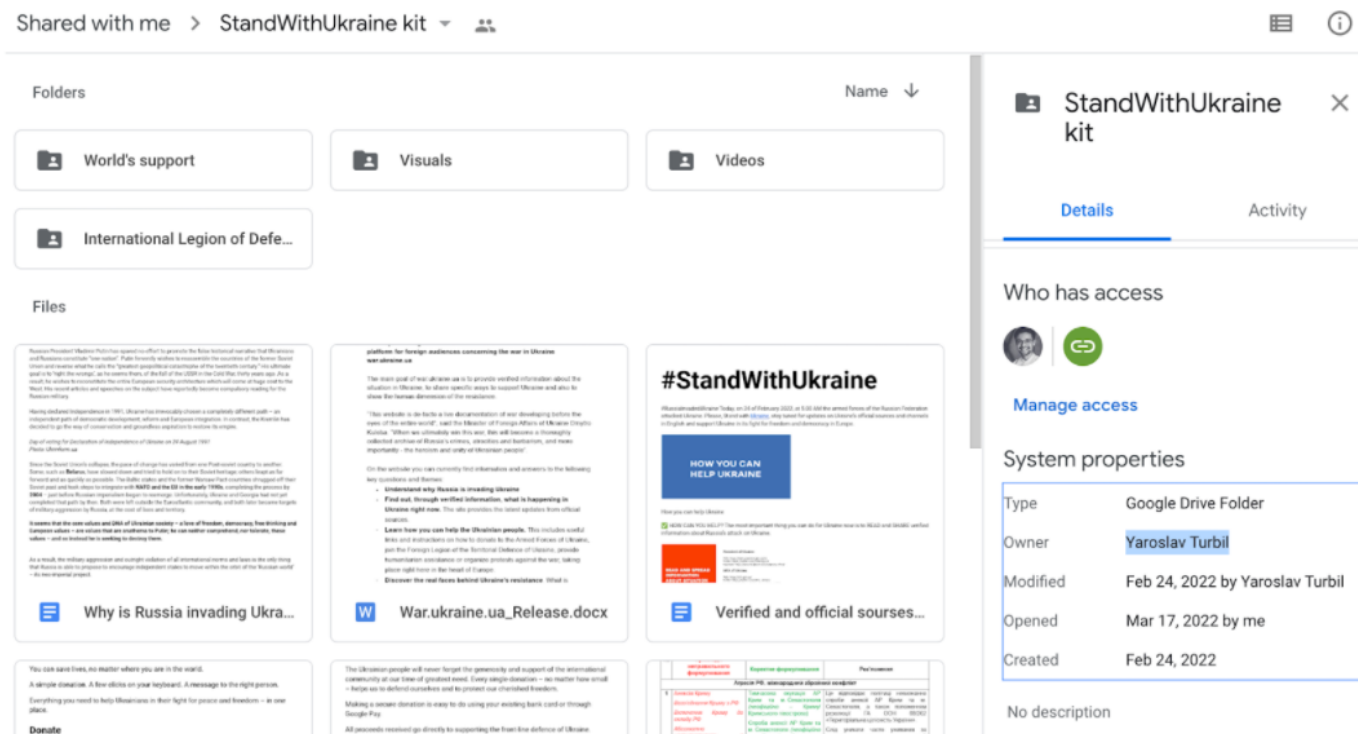
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The Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Ukraine



Taras Shevchenko National
University of Kyiv



Among the propaganda constructs distributed in the dossier is a video of the Snake Island incident, which was quickly proven to be false, in which it was reported that border guards stationed on a small island had been killed after telling a ship Russian warfighter “F***se” as he approached and asked them to surrender. President Zelensky held a press conference announcing that he would award the men the Hero of Ukraine medal as the story spread through the mainstream media. However, the supposedly dead soldiers quickly turned up alive and well, proving their heroic stance to be a farce.

Although the story was proven false, the dossier contains a propaganda video promoting it.

Another folder in the dossier is by Ukrainian graphic artist Dasha Podoltseva, with an MFA, and contains hundreds of propaganda graphics submitted by artists in Europe and the United States.

Some contain generic “no war” messages, while dozens of other images celebrate the “Ghost of kyiv,” a heroic Ukrainian pilot who turned out to be non-existent, and the fake “Snake Island 13” incident.

Many use xenophobic and racist language, and others are explicit in their praise of prominent Ukrainian neo-Nazi figures, including C14 leader Yevhen Karas, the fascist Right Sector paramilitary, and the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion. Several images call for “flag shakes”, a reference to the Molotov cocktails named after the late commander of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists Stepán Bandera, who collaborated with Nazi Germany in the mass slaughter of ethnic Jews and Poles during World War II. . Another image shows a book titled Encyclopedia of Incurable Diseases, mentioning Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Syria and Eritrea.



It says: "Ritual services."



It says: “Flag shake for Putin’s friends.”

Foreign extremists flock to Ukraine

The dossier also contains a link to a Foreign Ministry page called “Fight for Ukraine,” which provides instructions to foreigners who want to join Ukraine’s neo-Nazi-infested armed forces, dubbed the “Ukrainian International Defense Legion.”

Following Zelensky's call for foreign fighters to form a brigade, fighters from around the world, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Spain, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, among others, have traveled to confront Russian forces. . Others with no combat training or experience have come for "war tourism," referred to by one British soldier as "bullet hunters."



Recruitment charts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine extracted from the dossier.



Recruitment graph of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine extracted from the dossier.

While the Ukrainian government says tens of thousands have responded to the call, some analysts have cast doubt on those numbers, calling them a “public relations exercise.”

However, foreigners who have traveled to Ukraine have found a much more serious reality than anticipated.

The Russian air force bombs military installations are adjacent to where foreign fighters sleep. Having fled to neighboring Poland, a Spanish fighter described the bombardment as a “message” that may have killed thousands.

Similarly, an American fighter who hid in an ambulance to escape from the front line warned that Ukrainian authorities were killing foreigners who chose not to fight, calling it a trap.

Correct terms

A document within the dossier defines the accepted language on the conflict with Russia determined by the Ukrainian government.

“Such Russian clichés as ‘Crimean referendum’ or ‘the will of the Crimean people’ are absolutely unacceptable,” the document states, referring to the overwhelmingly successful 2014 referendum to secede from Ukraine.

The document considers unacceptable the terms “civil war in Donbas”, “internal conflict”, “conflict in Ukraine” and “Ukrainian crisis” to describe the war of the Ukrainian army with the secessionist republics of the Donbas region. This is despite the fact that the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that 14,200 people, including 3,404 civilians, have been killed in combat in Ukraine since 2014.

Instead of these phrases, the document asks to use the terms “armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donbas, international armed conflict, Russian war against Ukraine, Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict”.

		<p>над територією однієї держави до іншої), анексія як міжнародно-протиправне діяння має інші правові наслідки і пов'язана із зміною суверенітету (належності) над відповідною територією.</p> <p>В офіційних документах і виступах США фігурує формулювання «спроба анексії». ЄС, у свою чергу, використовує менш прийнятний, ніж «окупація» чи «спроба анексії», проте допустимий для України термін - «незаконна анексія».</p> <p>Водночас закріплення терміну «анексія» за злочинними діяннями РФ, наслідком яких стала окупація Кримського півострова, може також трактуватися як <i>де факто</i> визнання односторонніх дій РФ з приєднання окупованої території України, що, однак, є окремим грубим порушенням міжнародного права, яке не тягне за собою жодних правових наслідків у контексті територіальних змін.</p> <p>Виходимо з того, що на АРК та м. Севастополь як на окуповану територію поширюється міжнародно-правовий режим окупації відповідно до Гаазької конвенції про закони та звичаї війни на суходолі 1907 року, а також звичаєві норми міжнародного гуманітарного права.</p>
<p>Annexation of Crimea</p> <p>Reunification of Crimea with Russia</p> <p>Such Russian clichés like "referendum in Crimea" or "will of the people of Crimea" are absolutely unacceptable</p>	<p>Temporary occupation of the territory of Ukraine – the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol</p> <p>(informal: occupied Crimea, occupied Crimean Peninsula)</p> <p>Clichés like "attempted annexation of Crimea" or "occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea" can be used to emphasize the gravity of the internationally wrongful act committed by the Russian Federation</p>	

Key messages

Another document titled "Key Messages" contains specific propaganda claims that were widely reported in the mainstream Western media, but have since been debunked. One section states that "The whole of Europe was on the verge of nuclear disaster, when Russian troops began to bomb the largest nuclear plant in Zaporizhia."

However, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said that the building hit by a Russian "projectile" at the Zaporizhia plant "was not part of the reactor" but was a training center. Russian troops also let

Ukrainian workers continue to operate the plant.

Another section thanks Turkey for the decision to “block the access of Russian warships to the Black Sea.”

However, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan closed the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits to all military vessels, preventing NATO and Russian ships from accessing the Black Sea.

Among the document’s key messages is a statement of appreciation for the “anti-war demonstrations held by citizens of many nations throughout the world who show strong support for Ukraine in its defense against Russia.”

He is referring to large pro-Ukrainian demonstrations in Europe that have exposed calls for no-fly zones over Ukraine and shooting down Russian military aircraft, potentially transforming the conflict into a global war between nuclear powers.

KEY MESSAGES ON RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

as of 11.00, 22 March
(27th day of war)

1. WAR SITUATION

The **Russian troops** continue simultaneously (albeit with different intensity) **attacking Ukraine** from the territory of **Russia, Belarus** and the temporarily occupied parts of Ukraine's **Donetsk, Luhansk** regions and **Crimea**. This is a full-scale **war against Ukraine (international armed conflict)**, **launched by Russia**, not a "conflict in Ukraine". **Proper wording** is critical. While highlighting the situation in Ukraine, a clear **reference** must always be done to **Russia as an aggressor**. **We protect the entire Europe**, not only ourselves, as Putin will not stop in Ukraine:

- The **main directions of Russia's invasion** remain **Kyiv, Kharkiv, southern regions of Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk regions**;
- Russia fired nearly 1000 **missiles** at residential areas and military positions, attacks with **aviation** (1403 airstrikes as of 19 March), **tanks and artillery**, and sends **subversion and reconnaissance groups**. Ukraine became a testing ground for Russian missiles of different types;
- Russian **warships** shell the coast line. Ukraine's coast of the Azov Sea now is temporarily blocked by Russia. **Amphibious landing** to the Odesa region remains possible;
- **Russia has significant air advantage**, which it actively uses by **attacking military positions and civilian objects and infrastructure**, **killing dozens of civilians daily**, **bombing Ukrainian airports**. We urgently need the **no-flight zone**, or **air defense systems and fighter planes**. This would significantly accelerate the end of war;
- **Several towns** were temporarily **occupied** (including Kherson and Melitopol). Some are **attacked and besieged** on the ground, with **severe damage to residential areas** and **numerous casualties among civilians** (Kharkiv, Mariupol, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Chernihiv);
- **As of March 21, 2022, the estimated total area of hazardous territories of Ukraine to be demined is at least 82,525 km²**;
- Russia organizes **cyber attacks** and **fake news campaigns** aimed to sow panic in Ukrainian towns and cut off Ukrainian citizens from the official information sources;
- There are **no places left in Ukraine without an overt military threat**, be it shellings or infiltration of sabotage groups, members of which continue to be detained in all regions.

The territory of **Belarus** is actively **used by Russia for its military purposes**:

- **Missiles** are launched from the territory of Belarus, **airfield and rail networks** are used for transportation of Russian personnel, cargo and ammunition, **fuel** is supplied to the Russian troops on Ukrainian soil;

"Despite Russia's propaganda, there is no discrimination based on race or nationality, even when it comes to crossing the state border by foreign citizens," the document states.

However, numerous videos and news reports have documented the Ukrainian authorities preventing Africans from escaping the conflict. Even the *New York Times*, hardly a bastion of Kremlin propaganda, ran a report documenting these racist practices.

"If I were a Russian worried about the potential of Nazi extremists coming up with a dirty bomb, I'd need to take control of this very facility" – [@realscotttritter](https://twitter.com/realscotttritter)

deconstructs the Ukrainian nuclear plant takeover

With [@dancohen3000](#)

Full Interview: <https://t.co/KOMDd6018Y> pic.twitter.com/lpANwW2rt4

— MintPress News (@MintPressNews) [March 8, 2022](#)

One message says that “on March 16, Russian forces dropped a bomb on a theater where 1,300 civilians were sheltered. The number of victims is still unknown.”

But, as Max Blumenthal denounced, the explosion appears to be the result of a false flag operation engineered by the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion that sought to trigger a NATO intervention.

NATO-backed troll farms

Another anonymous investigation shows how Ukrainian PR firms have used ads to astroturf Russian internet and social media with messages calling to economically isolate Moscow and “stop the war.”

This work is led by Bezlepkin Evgeny Vitalievich, who uses the alias Evgeny Korolev, together with Pavel Antonov from the Targetorium organization. Under the pseudonym of him Korolev, the Ukrainian information warrior wrote a post on his (now private) Facebook page boasting that his company’s Facebook ads reached 30 million views in three days.

At the same time, **Facebook has blocked efforts by Russian state media channels to run ads and monetize their content.** Several fake media accounts like Russia 24 have sprung up, burying the real accounts under a series of imposters. Facebook has also called statements by Russian officials, including the

Defense Ministry, “false.”

This campaign has been denounced as being carried out under the recommendation of StopFake, a self-described “fact-checking” outlet that is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Atlantic Council, government ministries. UK and Czech Foreign Ministry and the International Renaissance Foundation, which is funded by billionaire George Soros’ Open Society Foundation.

StopFake was hired by Facebook in March 2020 to “stop the flow of Russian propaganda” but was founded to employ multiple characters closely linked to violent neo-Nazis. The journalist who co-wrote his exposé received death threats and eventually fled Ukraine.

These revelations have apparently not prevented Facebook from weaning itself from the organization’s censorship guidance.

Meanwhile, Russian hackers located a public Google document (since private, uploaded here) detailing the propaganda operation, which has been distributed on Telegram “creative farms” channels.

“Here you can find links to Ukrainian media outlets that need promotion, bot accounts with logins and passwords from which they sent users anti-war messages and messages with fakes about the Ministry of Defense, theses, and specific instructions on which posts and audiences embroider”, reads the investigation.

Another campaign is run by Nataliya Popovych, the founder of the One Philosophy public relations agency, in kyiv. Popovych’s LinkedIn profile shows that she has worked with the US State Department and was an adviser to former President Petro Poroshenko. She is also a co-founder and board member of the Ukraine Media Crisis Center, a propaganda arm funded by the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), the NED, the US Embassy and NATO. among many others.

A *Campaign Asia* article describes several public relations firms involved in the work. Among them is Richard Edelman, CEO of Edelman PR. Edelman is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Council and the World Economic Forum (or Davos Forum).

“Geopolitics has become the new test of trust. We saw it with the allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang and the war between Ukraine and Russia has only reinforced it,” he said, linking the US propaganda campaign around China’s campaign for the deradicalization of Uyghur Muslims. .

Public relations approved media

An article in *PRWeek* describes several personalities involved in what they describe as a “public relations army” that is “fighting on the frontlines” against Russia’s “savage genocide of Ukrainians.”

“Propaganda is the same as actual lethal weapons,” says Marta Dzhumaha, a public relations manager at the BetterMe healthcare company.

Julia Petryk, head of public relations for MacPaw, offers a list of approved outlets, written by her colleague Tetiana Bronistka, a former employee of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General’s Office. The list includes Russian and English language sources, as well as Telegram channels. However, these “verified sources objectively covering what is happening in Ukraine” are anything but independent. Most of them are connected to the US government, European governments and billionaire foundations.

Sources in English

- Vox
- BBC
- Politico
- The Washington Post
- Foreign Affairs
- The Economist
- CNN
- The Guardian

Telegram-channels

- NEXTA
- Медуза
- Медиазона
- Радио Свобода
- Дождь
- Журнал "Холод"
- Украинская Правда

We have selected for you a list of verified sources that objectively cover what is happening in Ukraine. Follow the links and draw your own conclusions.

