

Ukraine: NATO's Proxy war

Sungur Savran

The war in Ukraine has become a catastrophe for the international left.¹ We are of course talking about left-wing movements that call themselves “socialist” or “communist”. Although this war is in every way a child of imperialism, instigated, caused, perpetuated by imperialism and used for its future purposes, a great part of the international left discusses the war either pushing the issue of imperialism to the back stage or completely ignoring it. The same is true for the left in Turkey, where a very radical anti-imperialist tradition had taken root in the 1960s and the 1970s, many revolutionary cadres losing their lives fighting for the ouster of NATO from the country.

What we wish to do in this article is to lay bare the true nature of the war in Ukraine, or more specifically, expose the part played by imperialism in this war, a role that has largely remained hidden from the view. This we will try to do by adding new links to a series of articles we have already written on the topic. Before moving to the new material, it would be in order to introduce the reader to the overall assessment we have so far made on this war.

1. The Ukraine war: a general assessment

We have already said that behind this war stands imperialism. In our previous writings, we explained and provided the evidence for this plain truth rejected or ignored by an overwhelming part of the international left, going to the roots of the war. There is of course no need to repeat those arguments. On the contrary,

¹ This article was first published in Turkish in the journal *Teori ve Politika*, No. 86-87, Spring-Summer 2022. It has been translated into English by the author himself, with only slight changes in the text for adaptation to an international audience. Some footnotes have also been omitted as too many references to articles in Turkish would be pointless.

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the purpose of this article is to deepen the analysis so far provided by testing the previous propositions we put forth earlier on the basis of new evidence and reach certain conclusions regarding the attitude adopted by the left in general.

However, not repeating what we have already said on the topic may leave some of the readers of this article in the dark about our overall analysis of the Ukraine war if they are not familiar with our previous work on the issue. That is why we think it appropriate to start out with a summary of our views. In order not to repeat what has already been said, we will keep the summary limited to the main points.²

- One cannot and should not take a myopic view of this kind of earth-shattering development in international affairs. The real dynamics of the war in Ukraine can only be grasped by adopting a broad viewpoint and taking into consideration the totality of the historic tendencies at play. The road that led to the Ukraine war was paved by the aggressive enlargement of NATO since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, first in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and subsequently in the former Soviet republics. Ukraine was the straw that broke the camel's back since it confronts Russia with a mortal threat of a nuclear attack.
- Behind this aggressive expansion of NATO lies the threat perceived by imperialism, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall, due to the existence of Russia and China as major players in the international arena for its future hegemony over the world and this despite the blatant fact of the restoration of capitalism. Regarding China, it is clear that the question is an economic, and increasingly military, one. Russia, on the other hand, is, for the moment at least, dangerous first because of its military power and secondarily because it is one of the major players in the world energy market. But that is not the whole story regarding Russia. Because of the melting of the glaciers in the North Pole Region due to climate change, a landslide transformation in the configuration of the world economy is a highly likely scenario. The fact that this would present Russia with extremely favourable possibilities of economic growth aggravates the problem that Russia poses for imperialism. (The accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO is directly a product of this scenario.³) These two gigantic countries, Russia and China, starting from a peasant economy, has each reached, at different times, a level that has made technological leaps possible, thanks to the central planning of the economy on the basis of public property in large means of production. Imperialism therefore pursues the aim of bringing these countries down on their knees, dividing them up if possible or, if not, turning them into semi-colonies.
- The preparations for this strategic orientation on the part of imperialism started

2 The reader will find a more detailed analysis in our three-part article written before the war started: "Russia's Riposte to NATO's Encirclement", <http://redmed.org/article/russias-riposte-natos-encirclement>.

3 We have taken up this question in greater detail in an article in Turkish. Sungur Savran, "İsveç ve Finlandiya Konusunda Büyük Yalan: (1) Dünyanın Çatısında Kılıç Şakırtıları", <https://gercek-gazetesil.net/politika/isvec-ve-finlandiya-konusunda-buyuk-yalan-1-dunyanin-catisinda-kilic-sakirtilari>.

immediately after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 or, in the case of China, at the turn of the century, when the country irreversibly entered the process of the restoration of capitalism, albeit under the political continuity of the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. The civil war in Yugoslavia, instigated first by the EU and subsequently by the US,⁴ did not only aim for the assimilation of the Balkans, a region with its high level of historical specificity, under the newly imposed appellation of “Southeast Europe”, into the European Union through the destruction of a powerful South Slav state traditionally allied to Russia. It was also a dress rehearsal of a political and military strategy to be implemented in the former Soviet space when the time was ripe for that.⁵

- The foundations of the war in Ukraine were laid during the Maidan events of 2014. That sizable sectors of Ukrainian society had developed a strong infatuation for future accession to the EU and NATO had already become clear during the counter revolutionary event of 2005, which almost aped a similar event in Georgia in 2004, both to be named “colour revolutions”. But the 2014 events were much more meticulously planned and reactionary, almost under the direct guidance of the US. This movement became the bedrock upon which rose a regime committed to accession to NATO and the EU, but also marked by a rabid nationalism hostile to Russia. This was patently a coup d’Etat that relied disproportionately on the military power of neo-Nazi gangs of different appellations. The population of the Crimean peninsula decided, in a referendum whose result can with only great difficulty be questioned, to join the Russian Federation (it had already been Russian territory up until the 1950s). More importantly, the people of the Donbass region, a region dominated by a Russophone population of proletarian nature, established two statelets that called themselves “people’s republics” and donned Soviet-era symbols, including flags with the hammer and the sickle (the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics). Their struggle for independence from Ukraine cost 14 thousand people on all sides their lives between 2014 and 2022, even before this recent war started.
- This strategic orientation of imperialism may well have existed for the three decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, but it has gained a renewed urgency since 2008. The collapse of the Wall Street bank Lehman Brothers that year first triggered a financial crash of epic proportions, which then paved the way to the onset of the Third Great Depression of the imperialist epoch.⁶ To summarise briefly, great depressions are profound economic crises of a special character, peculiar to the period of historic decline of the

4 On the Yugoslav civil war see (in Turkish) Sungur Savran, “İkinci Kosova Savaşı”, *Sınıf Bilinci*, sayı 23-24, Bahar-Yaz 1999, <http://www.devrimcimarksizm.net/sites/default/files/sinif-bilinci-23-24.pdf>.

5 On this see our “Globalisation and the New World Order: The New Dynamics of Imperialism and War”, in Alan Freeman & Boris Kagarlitsky (eds), *The Politics of Empire. Globalisation in Crisis*, London: Pluto Press, 2004.

6 The first, originally called the Long Depression, extended from 1873 to 1896. The second is the famous Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s.

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capitalist mode of production, a decline that is the result of the fact that, with its characteristic private methods of appropriation that create a fragmented process of economic decision-making, capitalism is fundamentally ill-adapted to the management of a productive system based on the socialisation of the means of production and of labour. Market adjustments cannot provide a solution to this profound economic crisis. Great depressions can only be overcome after great tremors and upheavals in the political, ideological and military spheres. Fascism and world wars are the most barbaric forms taken by these upheavals. Capitalism has brought humanity once again to the threshold of the alternative “socialism or barbarism”.⁷ The Ukraine war was born as a synthesis of such contradictions. It is the preparatory stage of the future attack on one of the two rivals to the domination of imperialism shaken as it is by deep spasms due to its senility.

