

SOCIALIST★APPEAL

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST TENDENCY

UKRAINE INVASION SUPPLEMENT - 25 FEB 2022

Peace between peoples! War between classes! The main enemy is at home!



Russian forces have unleashed a massive attack on Ukraine. Tanks are already rolling into Kiev.

In previous weeks, Putin built up an estimated 190,000 troops close to Ukraine's borders, while European leaders shuttled between Kiev and Moscow, seeking a diplomatic solution. But one does not mobilise such a huge number of troops, tanks, and guns just in order to dance a diplomatic minuet.

NATO expansion

Every war must have some justification; and, in this case, Putin mentioned: "A hostile anti-Russia is being created on our historic lands."

This claim is constantly rubbished by the West as mere propaganda. On its own, clearly Ukraine does not represent much of a threat. But as part of an imperialist military bloc led by the United States, planted on Russia's doorstep, it most certainly would.

At the heart of the present dispute is, therefore, Ukraine's future membership of NATO. Guaranteeing against this was a central Russian demand, which has been repeatedly refused by Washington.

It is not quite clear whether acceptance of this demand would, in itself, have prevented an invasion. But continually rejecting it out of hand made it inevitable.

Ukraine is now in no position to resist Russian advances. The moment the West announced that it did not intend to send troops to defend Ukraine, the matter was settled in advance.

For all their public displays of bravado, the imperialists have not the slightest interest in the people of Ukraine. They are regarded as mere pawns in a cynical game of Great Power politics. It is only a matter of time before the Ukrainian capital is in Russian hands. The war will then, to all intents and purposes, be over.

Imperialist hypocrisy

Western leaders have fallen over themselves in their haste to condemn the invasion. All of these fine, defiant words are contrasted with the fact that Joe Biden, Boris Johnson, and co. never had the slightest intention of providing military support to Kiev.

Their only contribution to the present crisis was a never-ending series of bellicose statements, accompanied by dire threats of 'severe' (but unspecified) consequences that would allegedly follow a Russian attack.

These remarks, backed up by an obstinate intransigence to even consider Russia's demands, helped to make an invasion inevitable.

In short, all these ladies and gentlemen were quite prepared to fight to the last drop of the blood – specifically, that of the Ukrainians.

Even more despicable was the rabid ranting that was coming out of London, with Boris Johnson and Keir Starmer competing to prove who was the most ferocious enemy of Russia and the most ardent supporter of NATO.

All these words stink of hypocrisy.

Where was the chorus of condemnation when the Americans and their 'allies' (read: lackeys) launched a criminal and bloody war against Iraq? And what about their lying propaganda about non-existent 'weapons of mass destruction', which served as a cynical cover for an act of blatant aggression against a sovereign state?

Parading on TV for the world to see, in their tailor-made suits and polished smiles, the Western leaders are made to appear as the voice of reason and humanism. But scratch that surface, and you will find nothing but filth. There is no force on Earth as reactionary and as drenched in blood as US imperialism and its puppets in the West.

Limits of pacifism

As always, when war breaks out, our ears are suddenly assailed by a strange noise: the bleating of the pacifists – those pleasant, well-meaning souls who inform us that peace is good and war is bad.

But wars have never been halted by sentimental appeals to decency and common sense. On the contrary, common sense tells us that throughout the ages, all serious matters have always been resolved by force of arms.

One of the most remarkable features of pacifists is their seemingly endless capacity for self-deception. They eagerly cling to each and any speech by a leader fervently declaring his or her attachment to peace. Or this or that empty resolution passed by a government or institution repeating the same banal sentiments.

A naïve belief in the efficacy of such things make the pacifists useful dupes of the warmongers, since they lull people into a false sense of security.

Such speeches and resolutions merely serve as a convenient smokescreen to conceal the real, aggressive intentions that lie behind them.

And the biggest fraud of all is the comically misnamed United Nations. This body was set up following the Second World War, supposedly to prevent new wars in the future.

And every time there is a danger of war, the pacifists and left reformists call on the UN to intervene. But the UN has never prevented any war, and has in fact been involved in more than one. Today is no different.

Capitalism and war

Lenin once said that capitalism is horror without end. It is a system with war and reactionary national chauvinism baked into its foundations, as a part of the international competition for markets and spheres of influence.