Sources in Russian

- Новая Газета
- Новое Время
- Медуза
- Дождь
- Журнал "Холод"
- Медиазона
- Русская служба BBC
- Настоящее Время
- Цензор
- Зеркало Недели
- Эспрессо TV
- Солидарность (ВУ)
- 200RF

She also lists several Russian-language websites:

- Novaya Gazeta: Linked to and reportedly funded by the NED.
- Meduza: Funded by Latvia, the OAK Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorovsky, and Sweden.
- Dozhd: the SREDA foundation, the European Commission.
- Holod Media: Meduza affiliate and lauded on PBS and CNN as "independent media."
- He argued that Leningrad should have been handed over to the Nazis in World War II and has complained that they are called "fifth columns" because they were financed by Western powers.
- BBC Russia: British government outlet.
- Current Time TV: Created by the CIA-funded propaganda outlet Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in collaboration with Voice of America.
- Censor: Financed by its editor-in-chief Yuri Butusov, a former adviser to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense.
- 200RF – A Ukrainian Foreign Ministry website that claims to publish photos

and documents released from Russian soldiers captured and killed in action.

Among the Telegram channels included:

- Radio Svoboda: propaganda organ founded by the CIA Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.
- Espresso TV - Largely owned by the wife of former Ukrainian parliament member Mykola Knyazhytsky.
- Censor.net: Formerly the largest media site in Ukraine, whose motto is “Bring down Russia” and whose owner runs an “international troll parade”.

Intelligence operations

While PR firms distribute content, CIA cutouts and billionaire foundations run the media outlets from which they are derived. At the center of this operation is a project called Russian Language News Exchange which was a product of a network of opposition media outlets founded in 2016 operating in post-Soviet countries, as revealed by an investigation by the Russian media agency RIA FAN.

In July 2021, a group of journalists flew to Warsaw for media training after being exempted from coronavirus-related restrictions and quarantine orders by Poland’s top medical authorities.

Among the six journalists were Andrey Lipsky, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Novaya Gazeta, and Yuliia Fediv, CEO of Hromadske TV Media, one of the most-watched networks in Ukraine.

Hromadske’s financial reports show that it is funded by numerous governments and foundations, including the US Embassy in Ukraine, the Danish Foreign Ministry, the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency, the European Fund for Democracy, and Free Press Unlimited. . Silicon Valley billionaire Pierre Omidary was also involved in the creation of the medium.

Hromadske recently featured a commentator calling for the genocide of ethnic Russians in the Donbass, saying it was populated by 1.5 million “superfluous” people who “must be exterminated.”

The training, held behind closed doors from July 19-21, was titled “Media Network 2021+” and was closely linked to Mediaset, also known as the Russian Language News Exchange, a network founded in 2015. The Russian Language News website Exchange is miserable, with little information available on its activities, apparently carried out in private since the publication of the RIA FAN investigation.

While claiming to be independent, Russian Language News Exchange is a project of Free Press Unlimited, funded by the Dutch government and the European Commission.

It currently includes 14 media outlets that act as “nodes”, republishing each other’s articles on their platforms in various countries.

The website’s introductory video is hosted by Maxim Eristavi, a former Radio Free Europe reporter and founder of Hromadske. He today directs the Millennium Leadership Program at the NATO think tank and is supported by the arms industry, the Atlantic Council.

Since its creation, Mediaset has coordinated between media outlets in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. In March 2021, Mediaset expanded with the Colab Media Project, created through Free Press Unlimited’s Viable Media for Empowered Societies (VIMES) program. This program created a training program for journalists and sought articles from the Salvadoran outlet El Faro published in Euroradio (Belarus), Coda (Georgia) and Ziarul de Garda (Moldova).

On March 4, several days after Russia launched its military offensive, a new project

called Media Lifeline Ukraine was created.

The next day, Free Press Unlimited held an emergency conference for Ukraine hosted by co-founders Maxim Eristavi and Nataliya Gumenyuk. The meeting asked to raise 2 million euros for the project. “Only with continued external support, local media entities will be able to continue doing their job,” states its introductory page.

Days later, Free Press Unlimited announced a partnership to support a new joint project by Reporters Without Borders and its Ukrainian partner, the Institute for Mass Information, called The Lviv Press Freedom Center.). The Institute for Mass Information is headed by USAID Communications Officer Oksana Romaniuk and funded by USAID and the UK government.

Washington, D.C., lobbyists distract attention

While public relations firms and intelligence-related propaganda operations target society, Washington DC lobbyists are agitating in Congress to prolong the war in Ukraine.

Daniel Vajdich, a registered foreign agent and lobbyist for the Ukrainian Federation of Oil and Gas Industry Entrepreneurs, the largest in Ukraine, is working on behalf of Volodymyr Zelensky to lobby members of Congress to approve sending more weapons to Ukraine. He is now the director of Yorktown Solutions, previously advised the Ted Cruz and Scott Walker campaigns, and is a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

“Stingers, Javelins [U.S.-made missiles], and we solve the issue of fighter jets,” he told Politico, alleging that Russia is trying to carry out “genocide” and “depopulate certain areas of Ukraine.”

Vajdich also wrote Zelensky’s March 16 speech to the US Congress, in which he quoted Martin Luther King Jr.’s expression “I Have a Dream” to call for a no-fly zone

over Ukraine.

Ukrainian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Sergiy Kyslytsya's February 23 speech at the UN General Assembly was written by the general director of the capital's lobbying company SKDKnickerbocker, Stephen Krupin, a prominent former speechwriter of the President Barack Obama who worked hard on the 2020 Biden campaign.

Foremost among registered lobbyists promoting Ukrainian government and business interests is Andrew Mac, who also helped write Zelensky's speech to Congress. Mac registered as a lobbyist for Zelensky in 2019 and runs the Washington DC office of the Ukrainian law firm Asters Law.

The lobbying firm Your Global Strategy, founded by Shai Franklin, which has been affiliated with numerous Zionist organizations including the World Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League, is also using its influence with local officials in the United States. Franklin has arranged meetings between Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov and US mayors, including Eric Adams in New York, Michelle Wu in Boston and Lori Lightfoot in Chicago. She is also trying to organize a meeting between US officials and the mayors of Odessa and Kyiv. A media outlet owned by the wife of the mayor of kyiv recently linked a presenter calling for genocide against Russians, starting with children.

Franklin said he is working with the administration of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to help organize virtual meetings between the mayors of Odessa and Kyiv and their American counterparts.

Maryland-based attorney Lukas Jan Kaczmarek is also working on behalf of the Ukrainian Defense Minister to increase US arms shipments, specifically trying to arrange arms shipments from Cocoa, Florida-based Kel-Tec CNC Industries to the city of Odessa, Ukraine.

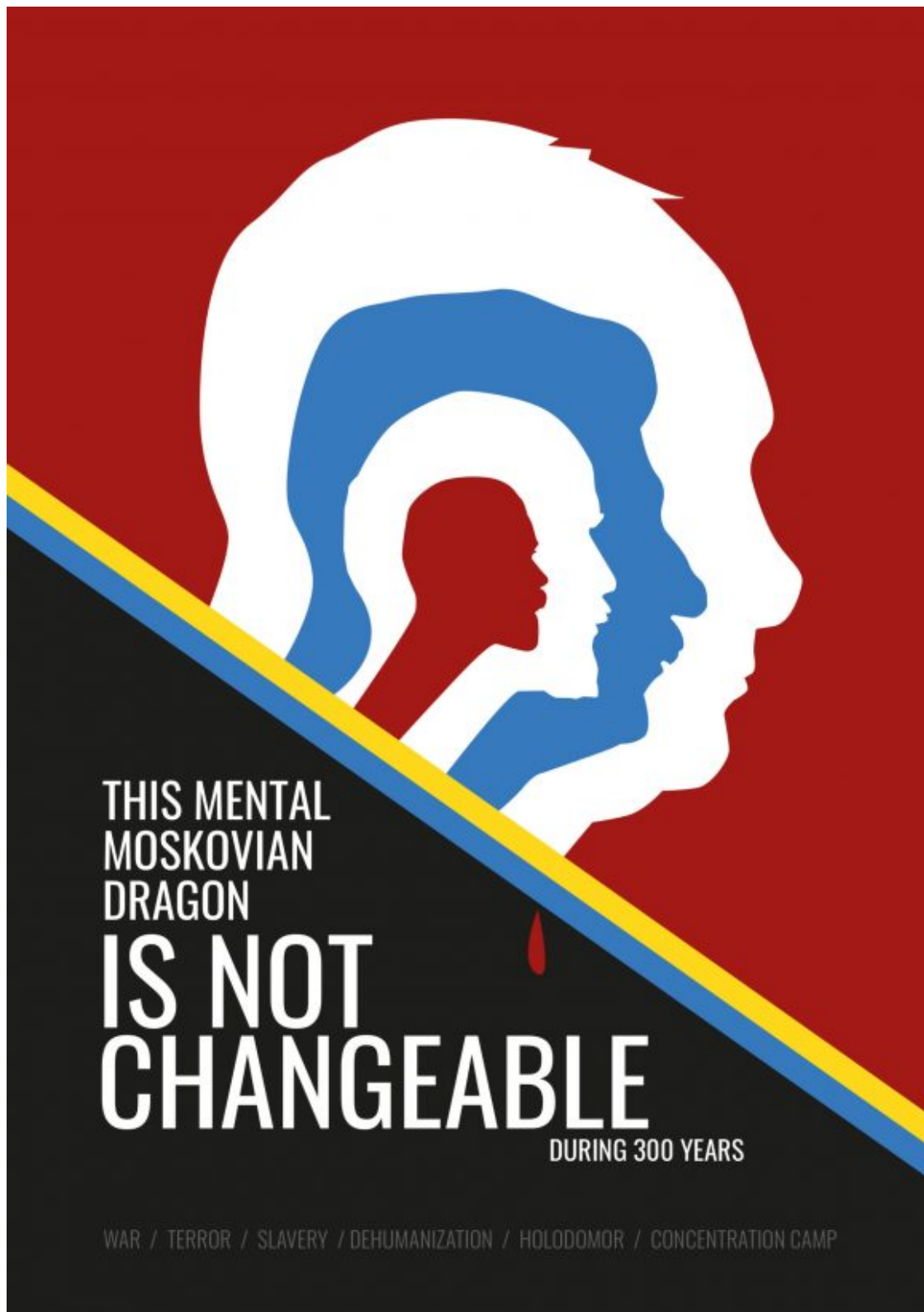
Former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul described the network of PR professionals and lobbyists surrounding Zelensky. “These are people who surround Mr. Zelensky, who are like intermediaries and interlocutors. They have been interacting with American elites and media for a long time,” he said.

