

Biden, Congress stoke war on all fronts with \$95.3 billion package

written by Melinda Butterfield
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On April 20, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$95.3 billion aid package for Washington's proxies in Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan. Included in the package were provisions for imposing sanctions on China, Russia, and Iran, and a requirement that TikTok's Chinese parent company sell its stake within one year or be banned in the U.S.

One third of U.S. adults use TikTok, including a majority of those under 30. A majority of teens use the platform. The potential ban would certainly curtail people's ability to freely access information and communicate. Importantly, it would limit people's ability to access global perspectives.

The so-called "liberal" media is even portraying far-right House Speaker Mike Johnson as a sensible "adult in the room" for working to get the bill passed. They also said that Trump had become more "presidential" after he greenlit the assassination of popular Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in 2020.

Some House Republicans had held up the bill by attaching it to demands for intensifying repression of immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border and other reactionary policies. Some of the Republicans do have misgivings about Ukraine funding, but only because the ruling class is divided on where exactly to focus its attacks. These Republicans are not anti-war. They have never flinched when it comes to arming Israel throughout this genocide.

Both parties are totally united on the goal of continuing U.S. imperialist supremacy at any cost. There are no peace-loving doves leading these parties of war-mongers.

Following the House, the Senate quickly passed the bill on April 23 with a 79-18 vote. Biden signed the bill the very next day. He stated: "In the next few hours — literally, a few hours — we're going to begin sending in equipment to Ukraine," and that "it's going to make the world safer."

Given that Washington has repeatedly blocked United Nations ceasefire resolutions to end the genocide in Gaza, all the while pumping money and weapons into Israel (the administration found ways to keep the flow steady while the funding bills were tied up), there is no indication that Biden is interested in making the world safer. Quite the opposite.

As for Ukraine, it is Washington that set the stage for the current war, orchestrating the fascist Maidan coup in 2014 on behalf of U.S. capitalists and International Monetary Fund creditors who demanded extreme austerity. It is Washington that funded the coup regime for eight years as it cracked down on domestic dissent (namely the left and trade unions), while attacking and killing some 14,000 people in the Donbass region.

After Biden signed this funding bill on April 24, the Pentagon jumped to send the first \$1 billion delivery to Ukraine. The weapons include shoulder-fired Stinger surface-to-air missiles, cluster munitions, Javelin anti-tank guided missiles, and more.

[According to Forbes](#), in late 2022, the U.S. had already sent 8,500 Javelins. Citing the army's 2023 missile procurement budget, they said that these missiles cost \$197,884 each. Eight thousand five hundred times that unit price would come to \$1.7 billion. That's just the cost of one class of weapon by the end of 2022. This is undoubtedly good for the shareholders of Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, the companies that together manufacture the Javelin.

Biden chides student protesters

With the majority of Washington behind him - especially the Pentagon - Biden is stoking war on all fronts. The blood of the 32,000+ dead in Gaza is on his hands just as much as it is on Netanyahu's. And yet, when he finally decided to comment on the student protesters who are acting as the conscience of the country (the same young people he wants to come out and vote for him in November), he scolded them!

"Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduation — none of this is a peaceful protest," he said.

First of all, in every location, it has been the police who have violently attacked the

student protesters. The students have been brutalized by the police, and there is no doubt that approval is coming from the top.

We have all spent months watching horrific videos of dead, mutilated children being pulled from rubble, killed by weapons Biden has paid for with our tax money. We could be forgiven for being more outraged by that than by a proverbial broken window. Biden's audacity in talking about peace is astonishing.

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said this 57 years ago in his "Beyond Vietnam" speech, at a time when U.S. imperialism was murdering millions in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

We can imagine what King would say today if he were alive to witness the absurdity of this military spending compared with the increasing immiseration of the population in the United States, the richest country in the world.

Right now, the same Supreme Court that took away women's and other people's right to reproductive autonomy – the same unelected Supreme Court being exposed for their lavish, free resort stays and wine tastings – is hearing a case about how easy it should be to throw homeless people in jail. The case started because the city of Grants Pass, Oregon wants free rein to fine and jail the homeless. But municipalities across the country are attempting to do the same thing. Instead of the government addressing the housing crisis this is what we get.

In January 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development counted 653,104 homeless people in their annual [Point-In-Time Homeless Assessment Report](#). That is about 1 out of every 500 people experiencing homelessness, up 22% from the year before. People are suffering from soaring food, housing, medical, and other costs.

The federal government spent \$700 billion in 2008 to bail out the “too big to fail” for-profit banks. It is spending many billions to wage wars on behalf of shareholders. But it will not bail out the working class. It is obvious where the government’s priorities lie, and it is not helping the people.



