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What is behind the International Socialist League's support to US/NATO war drive against Russia?

Marxists define their attitude toward a given war by analyzing the profound historical and material forces that give rise to it, and which are manifested in the development of the conflict. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), while opposing the invasion of Ukraine by Russian President Vladimir Putin's government, places the current war in the context of a broader Marxist analysis of the entire 20th century, in particular of the historical processes triggered by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent three decades of imperialist war waged by the US and NATO.

A diametrically opposed attitude is adopted by petty-bourgeois opportunists. They base their views on the surface of events and the limits of their own orientation to capitalism and its national state system.

One of the most striking expressions of this attitude is exemplified by a Morenoite and Shachtmanite amalgam called the International Socialist League (ISL). Over the past months, the ISL has issued statements with titles such as “No to Russian imperialist aggression against Ukraine! NATO and the US out of Eastern Europe! No more wars in the interests of the imperialists!”; and “Russian imperialism out of Ukraine! Solidarity with the Ukrainian workers and people! No more wars promoted by the imperialists!”

These pseudo-lefts seek to camouflage their support for US-NATO imperialist policies with phony “anti-imperialist” slogans. Joining the frenzied war propaganda of the Western corporate media in promoting “Ukrainian resistance,” regardless of its NATO-backed and

largely far-right character, the ISL presents the alleged aggressive expansionism of “Russian imperialism” as the determining factor in the outbreak of war. To the extent that NATO’s participation is mentioned, they claim that its presence “is no guarantee for peace” and “provides Putin excuses.”

The ISL enthusiastically endorsed “anti-Russian aggression” protests that took place in Germany and other European countries, covering up the role of their bourgeois leaderships, which demand a military escalation by their imperialist states, distill hatred against the Russian people and promote Ukrainian chauvinism.



MST/ISL protest in front of the Russian embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (Twitter)

In Latin America, where the national bourgeoisie assumed a more reticent attitude toward the conflict in Ukraine, the ISL itself organized such demonstrations that appeal to reactionary sentiments among the affluent middle class. In Argentina, the ISL’s leading party, Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Movement - MST), held a protest in front of the Russian embassy in Buenos Aires, in which ISL flags were mixed with right-wing placards depicting Putin as Hitler and with the slogan “Slava Ukraini” (Glory to Ukraine).

On March 4, the ISL published its “Chronicles from Kiev,” a series of comments on the war by Oleg Vernyk (or Vernik), the leader of its affiliated group in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Socialist League (USL). Speaking the language of a petty-bourgeois chauvinist, he proclaimed: “The Ukrainian military is much smaller in composition and less prepared.

We are not an imperialist state. But yesterday, our boys showed miracles of heroism. And they resist! ... Long live Ukraine!”

The ISL’s pro-NATO conference

These views were further developed in an online event hosted by the ISL on March 9 titled “International Conference from Kiev,” featuring Vernyk as its main speaker. The conference completely confirmed that the ISL’s so-called opposition to NATO is a hoax.

In the name of the ISL, Vernyk praised the Ukrainian state and the right-wing government of Volodymyr Zelensky, whom he praised for having “shown very positive personal characteristics.” He dismissed the presence of far-right and fascistic forces in the Ukrainian state apparatus and the army as nothing more than a “myth,” and demanded in practice that US/NATO engage in direct military confrontation with Russia, likely provoking a nuclear war. In Vernyk’s words:

Many left-wing organizations say that “there is a conflict between two imperialisms, but we’re not willing to support either side.” But we should look at the real situation: who started a war against whom? Russian imperialism. ... Before the war, the US had sent only a hundred anti-tank weapons to Ukraine, but there was a huge scandal, as if it had sent a lot of weapons. For two weeks now, our President Zelensky has been asking NATO to close Ukrainian airspace and defend the Ukrainian people. But what does NATO answer us? “Dear friends, this is your conflict, and we don’t want to take part in it.”

Contrary to what the ISL misleadingly claims, the engagement of the United States (as well as of the European imperialist powers) in the war against Russia in Ukraine goes well beyond the deployment of a few weapons. The amount of American and European weapons poured into the country, before and after the invasion, has actually been massive and is growing. As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported, the Biden administration is pushing through a \$40 billion package of military and financial aid to Ukraine that “brings the total allocated to the war in Ukraine in less than three months to a staggering \$53 billion.” Moreover, Finland and Sweden’s moves to join NATO are the latest imperialist provocations and preparations for a direct war against Russia, totally vindicating the analysis made by the ICFI.