McFaul and John E. Herbst, a former US ambassador to Ukraine and director of the Atlantic Council’s Eurasia Center, act as informal advisers to Zelensky. McFaul told Politico that he speaks with Ukrainian government officials “probably every day” and that he “has helped them establish contacts with producers on NBC or MSNBC.”

McFaul recently told MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow that “Hitler did not kill German-speaking people,” facing accusations of being a Holocaust denier.

Zelensky also had a “strategic video call” with McFaul before speaking to House Democrats.

With a powerful Russian army fighting alongside forces from the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics, defeat for the Ukrainian military appears imminent unless the US and NATO confront Russian forces directly, a scenario President Biden has already ruled out. . Still, lobbyists persist in their campaign to portray the Ukrainian military as helpless, dealing blow after blow against the Russian hordes. By doing so, they help prolong the war and continue the carnage.



Graphic calling Tsar Nicholas, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Putin incarnations of the same “Moskavian Mental Dragon”

КНИГА СПРАВОЧНИК

НЕИЗЛЕЧИМЫЕ ЗАБОЛЕВАНИЯ



Россия
Беларусь
Северная Корея
Сирия
Эритрея

ПО ДАННЫМ ООН 2022

“The Encyclopedia of Incurable Diseases”: Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Syria, Eritrea



It says: "Democracy is a weapon"



"I love NLAW" – Next Generation Light Anti-tank Weapon, provided by Western

governments to the Ukrainian military.

(Taken from [Mission Verdad](#))

Source: [CubaDebate](#)



Working class in Greece protests docking of French battleship in its port

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 31, 2022

On Thursday, March 24, a demonstration was organized at the Piraeus port region of Athens, protesting the docking of the French battleship Charles De Gaulle at the port. The rally was called by the Greek Committee for International Detente and Peace (EEDYE) and the Panhellenic Union of Merchant Marine Engineers. Hundreds

of cadres of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), as well as trade unionists from the All Workers Militant Front (PAME) and Federation of Greek Women (OGE), and student youth groups like the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) and the Students Struggle Front (MAS) participated in the rally stating, "Piraeus is a port of the peoples and not of the war and the imperialists."

902.gr reported that a small group of protesters also raised a banner from a boat in the sea near the French battleship which read "stop all interventions". Earlier this month, KKE activists had painted NATO ships red in the same port in a protest against Greece's involvement in the war in Ukraine.

By March 25, the French navy's aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle had docked at the NATO naval base at Souda Bay on the island of Crete. It is likely to join a series of military exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean. Anti-imperialist sections in Greece have been protesting against the country's collaboration in the US-NATO led endeavors in the Mediterranean. In the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine, Greek communists have intensified their campaign to demand that the government maintain neutrality and distance Greece from the war. According to reports, on March 24, Greek defense minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos met the French minister of armed forces Florence Parly and signed a deal aboard the Charles de Gaulle worth EUR 4 billion (USD 4.4 billion) for the sale of three advanced-technology frigates to the Hellenic Navy and six Rafale fighter jets to the Hellenic Air Force.

Regarding the protests on Thursday, the Labor Center of Piraeus stated that "The interests of the workers are in conflict with the aspirations and objectives of all those who are currently waging the war. We must not allow workers to become their cannon fodder."

In 2020, Greece had ratified a new defense cooperation agreement with the US to upgrade the Souda base and integrate it into the existing circuit of bases that includes bases in Alexandroupolis, Larissa, Stefanovikio, Magnesia and Araxos in

order to facilitate NATO maneuvers in the region.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



U.S. spends billions on war in Ukraine and working class pays the price

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 31, 2022

The largest national defense budget in the world just got larger. Earlier this month, the United States Congress passed [\\$728.5 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Defense](#) for the 2022 fiscal year, a sharp 5% increase from the previous year. The budget contains a plan for \$13.6 billion in aid to Ukraine for the Russia-Ukraine war.

On March 16, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the U.S. Congress, invoking everything from the September 11th attacks to Martin Luther

King to plead for more U.S. military intervention. Following the address, President Biden announced an additional \$800 million in Ukraine aid to come from the new defense budget.

Ukraine aid has received widespread bipartisan support among U.S. legislators in a Congress that is incapable of uniting around any domestic policy in a similar way. The House of Representatives passed the defense budget with a vote of 361-69, and the Senate passed the bill with a vote of 68-31. This decision comes from a Congress that is split down the middle between Republicans and Democrats, with Republicans in lockstep blocking Biden's domestic [relief](#) and [civil rights](#) bills. Infamously, conservative Democrats Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema have played the role of the swing vote between the two parties, [decidedly shooting down](#) virtually all of Biden's key progressive legislation.

"They got money for war, but can't feed the poor"

Out of the \$13.6 billion allocated for Ukraine aid, about half will go to replenishing the stocks of military supplies that the U.S. has already sent to Ukraine. The United States has been [sending billions in military aid to Ukraine](#) since the 2014 Euromaidan coup, taking the form of weapons, training, and intelligence. Some of those military resources have very possibly been used to [attack the people of the Donbass region](#), even before the Russian military action.

\$3.1 billion will cover "deployment, operational, and intelligence costs" for U.S. troops deployed to Europe. The United States now has [around 12,000 troops](#) deployed to bolster Ukraine's borders. The U.S. president is considering the option of [permanently maintaining this increase in troops](#), further militarizing Europe, which is already home to [at least 60,000 U.S. troops and hundreds of U.S. military bases](#).

The bill also provides \$300 million of funding for the Ukraine Security Assistance

Initiative, to help train and equip the military of Ukraine, and \$650 million for military support. Those seeking desperately-needed funding for nationwide social programs will be jealous to hear that the Army won about \$300 million more for tank and armored vehicle upgrades and \$500 million more for aircraft than they had requested.


Biden also recently announced that [\\$800 million more](#) of this new defense budget will go towards Ukraine aid, specifically for weapons. Before this, Biden had authorized a \$350 million package that was already the [“largest single authorized transfer of arms from U.S. military warehouses to another country.”](#) Some Congress members want to go further, such as Senator Jim Risch, who said, “I want to see more Javelins...I want to see more Stingers.”

Meanwhile, for the people of the U.S., the coveted social programs of the past year, particularly the massive relief package Build Back Better, were shot down by conservatives of both parties on grounds of “high costs”.

