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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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08.10.2023

Biden's border wall and the war in Ukraine

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden announced he had ordered the construction of a 20-mile extension of Donald Trump's border wall along a section of the US-Mexico border. Biden claimed he had no choice and was simply implementing a mandate left over from the Trump administration. But Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas cited an "acute and immediate need... to prevent unlawful entries into the United States."



Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, left, listens to Deputy patrol agent in charge of the US Border Patrol Anthony Crane as he tours the section of the border wall Tuesday, May 17, 2022, in Hidalgo, Texas. [AP Photo/Joel Martinez/The Monitor]

On Thursday, the DHS said it would begin deporting asylum seekers from Venezuela who had crossed into the US illegally. This could affect hundreds of thousands of desperate and impoverished workers who have been driven to seek refuge and employment in the US as a result of the economic crisis in Venezuela, stoked by US sanctions and a de facto blockade aimed at destabilizing the government of President Nicolas Maduro.

These vicious and anti-democratic attacks on the working class are a craven accommodation to the Republican right and Donald Trump, who in a recent interview took a page out of *Mein Kampf* to accuse migrants of “poisoning the blood of our country.”

Two days ago, in a statement on the ousting of Republican Kevin McCarthy from his position as House Speaker, the WSWS noted that the central priority of the Democratic Party and the Biden administration was the escalation of the US-NATO war against Russia.

The Democrats, we wrote, will “collaborate with the domestic agenda of the Republicans in exchange for guarantees that funding for Ukraine is untouchable. The Democrats have no problem working with fascists in the Republican Party; after all, they are in an alliance with fascists in Ukraine.”

Biden’s action on the border completely confirms this appraisal. The Democrats are seeking, if they are able, to create some sort of rearrangement in the House that will make countless billions in financing for the Ukraine war inviolable, and in exchange they will agree to anything.

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In 2020, Biden made his pledge to add “not one foot” to Trump’s border wall a major part of his appeal to voters. The fact that he has so crudely reversed it is a measure of the desperation of the dominant sections of the American ruling class that see the war against Russia as an existential question. They know there is little popular support for the war, and fear that support is eroding within sections of the political elite, both in the US and internationally.

These developments have shattered all claims that the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine is about democracy, either in Ukraine or the United States itself. And along with mounting attacks on democratic rights comes an intensifying assault on social programs and living conditions of the working class. With the national debt and budget deficits exploding, mainly due to ever greater military spending and tax cuts and bailouts for the rich, there are increasing demands for the gutting of social benefits from both sides of the political aisle.

Aside from the military, the CIA, the state apparatus in general and the corporate elite, the social forces that enthusiastically support the war are the upper-middle class layers who benefited financially from three decades of US wars abroad and the suppression for nearly four decades—now over—of the class struggle within the US.

To pay for the spiraling costs of the war and military rearmament, the ruling class has launched an offensive against the wages, jobs and living conditions of workers to make the working class bear the burden of the war. This policy meets with enthusiastic approval among the affluent upper-middle-class and their political representatives in the pseudo-left political organizations such as the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

The DSA is thoroughly integrated into the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracies, and has more recently been elevated into high positions in both as the movement of the working class has grown and increasingly assumed the form of a rebellion against the bureaucratic agents of capitalism in the trade unions.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the most prominent DSA Democrat, and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders have supported the US-led war against Russia from the beginning, repeatedly voting for multi-billion-dollar arms packages for the right-wing regime in Kiev. That government, installed in a far-right coup in 2014 organized by the US and German governments, is allied with neo-Nazi outfits such as the Azov Battalion and honors Stepan Bandera, the Ukrainian nationalist and fascist who allied with Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union in World War II and participated in massacres of Poles and Jews.

Late last month, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez condemned Republican lawmakers as insufficiently committed to the war with Russia. “Do they even support Ukraine?” she asked. “I don’t think that Republicans have even made clear that they don’t agree with Russia.”

On September 30, Sanders publicly and vocally endorsed more funding for the Ukraine war, declaring on Twitter, “I look forward to seeing Congress provide, in the very near future, financial support for Ukraine, which is valiantly struggling against Russian aggression.”

How have these pro-imperialist, Democratic Party anti-socialists responded to Biden’s attacks on migrants carried out as a quid quo pro for Republican support for the war?

AOC issued one mild statement calling on Biden to “reverse course” on extending the wall and repeating the standard Democratic Party mantra in favor of “meaningful immigration reform.” She said nothing about the connection between Biden’s adaptation to Trump’s

fascistic migrant policy and the war in Ukraine. Nor did she retract her early endorsement of Biden's bid for reelection in 2024.

As for Sanders, he has evidently said nothing about Biden's border wall. On the war, his position was summed up Wednesday when at least 11 anti-war protesters were arrested outside his Senate office.

Jacobin magazine, which is politically aligned with the DSA, has published just one article on the budget crisis in the US, the removal of House Speaker McCarthy and the ongoing crisis over his replacement. The article, by Paul Heideman, mentions the Ukraine war only once in passing, makes no connection between it and the political crisis in Washington, and concludes that the passage of a continuing resolution last Saturday averting a government shutdown was "a major defeat for the entire GOP."

The pseudo-left performs its most critical service to US imperialism by working from within as well as without the trade union apparatuses to promote every sellout and betrayal of workers' struggles. From the current mini-strike by Detroit Three autoworkers, deliberately minimized and sabotaged by UAW President Shawn Fain, to the strike by Screen Actors Guild actors, to the three-day walkout by 85,000 Kaiser Permanente healthcare workers—the DSA and similar groups promote the capitalist stooges and imperialist agents who head these organizations and portray them as genuine workers' leaders.

The working class is, in fact, the basic force that can and must stop the war in Ukraine—which is already morphing into a world war—through its independent, united and international industrial and political mobilization against the capitalist system and for socialism. The task of class conscious workers and youth is to build the necessary socialist leadership in the working class to provide a perspective and program to end imperialist war and the capitalist system that breeds it.

World Socialist 07.10.2023