10 years of injustice: Anti-fascist leader recounts Odessa massacre

written by Melinda Butterfield

May 6, 2024

May 2 marks the 10th anniversary of one of the biggest crimes of 21st century fascism – the massacre of nearly 50 activists at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa, Ukraine. Despite extensive video and photographic evidence, the Ukrainian government has never prosecuted any of those responsible. This attack on the anti-fascist resistance paved the way for today’s U.S. proxy war against Russia and the Donbass republics.

The following interview with massacre survivor Alexey Albu was conducted by

Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Melinda Butterfield in Simferopol, Crimea, in September 2014, and was originally published in October of that year.

Odessa Regional Council Deputy Alexey Albu, a member of the Ukrainian Marxist organization [Borotba \(Struggle\)](#), was a leader of the city's Anti-Maidan movement against the U.S.-backed coup of February 2014. Albu survived the May 2, 2014, massacre, when at least 48 people were killed by neo-Nazi gangs at the House of Trade Unions. Albu and his family were forced to flee to Crimea, where he continues his work as co-founder of the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa and leads an independent investigation of May 2. I spoke with Albu about his experiences.

Melinda Butterfield: How did you become active in the anti-fascist movement?

Alexey Albu: I first joined Komsomol, the youth organization of the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU). Later, I became a member of the KPU and organized its youth wing. I also took part in several local elections in Odessa. So I was always involved in political life as a communist.

The leaders of the KPU were afraid of openly demonstrating anti-fascist views. They didn't want to take responsibility for an open confrontation with the neo-Nazis or the actions of young people who were strongly against fascism. They took an opportunistic position.

In 2011, I accompanied friends who were members of Borotba to a couple of anti-fascist rallies. When the KPU leaders learned of my attendance at these protests, they planned to expel me.

I left the KPU and became a member of Borotba. I didn't plan to take people with me. Nevertheless, several comrades left the KPU and joined Borotba. One of them was Vlad Wojciechowski, who is now a political prisoner. Another was Andrey Brazhevsky, who was killed by the Nazis on May 2.

Borotba's role in Odessa

MB: What kind of work did Borotba carry out in Odessa?

AA: I was an elected deputy of the regional council, so I had the opportunity to speak for Borotba in the local government. We also had the opportunity to create an organizational headquarters in Odessa. Many people came to our organization. Odessa residents got to know us and our symbols, and a lot of journalists covered our activities.

We organized solidarity actions with Ukrainian sailors in England and supported the struggle of dockworkers in the Odessa region. We organized anti-fascist meetings and demonstrations. We held a lot of protest rallies against the local government. We also helped organize immigration and education centers.

All of our protests were directed against the government of President Victor Yanukovych. But when the Euromaidan movement started, we understood that the people who wanted to use it to get power were even worse. Bourgeois democratic law was preferable to direct rule of Nazis and oligarchs. We were against them from the very beginning.

[Euromaidan was the pro-imperialist movement which took its name from Maidan, the central square of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, where it held protests in late 2013 and early 2014. The backbone of this movement, which received extensive funding and political support from the U.S. government, were neo-Nazi gangs and political parties. Euromaidan culminated in the overthrow of President Victor Yanukovych in February. – MB]

When Euromaidan activists tried to occupy the Odessa Regional State Administration, our comrades protected the building. During the defense of the RSA, I became good friends with Regional Council Deputy Vyacheslav Markin, who was

later killed at the House of Trade Unions.

Markin and I were the only deputies who openly said we were against the Nazis, the Euromaidan, the junta and all the crimes this movement brought to Ukraine.

Protest encampment

MB: How did the Anti-Maidan movement and the protest encampment develop?

AA: After Yanukovych was overthrown in February, the Anti-Maidan movement grew and became quite broad. It was based among common people who were not connected with any party. It was organized from below, from the people. The coordinators of this movement included members of many organizations, including Borotba. Borotba was not the most powerful organization; it was just one of those that influenced the Odessa Anti-Maidan.

The biggest parties of Ukraine, the Communist Party and the Party of Regions, didn't participate in Anti-Maidan, although many of their members did.

The tent camp at Kulikovo Field [similar to the 2011 Occupy Wall Street encampments or the current student Gaza Solidarity Encampments in the U.S.] was the creation of all the groups that took part in the Anti-Maidan movement. For example, one group set up the area where people held speakouts. Others brought tents and supplies.

MB: How did you use your position as a regional deputy to help the movement?

AA: There was a lot of publicity when I introduced a draft law in the Regional State Administration, with help from Deputy Markin, calling for autonomy for the Odessa Region within Ukraine. This made Borotba very popular in Odessa. But unfortunately, most of the delegates didn't vote for the law.