- This then implies that, difficult as it may be to determine the exact timing, a new world war has become a palpable prospect. From now on Marxists need to proceed with their political preparations under the shadow of this prospect.
- Under these circumstances, Marxists, socialists, communists, revolutionaries, and anti-imperialist fighters of all countries are dutybound to stand up to the efforts of imperialism in Ukraine, i.e. the defeat and weakening of Russia, which will make it vulnerable to the attacks of imperialism. The way to push back the threat of world war, endangering not only humanity but all organic nature, passes through the defeat of imperialism in Ukraine. There should not be the slightest prevarication on this score. We should condemn unambiguously the policy of those currents on the left that attempt to take an equidistant position towards NATO and Russia or even totally disregard the part played by NATO, going so far as to parrot its favourite propaganda themes. (We will return to this question at the end of the article.)
- This by no means implies supporting the Putin regime or the oligarchic capitalist social system that it strives to protect. Work towards the defeat of imperialism should be carried out without any support extended to Putin and company outside the military sphere. There are countless instances of this kind of war policy in the history of Marxism. In any case, the prospect of world war, itself the product of deep-seated contradictions of capitalism, can hardly be expected to be overcome by a capitalist regime such as that of Putin. The panacea of the threat of world war is class struggle.

These, then, were the conclusions that we reached on the eve of the war in the period of the standoff between NATO and Russia and later in the initial stage of the war, all this in the light of our study of the economic foundations and the political-diplomatic-military configurations of the world situation in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Now we can pass on to discovering the possibilities that this general framework

⁷ We have examined the Third Great Depression in a book-length study in Turkish: *Üçüncü Büyük Depresyon. Kapitalizmin Alacakaranlığı*, 2nd Edition, Istanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2022.

provides us with in analysing the Ukraine war. If this article has any new contributions to make, that starts from this point onwards.

2. A proxy war

Since day one of this war, we have refused to call it a Russia-Ukraine war. The war started on 24 February. A statement by our party DIP (Revolutionary Workers Party) carried the title “The way to peace is through the military defeat of NATO and its proxies!” This is the conclusion reached at the end of the first paragraph: “In this war Ukraine is fighting a proxy war.”⁸

This judgment passed during the first days of the war to the effect that the war in Ukraine was really between NATO and Russia and that Ukraine was a proxy for NATO was based, in this first phase, on the analysis of the road that led to the war. The lived experience of the war itself was not yet there. It is incumbent upon us to examine *whether this judgment was concretely verified* in the course of the war. Let us now turn to the study of this question.

The arming of Ukraine

The Ukraine war is not being waged simply between two countries. Among the decisive factors in the development of a war are intelligence and reconnaissance technologies and weapons systems. This is all the more valid in the 21st century, when technology has become incomparably more advanced in these areas thanks to the great steps forward in the domains of digitalisation, space technology and telecommunications. Ukraine is fighting against Russia not with weapons of its own, but with those of NATO. Even leaving other NATO countries aside, the United States, having initially promised an aid of 3.7 billion dollars-worth of military support, adopted a military assistance budget of 40 billion dollars in May 2022. Let us make two different comparisons in order to see what this figure really stands for.

This amount is *twice* the annual military expenditure of a country like Turkey, which is a country with far-reaching ambitions in the military domain. On the other hand, among the countries that the United States extends military assistance to each year, in 2020, (leaving aside Afghanistan which was fighting alongside its own army in that period), America granted the following amounts to *the first five countries* on its list: Israel 3.3 billion dollars; Egypt 1.3 billion dollars; Iraq 550

⁸ This statement was also translated into English and published on RedMed, our international web site: <http://redmed.org/article/statement-dip-way-peace-through-military-defeat-nato-and-its-proxies>. See also the statements by the Christian Rakovsky International Socialist Center, one before the war: <http://redmed.org/article/statement-christianrakovsky-internationalist-socialist-center-nato-russia-ukraine-crisis> and one on May Day 2022: <http://redmed.org/article/may-day-statement-rakovsky-center-peoples-eurasia-mediterranean-and-world-mobilize-stop>. Finally, see also the final declaration issued by the Emergency International Anti-War Conference convened at the end of June 2022 organised by the Rakovsky Center and RedMed published in this issue of *Revolutionary Marxism* and also at: <http://redmed.org/article/emergency-international-anti-war-conference>

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million dollars; Jordan 500 million dollars; Ukraine 300 million dollars.⁹ The aid extended during the first five months of the war is **150 times** more than the entire assistance to Ukraine in the year 2020!

To see how extraordinary this aid is let us add a third point to the above two. Up until the present time [writing in July 2022], the United States has sent Ukraine 7 thousand Javelin anti-tank rockets in the course of this war.¹⁰ A lot of propaganda was carried out around the many Russian tanks that were destroyed by the Ukrainian army. Some estimations have the share of tanks that have been eliminated from the battle field within the inventory of the Russian army at one-fourth. If true, this would imply that what really eliminated those Russian tanks is not the Ukrainian army but the state-of-the-art technological capacity of the American anti-tank rockets! Furthermore, to understand what 7 thousand Javelins means, we should add that the US produces only 2,100 Javelins each year!¹¹ There is no way this could be simply considered military assistance. No, America is fighting Russia in a roundabout way, with Ukraine interposed on its side.

To put it another way, the United States is **not assisting** Ukraine, it is **investing** in the Ukraine war! This is precisely the situation: the war against Russia in the Ukraine war is being waged with NATO arms and Ukrainian human power. If we were to liken the war to a production process, the constant invariable capital (i.e. plant, machinery and equipment) is NATO property and the variable capital (i.e. labour power) is Ukrainian. And as we will see in a moment, continuing the analogy further, the organic composition of capital is tremendously high!

An endless list of weapons coming in as aid from different NATO countries is readily available for scrutiny in order to see how NATO feeds Ukraine with weapons systems (and, to top it all, this is a list that was drawn up quite early in the war, concretely speaking at the beginning of April!)¹²

State-of-the-art technology

NATO countries do not only content themselves with providing Ukraine with machine guns, tanks, armoured vehicles etc. left over from Soviet times inventory (for instance Germany from the former East Germany stocks and countries such as Poland or the Baltic countries from their own). They raise the stakes more and more, providing weapons of high calibre and even weapons that embody the state-of-the-art technologies used by the US army itself, such as the M777 howitzers, Javelin missiles, the 40-mile range HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems), which can launch multiple missiles simultaneously from the same platform based on a standard truck frame.

The Ukrainian economy had been in debt up to its neck even before the war.

9 <https://www.statista.com/chart/26641/us-military-aid-obligations-by-country/>.

10 “Briefing: The Long War”, *The Economist*, 2 July 2022, p. 17.

11 Ibid.

12 <https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/04/answering-call-heavy-weaponry-supplied.html>.