Notably, Risch, a Republican, said in a [statement](#): “Senators had two choices: this \$550 billion package with no tax increases, or allow Democrats to pass the Biden proposal of \$2.5 trillion, raise taxes, and pile it on top of their impending \$3.5 trillion social spending spree. On behalf of Idaho, I chose to support the lower \$550 billion investment in hard infrastructure like roads, bridges, and broadband. I believe it to be the substantially more reasonable and conservative solution to the necessary infrastructure spending. I intend to vigorously oppose Democrats’ reckless \$3.5 trillion social spending bill, which is coming next.”

There were many similar arguments against Build Back Better. Joe Manchin, the conservative Democrat whose vote became instrumental in the downfall of the plan last year, claimed that he could not support a bill of over \$1.5 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that if the programs outlined within Build Back Better were to run for ten years, the cost would add up to [\\$3 trillion dollars](#).

The legislation package itself does not include such extensions in its provisions. Even so, with the ten year estimate, the cost breakdown could be up to \$300 billion per year—far less than the current defense budget, which was passed quietly and uncontroversially.

Meanwhile, a national battle was played out among members of Congress and the media about the costs of Build Back Better. But is domestic relief just as controversial among the people of the U.S., who Build Back Better stands to benefit? Decidedly, no: The much needed relief plan for working people, elders, disabled people, families, and children [remained consistently popular](#), even [among Manchin's own constituents](#)  .

Build Back Better has been abandoned since the effort to pass the legislation through the Senate failed when Joe Manchin [effectively killed the bill](#) last December. Now, with a nation that has already sunk billions into aid for Ukraine, people in the U.S. and around the world are suffering. Gas prices are [higher than they've ever been](#) in the United States and globally. It is the millions of working people who need to commute to work or rely on affordable access to food and other goods who suffer, while rich celebrities like [Steven Colbert](#) and [George Takei](#) encourage workers to consider high costs “a patriotic donation”. A headline from *Bloomberg* on March 13 reads “Inflation Stings Most If You Earn Less Than \$300K. [the vast majority in the U.S.] Here's How to Deal”, urging people in the U.S., [who struggle with basic access to food](#), to skip out on purchasing a pet or a second car. There is thus far no proposed legislation to provide aid to workers who are struggling under the twin burdens of gas prices and inflation in the wake of this war.

Clearly the massive defense spending is not “trickling down” to benefit the people of the U.S.. Who does the \$728 billion actually benefit? One answer would be

the [booming U.S. defense industry](#). Companies like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon have seen stock prices skyrocket since the war began. Defense industry lobbyists are powerful in Washington, [spending billions](#) to make sure that their influence reaches those in power. The lobbying works—the U.S. military budget is larger than the next nine other defense budgets combined of China, India, Russia, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Japan, and South Korea.

Yet it appears that upwards of \$700 billion is not enough for some members of Congress. Forty Republican Congress members have [urged Biden](#) to increase defense spending even more, writing, “The security of the free world depends on a credible American military”. *Bloomberg* recently reported that the White House has plans to increase national security spending to a mind-blowing \$813.3 billion for the next fiscal year.

What exactly is the “free world” that politicians claim depends on the U.S. military? The people of the U.S. continue to struggle with food insecurity and lack proper medical care, calling the “freedom” of U.S. society into question.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - March 28, 2022

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 31, 2022

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Mariupol & Donetsk: a tale of two cities

By Greg Butterfield

In December 2014, a young Russian communist named Andrey Sokolov was visiting the newly formed Donetsk People's Republic. He went to meet a friend who'd been driven into exile from Ukraine after the U.S.-backed far-right coup d'état in Kiev earlier that year.

Sokolov took a wrong turn and wound up at a checkpoint controlled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. He was arrested and "disappeared" for nearly two years in the occupied city of Mariupol.

Sokolov was held for a long time in a bare cell in a secret prison. He was denied contact with the outside world, given little food, was tortured, and witnessed Ukrainian militants using cutouts of leaders from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics for target practice.

Eventually supporters were able to track Sokolov down with help from locals. As reports seeped out about his case, and those of others "disappeared" by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, Sokolov was offered a plea deal, which he accepted, and a court ordered him released with time served.

Upon his release, though, he was kidnapped by goons in plainclothes and held captive in another location.

Ukraine's government eventually felt obliged to allow a visit to Mariupol by human-rights investigators from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Sokolov's captors debated what to do with him. He was probably closer to death at that moment than he had ever been during his ordeal.

Eventually the order came down from above: There was too much attention to Sokolov's case to dispose of him permanently. Instead he was put in a taxi headed to the Russian border and given bus fare to Moscow. That was in the autumn of 2016 – almost two years after his fateful wrong turn.

Mariupol and the Big Lie

Mariupol has been in the news a lot recently. It's been a major hotspot in the joint military operation by the Donbass People's Republics and Russia to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.

The U.S. and other Western media mostly ignored Mariupol for the eight years it was under fascist occupation. They couldn't have cared less for the workers and political activists like Sokolov who had to live under the thumb of the Azov Battalion and Ukrainian security forces.

Now that the Azov nazis are being routed by the Donetsk People's Militia and Russian Armed Forces, newspapers, TV networks and social media are full of stories claiming "Russian war crimes" in Mariupol.

First there was a story about Russia attacking a maternity hospital. But as Russia's First Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyansky said at a

Continued on page 6

Donetsk People's Militia troops check men leaving Mariupol for tattoos of swastikas, runes and wolfangels marking them as neo-Nazi combatants.



PHOTOS: DONETSK NEWS AGENCY

The Emergency Campaign to STOP THE WAR LIES

By Solidarity with Donbass & Antifascists in Ukraine

The Emergency Campaign to Stop the War Lies is a grassroots effort to stop the lies and tell the truth about the U.S./NATO war on Russia and Donbass. It will kick off on March 20, the anniversary of the Iraq War, and culminate on the weekend of April 2 to 4, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.

March 20 to 27 Local outreach to communities, students and workers, including protests and picket lines, distributions of flyers and posters, street corner speak-outs, tabling in busy areas and banner drops.

March 27 "Expose the Lies" National Webinar featuring Alexey Albu from Borotba in Lugansk, Katya A. from Aurora Women's group in Donetsk, and Kristina Melnikova, a journalist who has covered Ukraine's war on Donbass for several years. Hear directly from the independent Donbass republics under fire from Ukraine and NATO.

Weekend of Sat., April 2 to Mon., April 4 – National protests on the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, who stood against war and racism.

Join us in demanding:

- No U.S./NATO war on Russia and Donbass!
- Jobs, education, housing, and healthcare, not war!
- Disband NATO, AFRICOM & AUKUS!
- Close Guantanamo and all U.S. military bases – bring the troops home!
- Feed the people, not the Pentagon! No to U.S. sanctions!

Initiated by Solidarity with Donbass & Antifascists in Ukraine and Socialist Unity Party / Partido de Socialismo Unido

Partial list of endorsers: John Parker, Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California; Youth Against War & Racism; Mujeres En Lucha / Women In Struggle; Struggle-La Lucha newspaper; Communist Workers League; Workers Voice Socialist Movement; LA Black and Brown Unity – Los Angeles; Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice – Los Angeles; Peoples Power Assembly – Baltimore; Odessa Solidarity Campaign; Unemployed Workers Union; Anti-War West Sydney; Rhode Island Against White Nationalism – Providence.

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23 years after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia: Lessons for today

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 31, 2022

Exactly 23 years ago, NATO countries, without UN Security Council authorization, ordered their troops to bomb the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as part of an offensive operation named Allied Force, under the pretext of a supposed humanitarian intervention to “prevent genocide” of Kosovar Albanians.

The air strikes lasted 78 days, beginning on March 24 and ending on June 10, 1999. During that time, more than 1,000 aircraft were used to drop more than 3,000 cruise missiles and about 80,000 tons of bombs on the territory of the Balkan country (which at that time consisted of Serbia and Montenegro). The number of dead, most of them civilians, ranges between 2,500 and 3,500 people. 89 were children, which means that, on average, NATO killed one child every day during the bombing. Some 10,000 people were seriously wounded. Most of the victims were Serbs.

Both military and civilian installations were hit. Hospitals, bridges, oil refineries,

power plants, political party headquarters, railways, schools and even the Chinese embassy in Belgrade were bombed.

In total, NATO's military intervention resulted in the destruction of 25,000 residential buildings, 450 kilometers of roads, almost 600 kilometers of railroads, nearly 40 bridges, 100 schools and kindergartens, 30 hospitals and 14 airfields. The material damage is quantified at about 100 billion dollars.

