

# STATEMENT ON UKRAINE. A GLOBAL ISSUE.

*If one wants to defend one's house, one needs to first identify the threat in order to mount a suitable response. Clearly the response will differ if the threat comes from an arsonist compared to say a thief. This is a lesson the leadership of Stop the War still needs to learn. The first test of the adequacy of any protest leadership is that they have identified the nature of the threat facing them.*

I attended the national Stop the War (STW) Zoom meeting yesterday evening together with another 399 attendees. I left with a strong sense of déjà vu". Here were the same leaders who had proved so inadequate and incapable in 2003. I remember comparing them to children mesmerized by the sweets in a sweetshop when they realised how big and broad the movement had suddenly become. The SWP leadership of STW would countenance no criticism of their tactics as befits every popular front. We warned that marches would not suffice. In this we were not alone, even the Financial Times acknowledged that Blair would not be swayed by the biggest of marches. We warned the failure to adopt militant working class tactics such as picketing out the ports and calling on truck drivers and seafarers to boycott military goods would irreparably weaken our response. But the STW rejected these tactics fearing their timid supporters in the shires would be repelled by this militancy. After all the battle cry of the popular front is – “unity above all else”.

The result was the disbanding and disorientation of the protest movement after the biggest political march in British history. Not one speaker on the platform in Hyde Park warned the crowd that only militant actions would suffice. Not one speaker on the platform set out a future course of action for the movement. The march may have been the biggest march in British history, but the lack of leadership from the platform represented the biggest failure of leadership in history.

And yet there was no accounting, no lessons learnt and no change in leadership. Which brings us to today. In all the presentation yesterday on Zoom, bar one, and then on a different issue, there was no mention of China. Ukraine was treated as a European issue driven by Yankee imperialism. But Russia cannot be divorced from China. In order to complete the encirclement of China, Russia must be neutralized at the very least. Those who argued that a compromise over the Ukraine could be reached, and diplomacy succeed, said so because they failed to understand the US strategic plan to maintain its hegemonic monopoly of the world economy.

The USA will not allow the situation to subside unless Russia backs down and accepts at the very least, a non-aggression pact with the USA, which effectively isolates China. As this is unlikely, because Russia has long since learnt that US promises are made to be broken, the US will escalate every time progress towards a European settlement is in process. And it will do so with increasing malevolency because time is not on the side of the USA in its rivalry with China. That's how wars start.

The leadership of STW yesterday evening was oblivious to the true nature of US aggression. Hence my opening remarks that the first test of leadership adequacy is the precise identification of the threat at hand.

For the first time since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the USA's grip on the world is being challenged by another country - China. For 70 years the USA has ruled the world with an iron fist sheathed in a Hollywood glove. If it could not control countries they have been intimidated, blockaded, and invaded.

The US struggle to maintain its hegemony threatens the world. We are being forced to relive the 1930s, but this time with nuclear weapons. However, this is not the 1930s, this is the 2020s, the last decade to save the planet from environmental disaster. Instead of the whole of humanity uniting to reverse climate change, we have the obscenity of war being threatened, and unless we stop it, being waged by a minority for its own selfish and inhuman interests. The stakes could not be higher.

The USA and Britain have used the oldest propaganda trick in the book. It is so boring. Begin by casting yourself as the victim rather than the perpetrator by starting the film at point B and not point A. Point B of course is the Russian build-up on the borders of the Ukraine. Point A, the broken pledges to the reformed Russia in the 1990s, the aggressive advance of NATO eastwards, the rejection by the Imperialists of the doctrine "the indivisibility of security", the expulsion of Russian economic interests from the Ukraine, the failure to recognise the safety of Russians in the Ukraine and the Crimea, the abandonment of the Minsk Agreement, the US and German inspired coup-de-tat in early 2014, all of which makes up A plus, plus. Taken in context, the Russian build up can be seen for what it is, a response to what it sees as Western aggression and interference on its borders, and therefore to its security, together with the failure by the West to negotiate in good faith.

Boring as this may be, it has been effective. Polls suggest 60% of the population currently blame Russia for events. Both Johnson and Truss have sought to exploit this public mood. The perspiring Johnson seeking to use it to deflect from his mounting political troubles, the aspiring (lost in the world) Truss seeking to use it to win support for her leadership bid.

### **Will NATO hold?**

Pre- the Second World War the US identified three enemy competitors who stood in the way of it becoming the hegemonic economic power. Most people can identify two of the three, Germany and Japan, but the third is a bit of a mystery – Britain – actually its biggest obstacle. In fact, though the US had overtaken Britain financially prior to the war, the British Empire and the Sterling area still prevented the Dollar becoming the global reserve currency. The grand strategy honed by the US in the first World War, to let Britain, France and Germany bleed each other white before stepping in, was to be applied to Britain in the Second War. Britain was to be bankrupted and turned into a debtor country through lend lease while the US stayed out of the war. Even if there had been no Pearl Harbour, the US would have entered the European war, as it did in mid-1917, when it appeared Germany was winning to the point of threatening Paris. The US feared the industrial might of Germany and saw it as a rising economic power in contrast to the UK which it saw as a declining power, therefore one to which it could ally.

Why is this important today? Because the USA is applying these lessons to the Ukrainian conflict. The first and second World Wars were centred in and around Europe. The next world war won't be. Its epicentre will be the Pacific. But the US knows that it has two competitors, not one, it has China and the EU to contend with. So how to focus on China while ensuring that the EU does not benefit from a future struggle which will bleed China and the USA dry.

The answer, embroil it in a conflict of its own making. The Ukrainian conflict is disrupting the EU and weakening it politically. The Trojan horse for US imperialism are the Baltic States and Poland, who slavishly follow US diktats. This is causing tensions within the EU where Germany, France and Italy are being more conciliatory towards Russia. And it is hurting economically as sky high gas prices attest. All

this serves the US's goals. The US played its cards admirably in the first two World Wars, the question is will it be able to do so a third time?

A real test is forming for the EU. Will they recognise what is afoot? Will they resist the USA's aggression and duplicity? Will they recognise that the intentions of US towards them is almost as malign as it is towards Russia? Or will the untested and immature structures and leaders of the EU succumb to the designs of the USA.

If the EU leadership awakes to these issues, and its institutions are robust enough, the consequence for NATO will be dire. NATO has always been the foreign arm of the Pentagon and the State Department, resting on the assumption that the EU cannot introduce its own military structures to replace it. This year those assumptions will be fully tested.

### **Conclusion.**

The need to build an anti-war movement is as great if not greater than in 1914 and 1939. However, the 20-year-old STW cannot be led in the old way. An anti-war movement cannot be built through the quest for peace but only through the declaration of war against capital. It can only be built by mobilising the international working class and adopting revolutionary tactics. It requires new leadership and new tactics.

We have no choice. The 2020s cannot be a repeat of the 1930s. This time history will not repeat itself as farce, it will simply become unrepeatable because civilisation will end. The 2020s are make or break for humanity.

The Ukraine shows how barbaric capitalism has become. Despite talking Green, capitalists would rather set the world on fire than co-operate to reverse climate change. War is proof that capitalists cannot be weaned off profit, but we can wean the planet of capitalism. That we must, otherwise the centuries of blood, sweat, tears and pain which went into creating the industrial pre-condition for our emancipation, will have been lost.

Brian Green, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022.