The country has survived on the basis of IMF stand-by programs for years. At the present time, experts predict that this year the economy will undergo a contraction of over 30 per cent. The public budget, on the other hand, suffers a monthly deficit of 5 billion US dollars.¹³ The economic administration has recourse to the printing press and has bordered on exhausting central bank reserves in order to protect the national currency, the *grivna*.¹⁴ In the end, it had to devalue its national currency 25 per cent vis-à-vis the dollar. In late July the economy closely escaped default thanks to a political decision on the part of the creditors whereby the country's debt payment was deferred until the end of this year.¹⁵

What this means is that very ironically, despite this horrible economic picture, Ukraine fights with cutting-edge weapons technologies! How can one call this a Russia-Ukraine war?

A united imperialist front

It is no secret that the most trigger-happy instigators of the Ukraine war are the United States and Britain. It is also common knowledge that among the countries of the European Union, it is fundamentally the countries of Eastern Europe that support the war and that the determining large Western European countries such as Germany, France and Italy extend a much more contradictory, hesitant support to Ukraine full of inner contradictions. However, despite all these differences, imperialism is for the moment completely and integrally behind Ukraine.

The military aid to Ukraine is being coordinated by 40 different countries from a base near Stuttgart in Germany. This group is named the Ukraine Contact Group.¹⁶ One can easily understand that the Contact Group has spilled beyond NATO. The Atlantic alliance had 30 members up until this year, when with the accession of Sweden and Finland this number went up to 32. The Contact Group, on the other hand, is made up of 40 countries. Among these are Japan and Australia, members of the alliance named QUAD against China that the United States has established in the Indo-Pacific region (the fourth member being India). This means that imperialism has gathered all its strength worldwide in order to defeat Russia in this war. Of course, the usual suspect, Israel, is also a member of the group. Israel is already a beachhead of US imperialism in the Middle East, but now it is making new headway in its overall relations with other imperialist countries by providing its cutting-edge technology in various domains from spying all the way to quantum computing to the common cause.

65 countries were involved in the Syrian "civil" war in one way or another (most saliently through the alliance against the ISIS). Now, at least 42 countries

13 "As Prices Soar in Ukraine, War Adds Economic Havoc to Human Toll", *New York Times*, 25 July 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/4nnkmep9>.

14 "Briefing", op. cit., *The Economist*, p. 18.

15 "International Creditors Give Ukraine More Time To Make Debt Repayments", *New York Times*, 20 July 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/mr2cau4c>.

16 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/26/world/europe/lloyd-austin-ukraine-contact-group.html>.

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are part of this new war, which is packaged as a war between Russia and Ukraine. Evidently, in this age of imperialism, capitalism leads to the socialisation not only of the productive forces but also of the destructive forces of war!

NATO military training

The United States and other NATO members carefully refrain (for the moment, at least!) from participating in the war effort with their own troops. The official reason cited is to avoid a confrontation between two nuclear powers by escalating the war into a potential world war. However, the deeper motive is no doubt the care taken not to declare to the world that this is a NATO war, since the participation of American, British, Polish etc. troops in the war would simply be a confession of the true nature of the war. It is this worry that leads to an overall syndrome of shameless hypocritical posing. For instance, US Special Forces trainers are training Ukrainian soldiers within the borders of Ukraine or even “helping plan combat missions”.¹⁷ But here is the trick: These trainers are not in the pay of the US army. These are retired soldiers “volunteering” to extend a helping hand to a “democratic nation”, who meet their expenses through crowd-funding (presumably through the generous donations of freedom-loving Americans).

We said earlier that the equipment of the Ukrainian army comes from NATO and the labour force from the citizens of the country itself. We now see that there is even more involved here. “Helping plan combat missions” is no longer training. It is part and parcel of the act of waging war, even a decisive act. At this point, proxy war slowly fades into a relationship of comrades-in-arms.

The network of NATO commandoes

Over time more and more news has leaked, whether intentionally or not we do not of course know, to the American media regarding the shouldering of combat missions by soldiers of NATO countries alongside Ukrainian troops. Without speculating on why, let us simply assess the meaning of all this. The story of the “volunteers” that we have just discussed was published on 5 July. This time we are taking up a news article dated 25 June.¹⁸

This article provides such vital information that we will have to quote extensively, sometimes a fragment, sometimes full paragraphs for the benefit of the reader (all emphasis is ours):

“... a *stealthy* network of commandos and spies rushing to provide weapons, *intelligence* and training...”.

“Much of this work happens outside Ukraine, at bases in Germany, France and Britain, for example. But even as the Biden administration has declared it will

¹⁷ “In Ukraine, U.S. Veterans Step in Where the Military Will Not”, *New York Times*, 5 July 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/26z3ajws>.

¹⁸ “Commando Network Coordinates Flow of Weapons in Ukraine, Officials Say”, *New York Times*, 25 June 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2p88ncjb>.

not deploy American troops to Ukraine, some C.I.A. personnel have continued to operate in the country secretly, mostly in the capital, Kyiv, **directing much of the vast amounts of intelligence** the United States is sharing with Ukrainian forces, according to current and former officials.

At the same time, **a few dozen commandos** from other NATO countries, including Britain, France, Canada and Lithuania, also **have been working inside Ukraine...** training and advising Ukrainian troops and providing an on-the-ground conduit for weapons and other aid..."

"... training and advising Ukrainian troops and providing an on-the-ground conduit for weapons and other aid..."

"At Ramstein Air Base in Germany, for example, a U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard team called Grey Wolf provides support, **including on tactics and techniques**, to the Ukrainian air force, a military spokesman said."

"Several lower-level Ukrainian commanders recently expressed appreciation to the United States for intelligence gleaned from satellite imagery, which they can call up on tablet computers provided by the allies. The tablets run a battlefield mapping app that the Ukrainians use to target and attack Russian troops."

"'What is an **untold story** is the international partnership with the special operations forces of a multitude of different countries,' Lt. Gen. Jonathan P. Braga, the commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, told senators in April in describing the planning cell. 'They have absolutely banded together in a much outsized impact' to support Ukraine's military and special forces."

As can be seen, here it is no longer a question of providing weapons or even training troops to teach them the methods of utilisation of these weapons. What is now at play is the **execution** of intelligence and reconnaissance missions inside the country, the supply of inputs to the same intelligence and reconnaissance activities through satellites, "advising" military units, and supporting the air force at even the tactical and technical levels, albeit from a distance. The intelligence, reconnaissance and tactical levels are **indispensable inputs** for combat missions. If combat forces were deprived of intelligence and reconnaissance, this would be like having a blind person sit at the steering wheel of a motor vehicle. Advice at the tactical and technical level, on the other hand, is to share in the mental processes of the commanders of combat forces, processes without which combat would be helpless. In short, all of this implies that NATO countries do not only provide Ukraine with weapons and equipment, but also supply the **most highly-skilled, well-trained combat-duty labour force** as well.

An eight-year preparation

The rulers of the imperialist countries, the spokespeople for NATO and the imperialist media are trying to present the Ukraine war as a lightning in the blue sky. They even go so far as to say that Russia started the war without the "slightest provocation". Yet they themselves have been preparing Ukraine for war during the last eight years, a reality that cannot be suppressed.