But these are only the most recent episodes in the systematic advance of the US and NATO in Eastern Europe since the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The aim is to encircle and ultimately colonize Russia.

These efforts were significantly escalated by the US-backed far-right coup in Kiev in 2014 that transformed Ukraine into a de facto military base for NATO's imperialist ambitions. Since then, the NATO powers have engaged in ever more bellicose provocations against Russia, with joint military drills with the Ukrainian army and diplomatic treaties such as the US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership, which directly threatened a war with Moscow.

The supposed starting point of the ISL's position—"who started a war against whom"—is fundamentally anti-Marxist. For revolutionary internationalists, the determining question is not "who fired the first shot," but rather what is the general character of a given war and the social forces behind it. In his writings about the first imperialist war, Lenin often recalled Clausewitz' famous dictum, "War is a continuation of policy by other means," claiming that "Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war."

As Lenin warned, "if you have not studied the policies of both belligerent groups over a period of decades—so as to avoid accidental factors and the quoting of random examples—if you have not shown what bearing this war has on preceding policies, then you don't understand what this war is all about" ["War and Revolution," May, 1917]. The attitude criticized by Lenin, transformed into a systematic method of political cover-up, is precisely what guides the ISL's response to the war.

The bankrupt origins of the "Russian imperialism" thesis

This is especially true in the ISL's characterization of Russia as an imperialist country, which tears the concept of imperialism completely out of its historical context. For Marxism, imperialism is the epoch of the highest stage of development of capitalism, marked by the dominance of finance capital, which arose in the late 19th century and has extended itself into our time. Whether in war or peace, the major capitalist powers pursue imperialist policies in the sense that they seek to resolve the contradiction between the growth of global productive forces and the constraints of national state borders through the drive to dominate the world.

The position of Russia in this international struggle is of a subordinated economy, mainly based on the exportation of commodities (and not of capital). The imperialist NATO powers are financing their proxy war in Ukraine with the aim of gaining control of the vast Russian landmass, which contains among the world's largest reserves of oil, gas, and strategic minerals. Moreover, this US-led imperialist campaign is part of broader war preparations against China. Russia, on the other hand, intervenes militarily abroad seeking not colonies for exploitation, but geo-strategic guarantees against imperialist intervention.

The ISL is particularly unable to explain how Russia emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a new imperialist power. This position is not in any sense a continuation of the tradition of Trotskyism, which has historically explained that the restoration of capitalism in the USSR would entail the transformation of Russia back into a semi-colonial country. The ISL's position is a development, in fact, of the positions of the petty-bourgeois opposition led by Max Shachtman and James Burnham, who broke with the Fourth International as far back as 1939-40.

The basis of the Shachtmanite opposition was a repudiation of Trotsky's definition of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state and of its bureaucracy as a caste, and not a social class. Variants of Shachtmanism— such as that represented by C.L.R James (Johnson-Forrest tendency)—proposed that the Soviet Union represented a new form of “state capitalism” with imperialist tendencies. In his complete and open break with the Fourth International's perspectives, James exclaimed: “Orthodox Trotskyism can find no objective necessity for an imperialist war between Stalinist Russia and American imperialism. It is the only political tendency in the world which cannot recognize that the conflict is a struggle between two powers for world mastery.” [*State Capitalism and World Revolution*, 1950]

The ISL's characterization of today's Russia as an imperialist power contains in itself the assumption that the Soviet Union constituted not a degenerated workers' state, but some half-way development toward an imperialist capitalist state. The dissolution of the USSR would have represented only a completion of that process. The historical significance of the October Revolution, instead of the beginning of the international socialist revolution, is reduced to a mere shortcut in the development of Russian national capitalism.

In its reactionary defense of the Ukrainian national state, the ISL further reveals the implications of its bankrupt historical conception. Advocating collaboration with Zelensky's military forces, Vernyk claims that the Ukrainian regime should be supported because, supposedly in opposition to Russian "totalitarianism," it is just a "common bourgeois democracy." In its previously mentioned declaration of January 21, the ISL declares that "The obstacle to the establishment of complete and total control of Russian imperialism over the territory of the former USSR has been Ukraine."

