

## Defend Ukraine's independence! For defeat of Moscow's invasion! US troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, *all* of Europe!

*The following statement was issued March 3 by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on behalf of the SWP National Committee.*

The Vladimir Putin regime in Russia has unleashed a murderous war, including massive bombardment of civilian-occupied urban centers in Ukraine. In face of this intentional carnage, and despite Putin's dangerous and provocative action placing Moscow's nuclear forces on high alert, Ukrainians are fighting courageously, often arms in hand, to defend Ukraine's national sovereignty and independence. The Socialist Workers Party hails their resistance and calls for the defeat of Putin's invading forces.

As the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union collapsed in face of massive popular mobilizations at the beginnings of the 1990s, Ukraine was one of 14 former republics to declare national independence. Now Putin's regime is ruthlessly seeking to claw back, under Moscow's hegemony, those nations incarcerated in the czarist prison house of nations, regenerating the Russian empire today with Putin as its czar.

Putin's aim is "to erase our history, erase our country," as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky concisely put it March 1.

Putin insists Ukraine is not a nation and has no right to exist as one. "Modern Ukraine was entirely and fully created by Russia," he claims. It is "an inalienable part of our own [Russian] history, culture and spiritual space." He proclaims that his hoped-for resurrection of the empire is a step toward rejuvenating Christendom, with its "Holy See" in the Russian Orthodox patriarchate of Moscow.

Russia's armed forces are facing tenacious resistance and taking thousands of deaths and injuries in the first week of the assault. In face of these setbacks, Moscow's armed forces have now stepped up heavy bombardment of residential and commercial areas in hopes of sowing terror and cowing the Ukrainian people into submission. Russian planes and cruise missiles have struck apartment buildings, homes, schools, hospitals and railway stations in Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv and numerous smaller cities. Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported March 1 that 2,000 civilians had been killed during the first week, as well as many Ukrainian soldiers.

Under Putin's direction, his high command is intensifying siege warfare against the entire population of



**"Ukraine - Peace. Moscow - Freedom," says banner at Feb. 24 demonstration in Moscow. More than 60 protests were organized across Russia in first week demanding halt to Putin's bloody war.**

Ukraine, cutting off electricity, water and sanitation, and cellphone, television, and radio communications.

In face of the rise of Jew-hating demagoguery and violence in today's world, there is mounting disgust among Jews in Ukraine and beyond at the outrageous claims by Putin — himself a product of Russia's notoriously Jew-hating secret police, formerly called the KGB — that the aggression aims to "denazify" Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Zelensky is Jewish, with a grandfather who fought in the Soviet army to turn back the German imperialist invaders, and other family members who were killed in the Holocaust. On March 2 "denazifying" Russian missiles struck a TV tower in Babyn Yar — the site of the slaughter of more than 30,000 Jews by Nazi forces during World War II — desecrating a Jewish cemetery. No wonder Jews around the world are seeing more of the truth and encouraging Jews in Ukraine to join with others there to stand and fight.

More Russian soldiers and sailors are becoming demoralized and disillusioned. They've been lied to by Putin's regime about what to expect, being told they'd be welcomed as "liberators," and would quickly roll over Ukraine's military forces. Now they're not only taking substantial casualties but facing shortages of food and fuel. Some are disobeying orders to shell civilian targets; retreating from battle or surrendering without a fight; even sabotaging or abandoning Russian military equipment.

Inside Russia, tens of thousands have poured into the streets of cities and towns all across that vast country to demand a halt to the war. They are doing so in face of police repression, with more than 7,000 arrests the first

week, as well as government threats of being charged with “treason.” Street demonstrations are spreading across Europe, the Americas, and worldwide, as well.

The Socialist Workers Party opposes the broadly aimed economic and financial embargo imposed on Russia by the U.S., European, and other imperialist ruling classes, as well as military maneuvers by these governments. Those sanctions ultimately fall most harshly on working people in Russia.

Washington and its capitalist allies in London, Paris, Berlin and elsewhere shed crocodile tears over Ukraine’s national sovereignty and the plight of its people. High-flown phrases aside, however, their only real concern is to protect their own profits and strategic political interests in the region. The Socialist Workers Party demands the complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops and both conventional and nuclear arms and nuclear missile systems from Europe!

Since the 1990s, both Democratic and Republican administrations and Congresses have acted to reinforce U.S. imperialism’s post-World War II position as the dominant “European” military power. In collaboration with other imperialist governments in Europe, as well as the other bourgeois regimes involved, Washington has extended the reach of its armed might close to Russia’s borders. This includes deployment of ballistic missiles in Poland and Romania.

Putin’s efforts to excuse his bloodthirsty invasion of Ukraine on grounds of moves by Washington and other NATO governments are as cynical as they are false. A sovereign and independent Ukraine poses no military threat to Russia of any kind.

At the same time, the Socialist Workers Party lends no political confidence to the capitalist government in Kyiv, which stands behind Ukraine’s wealthy rulers in their pressure on the living and job conditions and political rights of coal miners, rail workers, farmers and others among the oppressed and exploited.

The Socialist Workers Party stands and acts on our communist continuity with V.I. Lenin, under whose

leadership the Bolshevik Party in October 1917 led the working class to state power in Russia. It was that revolutionary workers and peasants republic that ensured the right to self-determination to oppressed nations formerly trapped within the czarist empire.

In 1922, after consolidating victory over the counterrevolutionary armies of the capitalists, landlords and 16 invading foreign powers, the Bolshevik-led government established a voluntary federation of the Russian, Ukrainian, and four other republics: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Communists in Russia, Lenin insisted, must “declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism.” It was only after the counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin against Lenin’s proletarian internationalist course that Ukraine and other oppressed peoples were again denied their language, cultural, and other national rights.

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party are campaigning to get out the truth about the Russian government’s murderous assault on Ukraine’s sovereignty, on its right to exist as a nation. We and fellow communists in other countries will organize to get this statement, along with weekly *Militant* coverage of the struggle of the Ukrainian people, into the hands of working people far and wide, including strike picket lines, social protests, at workers’ doorsteps and everywhere else we go. And to take them with us in protests against Russia’s invasion that are occurring across the United States and the world over.

The Socialist Workers Party is mobilizing its candidates for the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, and other public offices to use the 2022 election campaign period to maximize getting out the truth and presenting an independent working-class foreign policy. A foreign policy that starts from the interests of the toilers at home and internationally — not from hypocritical chants about “democracy” and “freedom” behind which the capitalist rulers seek to mask their exploitation and oppression of billions the world over.

The stakes are enormous. Working people must see the necessity of taking political power into our own hands — as toilers did in Cuba at the opening of the 1960s, following a popular, workers-and-farmers-based revolution — or we will face a future of social devastation, reaction, world war, and even nuclear catastrophe.

Join us in this effort to raise an independent working-class voice in the United States — to have an impact on public opinion here, elsewhere in the Americas, Europe, and the world. Join us in demanding:

For the defeat of Moscow’s murderous invasion and bombardment of Ukraine!

Defend Ukraine’s independence and sovereignty!

Get Washington’s nuclear weapons and armed forces out of Europe, *all* of Europe, now!

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