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***Beyond starting a war, the worst thing is to support its continuation.***



Sources: Socialist Project

*The complex nature of the war in Ukraine, and especially of the question of the relative responsibility of the different parties, has made it difficult to mobilize a powerful anti-war movement.*

A part of the left even opposes an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations, which were abruptly interrupted at the end of March. The aim of this article is to shed light on the war in order to help opponents of imperialism adopt an enlightened position.

In view of the Divisions within the left, I think it is necessary to start with A few words about myself. I have taught the Union's policy Soviet and the states that emerged from it

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for many years. As a trade unionist and socialist, I have actively participated in the training of workers in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, from the when such activity became politically possible. That Education is socialist in inspiration, and we define socialism as *a consistent humanism*. Therefore, I have actively opposed both the Russian regime and the Ukrainian, both deeply hostile to the working class.

### **The situation of the working class**

The The situation of workers in independent Ukraine has not been better than their counterparts in Russia. In some respects, it is still worse. Since independence, a succession of predatory governments has transformed Ukraine from a region that was relatively prosperous of the Soviet Union in the poorest state in Europe. The population of Ukraine in the last thirty years decreased from 52 to 44 million (even before the current war led to huge migration) additional). And of those 44 million, a good number are working on Russia.

It is true that in Ukraine, unlike Russia, the Elections can change the government. But they can't change the anti-worker nature of state policy. A violent blow in February 2014, executed by ultranationalist (neo-fascist) forces and actively supported by the U.S. government, overthrew An elected president, albeit corrupt, blocking a deal, reached the previous day with the opposition, under the auspices of France, Germany and Poland, to form a coalition government and convene New elections.

The coup d'état and the first measures of the New regime, in particular a law that eliminates Russian, which uses Every day at least half of the population, as one of the two official languages, provoked resistance and, finally, a Armed confrontation in the eastern areas, predominantly of He speaks Russian, from the country. That opposition was suppressed everywhere, sometimes by violent means and with loss of life, as occurred in the city of Odessa in May 2014, with the exception of Donbass. Burst a civil war, with Russian intervention on the side of the insurgents and NATO intervention in support of Kiev.

### **Beginning?**

That Important dimension of war is not part of the narrative used by NATO, the Ukrainian government or the main media of Western communication, which prefers to speak of a "Russian invasion" already in 2014. But what transformed a protest movement against the Coup d'état in an armed revolt was the refusal of the new regime Ukrainian even to talk to dissidents from Donbass. Instead of to negotiate, Kiev immediately launched an "anti-terrorist operation" against the region, sending neo-fascist units of the newly formed

National Guard, as the regular army proved unreliable. (From fact, if Russia had wanted to take over Ukraine, it might have done so. Easily done then: Ukraine did not have an army worthy of that name). Russia was immediately accused of being an invader by Kiev, intervened directly with its armed forces only several months later. to avoid an imminent defeat of the insurgents.

The way in Whether one analyzes and evaluates this war depends on the starting point. The Ukrainian government, NATO spokesmen, mainstream media of Western communication, but also some people who are They call socialists, usually start with the invasion of Russia in February of 2022. The image it projects is that of a large, well-armed state. that invades a smaller innocent state that it is defending bravely their sovereignty.

As for the *motives* of the Russian invader, only citizens of NATO member states were told that the invasion was *not provoked*. In a propaganda campaign unprecedented in recent memory, the "Unprovocation" rater became mandatory to report about the invasion. (One could note, in passing, its absence in the reports on the U.S. and NATO invasions of Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia, Libya...) The word "unprovoked" served like this to block any serious discussion about the invader's motives, apart from their supposed imperialist appetite.

Simply raise The question of provocation is sufficient to earn the accusation of Be an apologist for the aggressor. And a part of the left too. He participates in that, typically limiting his explanation of the invasion to selected passages from Putin's speeches, such as his famous observation that the demise of the Soviet Union was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century". The phrase that follows is rarely He mentions, "[Whoever wants his return has no brain.](#)"

The which was avoided above all, was a serious analysis of the relations between Russia and Ukraine in the three decades before the invasion, a review that could verify the existence of imperialist interests attributed to Putin. But why waste energy, when everything is already It is clear: a large country with nuclear weapons invades a small one without nuclear weapons. Surely that's enough to give support? Unconditional to the Ukrainian regime? Why bother analyzing the class nature of that regime or the reasons for its sponsor of NATO to incite a confrontation and supply it with weapons and training?