From these assertions, one can conclude that the breakup of the Soviet Union—a progressive historical event according to the ISL's reactionary political standpoint—resulted in two distinct products: "imperialist Russia" on the one hand, and "democratic Ukraine" on the other. The logical corollary to this perspective is that, to eliminate "Russian imperialism" and give birth to other "common bourgeois democracies," a further partition and crippling of Russia is necessary.

The false conceptions of "Russian imperialism" and "democratic Ukraine" must be rejected by Marxists. The Russian and Ukrainian states have fundamentally common characteristics as the reactionary product of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Both are ruled by bankrupt capitalist oligarchies—the descendants of the Stalinist bureaucracy and inheritors of the stolen property of the Soviet state—which are fundamentally unable to assert their independent interests from imperialism.

The ISL's rotten orientation to the Ukrainian bourgeois state and NATO is not merely platonic. Their supporters in Ukraine sit at negotiation tables with imperialist agents, make commitments to far-right politicians and build their constituency among the fascistic paramilitary forces.

The ISL's dirty record in Ukraine

The ISL offers no explanation of the political origins and trajectory of the forces that founded its Ukrainian Socialist League (USL). This is understandable, since a look at its background and ties reveal the most sordid political record.

On its website, the ISL reports that the foundation of the USL occurred less than a year ago, in April 2021. The opening remarks at the event were given by the group's leader

Oleg Vernyk, introduced as the president of the Zakhyst Pratsi (Labor Defense) union. Exhibiting the stamp of every opportunistic political tendency, Vernyk declared that the USL repudiates the “traditional conflicts in the Marxist milieu” and instead proposes the “unification of efforts” of “all Marxist organizations and circles that exist in Ukraine.”

While the principled divisions that emerged within the Marxist movement throughout the 20th century—most decisively the “river of blood” separating Trotskyism and Stalinism—do not interest the USL, it is inclined to divide political tendencies according to their orientation to different bourgeois national states. In a recent interview with the Russian website *Levoradikal*, Vernyk defines “myself and my comrades from the USL” as the “pro-Ukrainian left,” as opposed to the “pro-Russian left [which], of course, dominates the left in Ukraine.” He claims that his position boils down to “consistently fighting both Russian imperialism in Ukraine and Western imperialism at the same time.” That is a blatant lie.

The connections between Vernyk and his trade unions (he’s also in the leadership of the Democratic Trade Unions of Ukraine) and the pro-imperialist political forces that promoted the Maidan coup are glaring. In one of its 2014 statements, the Democratic Trade Unions of Ukraine claims: “The All-Ukrainian Union of Democratic Trade Unions of Ukraine, represented by its leaders and union members, has been on the European Maidan in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, since the first day of mass protests against the government’s brutal violence to overturn the Ukrainian people’s historic choice. European integration.”

Revealing its role as an agent of European imperialist powers and its purely bourgeois nationalist perspective, the statement calls for the “[f]ormation of a pro-European government of people’s trust” and “a broad public debate involving politicians, civil society and European partners on how to implement the agreement.” This reactionary program would later take place, with Vernyk sitting at the table with representatives of the European and Ukrainian ruling classes to discuss the capitalist future of the country.

Several photos on the Democratic Trade Unions of Ukraine’s Facebook page—now dedicated to sharing ISL and USL statements—show their flags raised alongside those of the fascist Svoboda (Freedom) party, one of the major forces in the far-right coup in 2014.

In one of them, both flags are displayed together on a wall of what they claim was the “occupation of Kyiv City Hall” in December 2013.

Glorifying the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN) and its leader Stepan Bandera, which aided the Nazis in horrific massacres of the Jewish population during the Second World War, Svoboda posted a statement in 2010 reading: “To create a truly Ukrainian Ukraine in the cities of the East and South ... we will need to cancel parliamentarism, ban all political parties, nationalize the entire industry, all media, prohibit the importation of any literature to Ukraine from Russia ... completely replace the leaders of the civil service, education management, military (especially in the East), physically liquidate all Russian-speaking intellectuals and all Ukrainophobes (fast, without a trial shot. Registering Ukrainophobes can be done here by any member of Svoboda), execute all members of the anti-Ukrainian political parties....”