NATO's cynicism is such that it decided to hold an emergency summit on the anniversary of the start of the bombings. At the meeting, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and US President Joe Biden will discuss the provision of assistance to Ukraine and the response to Russia's actions. It should be recalled that, as a senator, Biden was one of the most active supporters of the bombing in 1999.

Ukraine is the sequel to the NATO intervention against Yugoslavia.

The West pretends to have forgotten the Serbian case in order to turn against President Putin and accuse him of provoking the first military conflict on the borders of Europe after World War II. In addition to omitting the 1999 bombing, it is trying to erase the links it has with the current events in Ukraine.

Speaking to RT, celebrated Serbian filmmaker Emir Kusturica underscored the continuity between the two events, arguing that the latter is a sequel to the former in that they are conflicts driven by the Atlanticist side with U.S. imperial interest as its prerogative.

"This war did not come out of nowhere. This is a continuation of something sown long before," the director said. "You can see the continuity of Russophobia in the West, which rejected Russia's offer of partnership after the Cold War," he added.

Kusturica explained that, as an excuse for war, international law was transformed

into “humanitarian law” and later became a doctrine called Responsibility To Protect (R2P).

On the other hand, he pointed out that the triumph of NATO’s military intervention was followed by the implementation of the first models of color revolution that led to the overthrow of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. The soft coup strategy was then used in Ukraine in 2004 and 2014, Kusturica said.

Moreover, it should be noted that NATO’s objective was the disintegration of the Yugoslav state, which was successful in the end. The same is happening now against Russia, in a regime change approach which the Kremlin took note of and carried out actions to undermine it.

“In a unipolar world, no one is paying a price for [their] moves (...) Now we are faced with deconstructing [Western] power around the world, and I think what matters in the end is what kind of weapons you have,” the director said.

Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine was the last resort used after exhausting all diplomatic channels to demand that the West stop further eastward expansion of NATO.

The U.S., U.K. and other NATO members had already built more than 30 military facilities in Ukraine, including Pentagon laboratories for the development of biological weapons. Kiev publicly declared its intention to use its nuclear facilities and military-scientific potential to develop nuclear weapons. It became known that 150,000 Ukrainian military and Nazi battalions were concentrated in the Dombash region. The Zelensky government, with Washington’s backing, was preparing for an all-out offensive against the Dombash through war in March.

In January 2022, Russia warned that it would be forced to take additional measures to protect its security. On February 22, President Putin announced recognition of the

independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. On February 25, the operation of the Russian Armed Forces began.

Moscow is working with modern, high-precision weapons, targeting only facilities of infrastructure and military interest, as a Pentagon source confesses to Newsweek. The goal is not to occupy Ukraine, but to demilitarize and denazify the country and bring to justice all actors responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity against civilians in the eight-year war against the Dombash. At the same time, the Russian operation seeks to achieve Kiev's neutrality (refusal to join NATO).

Efforts to minimize civilian casualties are sabotaged by Ukrainian neo-Nazis. They install artillery and tanks in residential areas and civilian infrastructure, prohibit citizens from leaving the war zones, abduct them from civilian assistance and work facilities (schools, hospitals, factories, residential buildings) and turn them into human shields. The United States and other European countries assist them with arms supplies and cover up their crimes through information warfare in mass media and social networks.

It was the countries of the West who began to shake up the situation that led to the conflict in Ukraine, just as it happened 23 years ago in the former Yugoslavia, specifically in the present Serbian region, and it is the Anglo-European Atlanticists who have the greatest interest in the war to try, through chaos, to maintain the unipolar world as we knew it until recently.

Source: [Mision Verdad](#), translation Resumen Latinoamericano - English



Minneapolis teachers and support professionals reach tentative agreements on 18th day of strike

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 31, 2022

Minneapolis, MN – Early on Friday, March 25, the striking Minneapolis teachers and education support professionals reached tentative agreements that will be voted on by union members. They have been on strike since Tuesday, March 8.

Over the almost three-week strike, the educators made major progress on several of their key demands. A big issue of the strike was improving the conditions of education support professionals (ESPs) who are largely oppressed nationality workers and make poverty wages. Details of the final agreement have not yet been announced but in the previous “last, best and final offer” from the school district they had already moved the district up by thousands of dollars a year for the ESPs to around \$33,000 a year. The educators were holding the line for ESPs to reach a minimum of a \$35,000 a year wage for ESPs at the bottom of the scale. While

\$35,000 a year is still far too low according to the union, it would represent a life changing increase for the ESPs at the bottom.

At the same time, the teachers had set 3% per year as a bottom line on across-the-board raises, with additional raises in the form of step increases. As of Monday, March 24, the school district was offering the teachers a package that would include 5% and 7% over a two-year contract with step increases factored in.

The educators also had demands for smaller class sizes with caps on maximum size, as well as increased mental health supports for students.

More details on the tentative agreement are expected in coming days with a vote by the members soon to follow. If the vote passes it will end the strike.

In the last week of the strike, community, student, parent and labor support actions had ticked up to a higher level of intensity. Notably, a group of Minneapolis students began an occupation of the Davis Center, where Minneapolis Public Schools office is located, and they were still present on Friday morning as the tentative agreement was announced. The occupation included a community meal served by the students in the building on Thursday night.

Community support activity for the educators' strike was high throughout and included many actions, protests, support events and marches in support of the educators. Support for the educators' strike and their demands stayed high among community members and parents the whole way through.

The educators maintained strong picket lines throughout and over 95% of educators honored the strike for all 18 days. The educators appear stronger than ever before and ready to continue fighting for educators and students going forward.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)



Workers in Italy protest ammunition dispatches to Ukraine disguised as humanitarian aid

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 31, 2022

Workers and trade unions in Italy have protested the transfer of arms and ammunition to Ukraine from Italian seaports and airports disguised as humanitarian aid to the war-torn country. On March 14, cargo workers at the Pisa airport refused to load cartons of arms and ammunition in planes destined to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Earlier, in the first week of March, dock workers at the port of Genoa also alerted that they had seen 'camouflaged' tanks disembarking at the port from a ferry coming from Palermo, allegedly destined for Ukraine. Trade unions like USB Italia, along with the Communist Youth Front (FGC), Communist Refoundation Party (PRC), Italian Peace and Disarmament Network, and others, protested the shipments of arms disguised as humanitarian aid and demanded an inquiry by a parliamentary commission into the issue.

As the war in Ukraine continues, several countries, including the US and the EU bloc, have imposed heavy sanctions on Russia and demanded it to stop the war immediately. On the other hand, the same countries are sending arms and ammunition to the military and paramilitary forces in Ukraine, which has led to an escalation of the conflict. As the Ukrainian government started distributing arms to its population to fight the Russians, an imminent threat of militarization and proliferation of armed gangs looms over the region even after the war ends. Progressive sections across Europe, which have condemned the war in Ukraine, have also urged EU countries to arrange the much needed medical and humanitarian aid to Ukraine instead of sending arms and ammunition.

On March 6, the Autonomous Collective of Port Workers said, “we have seen several times the vehicles of the Italian Army moving for the drills, for some time we have seen dozens of Iveco military trucks destined for the Tunisian army, we have seen hundreds of Toyota pick-ups going to Tripoli via Tunisia. We’ve seen many things and asked ourselves many questions, we see Bahri every 20 days escorted and supervised. Today for the first time we see this, well-hidden tanks disembarked from the ferry coming from Palermo, unconfirmed rumors say they are destined for Ukraine, one thing we are sure of is the economy of war, arms trafficking is the cause of the conflicts, the issue is delicate but for us a deadline exists, commercial ports cannot become the hub of military logistics under any circumstances.”

Dock workers in Genoa have a legacy of anti-war interventions. In 2019, they had protested the docking of Saudi ship *Bahri Yanbu* carrying weapons allegedly destined for use in the ongoing war in Yemen.

The USB Union in Pisa demanded the civil airport air traffic control authorities to immediately block these death flights disguised as “humanitarian” aid from their facilities. They also urged workers to continue refusing to load weapons and explosives that are going to intensify the war.

