

## **Solidarity Statement with the People of Ukraine, and with All Peoples Oppressed by Militarism & Imperialism**

The CFA-SFSU union chapter of faculty, counselors, coaches and librarians at SFSU stands in complete solidarity with the people in Ukraine, and supports its resistance against the Russian invasion. All Russian troops must go now! We know some of our co-workers are Ukrainian, Russian and/or come from Ex-Soviet Republics, and are suffering through very difficult moments. Please know that your union is with you; we are committed to building working class solidarity, internationally, from below, together. We are prepared to participate in solidarity efforts with the Ukrainian people here in the US and abroad. We also take this opportunity to express our solidarity for other peoples who today are also suffering from wars and occupations in Ethiopia, Palestine, Sudan, and Yemen.

Furthermore, we want to extend our solidarity to immigrants and foreign students trapped in Ukraine, especially our non-white brothers and sisters, and Ukrainians of African descent who are facing racist discrimination at the border and confronting obstacles to fleeing the country. We must combat all forms of racism and discrimination especially in times of humanitarian crisis, and those actions must stop.

We also want to express our full support and solidarity with all the antiwar activists in Russia. More than 8,000 protesters were arrested in the first 10 days of the war by the Putin regime, and 4,000 more were arrested yesterday. Daily protests, spreading in dozens of cities, have been brutally repressed by the police, and protestors face jail sentences of 15 years for publicly opposing the war operations of their own government. We in the United States can relate to their bravery; many of us publicly opposed the many wars carried by the US government, be it in Vietnam, Afghanistan or Iraq, among others. We demand the immediate liberation of all antiwar activists who have been detained. We also demand full academic freedom and protection for the thousands of faculty in Russia who have publicly stated their opposition to the war and are worried about their job security as a result.

We demand that the Biden administration immediately provide refugee rights and real material support to ALL refugees. More than 1.7 million Ukrainian refugees have fled to Europe and many refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Central America (among others) are trying to reach the US or are already in the US with very poor legal protections. The Temporary Protection Directives (TDP) in place for existing political refugees, many of them fleeing wars and dictatorships resulting from direct US involvement, are not a substitute for meaningful immigration policy that upholds working class solidarity and human rights. We demand that all these populations be awarded official refugee status or asylum and that housing and jobs be made available for them.

We oppose any attempt by the US government to use this war in Ukraine to advance its own imperialist interests in the region, such as the control of access routes to oil and gas and its control of more strategic markets and resources. Furthermore, we assert that sanctions targeting US economic competitors hurt the Russian people, and are not at all useful for ending a war. Rather, they fuel nationalist rhetoric in Russia and add to the credibility of Putin's narrative that this invasion is a war of “civilizations” against the “West”.

We oppose all oligarchs -- Russian or American -- as much as we oppose nationalism and imperialism which lead to crimes against humanity. Putin claims that Ukraine is part of Russia's "*own history, culture and spiritual space*", thereby mobilizing Russian nationalism and the desire to return to the "Great" Russian Empire. We reject this narrative as much as we denounce the use of racist and Eurocentric narratives that frame this conflict as one between the U.S. and European “Civilized” peoples against the Russian, Asian and Eastern “Barbaric” or “Uncivilized” ones. These narratives, relayed consciously and unconsciously by the media and politicians, are false. They are rooted in racist, colonial notions of 'civility', and they are extremely dangerous. Much if not all of the colonial expansion, domination, exploitation, and oppression of peoples all over the world, including the attempted genocide of many of the native Indian nations in the Americas, as well as the continuation of new-colonial forms of domination today, were and are conducted with the aid of those very narratives. Further, the US and European countries have a long record of having carried out “barbaric” acts of war, as seen in their own territories or via their support for dictatorships and fascist regimes as vicious and cruel as Putin’s. As university educators we must debunk them and provide a better explanation of the root causes of world conflicts.

Finally we demand the end to NATO's expansion, as well as a drastic decrease in military spending in the US. Nothing justifies Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an independent sovereign nation. Yet NATO is a US led military alliance which has intervened in many conflicts, wars and occupations to the detriment of the well-being of peoples and of the sovereignty of other nations. It is a fact that NATO has expanded to 14 new countries since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which has contributed to the escalation of tensions. NATO's budget has increased every year for the past decade, including an almost 9% increase just this year, amidst a global pandemic and its subsequent social crisis. The Biden administration proposed a \$768 billion war-spending “defense” bill in December 2021, one of the largest military budgets for the Pentagon in recent U.S. history. He has however failed to pass any major social reform to guarantee basic union rights for workers, voting rights, or to provide for better jobs, real healthcare, housing, education, or social services, not to mention climate action. We demand jobs, education, housing and climate justice for all people, not war and a new arms race.

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