

SEP (US) 2022 Congress Resolution

Mobilize the working class against imperialist war!

Socialist Equality Party (US)

16 August 2022

This resolution was adopted unanimously at the Seventh National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held from July 31 to August 5, 2022. Read the full report on the Congress and the other resolutions here.

1. The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) denounces and condemns the imperialist proxy war in Ukraine instigated by the US and its NATO allies. The United States and NATO are not responding to an unprovoked act of Russian aggression. Nor are they defending democracy in Ukraine, whose neo-Nazi-infested regime ranks among the most corrupt in the world.

2. The war against Russia is the continuation and intensification of the drive for US global hegemony that was initiated with the first invasion of Iraq in 1990-91 and intensified following the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991. Biden's declaration that Putin cannot remain in power revealed the basic aims of the war: the removal of the present regime in Russia, its replacement by an American-controlled puppet, and the breakup of Russia itself—in what is referred to as “decolonizing Russia”—into a dozen or more impotent statelets whose valuable resources will be owned and exploited by US and European finance capital.

3. With extreme recklessness, American imperialism is risking a nuclear war that could result in the extinction of human life on the planet. The destruction of Russia and control of the Eurasian land mass, a longstanding geo-strategic goal of US imperialism, is viewed by the Pentagon and CIA as essential preparation for and part of an onslaught against China. What was referred to by Lenin during World War I as a “redivision of the world” is now underway. US imperialism intends to redraw the map of the globe.

4. As should now be obvious, Biden's decision to withdraw forces from Afghanistan was not, as he claimed, the end of the “forever war.” It was a carefully calculated redeployment of US military assets on the eve of the instigation of war with Russia. Its hasty and chaotic execution was determined by the timetable of the anticipated imminent conflict in Ukraine.

5. Though the war has been instigated by US imperialism, the SEP unequivocally opposes the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. While rejecting claims that Russia is “imperialist”—a definition embraced by the pseudo-left agents of the Pentagon and NATO to legitimize their support for the proxy war—the SEP gives no support whatsoever to the “national defense” policies of the reactionary Russian ruling class that came to power through the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990-91 and the systematic plundering of its assets. Putin himself stands atop a semi-Bonapartist autocratic regime that rules precariously over a country seething with social contradictions.

6. As the war waged by the US and NATO is a continuation of imperialist expansion, the invasion of Ukraine is a continuation of the

reactionary policies of the Russian oligarchy and its repudiation of the entire progressive heritage of the Russian Revolution and of the democratic principles embodied in the original founding of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922. The encirclement of Russia by imperialism is the disastrous outcome of the Stalinist regime's final betrayal of the legacy of the October Revolution.

7. Russia's policy, as Putin has himself stated, is based on a revival of Russian chauvinism and nationalism, which is incapable of opposing imperialism or appealing to the broad mass of workers in Russia, let alone in Ukraine, Europe and the United States.

8. The opposition of the SEP to the Russian invasion, however, is from the socialist left, not the imperialist right. All the reasons that have been given by the Biden administration to justify the war are a pack of lies.

9. First, the claim that the war is being waged to preserve “democracy” is exposed by the fact the Ukrainian government is a corrupt regime of oligarchs, beholden to American and European imperialism, and resulting from the February 2014 US-backed coup spearheaded by far-right organizations. The policy of the Ukrainian government is based on the promotion of outright fascist groups like the Azov Battalion and the rehabilitation of Stepan Bandera and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the Nazi collaborators during the Second World War.

10. The claim that the US is defending democracy is all the more ludicrous given that the government pursuing the war was nearly prevented from taking power by the fascist putsch of January 6, 2021, and that Biden still refers to the party engaged in this conspiracy as his “friends” and “colleagues.” Furthermore, while claiming to uphold “human rights” against the “war criminal” Putin, US imperialism is responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent civilians, the largest refugee crisis since World War Two, and the bolstering of dictatorships around the world, such as its Saudi Arabian allies.