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The Special Forces cooperation between the United States and Ukraine in recent years has prepared both sides for the complexity of the war before the war itself started. We are again quoting from the *New York Times*:

“From 2015 to early this year, American Special Forces and National Guard instructors trained more than 27,000 Ukrainian soldiers at the Yvoriv Combat Training Center in western Ukraine near the city of Lviv, Pentagon officials said.”

One must add to this the fact that some other NATO allies also trained Ukrainian soldiers, reaching the thousands.¹⁹ This past June, even as the war was raging furiously, Boris Johnson, still at that time prime minister, committed his armed forces to training 10 thousand Ukrainian soldiers each quarterly period.²⁰

Given these facts, freely admitted by US and British officials, is it possible to continue claiming that the Ukraine war simply came out of the blue?

NATO prevents the cessation of hostilities

Of course, the Ukraine war presents a lot of complexities. Although the determining issue is the prospective membership of Ukraine in NATO and the subsequent deployment of nuclear arsenal in that country, there are other matters that await solution through the war, most importantly the question of the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics from Ukraine.

Despite these complexities, Russia and Ukraine almost reached an accord on a peace agreement very early on, only a month after the war had started. In meetings organised through the intermediation of Turkey, the first in early March in Antalya and the second at the end of that same month in Istanbul, there was such clear rapprochement between the sides that Zelensky personally declared, right before the Istanbul meeting started, that Ukraine agreed to the status of “neutrality”, that it was committed to refraining from joining NATO and that, in return, it demanded a system of guarantor states in order to assure the security of the country. Since Russia’s demands focused on the first two points (the commitment not to join NATO and neutrality), it was evident that an agreement was clearly in sight.

However, immediately afterwards Ukraine was to abandon the negotiation table. When one looks into the reasons for this, the evidence is unmistakable. Only a week after the Istanbul meeting, a NATO Meeting of Foreign Ministers was held in Brussels, at the end of which NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, at a press meeting, that this would be a war “for the long haul”. Even the Western media received this with amazement, since only a week had gone by when, in Istanbul, the two sides had come so close to an agreement. In the meanwhile, the day after the foreign ministers’ meeting Boris Johnson, chief provocateur for the war, made a surprise visit to Kiev and met Zelensky. That Johnson tried to dissuade Zelensky from signing the peace agreement and said “hold tight, we’re behind you” or even pressed him to continue the war was later leaked to many media organs.

Around ten days later, on 20 April, the Turkish foreign minister, Mevlüt

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *The Economist*, op. cit., p. 17.

Çavuşoğlu, during an interview on television, admitted that “certain NATO countries” want to prolong the war, “with the purpose of weakening Russia and even hope that perhaps Putin will fall”. This, he said, had been explicitly discussed during the NATO Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 6-7 April. This could have had the effect of a bomb, but the imperialist media simply ignored it.

However, only several days later, on 25 April, during his visit to Kiev, the US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin disclosed that it was the intention of the United States to see to it that Russia was weakened in the Ukraine war.²¹ This was an admission coming from a very authoritative source. It was imperialism that wanted the war to go on! A month later, Julianne Smith, the Ambassador of the United States to NATO, did not mince her words at all: the aim of the Ukraine war was *the strategic defeat of Russia!*²²

War is the continuation of politics through other means. It is now clear what the politics behind the Ukraine war is: At least the United States and Britain, from among the NATO countries, *wanted the war*, with the express purpose of eroding the military power of Russia, to weaken it substantially, and if possible, to bring about a regime change in that country.

Imperialism is responsible for the destruction suffered by Ukraine

We need to underline very clearly the meaning of the effort of the imperialist cohort to prolong the war. This matter has brought out how false to its very core the propaganda instrument used most commonly by imperialist governments as well as the media is: especially in the initial stages of the war, the international media made the suffering of the Ukrainian population (scenes of separation of families as millions of Ukrainian women and children moved west as refugees, the destruction of bombs and the deaths, attacks on hospitals, schools or homes for the aged etc.) the major axis of anti-Russian propaganda. The aim was simply to say that by starting an unprovoked and unnecessary war, Russia was inflicting a severe massacre and destruction on the Ukrainian people. By being exposed as the ones who really wished to prolong the war and then assuming this stance themselves, the Western imperialist countries have now admitted that it is they and not Russia who are the main culprits in the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

On the other hand, with regard to the bombing of what are superficially regarded as civilian targets, Ukraine has been caught red-handed. The Ukrainian army or the so-called “volunteers” of the Azov Battalion, in effect the neo-Nazi militia, have time and again committed the crime of turning these civilian buildings into hide-outs for troops or into ammunition depots. On this, there have been news articles even in the Western media²³ based on a report prepared by the United Nations

21 “How Does It End? Fissures Emerge Over What Constitutes Victory in Ukraine?” *New York Times*, 26 May 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/3y6a43ee>.

22 <https://www.politico.eu/article/western-allies-nato-us-uk-eu-against-russia-want-to-see-defeat-moscow/>.

23 <https://www.yahoo.com/news/un-says-ukraine-bears-share-041554667.html>.

Human Rights Committee.²⁴

Admissions from within the imperialist camp

Finally, it may be worth our while to touch upon the observations of certain very important personalities of the imperialist world regarding the fact that this is in reality NATO's war, although standing on its own this obviously is no definitive proof. Henry Kissinger, a former Secretary of State of the United States, famed as the greatest strategist of the country in the second half of the 20th century, a historical figure who concocted a Sino-American alliance of former enemies out of the manifold contradictions of world politics, thereby isolating the Soviet Union, has openly criticised the pressuring of Ukraine into abandoning the table of negotiations, even going so far as to contend that there is no way out except if Ukraine surrenders some territory to Russia.²⁵

(Only two months after this, the same Kissinger said in an interview on the German television channel ZDF that it would be a mistake on the part of Ukraine to concede territory to Russia. This was characterised by the international media as a “change of heart” on the part of Kissinger. The reality is entirely different. The responsible servant of the United States establishment that he is, Kissinger did not choose to resist the pressure upon him coming from a whole spectrum of actors, starting from Zelensky and reaching all the way to the hawks within the Biden administration and thus made a concession to the warmongers. Those who talk of a “change of heart” do not pay any attention to the next sentence that Kissinger pronounced: “Kissinger pointed out that the West should make it clear which issues are open to discussion and which are not and that it should do this in consultation with the people of Ukraine.”²⁶ Which means that, in his eyes, some issues are “open to discussion”. This shows that Kissinger has only conceded on the question of surrendering territory to Russia and is refusing to call Zelensky to stay away from the negotiations table as are doing the current rulers of US and British imperialism.)

A prominent figure within the American community of International Relations specialists, John Mearsheimer of Chicago University, has insisted during the war on the line of reasoning that he has defended since the Maidan events of 2014. Mearsheimer is of the opinion that the extreme deterioration of US-Russia relations is down to the aggressive policy of the United States and that this is a thoroughly erroneous foreign policy orientation.²⁷

Both Kissinger and Mearsheimer are without doubt specialists who act as advisors to US imperialism. Their intention is not to stand up to the interests of

²⁴ *Situation of Human Rights in Ukraine in the Context of the Armed Attack by the Russian Federation*, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ua/2022-06-29/2022-06-UkraineArmedAttack-EN.pdf>.

²⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/world/europe/henry-kissinger-ukraine-russia-davos.html>.

²⁶ https://t24.com.tr/haber/eski-abd-disisleri-bakani-kissinger-geri-adim-atti-ukrayna-rusya-yatoprak-vermemeli,1048448_

²⁷ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/why-john-mearsheimer-blames-the-us-for-the-crisis-in-ukraine>.

imperialism. On the contrary, they defend their viewpoint so that while the United States is dealing with what is the real threat to the United States, i.e. China, it can perhaps assimilate Russia into a European alliance or, at the least, neutralise it, just as Kissinger did when he played the Chinese against the Soviets. What is important for us is that while defending this line they lay bare the truth that it is not Russia but the United States that is responsible for the state of the world nowadays.

Another agent of imperialism who has spoken frankly is a former Secretary General of NATO, the Belgian Willy Claes. This is word for word what Claes said on Belgian television:

If I may say it a little boldly, *it is about a confrontation now between Russia and America*. With all due respect and sympathy for the Ukrainians, and by the way, Europe is not playing along. ... In conclusion, the Americans will not object it taking a while. ... It's a golden age for the war industry, which is by definition American.²⁸

As may easily be seen, Claes is very well aware (“if I may say it a little boldly”) that he is saying something that should not be uttered in public: “it is about a confrontation now between Russia and America”. In other words, this is precisely a proxy war waged on behalf of America! Who would know better than a former secretary general of NATO? The current secretary general also knows it, but since he is not a senior citizen yet, his duty is to conceal the truth!

A warning to the liberal left from within its own universe: Jürgen Habermas

One of the striking aspects of this war is the fact that a certain sensibility that sees itself on the “left” but has totally capitulated to the hegemony of liberalism should attack Russia even more vehemently than the genuine agents of imperialism itself and never even mention the part played by NATO. Well aware that this kind of left-wing intellectual under the spell of liberalism would be responsive to the thinking of Jürgen Habermas, let us dwell for a moment on the position of the latter on the war.

We will take up the ideas that Habermas expresses in his newspaper article one by one, in laid-back fashion, without hurry, for the delight of our readers. Habermas first utters the following clause: “The West, which, with the drastic sanctions it imposed early on, has already left no doubt about its *de facto participation* in this conflict” (all emphasis in this section is ours). Habermas obviously entertains no doubt as to the fact that the West is part and parcel of this war. Then he continues: “The West... must therefore carefully weigh each additional degree of military support to determine whether it might cross the indeterminate boundary of formal entry into the war...” Let us pause here as well: “the indeterminate boundary of *formal* entry into the war”. The speaker speaks with the precision of a philosopher

²⁸ <https://www.globalresearch.ca/habermas-war-ukraine-conversion-former-pacifists-leads-mistakes-misunderstandings/5783010>. Our emphasis.

so that is how we ought to understand him. Habermas says the West has not yet formally entered the war, but that it is *de facto* a part of that war. However, the point of transition from one to the other is unsteady and uncertain, each marginal step may result in the crossing of the boundary. If that is the case, then we are *not* talking about a *qualitative* transition, but one that is only *quantitative*. Everything we have been speaking of from the beginning of this part two of the article (weapons, ammunition, equipment, intelligence, reconnaissance, advice, tactical support, “volunteer” trainers, commandoes) are in fact a part of this quantitative development. Moreover, “this boundary [is] indeterminate because it depends on Putin’s own definition.”²⁹ With this third proposition what our philosopher intends to say is that whether the West is formally part of the war or not is in fact not a theoretical question but a practical one. Why? Because once Putin decides that the West is formally part of the war, he will declare war on the West as well. It is as if it is not Habermas talking but Marx!³⁰

It would be very useful to understand the political context of why Habermas intervenes in this manner. In Germany, the hegemonic field of the liberal left includes, alongside former Marxists, the Greens as well. At the moment a tripartite government coalition holds power in the country. The Social Democrats govern the country together with the traditional liberals of the Free Democrats and the latter-day liberals, the Greens. One would be forgiven if one thought that, with the historical origins of their programme based on “peace” as well as “ecology”, the Greens would be more cautious about the war and would engage in much less warmongering than the other two. Well, that is not the case. The Social Democratic chancellor Olaf Scholz is much more ambivalent about the war, approaching it with caution, and even prevaricates in his policies, while the co-chair of the Green Party, Annalena Baerbock, who is serving as the Foreign Minister in the cabinet, is a foremost hawk! In an address to parliament, Baerbock apparently also tried to settle accounts with her past. So *this* is what worries Habermas. He says, in sheer irony, that the Russian policy “ripped the young away from their pacifist illusions”.³¹ His real purpose is to defend the cautious politics of Chancellor Olaf Scholz from the crusading spirit of the likes of Annalena Baerbock. We saw the most sensitive and nuanced ideas above: what Habermas is telling the hawks is “watch out or you will summon a world war!”

These developments may rightly surprise the younger generations. But it was not overnight that the international left arrived at this point. A decades-long process has shaped the present configuration. Let us remind the reader that in her promotion

29 For the entire quotation see “Italy’s crisis redoubles European foreboding”, *New York Times*, 16 July 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2ejffmde>. All emphasis ours.

30 Let us remember Marx’s Thesis Two on Feuerbach: “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.”

31 <https://www.globalresearch.ca/habermas-war-ukraine-conversion-former-pacifists-leads-mistakes-misunderstandings/5783010>.

(!) from Green pacifism to a hawkish defence of a NATO war, Baerbock may very well have drawn lessons from a precedent case of a quarter of a century before her present foray into this sphere. We have always held that the civil war in Yugoslavia was a dress rehearsal for what is now occurring in the former Soviet space and drew the reader's attention to that point earlier in this article as well. It turns out that this was true for the historical development of the German Green Party as well. On this score, too, that is the case!

The Kosovo War of 1999 was a war of the Social Democrats of Europe in every way. In the big four of the European Union, the Social Democrats were in power, either on their own or in coalition governments but wielding the prime minister's office. Tony Blair in Britain, Lionel Jospin in France, Gerhard Schröder in Germany, and in Italy, the leader of what is today called the Democrats. But what made the situation even more ludicrous in Germany was that the coalition government was a "left" coalition and that the Foreign Minister was, exactly as today, the leader of the Green Party! Joschka Fischer was born a butcher's son, a son of the people, and moreover was a child of 1968. In his revolutionary period, he became famous for insulting the speaker of parliament when speaking face-to-face with him with a curse word that is impossible to repeat in good company. He was a student of Habermas, who himself was much more to the left at that time. It was this repentant revolutionary of 1968 turned a pacifist Green who, in 1999, shamelessly assumed the task of leading the forces that dropped NATO bombs on the people of Belgrade. You will never walk alone, Annalena Baerbock!

