

Canadian and US Activists Reject Media Cold War Propaganda Against Russia

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More than 230 peace activists in Canada and the United States came together on March 14 for a Zoom webinar on the Ukraine crisis. In addition, the Facebook live stream had 184 views with many more expected with the replay. Organized by the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War (Canada), the exchange was co-sponsored by United National Anti-War Coalition (US), Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (Canada), Mobilization Against War and Occupation (Canada), Orinoco Tribune (Venezuela), the International Action Center (US) the International Manifesto Group (Canada) and the Regina Peace Council (Canada). The Canada Files was the media sponsor. The panel was bilingual, English and French, with simultaneous translation. The webinar title was: The Ukraine Crisis: What Is the Cause, Russia or US/NATO?

The five panelists were in agreement that the mainstream media were engaging in hysterical demonization of Russia, confusing the people concerning the causes of the conflict. They expressed the need for developing an anti-war movement and for expanding the alternative media. They expressed concern for a growing censorship and silencing of persons, organizations, and ideas that defend Russia.

Danny Haiphong (US), a contributor to Black Agenda Report in the USA and co-editor of Friends of Socialist China, stressed that Russia is not our enemy, and that it is important to listen to the Russian perspective in seeking to understand the conflict. From the Russian perspective, one sees the historic aggressive opposition of Western imperialism to the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union; and the expansion of NATO, following the fall of the Soviet Union, to the east and to the Russian border. Haiphong noted that Russia had persistently made clear the unacceptability of the incorporation of Ukraine into NATO and the violence, since 2014, against the Russian population in the Donbass region. NATO, he maintained, is the source of endless imperialist wars, and NATO must be eliminated.

Arnold August, a Montreal-based author, journalist, a columnist for *Trabajadores* (Cuba), a Contributing Editor for The Canada Files, and member of the International Manifesto Group, observed that we all hope that the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine will come to fruition, but the governments of Canada and the United States are sabotaging the negotiations, ignoring those European voices saying that it was a mistake to promise NATO to Ukraine. August maintained that “false flags” are part of American DNA; that is to say, the United States has a long history of disseminating false stories to justify itself imperialist intervention. This began with the USS Maine, and its has continued with respect to Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. The media goes to great lengths to disseminate false flags, as can be seen in the distorted story of a supposed Russian attack of a hospital. August exposed the real story that is ignored by the mainstream media, Ottawa and Washington: the hospital had neither patients nor medical staff but was occupied by the fascist Aznov battalion of the Ukrainian armed forces.

Sara Flounders (US), Co-Director of the International Action Center in New York City and a contributing editor of *Workers’ World*, stressed the need to put forth clear and unifying demands, in order to effectively overcome challenges confronting the mobilization of the people in response to the dangerous imperialist war in Ukraine. She proposes: “US/NATO Out of Ukraine;” “Stop the US war on Ukraine;” “NATO Out;” “Disband NATO;” and “Disband the US/NATO War Machine.”

Flounders maintains that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the NATO war machine has been used to enforce capitalist relations, and to this end, NATO has been involved in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the case of Russia, NATO has been encircling Russia with the intention of dismembering it, as NATO did with Yugoslavia. NATO seeks to enable U.S. control over Russian raw materials, and with the goal of eliminating Russia’s alliances with anti-imperialist governments of the world. The campaign against Russia has included the de facto incorporation of Ukraine into NATO.

Flounders declared that economic sanctions are an act of war. More than forty countries have had economic sanctions imposed, constituting one-third of the world’s population. Imperialism launches military and economic war against nations that refuse to comply with the dictates of Washington.

Flounders projected that the governments of the world are going to increasingly refuse to accept the US/NATO War against Ukraine and Russia, because it is against their economic interests. US/NATO wars serve only the interests of U.S. corporations.

Ken Stone, Treasurer of the Hamilton Coalition to Stop The War and Executive Member of the Syria Solidarity Movement, noted that Canadian support for Ukrainian President Zelensky is a great act of hypocrisy, because for 100 years, Canada has been interfering in Ukrainian affairs; initially as an ally of British imperialism, and later as an ally of U.S. imperialism.

Stone observed that NATO has expanded to the east since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian military operation of February 24 responds to 100 years of Western interventions and to post-Soviet NATO expansions. Canada, the United States, and NATO should be blamed for the war, not Russia.

Ali Yerevani, political editor of *Fire This Time* newspaper, was a participant in the 1979

Iranian Revolution. He addressed the need to respond to imperialist propaganda, which falsely claims that the Russian military action was unprovoked, and that Ukraine is a democracy, while it overlooks the role of fascism in the opposition to Russia. The mainstream media script, he declared, has been written by the U.S. Department of State. We must understand, he maintained, that Russia had no alternative to the military operation, taking into account the de facto incorporation of Ukraine into NATO and the violence against the Russian population in the eastern region of Ukraine.

In his closing remarks, Arnold August observed that since the pandemic the world has changed. Neoliberal capitalism today demonstrates that it is unable to respond to the most basic human problems, such as health services; meanwhile, China demonstrates a capacity to manage the pandemic and to expand its economy in a sustainable form. A multipolar world is further emerging, with some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Russia, China, and Iran being important centers, while the US leashes out by striving to maintain its world domination. This explains in part its most recent aggressive policy toward Russia to weaken it, thus provoking the current crisis.

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