

International Viewpoint supports war propaganda against Russia

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The Western media has spent recent weeks working flat out to provoke a war with Russia. The US and other NATO members are supplying Ukraine with “lethal weapons,” mobilizing their own troops and preparing—in the words of a senior US military officer—“the biggest European war since World War II.” Under these conditions, it was only a matter of time before *International Viewpoint* joined the chorus of warmongers.

On January 20, the international mouthpiece of the pseudo-left issued a statement that did not even bother to hide imperialist war propaganda behind a pseudo-socialist veil. Under the misleading title “Time for International Anti-War Solidarity,” unnamed “Ukrainian socialists” called on the “international left” to “condemn the imperialist policies of the Russian government.”

A statement of this character could also have been written by the CIA in Langley, Virginia, by the BND (Germany’s foreign spy agency) in Berlin or by MI6 in London. It leaves no doubt that *International Viewpoint* has both feet in the camp of NATO and its Ukrainian puppets in the military confrontation with Russia.

Pointing out that US hegemony is in decline, the authors note with regret, “Unfortunately, the decline of American imperialism has been accompanied not by the emergence of a more democratic world order, but **by the rise of other imperialist predators, fundamentalist and nationalist movements.**” (Emphasis in original)

“Under these circumstances,” they conclude, “the international left, accustomed to fighting only against Western imperialism, should reconsider its strategy.” The “imperialist robber” that must now be fought is “Russian imperialism, which is now trying to get the US to redistribute the spheres of influence in the world.”

The statement calls for the overthrow of the Putin regime in Russia: “Only a revolution in Russia and the overthrow of the Putin regime can bring stability, peace and security to the post-Soviet countries.” What is meant by this is a so-called “color revolution” such as that which the US and its allies have staged in numerous countries in order to bring a more pliable pro-imperialist regime to power. *International Viewpoint* says not a word about the program and the class character of the desired

revolution; it speaks neither of a socialist nor of a proletarian revolution and has so far always supported such color revolutions.

International Viewpoint also advocates a purely bourgeois program for Ukraine. The goal is a capitalist Ukraine under imperialist auspices. The statement declares, “We are striving for a peaceful, neutral Ukraine, but for this the Kremlin must end its aggressive imperialist policy, and Ukraine must receive security guarantees that are more serious than the Budapest Memorandum...”

In the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the United States, Britain and Russia guaranteed Ukraine secure borders in return for Kiev giving up nuclear weapons.

International Viewpoint even promises Ukrainian workers that the imperialist superpowers will protect their interests if the “progressive movements” in those countries—i.e., themselves—put pressure on them. “Not harboring illusions about the policy of Western governments serving big capital and their own goals,” they write, “we believe that the interests of the Ukrainian working people can be taken into account by them only under the pressure of progressive movements and the public of these countries.”

This after millions of inhabitants of Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and numerous other countries lost their livelihoods or lives because they were “liberated” and “protected” by the US and its NATO allies!

As a first measure, *International Viewpoint* demands that Western troops be stationed in Ukraine: “The first step should be the **introduction of a UN peacekeeping contingent in Donbas.** We are aware of the problems with existing peacekeeping missions and remember that sometimes blue helmets did not prevent massive violence. But under the current Ukrainian circumstances, this is a necessary forced step.”

The WSWs is not surprised that *International Viewpoint* is joining the cabal of warmongers. We even expected it. We have published numerous polemics against individuals such as Gilbert Achcar, Rohini Hensman, Juan Cole and organizations such as the French NPA, the German Left Party, the Spanish Podemos and the American DSA, who pose as “left” and engage in pro-imperialist war propaganda.

In early 2016, the International Committee of the Fourth

International published the statement “Socialism and the Fight Against War,” which devoted an entire section to the “pseudo-left agencies of imperialism.” It explained their political role, examined their social basis and refuted their claim that Russia and China are imperialist powers.

The pseudo-left consists of a privileged layer of the middle class that became radicalized in the 1960s and 1970s and later prospered thanks to rising stock prices and incessant attacks on the working class. “The protracted stock market boom enabled imperialism to recruit from among sections of the upper-middle class a new and devoted constituency. These forces—and the political organizations that give expression to their interests—have done everything in their power to not only suppress opposition to war, but also to justify the predatory operations of imperialism,” the statement explained.

The pseudo-left’s description of China and Russia as “imperialist” serves two purposes, the ICFI statement went on to explain:

First, it relativizes, and therefore diminishes, the central and decisive global counterrevolutionary role of American, European and Japanese imperialism. This facilitates the pseudo-left’s active collaboration with the United States in regime-change operations such as in Syria, where the Assad regime has been backed by Russia. Second, and even more significantly, the designation of China and Russia as imperialist—and thus, by implication, as colonial powers suppressing ethnic, national, linguistic and religious minorities—sanctions the pseudo-left’s support for imperialist-backed “national liberation” uprisings and “color revolutions” within the boundaries of the existing states.

The ICFI advocates the overthrow of capitalist rule in Russia and China. But it pursues this goal within the framework of the strategy of world socialist revolution. The overthrow of the Putin regime is the task of the working class and not of the imperialists and their local accomplices. The collapse of Russia as a result of an imperialist offensive would lead to its break-up into numerous puppet states that would be colonies of the imperialist great powers.

What happened to Yugoslavia in the 1990s would be repeated on a larger and even bloodier scale. At the time, many pseudo-leftists hailed the brutal struggles of nationalist gangster cliques fighting over the remnants of Yugoslavia and hanging by the threads of rival great powers as “struggles for national self-determination.” They were nothing of the sort. What remains is a national patchwork of impoverished, impotent and completely dependent states.

The reactionary character of Putin’s regime stems precisely

from the fact that he continued the work begun by his Stalinist predecessors: the rejection of the international, socialist program of the October Revolution, capitalist restoration and the plundering of the Soviet Union’s state property by a handful of oligarchs and its opening up to international finance capital. For this reason, Putin and his predecessors, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, were initially emphatically celebrated in the West. The German Bundestag even honored Putin with a standing ovation in 2001 when he gave a speech there in German.

The pseudo-left also shared this euphoria. The last book by Ernest Mandel, the longtime leader of the United Secretariat that publishes *International Viewpoint*, was a hymn of praise to Gorbachev. Tariq Ali, another leading member of this tendency, dedicated one of his books to Boris Yeltsin, who bombed his own parliament, dissolved the Soviet Union and personally chose Putin as his successor.

But the further NATO advanced into Eastern Europe and the territory of the former Soviet Union, the more Putin became an obstacle. Even the Russian oligarchs, whose interests he represents, have their own national interests. But the Putin regime, which fears the working class far more than the imperialist powers, has no answer to the growing threat of war. It oscillates between diplomatic maneuvers and military saber-rattling, which further increases the danger of a third world war—and with it the annihilation of mankind.

The NATO member states, driven by the growing resistance to social inequality and their murderous pandemic policy, are consciously accepting such a catastrophe and are pushing ahead with their war preparations. They are supported in this by the pseudo-left, which is deeply integrated into the apparatus of bourgeois rule.

The outbreak of a war with terrible consequences can only be prevented by the development of a global anti-war movement among the working class. This requires the building of a new political leadership in the working class. *International Viewpoint*’s support for NATO’s war preparations underscores once again the deep rift between the pseudo-left and the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The ICFI and its sections, the Socialist Equality Parties, are today the only international socialist tendency worthy of the name. Building sections of the ICFI, including in Russia and Ukraine, is the most urgent task in the fight against the threat of war.



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