Sometime later, Fischer withdrew from politics and, cashing in on his devotion to the imperialist system, rose rapidly in his business life. His first job was in the counselling firm of Madeleine Albright, who had served as Secretary of State of the United States between 1997-2001 under Clinton, and thus should be considered as a "comrade-in-arms" to Fischer during the Kosovo war. His job definition was to serve as counsellor to German companies, which means, in a world of revolving doors in which people move back and forth between government posts and corporate jobs, a trading of influence, serving as a "middle man" between companies and governments to curry the favour of the latter. (Let us add that while she was still Secretary of State, Albright went down in history when answering a question by a journalist who reminded her that the US embargo on Iraq had killed hundreds of thousands of children and asked whether it was worth it, to which Albright responded: "yes, it was"!)

The next job Fischer took was iconoclastic! He joined as an advisor to the corporation that was building the oil pipeline Nabucco. Very becoming for the leader of the German Greens to pontificate on the fortunes of a company engaged in profiting from fossil fuels and this after serving as a major minister in a war cabinet! All this should remind us that a bright future is probably also awaiting Annalena Baerbock!

We absolve former Marxists of humble standing who have become confused and are trying to find a progressive way out of the disillusionment of yesterday all the while trying to survive on meagre resources. But the new generation ought to scrutinise very carefully the "careers" and future plans of certain "personalities",

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former revolutionaries and now left-wing liberals, prominent politicians who have somehow risen to positions they by no means deserve, and intellectuals who have become celebrities. It might be that, after rising so high on the shoulders of the masses who supported them for their revolutionary word and deed, they are now spitting on their past ideas and ideals precisely because those ideas and ideals are barriers in the way of their future career plans. At first impression, it may sound as if they are talking to you of novel ideas. But if you listen carefully, they are not talking to you. They are really making job applications for the appropriate positions the bourgeoisie might offer them precisely because they will mislead the masses into submission to the interests of the ruling classes.

An interim conclusion

Although no one but two dinosaurs, one who is now 98 years of age on the right wing of the political spectrum (Kissinger), the other, 92, on the left (Habermas) have said it, the truth is plain to see: it is NATO's strategic orientation that has led to the Ukraine war. Even if it was not the intention of NATO leaders and in particular of the United States and Britain to start a war particularly, consciously and deliberately (we believe that it was and this in order to weaken, isolate and erode the military power of Russia), even if this was not the case, they are now content that the war has broken out. What is more, they do not want it to come to an end and are doing their best for it to continue.

Ukraine has become a tool of NATO imperialism in a proxy war. This is exactly how we can describe the situation: NATO has made an entire country and its people its army of mercenaries. And it has brought a former actor who played the part of the president of the country in a television series to play the same role in real life!

One of the foremost voices that represent international finance capital and of the City of London is the weekly *The Economist*. This newspaper (that is what it calls itself) existed at the time of Marx, who, in fact, at times polemicised with it on current economic and political affairs. It is this newspaper, an almost two-century old institution of capitalism, that poses the question "How to Win the Long War?" in its editorial of early July in an issue whose main dossier is devoted to that war. Here is how it answers that question: Ukraine has a very high number of highly motivated fighters. It is up to the "defence industry" of the West to support it. Is what is being said here not clear enough? NATO's weapons plus Ukrainian lives equals "victory in the long war".³²

3. Preparatory meeting for the Third World War: The Madrid Summit of NATO

The threat that NATO poses to the peoples of the world does not only manifest itself in the strategy pursued in Ukraine. The NATO summit that met in Madrid on

³² <https://www.lemonde.fr/international/live/2022/07/18/guerre-en-ukraine-en-direct-volodymyr-zelensky-limoge-des-hauts-dirigeants-apres-des-soupcons-de-trahison->

28-30 June 2022 was not simply one of those summits held routinely every other year. The Madrid Summit designated for the first time since the end of the Cold War the countries that NATO considers enemies by name, extended the area of interest of NATO to the entire northern hemisphere, and, most important of all, by determining the conditions under which NATO will engage in war with other nuclear powers, implicitly declared the threat of a world war to the entire world. And, as we shall see below, some of those conditions are meagre excuses, to say the least.

We are not going to try to assess the decisions of the Madrid Summit in their entirety. We will only touch upon those aspects that will help us grasp the nature and the prospects of the war in Ukraine and thus the threat of world war. Let us simply point out that a fuller assessment of the Madrid Summit is necessary for determining the tasks of the international socialist movement.

Let us start out by indicating that one of the most significant aspects of the Madrid Summit is the accession of Sweden and Finland to the alliance, once the veto threat by the Turkish government was lifted. This significance does not derive solely from the fact that two very rich Nordic countries are adding their economic and military power to the imperialist military apparatus. It is also not only the fact that Finland, which has a 1,200 kilometre-long-border with Russia and stands at a distance of only 200 kilometres from St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), the second largest city of the Russian Federation and has an outsized military force relative to the population of the country, either. Beyond all of this, the most important aspect of this round of NATO enlargement is the fact that the five NATO members littoral to the Arctic Ocean (United States, Britain, Denmark, Iceland and Norway) are now being buttressed by two Nordic countries that stand immediately behind the front line so to speak, which shows that the competition over the North Pole Region has the potential of taking military forms in the near future. We already hear in the distance the first skirmishes on the roof of the earth.

Beyond this, what we will focus on will be certain specific aspects of the decisions of the NATO 2022 Strategy Document adopted at the Madrid Summit.

Naming the enemy

Although NATO convenes a summit every other year, this does not mean that it works on a strategy document on the occasion of each of these summits. For instance, the most recent strategy documents before that adopted at the Madrid Summit date from 1991, 1999, and 2010. The last document before the Madrid one was adopted at the 2010 Lisbon Summit. No enemies were specifically named in that document.

In the Madrid document the Russian Federation is declared to be “the most significant and direct threat” (# 8, p. 4).³³ Enemy number two is the People's Republic of China (# 13, p. 5). The paragraph that names China also adds that there is a “deepening strategic partnership” between the two countries in question (# 13,

³³ *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 29 June 2022. Whenever we quote from the text or mention a decision, we will provide the paragraph and page number in parentheses within the text.

p. 5). Finally, several countries are mentioned as threats, particularly due to their possession of mass weapons of destruction: Iran, Syria and North Korea (# 18, p. 5)

Though it is outside the topic of this article, let us point to a certain particularity of this enemy profile with regard to Turkey's geographic position. Three of these "threats" are neighbours of Turkey, from the north, the east, and the south. This alone shows how serious a mistake it is on the part of the left in Turkey to have shown little interest so far in the recent wars that have involved NATO.

The extension of NATO's remit to the entire northern hemisphere

As the name North Atlantic Treaty Organisation implies, NATO is an alliance that is centred on the northern regions of the two continents that border the Atlantic Ocean. Three years after its establishment in 1949, it was enlarged in a manner in which it could threaten the Soviet Union directly from its frontiers (and the low-cost troops of Turkey played a role as well): Greece and Turkey were made members in 1952. However, the real centre of gravity lies on the two coasts of the Atlantic. Of course, after 9/11 when the United States had recourse to article five of the treaty, which stipulates that an attack on any member is considered as an attack on all, and thus had NATO operations spread to Afghanistan, this broadened NATO's geographic remit *de facto*. But legally speaking, because the 9/11 attack was assumed to be an attack on America, legally speaking there was an explanation for this.