The Italian Peace and Disarmament Network reported that the ongoing 'humanitarian missions' from Italian airports act as a real international military "air bridge" towards the base of Rzeszow in Eastern Poland, which has been functioning as the center station of the USA Logistics Command. The Communist Refoundation Party (PRC) demanded a parliamentary inquiry into arms trafficking going on at Italian airports and seaports in the name of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. The Communist Youth Front (FGC) condemned the Mario Draghi-led Italian government's complacency in escalating the war in Ukraine and applauded the workers of the Pisa airport and the dockworkers at Genoa who refused to become accomplices in an imperialist war.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Giuliano Brunetti: 'Our struggle against NATO is a struggle against

occupying forces'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 31, 2022

Thousands have taken to the streets across Italy to protest against NATO and call for peace as the war in Ukraine completes its fourth week. At a time when governments have focused only on condemning Russia for the current situation, left activists have sought to point out the pivotal role of NATO in escalating tensions between the two countries in the days prior to the Russian invasion. Now, instead of calling for peace and diplomacy, it is fanning the flames of war.

Questions have also been raised about the role of NATO historically. Many reject the claim that it is a defensive military partnership and argue that it is a tool of US domination in Europe and across the world, pointing to its direct involvement in the destruction of Afghanistan, Libya, Yugoslavia, and other countries in helping maintain US hegemony.

The anti-NATO sentiment surging across Italy today builds on decades of longstanding struggles against the alliance and against the imposition of the US model of militarism and its foreign policy. Italy's aggressive response to the war in Ukraine is directly shaped by its allegiance to NATO and the US and seemingly is against the pacifist will of the people.

Arms and sanctions, escalation of war

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Italy [pledged](#) that it would work with its "NATO allies to respond immediately, with unity and determination". It proceeded to [announce](#) on February 26 that it was joining the European Commission in imposing economic sanctions such as cutting off Russian banks from the SWIFT system, placing restrictions on the Russian Central Bank, issuing targeted sanctions

against individuals and entities, and declaring it would combat “disinformation and other forms of hybrid warfare.”

On February 28, Prime Minister Mario Draghi proposed a decree to send “military vehicles, material and equipment for the Ukrainian government,” joining the efforts of other NATO countries to pour fuel on the fire. The decree was approved by the parliament with almost complete unanimity, with the exception of a small minority of MPs including Matteo Mantero of the left-wing party Potere al Popolo. Talking to Peoples Dispatch, Giuliano Brunetti of Potere al Popolo pointed out that “apart from those isolated voices, all the political parties of the establishment agree with the sending of weapons to Ukraine.”

Leftists and progressive groups have warned about sending weapons to Ukraine and several protests have even been organized in the [ports to block the shipments](#). Brunetti said that sending weapons could lead to a dangerous outcome as “we have absolutely no idea who is going to get those weapons.”

While the Italian political establishment has fallen in lockstep with NATO orientations, in addition to opposition from progressives, some members of the Italian military have voiced concern. “Leaders of the Italian army are opposed to sending weapons because they know perfectly well that those weapons are useless and actually we are creating the conditions for a further bloodshed in this situation,” Brunetti highlighted.

Italy in NATO

The impact of Italy’s participation in NATO has consequences far beyond those seen today in its response to Ukraine. Its very entrance into NATO was part of the post-WWII strategy of the US to subordinate its former enemies in order to keep them out of the sphere of influence of its former ally, the Soviet Union: “Aside from Italy’s strategic position in the Mediterranean, the power of the Communist Party was the

main reason for the American involvement in Italy. The United States did not want to lose a strategically placed European country to the Soviet Union.”

NATO itself [acknowledges](#) that the Communist Party, which was consistently against NATO, “played a pivotal role in the Resistance during the Second World War and was the second largest political party in the post-war period.”

With the victory of the conservative Christian Democrats in the 1948 elections, the US achieved its goal and on April 4, 1949 Italy was one of the 12 countries that signed the North Atlantic Treaty that led to the formation of NATO.

NATO's occupation of Italy

As part of its commitment to NATO, Italy has become a strategic military staging ground for the US military. Over the past several decades, at least seven US military bases have been established in the country, as well as over 100 US military installations. The strategic command of the Sixth Fleet of the US Navy that controls all of the Mediterranean Sea is located in Naples, in the south of Italy. Sicily is home to high-tech systems of the US Military and on the island of Sardinia, the US military tests artillery, including uranium bullets that are harmful for those handling them and for those that live in the surrounding areas.

This has converted Italy into a launchpad for military aggression. Brunetti said that “Italy has been used during the last decades as a giant airfleet carrier for NATO missions against other countries. For example, when NATO bombed Yugoslavia in 1999, the strategic bombers took off from Italy.”

Additionally, the country has become a hosting ground for part of the US’ vast arsenal of nuclear weapons despite Italy itself being barred from producing them. This has been a major point of friction especially given the mass anti-nuclear movement in Italy in the 1980s. “Even though we voted to close nuclear plants in a

referendum, we still have nuclear warheads on our soil,” Brunetti said.

For Brunetti, this amounts to an occupation, “We are occupied by the US Navy. We are occupied by the US land forces. We are occupied by the US air forces. We have around 100 nuclear warheads in our country,” he said.

Italy’s role as a subordinate partner in the alliance means that Italians have more in common with those that NATO attacks than those that control it. The 20 victims of the Cermis massacre who were killed by two reckless US Marine Corps pilots from NATO’s Aviano Air Base, were denied justice as the pilots were whisked off to a US military court and found not guilty.

Brunetti noted that “We see NATO not as a defensive alliance, but actually as the boot that is stomping on the heads of the people across the world. It’s an instrument for the domination of the oceans by the United States of America, and we would like to be liberated from this military occupation.”

Atlanticism or bust

The political reaction of the Italian state to the war in Ukraine reflects the overall pattern of the Italian political class’ subservience to NATO. Brunetti criticized the fact that “all major political parties from center left to center right (including the extreme right that is supposedly nationalist and in favor of the nation’s interests), accept the fact that Italy is a NATO member and do not even consider the possibility of leaving NATO.”

In addition to having its territory occupied by US and NATO military installations, troops, weapons and more, Italy has specific political and economic responsibilities to fulfill as a member. One of these is that 2% of the national GDP has to be spent on defense, such as the arms and weapons industry. When NATO launched its invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and of Iraq in 2003, Italy was not able to have an

independent position, but was obliged to take part in the invasions “against the will of millions of Italians.”

Brunetti said that “the mood of the Italian population has always been pacifist and of neutrality due to our history of the fascist dictatorship and having had colonies. But this pacifism is unfortunately impossible under the NATO umbrella.”

This lack of alignment between the will of the people and the actions of the ruling class is due to the loyalty of Italy’s elite class to Atlanticism. For Brunetti, this concept refers to “the special link, the special relationship that we as Italy have, not with the ordinary people of the United States, but with the ruling elite of the United States, the warmongers, the genocidal elite and so on.”

While liberal and conservative pundits have used the war in Ukraine to emphasize the importance of NATO and its centrality in defending countries across Europe, the struggle to denounce the alliance and its attacks against the people of the world intensifies.

“Our struggle against NATO is a struggle against occupying forces, and it is also a struggle for our sovereignty,” Brunetti stated, “It’s a struggle to be able to build a foreign policy, which is based on solidarity and cooperation and not on military warfare.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Get our children to school on time!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 31, 2022

New York — A rally in Brooklyn's Cadman Plaza on March 19 demanded better school transportation. They were sick and tired of school bus routes that guarantee children having to wait for and stay on school buses for too long.

The rally was organized by Parents to Improve School Transportation (PIST) and the Comité Timon. These groups are demanding a school bus bill of rights to ensure respect for the riders' civil rights, the workers' job rights and everyone's safety.

It's not the bus operators or matrons' fault. They want to do the best job in getting children needing special education to school.

A delegation of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181-1061 members came to support the fight for transportation inclusion, equity and reform for students.

New York City spends over \$1 billion a year on transportation but the system is all screwed up. Many school bus routes are misdesigned.

Children often have to spend more than an hour on a bus each way with no bathroom breaks. This is especially rough for kids with disabilities.

The problems started when billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to break ATU Local 1181-1061. Mayor Money Bags ripped up the Employee Protection Provisions that guaranteed living wages and work conditions.

The EPP were removed from a significant fraction of the route packages that private companies bid upon. This drove down the companies' bids overall. The bus outfits took the difference out of newly hired workers' wages and benefits.

As Tomas Fret, Recording Secretary ATU Local 1181-1061 said, we want to make the job a career again. Mothers spoke of their children dreading the long bus rides.