During the 2020 Ukrainian local elections, VERNYK made an official statement supporting right-wing candidate Yuriy Levchenko and his People’s Power party, which had accepted leaders of his trade union as candidates. VERNYK wrote: “On behalf of the Central Committee of the VNPS ‘Labor Defense’ I express my gratitude to the political party ‘Levchenko’s team People’s Power,’ which in fact demonstrates the support for independent trade unions of Ukraine and boldly and in principle nominates its activists to local governments.”

The People’s Power party supported by VERNYK was founded in 2020 by Levchenko, shortly after he broke with Svoboda, which he represented as an MP in Kiev. A representative episode in his political career occurred in October 2017, when Levchenko admittedly dropped a smoke bomb inside the parliament to disrupt the vote on a bill for a “Peaceful Settlement of the Situation in Certain Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions.”

The USL’s sinister orientation to the Ukrainian far right is further evidenced by a post on VERNYK’s Facebook page. In one picture, dated November 2017, he poses next to uniformed police officers described as members the Special Tasks Patrol Police, among whom he is reportedly inaugurating a union branch. He writes in the caption: “The time has come when the soldiers of the regiment, on whose shoulders rest the harsh everyday life of the anti-terrorist operation, will independently and responsibly begin to fight for

their socio-economic and labor rights in the ranks of our militant independent trade union.”

The Special Tasks Patrol Police was a direct product of the 2014 coup. Under the new regime, it was created as a network of “volunteer battalions” formed by paramilitary forces, some of them openly fascist, such as the notorious Azov Battalion, which carries a variant of the Nazi swastika as its emblem. Yuriy Bereza, a fascist politician and commander of the Dnepr-1 battalion, explained the significance of these militias: “The volunteer battalions, which were created within the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are probably one of the most significant reforms that brought real patriots to the police.”



Vernyk (left) stands next to Special Tasks Patrol Police officers. (Credit: Facebook)]

The ISL’s man in Ukraine, Oleg Vernyk, has an extremely dubious past. In 2003, he was at the center of accusations of a “political and financial scam” in Ukraine involving “at least 12 and probably many more (over 20) organizations around the world,” according to the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) in the United States, one of those who fell for this scam.

While then leading the Ukrainian section of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), Vernyk and his colleagues reportedly introduced themselves under different identities to various “Western organizations,” declaring their interest in establishing an affiliated group in Ukraine and on that pretext collecting financial support from each of them. These fraudulent operations and the phony political parties created by them lasted

for years, exposing at the same time the rottenness of the “international” relations sought by these various pseudo-left organizations. The scandal led to the CWI issuing a statement in August 2003 announcing its decision to “Immediately suspend Oleg Vernik, a member of the IEC of the CWI, and to recommend his expulsion to the next meeting of the IEC.”

Another figure reportedly participating in this scam was Ilya Budraitskis, then representative of the Russian section of the CWI, now leader of the Pabloite Russian Socialist Movement and, like Vernyk and the USL, an apologist for the Maidan coup.

What is the ISL?

The ISL is a political amalgam of national tendencies with different anti-Trotskyist origins, which have in common the need to hide their records of opportunism and betrayals of the working class under a new political façade.

It was founded in 2019 on the initiative of the Argentine MST, a party that originated in a split of Nahuel Moreno’s Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism, MAS) in 1992. While it is impossible to find any explanation for the political reasons that led them to break with the MAS and its international grouping, the LIT-CI, their subsequent record has only reinforced the most rotten aspects of Morenoism.

Between 1997 and 2005, the MST presented itself in the “Izquierda Unida” (United Left, IU) electoral alliance with the Stalinist Communist Party of Argentina. They borrowed the name of one of the opportunistic alliances established between Moreno’s MAS and the already discredited CP in the aftermath of the Argentine military dictatorship. And, even after their alliance with the Stalinists broke up in 2005, the MST continued to uphold it as its fundamental political model. In 2015, it joined the Frente de Izquierda y de Trabajadores (Left and Workers Front, FIT), led by the Partido Obrero (Workers Party, PO) and the Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas (Socialist Workers Party, PTS), where it remains until today. The PO began an initiative together with the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK) in Greece, and the Revolutionary Workers’ Party (DIP) in Turkey to “refund” the Fourth International in alliance with Russian Stalinists.