11. Second, the claim that Ukraine is waging a war for “national self-determination” is refuted by the fact that among the first actions taken by the chauvinist regime in Kiev after the war began was the disenfranchisement of a large section of the Russian-speaking population. The Ukrainian government, moreover, demonstrates complete indifference to the lives of Ukrainians caught up in the war, who are treated as cannon fodder in the pursuit of the interests of the Ukrainian ruling class, in line with US and European imperialism.

12. Third, the claim that the war is a response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 ignores the systematic efforts of the imperialist powers to instigate the conflict through the relentless expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the transformation of Ukraine into a NATO staging ground for attacks on Russia. In the months preceding the Russian invasion, the Biden administration refused to

negotiate over Russia's objections to Ukraine's integration into NATO and endorsed, in November 2021, a US-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership intended at backing Russia into a corner.

13. The real driving forces behind the war are: 1) The geopolitical interests of American imperialism and its drive for global hegemony; 2) The effort by US and European imperialism to gain direct access to Russia's immensely valuable and strategically critical raw materials; and 3) The attempt by the ruling class to resolve its intractable domestic crisis through war abroad.

14. The war against Russia is the outcome of a geopolitical strategy pursued by the United States since the dissolution of the Soviet Union more than 30 years ago. Over the past three decades, the US has launched a series of wars aimed at using its unrivaled military power to offset its protracted economic decline: the Persian Gulf war of 1990-91; the war against Serbia in 1999; the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001; the second war against Iraq in 2003; the war against Libya in 2011; and the CIA-backed civil war in Syria.

15. Throughout this period—year by year, and war by war—the International Committee of the Fourth International analyzed the implications and consequences of the drive of American imperialism for global domination. In 2016, the ICFI stated:

The last quarter century of US-instigated wars must be studied as a chain of interconnected events. The strategic logic of the US drive for global hegemony extends beyond the neocolonial operations in the Middle East and Africa. The ongoing regional wars are component elements of the rapidly escalating confrontation of the United States with Russia and China. [Preface to *A Quarter Century of War: The US Drive for Global Hegemony 1990-2016*, David North, July 11, 2016]

16. The other major imperialist powers allied with the United States are, likewise, pursuing their own reactionary economic and geostrategic interests. The conflict with Ukraine has provided German imperialism with an opportunity to implement the largest rearmament campaign since the collapse of the Nazi regime. British and French imperialism are also eager to participate in the war to advance their own interests in Europe and throughout the world.

17. The drive of the US for global hegemony is connected to the specific economic interests of the ruling class in the breaking up of the vast expanse of Russian territory. Russia encompasses eleven time zones and is the source of enormous reserves of raw materials, metals and minerals, including gold, platinum, palladium, zinc, bauxite, nickel, mercury, manganese, chromium, uranium, iron ore, cobalt and iridium. Many of these raw materials, particularly rare earth minerals, are critical to the production of semiconductors and other components in advanced technology.

18. As Lenin emphasized in his analysis of imperialism, "The more capitalism develops, the more the need for raw materials arises, the more bitter competition becomes, and the more feverishly the hunt for raw materials proceeds all over the world, the more desperate becomes the struggle for the acquisition of colonies." Access to and control over these minerals is not only crucial for the operations of US and European corporations. Control over these materials is seen as part of the broader drive for global domination, particularly against China.

19. Finally, the military policy of the United States is driven by an intractable political, social and economic crisis, which has been enormously exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In just two-and-a-half years, more than one million people have died from COVID in the United States. The colossal scale of death from the pandemic is the product of the

deliberate decision by the ruling class to prioritize profits over lives.

20. The catastrophic impact intersects with a society already torn by extreme levels of social inequality. There are already many expressions of a growing movement of the working class in opposition to soaring prices and exploitation. This would not be the first time that a desperate ruling class, facing internal crisis and class conflict, has turned to war as a means of enforcing a false "national unity."

21. Despite their ferocious infighting, there exist no fundamental differences between the Democrats and the Republicans on the waging of war. This includes the faction of the Democratic Party supported by or members of the Democratic Socialists of America, including Bernie Sanders and Alexander Ocasio-Cortez, all of whom have voted to support the massive military armament of Ukraine.