"The Department of Education, the bus companies, the state and city officials, lie about the crisis of school buses in New York," said Greg Butterfield, whose two daughters attend Brooklyn public schools. "They lie about the safety of conditions for students with special needs, drivers and aides. They lie about the safety of all students, teachers and school workers."

"And at the national level they lie about U.S. wars," Butterfield added.

"The budget measure signed by President Biden this week cut money for COVID public health measures in order to send billions of dollars more in deadly weapons to Ukraine. U.S. sanctions on Russia are driving up gas prices that not only hurt drivers today, but will be used as an excuse by the bus companies and the DOE for why they can't afford to make the changes to protect children and workers."

After the rally people marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to the Department of Education headquarters on Chambers Street. It's located in an old courthouse whose construction 150 years ago Boss Tweed used to loot \$20 million.

That sort of corruption and neglect causes misery for thousands of schoolchildren today. Stop violations of access to education!



Mariupol and Donetsk: a tale of two cities

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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In December 2014, a young Russian communist named [Andrey Sokolov](#) was visiting the newly formed Donetsk People's Republic. He went to meet a friend who'd been driven into exile from Ukraine after the U.S.-backed far-right coup d'etat in Kiev earlier that year.

Sokolov took a wrong turn and wound up at a checkpoint controlled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. He was arrested and "disappeared" for nearly two years in the occupied city of Mariupol.

Sokolov was held for a long time in a bare cell in a [secret prison](#). He was denied contact with the outside world, given little food, was tortured, and witnessed

Ukrainian militants using cutouts of leaders from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics for target practice.

Eventually supporters were able to track Sokolov down with help from locals. As [reports seeped out about his case](#), and those of others "disappeared" by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, Sokolov was offered a plea deal, which he accepted, and a court ordered him released with time served.

Upon his release, though, he was kidnapped by goons in plainclothes and held captive in another location.

Ukraine's government eventually felt obliged to allow a visit to Mariupol by human-rights investigators from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Sokolov's captors debated what to do with him. He was probably closer to death at that moment than he had ever been during his ordeal.

Eventually the order came down from above: There was too much attention to Sokolov's case to dispose of him permanently. Instead he was put in a taxi headed to the Russian border and given bus fare to Moscow. That was in the autumn of 2016 – almost two years after his fateful wrong turn.

Mariupol and the Big Lie

Mariupol has been in the news a lot recently. It's been a major hotspot in the joint military operation by the Donbass People's Republics and Russia to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.

The U.S. and other Western media mostly ignored Mariupol for the eight years it was under fascist occupation. They couldn't have cared less for the workers and political activists like Sokolov who had to live under the thumb of the Azov Battalion and Ukrainian security forces.

Now that the Azov nazis are being routed by the Donetsk People's Militia and Russian Armed Forces, newspapers, TV networks and social media are full of stories claiming "Russian war crimes" in Mariupol.

First there was a story about Russia attacking a maternity hospital. But as Russia's First Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyansky [said at a UN Security Council meeting](#), there were no patients in the hospital; it was being used as an Azov base. Local residents had reported that days before.

Then it was the city's theater that Russia had allegedly attacked, killing many civilians sheltering inside. Photos of the blown-out theater were plastered across screens worldwide. But later, the quisling Mariupol City Council quietly [admitted that nobody died](#). According to Russian and DPR sources, the theater explosion was actually carried out by Azov. ([The Grayzone](#) has published an extensive investigation around the theater claims.)

A Turkish mosque in the city was said to have been attacked by Russian troops. But no. "Our mosque remained undamaged," Ismail Hacıoglu [told Andalou Agency](#) March 12.

More recently, the claim was made about [a school being attacked](#). Many children supposedly dead or wounded as a result. But again, it was a case of Azov using civilian facilities to hide its paramilitaries and storehouses of weapons.

The Biden administration, NATO and the corporate media don't believe the claims they make, and they don't really care if they are later exposed as untrue. The impact comes from piling lie upon lie, confident that the original outrage is what will be remembered. So many people "know" it happened, it must be true.

U.S. imperialism is the best student of Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels' strategy of the "Big Lie."

Mariupol belongs to DPR

Mariupol is not part of Ukraine, as the media claim. It's part of the Donetsk People's Republic. It's the DPR's only major seaport.

Mariupol's occupation by Ukraine since mid-2014 has caused enormous harm to the people of Donbass, because it prevents them from being able to move goods through the Sea of Azov.

More than that: it's been a seething wound in the republic's side. The Azov nazis, armed and trained by NATO, have launched many attacks on civilians in free Donetsk from their stronghold. And it posed a constant threat near the border with Russia.

Washington and Kiev stockpiled weapons and troops in Mariupol for the planned Ukrainian invasion of Donbass earlier this year – an invasion cut short only by the defensive military operation by Donetsk, Lugansk and Russia.

Now, block by block, building by building, Mariupol is being liberated at last as DPR and Russian troops advance, driving the Azov rats into a shrinking zone. On March 23, the Donetsk government reported that 70% of residential buildings had been cleared of occupiers.

For the first month of the armed conflict, [Azov held the residents of Mariupol hostage](#). They repeatedly sabotaged the humanitarian corridors Russian and DPR troops provided for civilians to safely leave the city, even shooting people trying to leave. Only when the assault on the city had begun and the neo-Nazis began to lose ground were people able to begin fleeing in large numbers.

Refugees from Mariupol are being welcomed in areas of the DPR away from the front lines, and in Western Russia. As they leave the city, the armies of liberation provide them with water, food and first aid. Many [tell journalists harrowing stories](#)

of their ordeal under Azov rule.

Regular Ukrainian soldiers who put down their weapons are also free to evacuate. But first DPR Militia troops [check all men leaving the city for tattoos](#) that would mark them as fascist combatants trying to sneak out.

By the way: When DPR and Russian troops liberated the Mariupol airport, they uncovered an [abandoned secret prison](#) run by the Azov Battalion. Perhaps this is where Andrey Sokolov was held.

Donetsk under fire

In contrast, Donetsk, the capital city of the DPR, is a place you don't hear about much. Its inhabitants are only referred to in the corporate media as "separatists" and "Putin's proxies." To Azov and the other Ukrainian nazi groups, they are "roaches" and "cattle" fit only for slaughter.

But the residents of Donetsk are multinational workers. Miners and metalworkers. Teachers and students. Activists and political refugees. Mothers and fathers, grandparents, children. Notice that Joe Biden and Lindsay Graham have no disagreement on this: You shouldn't know they exist, or care when they are killed.

As the People's Militia has pushed forward to liberate the occupied portions of their region, like Mariupol, the increasingly desperate Ukrainian troops dug in on the outskirts of Donetsk have been lashing out, deliberately targeting civilians (as they have throughout their eight-year war on Donbass) with increasingly deadly weapons.

These aren't fabricated or exaggerated stories like those in Mariupol and other areas of Ukraine, reported by CNN and the New York Times through crocodile tears. These are the lives of working-class people who have been subject to nearly a decade of endless war and blockade, but have stayed strong and resisted the U.S.-

orchestrated attacks on them.

On March 14, a Tochka-U missile was fired by Ukrainian forces at downtown Donetsk. There are no military installations in the area; the only purpose was to terrorize the population.

DPR air defense shot down the missile, saving untold lives. Unfortunately, one of the cluster bombs in the missile's payload survived, and hit the ground on a busy street. [At least 20 people were killed](#), including a child and senior citizens on a bus. Dozens were wounded.

Cluster munitions are banned under international law. Their use is a war crime.

The next day, another missile was launched at Makeyevka on the outskirts of Donetsk – an area that has been pummeled nearly daily for years by Ukrainian artillery. This time, luckily, no one died, but six people were wounded, including two children.

Another attack came March 18 on a shopping area in Donetsk. [Four women were killed](#).

Since then, Ukraine's military fired Tochka-U missiles on the Proletarskiy and Zelyonyi districts of [Makeyevka](#) March 21 and Karla Marksa township in [Enakiyevo](#) on March 22.

Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations [called out Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo](#), who repeated unsubstantiated claims about Russia's conduct but "did not find a single word to say about today's strike by a Ukrainian Tochka-U missile with a cluster bomb at central Donetsk."

In 2014, the people of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions voted for independence and their right to live free of a Ukraine dominated by fascists and U.S.-NATO

imperialism. They have resisted untold horrors for eight years - horrors which continue today. Their struggle is a righteous one, and they will win.