The Venezuelan Marea Socialista (Socialist Tide, MS), another founding section of the ISL, was created during the rise to power of the bourgeois nationalist government of Hugo Chavez, which it defined as a revolution. In 2008, the MS joined Chavez's ruling Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela, PSUV), leaving it later in 2015 while claiming to represent the "real chavismo" against the "deviations" committed by the new President Nicolás Maduro.

The orientation to their own bourgeois national states and political establishments is what defines the policies of every section of the ISL. This generates the permanent potential for an organizational implosion. Last year's presidential election in Chile has clearly demonstrated this, with the ISL's Chilean and Turkish sections issuing conflicting statements on the victory of pseudo-left candidate Gabriel Boric over his far-right rival José Antonio Kast. While the Chilean Movimiento Anticapitalista (Anticapitalist Movement) "raised a clear call to vote against Kast" in favor of Boric and celebrated "the defeat of Pinochetism," the Turkish Sosyalist Emekçiler Partisi (Socialist Laborers Party, SEP in Turkish acronyms) said that "revolutionaries" should not "be excited about Boric winning the presidency."

The ISL was not and could not be created based upon a critical analysis of its own political experience, much less through a principled appropriation of the 80 years of history of the Trotskyist movement, with which it has broken any and all ties. Rather, it starts from an attempt to falsify this history and claim that the Fourth International in fact never existed, being no more than a project that was aborted with the assassination of Trotsky in 1940.

In 2020, the ISL held an event titled the "Leon Trotsky Series," supposedly celebrating the life of the great Russian revolutionary. ISL leader Alejandro Bodart summed up his organization's fraudulent view of the history of the Fourth International after Trotsky's death:

[The] distance between [Trotsky's] experience and ability, and that of the cadres who continued his work, was enormous. ... The Fourth International was decimated and effectively paralyzed during the war. And when it reorganized at its end, its leaders turned out not to be up to the difficult circumstances. ... These difficult circumstances were compounded by a series of tremendous mistakes by the leadership of the Fourth International, which ended up dividing and dispersing the Trotskyist movement. ... Those

of us who continued the struggle to build a world revolutionary party did so separately, building international currents centered on a more developed party with like-minded groups in other countries.

Pointing to the political conclusions derived from this historical fabrication, Bodart continues: “[R]ecovering [the Fourth International’s] legacy requires us to overcome the limitations we have had. This is the challenge the ISL is taking up in trying to regroup the revolutionaries who come from different experiences and traditions, from different currents of Trotskyism on the basis of a principled program for socialist revolution.”

The ISL’s refusal to address the internal struggles that developed within the Fourth International during and in the aftermath of World War II fulfills a critical political role. By erasing and falsifying the history of the protracted struggle of orthodox Trotskyism against all kinds of revisionism, it attempts to avoid the obvious identification of the opportunist politics it pursues with that of the anti-Trotskyist renegades of the Fourth International. Bodart himself and his MST were until recently represented in the Pabloite United Secretariat with observer status.

In its document “What Kind of International Organization do We Need?” the ISL advocates a “different model of international construction,” openly rejecting the principles under which the Fourth International was founded, and declares that “the ISL is not built on 100% sameness.”

Explaining the kind of political heterogeneity it advocates, it says that “partial differences, such as the class nature of the USSR, which is a very classical discussion of the past, cannot be a reason for separation.”

The “very classical discussion of the past” they refer to, far from an open question for the Trotskyist movement, was the cause for a definitive separation between Trotskyism and petty-bourgeois opportunism. The path taken by those who opposed the Fourth International’s designation of the USSR as a workers’ state, such as Max Shachtman, ended in direct collaboration with US imperialism—where the ISL finds itself today.

Another historical ancestor of the ISL sections, Tony Cliff, broke with the Fourth International in 1950 on the basis of the Shachtmanite “theory” of state capitalism,

proclaiming the Soviet Union a new form of class society and the Stalinist bureaucracy a new ruling class. Rejecting the defense of the USSR against imperialism, he initiated the slogan “neither Washington nor Moscow.”

Rejecting all the historical foundations of the Fourth International and basing itself on Shachtmanite and Pabloite revisionism, the ISL is one of many middle-class anti-Trotskyist organizations that abuse the dignity of Trotskyism, and invoke the need for an “international” organization only as a cover for their national opportunist agendas.