Another argument that is sometimes heard is that the Autocratic Russia fears the example and attraction that the Ukraine's democracy in the people of Russia, with whom Ukraine shares A long border. In fact, the sad experience of the workers of Ukraine with their

"democracy" is one of the most important arguments Putin's strong against his liberal and socialist opponents.

Of In fact, Putin presented his goals when he launched the invasion: the Ukraine's "return to geopolitical neutrality", its "demilitarisation" and its "denazification". If the first is clear, the other two They require some explanation. Demilitarization expresses opposition from Putin to the arming and training of the Ukrainian army by of NATO, which, in effect, was being integrated into the armed force of NATO. the alliance, a process that began shortly after the coup d'état of 2014.

As for denazification, it means the elimination of the political influence of ultranationalists (neo-fascists) in the government and especially in its apparatuses of violence (the army, the political and regular police), as well as in language policy and cultural. The very essence of the ideology of the ultras is the hatred of Russia and everything Russian. Its influence within the state apparatus has not stopped growing, especially since the coup d'état of 2014.

### **European security?**

The "Unprovoked" qualifier next to the word "invasion" serves especially to hide the fact that a clear statement of the U.S. president that Ukraine would not become NATO member would in all likelihood have avoided this war. The NATO's expansion into Ukraine was the main problem posed by Moscow in the months leading up to the invasions. During that time, Putin He regularly proposed negotiating an agreement on the non-expansion of the NATO in Ukraine.

In December 2021, just a few weeks before The invasion, Moscow again formally proposed to the United States and to NATO to start negotiations immediately with a view to concluding a European Security Treaty. The proposal was ignored, as was those who had preceded it.

It is possible, of course, that Putin was lying about his desire to reach an agreement and that he alone was looking for an excuse to absorb Ukraine. But, then, Why not try that hypothesis, if there was the slightest chance of Avoid a war that the US administration had been waging predicting for months?

And keep in mind that the CIA, for its part, has established that the decision to invade was taken by Moscow only a few days before the order was issued. This indicates that the war could have been avoided if NATO had accepted the proposal of Russia to start negotiations.

### **U.S. denials**

The refusal of the US to react to the security concerns of Moscow in the months and years leading up to the invasion, despite a series of clear warnings from high-level U.S. officials, including William Burns, former ambassador to Moscow and currently head of the CIA suggests that the U.S. government did indeed *want this war*. In any case, the United States, with the enthusiastic support of the UK and the agreement of the other NATO members have *done absolutely nothing* since that the war began to promote a negotiated settlement that would end the horrific destruction of lives and socio-economic infrastructure.

More Quite the opposite: Washington has blocked any negotiated end of war. Take, for example, the "penalties of hell" imposed on Russia. Why were they not accompanied by conditions for their uprising, if the goal was to stop the invasion?

Other The goal, never admitted, is to consolidate U.S. domination on Europe's foreign policy. Since the end of the USSR in 1991, The United States has consistently acted to exclude Russia from any European security structure to replace NATO, an alliance born of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. As it was predictably, that policy provoked hostility from Russia, even earlier. That Putin came to power and at a time when advisers Americans held key positions in the Russian administration. The Russia's hostility, in turn, served as a convenient justification. for the continued expansion of NATO. And so it didn't take long. in which NATO declared Russia an existential threat to the security of its members. The circle was closed.

Before To continue, I must make one thing clear: acknowledge the concerns of Russia's security and Washington's role in provocation and The prolongation of the present war does not mean exonerating Moscow from its Liability for loss of life and material destruction caused by the current war. The Charter of the United Nations recognizes only two exceptions to the prohibition of the use of military force by Part of one state against another: when the use of force is authorized by the Security Council or when a state can claim legitimate self-defence.