The Madrid strategic concept brings the novelty of attributing to NATO the responsibility of fighting a war with China when the conditions are gathered. The new geographic space in which NATO will be active is first extended to the MENA region (the Middle East and North Africa) and the Sahel region of five West African countries, by declaring these two regions as dangerous and unstable due mostly to "destabilising and coercive interference by strategic competitors" (# 11, p. 4), i.e. Russia and China. Then comes in the Indo-Pacific region (practically the entire coastline of Asia), the Western Balkans, and the Black Sea region (# 45, p. 11). In other words, NATO is tasked with the "security" of an entire zone that starts from the east coast of the United States, roams across the entire globe to finish on the west coast of the same country. This is for good reason. As we shall see in a moment, the same document includes China and North Korea within the threat of world war. The geographic redefinition of NATO's scope of operations is thus directly related to its preparation for world war.

Outer space and cyber space become *casus belli*

The Madrid strategic concept, using the term 360 degrees, includes within the theatres of war the outer space and cyberspace as well as the classical theatres of land, sea and air (# 17, p. 5). This new addition also provides grounds for stressing the importance of technology. We will see in a moment that this is not all, that when outer space and cyberspace are considered as spheres of combat, this also makes them grounds for *casus belli*.

The threat of world war

Now we come to the most important aspect. This aspect is never mentioned by the bourgeois media. The Madrid 2022 strategic concept hurls the threat of a world war and of nuclear war at the entire population of the world, but of course first and foremost to Russia and China.

The document declares that NATO is ready to engage in war with “peer-competitors”, i.e. countries that wield a level of military power that is comparable to that of NATO (# 22, p. 6). There are quite a number of nuclear powers in the world: India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea also possess nuclear arsenals. However, there are only two countries that may be called “peer-competitors” of the imperialist alliance: China and Russia. A war between one of these and NATO will almost inevitably trigger a world war. The NATO strategy document threatens to engage in this kind of war under three different conditions:

- The necessity of supporting any ally (NATO member country) under article 5 responsibilities (# 21, p. 6).
- “A single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities or hostile operations to, from, or within space may trigger the use of article 5 (# 25, p. 7).
- “Hybrid operations against allies” may also lead to recourse to article 5 (# 27, p. 7).

As can be seen, the bar of conditions that would result in the outbreak of world war has been held extremely low. Just to cite an example: a cyberattack on the water or electricity networks of any NATO member can, in this formulation, provide the grounds for the collective declaration of war on China or Russia. And if we remember that the culprit of a cyberattack is very difficult to determine in the short run, this will not be like Pearl Harbor. It may very well resemble much more the Tonkin Bay affair, a feigned excuse used by the United States in order to escalate the war on Vietnam. Thus, having organised a sham cyberattack on itself, America may then have recourse to article 5 and start a world war. Another example would be the destruction of an American satellite or space station by Russian or Chinese spaceships.

Finally, the concept of hybrid war is used very loosely and with a very broad scope. According to the Government Accountability Office (GOA),³⁴ an official agency of the US government, the US armed forces do not have a single common definition of “hybrid war”. Moreover, the Special Forces Command questions even the necessity of resorting to such a concept and argues for the sufficiency of the concept “full spectrum”. Among the methods of war that can come into the scope of the two concepts, one can enumerate the following: attacks on computer networks or satellites, portable surface-to-air missiles, improvised explosive devices, manipulation of information and of the media, chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive devices. It is tempting to say that the “spectrum”

³⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/2p9za9hu>.

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is full to the brim!

It would not be an exaggeration to say, then, that on the basis of this “full spectrum”, NATO is aiming to hold the world to ransom on the basis of threats and in case this proves unpracticable, to turn and resort to world war.

Promises to the “left wing” of imperialist democracy

Now we are entering a sphere that is, *from the point of view of the aims of this article*, at least as important as what has already been said so far on the NATO 2022 strategic concept. The strategic concept puts on a show of *progressive politics* that permeates the entire document, something hardly normal for a military alliance. We say this motif “permeates” the document for the following sections and paragraphs all partake of this approach, in whole or in part: a short part of the “Preface” (p. 1), # 5 (p. 3), # 12 (p. 4), # 19 (p. 6), # 39 (p. 9), and # 46 (p. 11).

Leaving a fuller analysis to another occasion, we will simply touch upon the main themes taken up, which will convey to the reader what we mean:

- NATO claims that the military apparatus of imperialism is a partisan of eliminating nuclear weapons from the face of the earth! The opportunity of supporting NATO is thus extended to *pacifists and/or critics of nuclear weapons*.
- NATO contends that climate change is extremely important. This way it harps on the sensibilities of *European and partially North American* youth. Calculating the probable opposition of youth to war at least because of its deleterious impact on climate change (simply considering the carbon emission due to warplane or tank sorties would be enough!), which would make a military apparatus such as NATO unpopular, the document says that military activities will henceforth be carried out in ways that would avoid aggravating climate change. Since the aim is not to prevent climate change but to “sell” NATO to the young people who pay great attention to this, no one will bother to talk about how this would be possible. It is just that NATO “new look” is environment-friendly!
- The concept “human security” has become an important issue in *the NGO community* within the last decade or so. It is claimed that rather than military-security focussed approaches that open the door to militarism, it is necessary to adopt more “civic” approaches that aim to provide for the security of humans in every sphere of life. The United Nations is in fact routinely the origin of such operations. It is now becoming clear that “human security” is an umbrella concept that is pushed through in order to legitimise the discussion of “security” in “progressive” circles. Once you start from “human security”, defence, security, and military activities will become legitimate when it is a question of threats posed by forces that are “alien to Western values”.
- The concept “Women, Peace and Security agenda” is also an ideological slogan “made in the UN”, supposedly to spread gender equality and for women’s empowerment. But the way it has been formulated, that is to say the fact that it includes the concept of security, makes it possible to say that it is simply a

gendered variation of the concept “human security”, in order to absorb the energy of *women*.

- “We will continue to advance gender equality as a reflection of our values.” This oath by NATO is a blatant invitation to *feminists*. We are free to believe this, of course, if we forget for a moment how in the armed forces of the United States, the real boss of NATO, retired generals acting as teachers constantly exercise sexual harassment on the female and male students of military schools, how male military personnel of all ranks sexually assault and rape female military personnel at every opportunity and how the top ranks of the armed forces have become masters in covering up for their fellow male officers.
- NATO also pretends to take up what it believes defines the world situation, “pervasive instability”, not from the angle of the interests of imperialist states and their ruling classes (the bourgeoisie), but through the prism of a series of progressive, humanistic concerns. The *consequences* of “pervasive instability” (# 12, p. 4) are manifold: the prevalence of sexual violence in conflicts, the undermining of “human and state security” (beware NGOs the combined use of the two concepts!), the harmful impact on “women, children and minority groups”, the damage done to cultural property and the environment, the forcible displacement of people, the fuelling of human trafficking and irregular migration etc. etc. All this, if we are permitted to be a little sarcastic, “is worrying NATO profoundly”. For some reason the *causes*, as opposed to the consequences, of “pervasive instability” are never discussed. Perhaps this is because, whatever the proximate causes for each of these, the ultimate cause of all the ills that beset humanity is the ruthless exploitation and oppression of an overwhelming majority of humanity by a tiny minority class of capitalists and the authors of the document are cynically aware of this!