The ICFI’s farsighted warnings and revolutionary internationalist attitude to the war

As we point out that the present war in Ukraine is rooted in the consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a principled revolutionary position in relation to the present war must stem from a correct political assessment of the major historical event of 1990-91.

In its document, “Our vision of the world. Our strategy,” the ISL proclaims that “It was not a triumphant counter-revolution that opened the way to capitalist restoration, but one democratic revolution after another that ended the domination of Stalinism over a third of the planet.” With this reactionary celebration, the ISL claims its place in the rotten tradition of the Morenoites and other Pabloite organizations that gave a political cover to the Stalinist restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union.

The ICFI clearly saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union and restoration of capitalism by the Soviet bureaucracy as the culmination of the Stalinist counterrevolution, fully vindicating the Fourth International’s prognosis and perspective. The Morenoites, however, claimed it represented a new kind of “democratic revolution” not envisaged by Trotsky that fundamentally refuted the program of the Fourth International.

Fighting to expose the illusions promoted by the Stalinist bureaucracy and its Pabloite apologists, the ICFI warned the Soviet and international working class that the dissolution of the Soviet Union would not open the way for the flourishing of capitalism and a pacific coexistence with imperialism. On the contrary, it would lead to the fragmentation of the USSR’s territory and intensification of aggression by the imperialist powers, not to

mention an unprecedented decline in the living standards of the Soviet working class. These were the tendencies manifested in the subsequent 30 years of wars waged by the United States and NATO, of which the present war in Ukraine is a continuation.

After the August putsch in the USSR in 1991, David North visited Kiev on behalf of the International Committee of the Fourth International, delivering a lecture at a workers club. In this lecture, based on the Trotskyist analysis of world economy and the danger of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, he said, “As Russia and the Ukraine attempt to integrate themselves into the structures of world imperialism on a capitalist basis, they will quickly find themselves not only confronted with all the massive problems confronting every other third world nation—none of which has found successful answers to their problems—but with additional and especially harrowing difficulties.”

As North explained, “the only solution which can be found is that which is based on the program of revolutionary internationalism.” He continued:

The return to capitalism, for which the chauvinist agitation of the nationalists is only one guise, can only lead to a new form of oppression. Rather than each of the Soviet nationalities approaching the imperialists separately with their heads bowed and their knees bent, begging for alms and favors, the Soviet workers of all nationalities should forge a new relationship, based on the principles of real social equality and democracy, and on this basis undertake the revolutionary defense of all that is worth preserving of the heritage of 1917.

The past 30 years of NATO’s eastward expansion and relentless encircling of Russia, provoking a desperate invasion in Ukraine, have sharply vindicated these warnings. The narrative of the Morenoites and other pseudo-left groups of an “imperialist Russia” waging an unprovoked expansionist war, on the other hand, lacks any historical or materialist basis.

As the WSWP previously explained, even if this definition were correct (which it is not), this does not justify the Morenoites’ support for NATO and the Ukrainian national state. Socialist “defeatism” applies to all sides in an inter-imperialist conflict.

Nearly 80 years ago, Trotsky explained that “A ‘socialist’ who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism.” The task of Marxists in Ukraine is not to defend their “own” imperialist-backed national state against Russia in the war, but to advance an internationalist revolutionary perspective based on socialist defeatism to unify and mobilize Ukrainian, Russian and the international working class against the NATO powers, as well as the Kiev and Kremlin regimes.

The Russian Marxists must also base their perspective on socialist defeatism, mobilizing masses of workers and youth against the Putin regime with the demand for an immediate end of the reactionary invasion. The only allies of the Russian workers are their Ukrainian and international class sisters and brothers. This position is an integral part of a single program for the Ukrainian and international working class based on a world socialist revolutionary strategy. This means building ICFI sections in Ukraine, Russia, and all over the world.

Also completely absent from the pseudo-left explanations for the present war are its roots in the insoluble crisis of world capitalism, brought to an explosive level by the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the war, the criminal response of the capitalist ruling class to the pandemic is disrupting the living standards of hundreds of millions around the globe and pushing the proletarian masses to the path of socialist revolution.

The major wave of protests and strikes erupting across the globe, from Sri Lanka to Turkey, Brazil and across every continent is the fundamental constituency for an international movement against war, social inequality and the mass death policy toward the pandemic, and for socialism.

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