NATO's expansion to Russia's borders, the armament and training of the Ukrainian army, starting from the 2014 coup, Washington's abrogation of a series of treaties of Nuclear arms limitation, and their stationing of missiles in Poland and Romania, only 5-7 minutes flight from Moscow – can be, in my opinion, legitimately regarded by Moscow as serious threats to the security of Russia.

*But the threat was not immediate, so it did not justify the invasion.* Moscow I had not exhausted all alternatives. Even from your own point In view, the invasion worsened their

security situation by bringing together NATO under the leadership of the United States, and especially the allow Washington to consolidate French and German support for the NATO's aggressive policy towards Russia. These two NATO members They were the most opposed to its expansion before the invasion. And now Sweden and Finland, formerly 'neutral' (although, in fact, in On the way to a de facto integration of their armies into the forces of the NATO) have decided to join the alliance.

In the days leading up to the invasion, Russia claimed Ukraine was planning to invade regions Dissidents. On the eve of the invasion, after refraining from During the eight years of civil war, Moscow finally recognized the independence of the two regions of Donbass and signed a Mutual defense treaty with them. He did so to justify that Moscow claimed that it was lawfully invading, in response to the request from their allies, victims of aggression.

The validity of the claim that Kiev was preparing to attack is not Clearly, although in the months before the invasion of Russia, Kiev had openly declared its intention to recover all its territory, including Crimea, with its armed forces. And it had concentrated 120,000 Soldiers, half of his army, on the border of the dissident region of the Donbass. In the four days before the invasion, the 700 observers for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documented a huge intensification of bombing, most from the Kiev side of the demarcation line, i.e. of the forces of Ukraine. In the eight years prior to the invasion, 18,000 lives lost, including 1,304 civilians, the vast majority On the insurgent side.

As noted, the CIA confirms that the Moscow's decision to invade was made in February, just a few days before it happened. That contradicts the repeated claims of the U.S. administration in the previous months of a Invasion was imminent.

From my point of view, whatever that were Kiev's intentions before the invasion, Moscow should having waited before launching his army. Until Kiev moved, could have continued to seek the support of France and Germany for a Security treaty, since these two states were the most They opposed NATO expansion. As such, the invasion apparently pushed at least a part of Ukraine's population that up to then he had sympathized with Russia in the arms of the ultranationalists.

### **Political stalemate, brutal struggle**

One Once the war began, the humanist position is to demand an end. Fast and negotiated to minimize loss of life and socio-economic infrastructure. Because *after starting a war*,

*the most reprehensible act is to keep it going when there is no Hope that the continuation of the struggle can change the outcome.*

Yet that is exactly the policy of Kiev and NATO, whose goal, in Biden's words, is [to "weaken Russia."](#) Incredibly, this rejection of diplomacy is supported even by certain circles that identify with the socialist left.

One You must understand that, despite the falsely optimistic picture of the course of the war for Ukraine that has been presented by the spokesmen of NATO and the servile media, the reality is that the Continued fighting can only increase the suffering of the workers in Ukraine, with no hope of improving the outcome of the war for them. The opposite is true.

The restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the stated objective of Kiev, which has the support of NATO, it is certainly legitimate (insofar as that does not deny the right to cultural or territorial self-determination of non-Ukrainian ethnic and linguistic groups). But that goal, declared now by Kiev, it is illusory. Therefore, a commitment is inevitable. *Insist on continuing the war until it recovers All lost territory is, in fact, just as criminal, if not more so. criminal, than the invasion itself.* In addition, the stubborn search for This chimerical objective runs the risk of a direct confrontation with NATO and nuclear war.

In fact, the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, which were largely ignored by the media of Servile communication, took place in the first weeks of the and seemed to be progressing well. Ukraine reportedly reports accepted a neutral, non-aligned and non-nuclear status, with its security. guaranteed, in case of attack, by the permanent members of the Council of UN Security. Russia, for its part, abandoned its demand for denazification, and Ukraine promised to restore the official status of the Russian language, which he had banned in public life.

There were also some movement towards compromise on the thorny issues of the state of Donbass. As for Crimea, Russia clearly never It was agreed to postpone a final resolution fifteen years.