How many millions of workers and poor have been marched onto the battlefields and sacrificed in the name of the 'nation', which is merely another word for the interests of the capitalist class?

As long as capitalism remains, war will remain a permanent feature, and there can be no talk of 'united nations', just like there can be no talk of a united nation. The only unity that is possible is international class unity.

It is the task of Marxists and socialists to expose the illusion that the interests of the workers and poor can be reconciled with those of the ruling class. The only way to fight war is to fight against the system which causes war.

What now?

While it is too early to say that the war is over, nobody can doubt that the Russians will achieve all their declared objectives in a very short time.

The prevailing mood amongst ordinary Ukrainians will be one of despair, pessimism, and, above all, war-weariness and a strong desire for peace and some kind of stability. This may provide Putin the basis for setting up a pro-Russian government in Kiev.

Obviously, the question of Ukrainian membership of NATO will be off the agenda. Under the declared banner of denazification, there will be a purge of right-wing and ultra-nationalist organisations.

When Putin says he does not intend to occupy Ukraine, there is no reason to doubt his word. To be more accurate, he will not occupy it for long. That would be too difficult and very expensive.

No. He will withdraw, having made his point. And he will now be negotiating from a position that is far stronger than before – able to show both to the Ukrainians and the rest of the world that Russia is not to be trifled with; that NATO's expansion to the east must stop; that Ukraine and Georgia must never join it; and that NATO must not place large concentrations of forces near Russia's borders or hold provocative manoeuvres in the vicinity.

The US will likely announce new sanctions against Russia, using tools to punish Russian banks and its larger financial system that Washington had so far held in reserve. But these will do nothing to alter Russia's position, since Putin has taken steps to drastically reduce Russia's dependence on the West.

On the other hand, if sanctions lead to the cutting off of Russian gas supplies to Europe, it would have catastrophic effects and we would then expect a further rise in food and fuel prices.

What attitude should we take?

The present situation has inevitably been met by an intensified barrage of propaganda in the prostitute media. The aim of this is not at all to promote the interests and well-being of the people of Ukraine. On the contrary, their interests have been cynically sacrificed on the altar of imperialism.

It is imperative that we maintain a firm class position and do not allow ourselves to be dragged along by the lying imperialist propaganda machine.

Do we support Vladimir Putin and the Russian oligarchy whose interests he backs? No, Putin is no friend of the working class, either in Russia, Ukraine, or anywhere else. The invasion of Ukraine is merely a continuation of his own cynical and reactionary agenda.

But that is not the question we should ask ourselves at this time. The question is: can we in any shape or form appear to be in the same camp as US and British imperialism? Can we associate ourselves, directly or indirectly with NATO, that reactionary imperialist gang? Or with Boris Johnson and the war-monger Liz Truss, or that Blairite traitor Starmer?

It is the task of the Russian working class to deal with Putin. Our fight is against imperialism, NATO, and our own reactionary Tory government and those miserable so-called Labour leaders who are its partners in crime.

As Lenin always insisted: the main enemy is at home. It is high time we reminded ourselves of that fact.

READ OUR FULL ANALYSIS:



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR

Socialist Appeal is the Marxist tendency in Britain. We are fighting in the labour movement for a socialist programme that will put an end to capitalism. We also organise students and youth around Marxist ideas in the struggle to change society.

Marxism arms us with a conscious understanding of society and the class struggle. Only by absorbing this outlook can we lay the foundation for the overthrow of capitalism.

Our tendency therefore stresses the need to educate and train our members in Marxist theory and the struggles of the working class. Marxist theory is a guide to action, a guide to the class struggle.

We are faced with a deep capitalist crisis and a Tory government pushing a vicious programme of austerity. The labour movement must mobilise to kick out this Tory government and the crisis-ridden capitalist system they represent.

We are internationalists. Capitalism is global; socialism must be global too. The fight by the working class is an international struggle. We therefore work with the International Marxist Tendency - the international organisation of Marxists - to prepare for world socialist revolution.

The fight to change society will not happen by itself. Every worker, student, unemployed person - young and old - must get involved in this battle. There has never been a more important task. Don't stand on the sidelines! Get involved today!

GET INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION!

