



# Speak Out Now

March 14, 2022

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## Who Pays the Price for This War?

The Ukrainian people have been enduring bombing, shelling, and indiscriminate destruction for 18 days. Thousands of people have been killed. Villages, towns, and cities have been totally destroyed. More than 2.5 million people have fled this country of 45 million. That's like 18 million people fleeing the U.S. in two weeks.

Putin and the ruling class in Russia are directly responsible for this devastating invasion. During months of troop maneuvers on Ukraine's border, Putin said he would not attack. Then he did. And when he did, he warned the U.S. and European powers they will face "consequences like we've never seen before," if the U.S. and Europe openly enter the war. In other words – World War III.

The U.S. government and its NATO partners in Europe have sent some weapons and humanitarian aid to Ukraine as they point to the horror there. These hypocrites claim to represent humanitarian and democratic interests against the Russian war machine — as if they don't have blood staining their hands from their many military assaults around the world, including in the Middle East, Africa and many more.

There is a world-wide opposition to this war. In Russia there is a deep-seated opposition to Putin's regime and this war. To silence these voices, the Russian government has shut down all non-state-controlled media. Those who protest the war are met with violent police attacks. More than 15,000 people have been arrested and could face charges of treason which could lead to 15 years in prison.

The Russian people are not responsible for this war. The soldiers who invaded Ukraine did not volunteer. All Russian men, ages 18-27, are eligible for the draft with few exceptions. Their families and friends fear for their lives. Ordinary Russian working people are feeling the impact of the U.S.-led sanctions on top of the poverty they were already facing. Now they face skyrocketing inflation, shortages of imported goods and loss of jobs.

This war is also magnifying the political and economic crises people face around the world. The war is contributing to the record-breaking inflation we are dealing with in the U.S. We see this in the rising price of gas and oil which impacts the entire economy. Oil and gas are used in the production of thousands of goods – from plastics to pharmaceuticals. Oil-based fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are used in the growing of much of our food as well as most transportation.

Every day the media show some of the horrific impact of this invasion on the lives of Ukrainian people – the continued slaughter, thousands fleeing while others remain to fight. Of course, people outside Ukraine want to help and would be willing to sacrifice to help the people who are under attack. But the sacrifices we are supposed to accept are higher prices for everything, including billions more in military spending. And who benefits from this? The oil companies are getting top dollar for their oil and having a record number of oil leases on public lands handed to them by the Biden administration. And the weapons manufacturers? This is what they are in that murderous business for. Even aid for the people of Ukraine hands millions of dollars to the suppliers and those who deliver the aid!

The realities of this war are becoming clearer with each life and building destroyed. The only possible benefits go to the super-rich who profit off every bullet fired and every rise in consumer prices. It is the same here as in Europe and Russia.

The people of Ukraine are doing all they can. Some of the people in Russia are taking an open stand. We have every reason to stand with them. Our future is in our hands not those of the Putins, Bidens and other heads of state around the world.

- **Russian troops out of Ukraine!**
- **The people of the region have the right to determine their own future – free of outside forces of domination!**