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War in Ukraine

On basic principles regarding the war in Ukraine and Socialist Action (US)

- Debate - 2022 - Ukraine -

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The Executive Bureau of the Fourth International adopted this public statement of political disagreement with the positions of Socialist Action (USA) concerning the war in Ukraine.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is of central concern for socialists across the world. Internationalists worldwide have condemned the invasion and expressed their solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Statements by the US organization Socialist Action however contradict basic principles of the Fourth International and of the socialist movement in general.

On 24 February, the Russian army invaded Ukraine. Four months later, the death toll is in the tens of thousands. Entire cities have been devastated and the invaders have committed large scale atrocities. And the killing and destruction has far from ended. From the beginning of the war, the Fourth International condemned the Russian invasion. Since the attack began, the Bureau of the Fourth International has made two statements, one on 1 March, and one on 24 May. [1] We call for support to the Ukrainian resistance in defence of the right to self-determination and for solidarity with Russian anti-war activists. Our comrades are organizing solidarity with the Ukrainian people and working class through aid convoys, fundraising and mobilizations as well as support for Russian anti-war activists.

Common to all our work is the rejection of all imperialism. As such, the Fourth International opposes all imperialist blocks and opposes NATO and Russian-led CSTO expansionism and interventions. Our opposition to imperialism and expansionism results in basic positions that include:

- condemnation of the Russian invasion and the demand that Russian troops leave Ukraine
- recognition of the right to self-determination of Ukraine
- solidarity with Russian anti-war activists

We note that Socialist Action defends none of these three positions, even though it claims to have “fraternal relations” with the Fourth International. Its most recent statement on the war [2] does not reject the Russian invasion, nor does it declare support for Russian anti-war activists. Their statement presents a distorted version of Ukrainian history. It attempts to instrumentalize declarations made by Fourth International comrades by referring to only part of what our comrades have to say and ignoring their assessment of the current war. Socialist Action obfuscates its position on the right of self-determination of Ukraine by calling only for independence of a hypothetical socialist Ukraine. Socialist Action is part of the United National Antiwar Coalition which has issued statements along similar lines; no rejection of the Russian invasion, no recognition of the right of self-determination of Ukraine and a refusal to stand in solidarity with Russian anti-war activists. [3]

Within the Fourth International, there is an ongoing political debate on how to shape our solidarity and on what slogans and demands need to be adopted by national organizations in their specific contexts. Our website *International Viewpoint* provides space for discussion on this as well as for criticisms of the statements issued by the Bureau, such as that written by the Greek section of the Fourth International, OKDE-Spartakos. [4] However, all share the same socialist principles and support for the three positions outlined above. Our differences with Socialist Action are of a different nature. Despite repeated requests from the Bureau of the Fourth International, Socialist Action has not declared its support for the three positions outlined above.

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

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26 June 2022

PS:

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[1] [“No to Putin’s invasion of Ukraine! Support to the Ukrainian resistance! Solidarity with the Russian opposition to the war!”](#) and [“War in Ukraine: solidarity with Ukrainian resistance, against all imperialisms”](#).

[2] [“Where We Stand on Ukraine: No to the U.S.-orchestrated fascist coup”](#).

[3] [“Ukraine: U.S. Out Now! Remains Our Anti-Imperialist Antiwar Credo”](#).

[4] [“A critique to the decisions of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International concerning the war in Ukraine”](#).