Liberals, postmodernists, defenders of identity politics, Greens, even pacifists, NATO is calling out to you. Uncle Sam wants you!

4. Capitulation

It is now very easy to write a conclusion to this article.

The international left has simply capitulated to imperialism. This is really the result of a slow-motion decline and retreat that has lasted at least for the last three decades, if not even longer. But with the war in Ukraine the Rubicon has been crossed.

We saw while examining NATO strategy that, concerning the home front, the military apparatus of imperialism is precisely aiming for this. Among all the forces that have been to this or that extent influenced by the progressive values of humanity, it is calling all under the NATO umbrella, all *except* those who take an intransigent anti-imperialist position. The fact that the left has taken shelter in “democratic values” since the collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union accords it great opportunities.

There is a constant buzz on the left over the question of whether Russia and/or

China are imperialist powers or not. Many currents believe that if they can declare Russia an imperialist power, then they can take shelter in an equidistant or neutral position regarding the Ukraine war. All the while trying to make believe that they are doing this in the name of the Leninist policy of war. An absurd move. If there is a war between two imperialist camps, the duty Leninist politics posits for socialists of both sides is to struggle for the defeat of their own country and, if possible, turn the war into a civil war! In other words, if the socialists who defend the thesis of “imperialist Russia” are socialists of NATO countries, which is usually the case, they are dutybound to work for the defeat of their own country and for the eventual conversion of international war into a civil war!³⁵ ***Otherwise, they will have sided with NATO!***

We thus see that for those who have chosen the path of not standing up to NATO on the left, the thesis of “imperialist Russia” is of no avail. Nothing can save them! It is in vain to hope that anything will save them from the iron duty of fighting against their own bourgeoisie. Let us speak plainly: The reason for the overwhelming majority of the left to avoid confronting NATO is totally different. ***The reason is that within the last three decades these people have totally adapted to bourgeois democracy.***

Because those countries where bourgeois democracy is most advanced are imperialist countries that can afford this thanks to the possibilities of super-exploitation provided by their imperialist domination of the world economy, these currents and ideologues of the socialist left turn against Russia and target those socialists who point to the responsibility of the imperialists and fight to defeat NATO. In a show of unprecedented imbecility, they accuse the war policy of Marxists of being “Putinist” or “nostalgic”. They thus take the side of NATO.

A new period is opening in the history of the international left. In the process of restructuring of the international left, one’s position on the Ukraine war will henceforth be of capital importance, though of course not the only criterion.

And why? Why attribute such great importance to this war? What is it that makes it so fundamental to socialist policy? This war is, after all, a war between states that are all bourgeois states. Why then is it that a conflict where the working class does not play an independent role is considered so important?

Reasonable questions. For socialists the real acid test is class struggle, revolution, the construction of socialism, and internationalism, so inherent in the concept socialism. Why then? This way of looking at the question would be missing something extremely important. In this war an overwhelming majority of the socialist movement has taken the side of imperialism or at least proved that it is under the spell of imperialism. This is why we named this concluding part of the article “Capitulation”. ***What remains from 20th century socialism has now capitulated to imperialism.*** 21st century socialism needs to reconstitute a socialist/communist movement in each country and internationally taking as its central concern a consistent anti-imperialism.

Those who capitulate to imperialism cannot push class struggle to its logical

³⁵ See our comrade Levent Dölek’s article in this issue.

conclusion. All revolutions of the future will have to fight imperialism if they are to win. NATO will probably only collapse as a result of a defeat suffered at the hands of a wave of socialist revolutions. The camps will then become clearly visible. Those who have capitulated to imperialism, those who idly ponder on the rule of law and human rights and the rhetoric of democracy will be confronting us and will side with imperialism.

But in order to get to that point, we first need to explain to those within and near socialism who have not completely adapted to imperialist democracy why this is an imperialist war and not simply one between Russia and Ukraine. This ideological-political-theoretical war has not yet been won. Only if we can explain this on a solid basis can we lay the groundwork for a new socialist movement and really draw clear boundaries between those on the side of imperialism and those who are its implacable enemies.



RedMed and Christian Rakovsky Centre on the move!

RedMed (short for Red Mediterranean) was, until recently, a web site that published news, opinion, commentary and political declarations from around the Mediterranean Sea, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Black Sea region, Transcaucasia, and the broader Eurasian region. It has now been transformed, as of the beginning of 2020, into a centre for propagating socialist thinking, carrying commentary and political statements and publishing various journals from the Mediterranean region all the way to Russia and the former Soviet Union.

RedMed used to work hand in hand with the Balkan Socialist Centre Christian Rakovsky to establish links between socialists and revolutionaries from these regions. However, parallel to the expansion of RedMed, the Christian Rakovsky Centre also broadened its remit. Over time three Russian organisations became members of the Christian Rakovsky Centre: the OKP (United Communist Party), the RPK (Russian Party of Communists), and the Association "Soviet Union", in addition to the original members, two political parties of two Mediterranean countries, EEK (Workers Revolutionary Party) of Greece and DIP (Revolutionary Workers Party) of Turkey. Thereupon the centre changed its name to the International Socialist Centre Christian Rakovsky.

RedMed is now publishing on a bimonthly basis both the Communist of Leningrad, a journal brought out for quite some time in Russian by the RPK, and Soviet Renaissance, a new online journal in Russian prepared by the Association "Soviet Union". This is in addition to its already established commentary and political statements on world affairs in many different languages, first and foremost in English but also in French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Russian, Farsi and Arabic.

RedMed welcomes letters, comments, and news about struggles, debates and materials in different languages. We would appreciate it very much if people would volunteer to translate the different articles and declarations that we publish on the web site into their native tongue.

Let us join hands to bring down the yoke of imperialism and capitalism in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and across the world.



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The myth of Russian imperialism: Why neutrality on the Ukraine war is wrong

Levent Dölek

With the onset of the war between Russia and Ukraine, a politics of “neutrality” has been commonly defended by the left, justified by a reference to Lenin and the politics of the Bolsheviks during the First World War. These references are mistaken. Russia cannot possibly be taken as an “imperialist” state on the basis of any Marxist framework and certainly not based on the perspective put forth by Lenin on imperialism. On the other hand, let us for a moment grant, for argument’s sake, that Russia is imperialist, the politics of “neutrality” would still be an erroneous course of action from the Leninist perspective. Revolutionary Marxism (a.k.a. Bolshevik-Leninism) analyzes each and every war by the principles based on the interests of the local and international working class, and not by abstract dogmatic criteria.

Leninism rejects the politics of neutrality in war

First and foremost, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks identify both warring blocs as “wrongful” and “predatory” in a war between two imperialist blocs, they do not conclude with a policy of neutrality for the working class. Lenin states that in the First World War, it is difficult to ascertain whether the victory of any one of the leading states of imperialist blocs, the British or Germans, is better for the proletariat. The interest of the working class is in revolution. The war will transform into re-