By ignoring this draft law, the regional deputies forced people to protest. On March 3, they came to the RSA building and started clashing with police. I tried to bring the people into the building to give them the opportunity to speak with the deputies. I was injured trying to get people inside.

Afterward, I had problems with the Security Service of Ukraine [SBU, political police whose role is similar to the FBI in the U.S.]. They searched my apartment and tried to interrogate me. The growing repression had a great impact in Odessa society. By the end of April, the Anti-Maidan protests had become smaller. Fewer people came to Kulikovo.

People were also disappointed because they came to Kulikovo every day, or every weekend, and saw that the leaders of the organizations couldn't agree with each other. Instead, one by one, these groups started to make deals with the government.

The local government wanted to remove the camp, using the annual May 9 Victory Day parade as an excuse. Some organizations agreed to remove their tents, but others decided to stay.

Target: Odessa

MB: Why do you think the Kiev junta and the fascists targeted Odessa on May 2?

AA: First of all, I should explain that the Odessa region is very important for the Ukrainian economy. [The administrative subdivision of] Odessa has seven seaports and 70% of the country's imports come through there.

Supporters of the junta in the local government wanted to stop the Anti-Maidan movement. They brought in neo-Nazis from Kiev in the middle of the night. They organized checkpoints inside the city, with 10 or 15 people at each checkpoint. They operated in around-the-clock shifts. They were fed by the government, and they earned money.

On April 29-30, Andriy Parubiy, head of the Defense and National Security Council, even presented the people at the checkpoints with bulletproof vests.

On one hand, they wanted the people from Kiev to radicalize the local Euromaidan movement, to ensure that they would enforce the new government's orders. On the other hand, they wanted to remove the activists from Kulikovo Field, to make sure there would be no organized opposition.

I don't think the government necessarily planned to kill people and cause so many casualties. But they organized everything and set the events in motion.

MB: Before the massacre on May 2, you planned to run for mayor of Odessa.

AA: What happened was that we held a strong anti-fascist demonstration on May Day, which worried the local government. That day, a lot of people from the Odessa Anti-Maidan movement agreed to back my campaign for mayor as the candidate of Kulikovo Field.

The following day, May 2, the tragedy began.

Deputy Markin was my campaign manager. He was killed by the Nazis. Afterward, anyone who tried to agitate for the candidate of Kulikovo Field was attacked by the fascists. So I decided to stop the campaign. I couldn't take part in such elections.

Anyway, I was soon forced to leave Odessa. The local government spread lies, saying that I was responsible for the deaths at the House of Trade Unions. They claimed I took people into the building and subsequently the building burned, so I was guilty. They planned to arrest me.

Actually, I was one of the last people to enter the building. Never mind the fascists who threw Molotov cocktails, shot people and beat to death those who leapt from the burning building!

Kiev suppresses evidence

MB: Along with other Odessa political exiles, you have been conducting an independent investigation of the May 2 tragedy. Can you describe your work?

AA: The main problem for us is that a lot of information was lost the day after the tragedy. Many people went there. The House of Trade Unions was cleaned out before facts and evidence could be gathered.

Also, all the material recorded by the police and Security Service of Ukraine was never published and is classified top secret. So we have to look for information from open sources or solicit people who witnessed the massacre to share information. And of course many have been coerced by the new regime to remain silent or change their stories.

Our committee is sure that there were more than 48 victims on May 2. For one thing, the mother of an activist told us that when she went to the morgue to identify her child, the police showed her more than 60 bodies.

Officials of the government, the Security Service and the police do not provide any information, not even to the official investigation committee set up by the Ukrainian parliament. The leaders of the ultranationalist Ukrainian militia do not comment or make any statements. They are trying to avoid all questions about this tragedy.

But under the law they have to answer all the questions and turn over all the evidence and facts they have to the investigation committee.

MB: Do you have any parting message for workers and youth in the U.S.?

AA: The government in Kiev is doing everything in order to hide the real causes of this terrible tragedy and the real culprits of the massacre. We declare that we will pursue the investigation anyhow, and everyone guilty will answer for it and will be

punished.

We are grateful to all the comrades who support the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the oligarchy and the Nazis. We are grateful to everyone who is helping us, and we call for solidarity because only together, by joint efforts, can we defeat the world capitalist system.

¡No pasarán!

Svetlana Licht and Marina Nova provided translation assistance.



Moscow: United Communist Party activists attend opening of monument to Fidel Castro

written by Melinda Butterfield

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In Moscow, on Nov. 22, 2022, on Fidel Castro Square, the grand opening of the

monument to the great commander and leader of the Cuban Revolution took place.

Following Cuban President and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba Miguel Diaz-Canel, the communists of the OKP together with representatives of allied left organizations laid flowers at the open monument.



Translated by Melinda Butterfield

[Source: United Communist Party](#)