22. The war has thoroughly exposed the pseudo-left organizations that represent privileged sections of the upper middle class, including the Democratic Socialists of America in the United States. Under the guise of opposing Russian "imperialism," the DSA, along with various Pabloite and "state capitalist" organizations internationally, have aligned themselves with the US and NATO and called for the imperialist arming of Ukraine. Their support for the war against Russia is a culmination of a policy that they have pursued in relation to imperialist war against Libya, Syria, and other countries.

23. The SEP rejects the characterization of Russia and China as "imperialist." This designation, torn out of all historical and economic context, serves one purpose: To justify and legitimize a policy of "decolonizing" Russia and China, that is, breaking these countries up into a series of puppet regimes controlled by the US and NATO imperialist powers. The "theory" of Russian and Chinese imperialism is a continuation of the positions of Shachtman and others who rejected the defense of the USSR with the false claims that the Soviet Union was "state capitalist" and "imperialist."

24. In keeping with its opposition to war, the Socialist Equality Party condemns the international propaganda campaign against Russian culture. This important component of the drive to war has involved discriminatory measures taken against Russian musicians, film directors, athletes, other individuals, as well as against the Russian language, literature, music, film, and culture more broadly. The anti-Russian campaign repudiates and denies the historical and cultural ties between Ukraine and Russia. It has inspired a rash of deplorable hate crimes committed against Russians and Russian-speaking persons in multiple countries. A consequence of the international anti-Russian campaign has been that it legitimizes the Putin regime within Russia. Thus, throughout the world, the campaign confuses and pollutes political consciousness, intimidates opposition to the war, and serves to counter the objectively driven striving of the working class for international unity.

25. The social basis for opposition to war is the international working class. In its initial statement opposing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, published on February 24, 2022, the International Committee of the Fourth International wrote:

The danger of a catastrophe can only be averted by the action of the working class, within the US and throughout the world, on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program.

A fundamental principle of this program is the rejection of the defense of the "national state," a historically obsolete political structure, the existence of which is in contradiction to the dominance of world economy and the global interdependence of the productive forces.

Trotsky added, "Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable

war on the national state in time of peace.” To follow “the map of the class struggle” means to root opposition to imperialism in the fight to unify the international working class in opposition to exploitation, inequality and the capitalist system.

26. At its most fundamental level, imperialist war arises out of the basic contradictions of the capitalist system—between a global economy and the division of the world into rival nation-states, in which private ownership of the means of production is rooted. These same contradictions, however, produce the objective basis for world socialist revolution. Already, the consequences of the war are enormously intensifying social conflicts within the United States. The impact of soaring inflation is driving class struggle, including the eruption of strikes and protests among autoworkers, airline workers, health care workers, educators, service workers and other sections of the working class.

27. The SEP resolves to fight to build a powerful anti-imperialist movement in the United States, as a critical component of an international movement of the working class against war. The fact that the United States is the center of world imperialism and the cockpit of the developing global conflict imposes immense political responsibilities on the SEP in the US.

28. The SEP demands an immediate end to the US-NATO war against Russia. This war is being waged as a conspiracy against the population of the United States and the entire world. It has been imposed without any discussion of its causes and consequences. We call for the disbanding of the NATO military alliance and the liquidation of the massive military apparatus of American imperialism, financed with more than \$1 trillion a year. All the resources used to finance the military machine will be paid for through brutal austerity and attacks on the working class.

29. The realization of this program is not possible except through the political mobilization of the working class in opposition to the entire ruling class and its two parties, the Democrats and Republicans. The development of an anti-war movement in the US must be connected to the fight to unite workers in every country, including in Russia and Ukraine, against war and imperialism.

29. While there is enormous opposition to war in the American population, this opposition lacks a program, perspective and leadership. The task of the Socialist Equality Party is to develop within the working class and its vanguard an understanding of the inextricable connection between war abroad and exploitation at home, and in this process build a revolutionary leadership in the working class that has as its aim the conquering of state power and the socialist reorganization of the American economy, as a component part of the world socialist revolution.



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