

Democrats fund Ukraine war at the expense of American workers

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The overwhelming vote in the US House of Representatives Tuesday night for nearly \$40 billion in military and financial aid to Ukraine is a watershed event. It demonstrates the commitment by the Biden administration to supply virtually unlimited resources to a war which threatens to unleash a nuclear holocaust upon the world. Having pushed the regime of Vladimir Putin relentlessly through two decades of NATO expansion to the east, and arming Ukraine to the teeth for a proxy war with Russia, American imperialism is rushing ahead recklessly, regardless of the danger of triggering World War III.

As the WSWS warned in an editorial board statement on April 27, “The aims of the war are now clear. The bloodshed in Ukraine was not provoked to defend its technical right to join NATO, but rather was prepared, instigated and massively escalated in order to destroy Russia as a significant military force and to overthrow its government. Ukraine is a pawn in this conflict, and its population is cannon fodder.”

It is not only gaining access to the vast resources of Russia—oil, gas, countless strategic minerals—that is the aim of the US-NATO intervention. Washington views the elimination of Moscow as a significant strategic obstacle as a decisive step towards the ultimate goal, which is a military confrontation with China to establish its domination over the entire Eurasian landmass.

No less historically important are the domestic implications of the Ukraine war for the working class in the United States. It is working people who will pay for this war, as they have paid for all the overseas acts of aggression by US imperialism.

The \$40 billion bill approved by the House of Representatives, and expected to pass the Senate within days, brings the total allocated to the war in Ukraine in

less than three months to a staggering \$53 billion. This new spending is larger than the total budget for the US Marine Corps. It is greater than the entire budgets of five federal departments, or of all independent federal agencies combined. It is more than total federal spending on housing and homelessness, more than total state and federal spending on public health.

What would \$53 billion buy, if this sum was devoted to the needs of working people? It could hire 500,000 teachers at \$106,000 a year in salary and benefits, or a similar number of nurses. It could provide a \$6,000 raise to every nurse, teacher and nursing home worker in America (9.25 million workers). It could provide a \$1,000 raise to every worker in America making less than \$15 an hour (52 million workers).

None of these things, of course, will happen because the American government operates not in the interests of working people but of the financial aristocracy.

Democrats in the House of Representatives voted unanimously for the Ukraine war funding, 219-0. This has colossal political significance. The Democratic Party has emerged as the war party of American imperialism. There is no distinction in that regard between the “CIA Democrats”—those who entered Congress in 2018 direct from the CIA, the Pentagon or the State Department—or those nominally adhering to the “left,” the Bernie Sanders wing of the party.

The four representatives who are members of the Democratic Socialists of America, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman, all voted for the Ukraine war funding. They represent, not socialism, but the “left” wing of the State Department and CIA. They do not speak for the working class but for the privileged sections of the upper middle class, where the war frenzy of the US ruling class has found firm support.

The unanimous Democratic vote underscores the real meaning of the Democratic “opposition” to Trump during his four years in the White House. The Democrats’ sole genuine objection to the policies of the Trump administration was his failure to pursue the anti-Russia campaign begun by Obama with the CIA-backed overthrow of the elected Ukrainian government in 2014 and the installation of a virulently anti-Russian regimes headed by Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019) and then Volodymyr Zelensky, who took office in 2019.

The Democrats instigated the Mueller investigation over bogus claims that Russia was responsible for Trump’s election victory in 2016 and that Trump was a Russian stooge. This was followed by the first impeachment of Trump, in 2019, based on his brief delay of US military aid to Ukraine in an effort to pressure Zelensky to assist his reelection campaign by digging up dirt on Biden.

The Democratic Party support for the war in Ukraine is across the board. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the “democratic socialist” and one-time advocate of “political revolution,” issued a statement urging immediate action to provide arms and money to Kiev. “We should always have a debate,” he said, “but the problem is that Ukraine is in the middle of a very intense war right now. I think every day counts, and I think we have to respond as strongly and vigorously as we can.”

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, representing the party establishment, declared during the debate over the legislation, “When you’re home thinking about what [\$40 billion to Ukraine] is all about, just think about ‘When I was hungry, you fed me’ from the Gospel of Matthew.”

Actually, the proper response from working people to the gospel of Pelosi would be, “When I was hungry, you spent the money on guns, not butter.”

In remarks delivered from the White House before the House vote, President Biden declared that fighting inflation is his “most important domestic priority.” In other words, it is secondary to the overriding national security priority, which is to defeat Russia in Ukraine, setting the stage for the US and NATO to press their offensive to install a puppet regime in Moscow or break up the country outright.

Inflation is devastating the living standards of working people. By one analysis, the average American

household will pay nearly \$2,000 more for gasoline in 2022 and an additional \$1,000 extra for food, to say nothing of rising rents, increased mortgage payments as interest rates are hiked by the Federal Reserve and other soaring costs.

Prices are being driven up not by the evil demon Vladimir Putin, as Biden claims, but by the policies of the Trump and Biden administrations and the measures undertaken by the Federal Reserve to defend the wealth and income of the financial aristocracy.

In particular, the Fed’s decision to pump \$4 trillion into the financial markets in March 2020, when trading in Treasury bonds “froze” under conditions of panic over the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, is the driving force of the explosion in prices. This was the culmination of a long-term Fed policy, going back to the 2008 Wall Street crash, to prop up the financial system and save the fortunes of the super-rich, regardless of the impact on the working people who comprise the vast majority of the population.

There is an intrinsic connection between the war abroad and the assault on the working class at home. The ruling class cannot carry out one without the other. Workers must recognize that fact as they come into struggle over the impact of inflation on their living standards.

The rising militancy among workers is expressed in such actions as the powerful rejection vote by autoworkers of the contract at Detroit Diesel promoted by the UAW and the series of strikes by health care workers in California. This class movement must be connected to a class opposition to imperialist war.

Only the working class can provide the basis for the building of a powerful anti-war movement against American imperialism. The WSWS urges workers to take up this political struggle, on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program.



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