After After five weeks of war, Kiev and Moscow expressed optimism about a Negotiated ceasefire. But at that very moment, the president of the United States ended its European visit with a remarkable speech. After stating that Putin wanted to recreate an empire, [he declared](#): "By God, this man cannot remain in power." Some days then, the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, suddenly appeared in Kiev. An aide to

Zelenskyy told the media that had brought a simple message: "Don't sign a agreement with Putin, who is a war criminal."

As by Coincidentally, that took place just after Russian troops were removed from the vicinity of Kiev, which was presented by the Western media, erroneously, in my opinion, as a sign that Ukraine could win the war. And at the same time, also as if by chance, Kiev announced the discovery of crimes of war attributed to Russian forces in the village of Bucha. That put End of negotiations, to this day.

### **The diplomatic situation**

While whereas Moscow regularly repeats its desire for a resumption of the In diplomacy, Kiev insists on its conditions for ending the war: the return of all its territory, including Crimea. He even added Henry Kissinger to his blacklist of enemies of Ukraine for having asked a negotiated agreement that would mean, at least temporarily, a Return to the territorial status quo of before the invasion and the neutrality of Ukraine. An adviser to Zelenskyy described that statement. like a "[stab in the back of Ukraine](#)." Someone commented that when Henry Kissinger becomes a voice of reason, the situation is really serious.

We must remember that Zelenskyy was elected president in 2019 with a Pro-peace platform, winning 73.2% of the vote. He immediately declared its intention to restart the [Minsk Agreement](#) and stated that it was prepared to pay the price of a loss of popularity. Dmitrii Yarosh, the neo-fascist leader who had been Appointed adviser to the army's chief of staff, he responded in a [televised interview](#) that it wasn't Zelenskyy's popularity that would suffer. "He will lose his life. It will hang from a tree in Khreshchatyk [a central street in Kiev], if betrays Ukraine and those who died in the revolution and war."

But in October 2019, Zelenskyy, however, signed a new agreement with Russia and Donbass dissidents for the elimination of heavy weapons of the contact line, an exchange of prisoners and the granting of some autonomy to the region, all in the [Minsk II Agreement](#). And when the soldiers of the neo-fascist regiment of Azov refused to Zelenskyy traveled to Donbass to call them to order. But Far-right groups blocked the withdrawal, and on October 14 In 2019, 10,000 masked demonstrators, dressed in black and with torches, marched through the streets of Kiev, shouting "Glory to Ukraine! No to capitulation!"

Zelenskyy finally received the message. Since the 2014 coup, neo-fascists had penetrated every Once again in the various armed and other structures of the State (especially the



army, civil and political police). Their ideology, at the core of which is a deep hatred of Russia and everything Russian, penetrated into political circles beyond the overtly neo-fascists, including those who consider themselves liberals.

By therefore, there is an alliance between the "deep state" of the United, which does not hide its objective of weakening Russia, of seeking a » Strategic defeat", and the Ukrainian ultra-nationalist neo-Nazis, who exert a significant, perhaps decisive, influence on the Government: Last October, Zelenskyy went so far as to sign a decree on the "impossibility of negotiating with Putin": a disastrous formula for the working class of Ukraine and the whole world.

### **Immediate ceasefire**

The Canadian Left Should Demand Canadian Government Pressure in favour of an immediate ceasefire and a return to the drawing table negotiations, something Moscow has continuously requested. The Deeply biased news coverage of mainstream media communication on the "great victories" of the Ukrainian army, when, in fact, it is a question of Russian strategic withdrawals, led to Cape in good order and with a minimum of losses, in preparation of a Great offensive with consolidated and augmented forces. Nothing has changed a Basic fact: Kiev cannot win the war, or even improve its position, by military means, without direct NATO intervention, and the threat of nuclear confrontation that would imply.

In the long run, the left must build a broad movement, such as the one that helped block Canadian involvement in the Iraq war or the stationing of U.S. medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe in the 1980s, to demand that Canada leave NATO, which is a dangerous, imperialist organization that threatens all of humanity.

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