

AUPE statement on the war in Ukraine



THE LABOUR MOVEMENT MUST BE A FORCE FOR PEACE, AGAINST WARS OF AGGRESSION

On Feb. 24, 2022, the world watched in horror as the Russian military invaded Ukraine. In a senseless act of imperial aggression, the leadership of Russia has launched a war on its neighbour with the explicit goal of regime change. In the days since, the war has only escalated.

The senseless violence occurring in Ukraine must be opposed in the strongest possible terms. AUPE condemns this war, and the global forces that led to its escalation.

Through the better moments of its history, the labour movement has acted as one of the most powerful voices against war. Today, AUPE is proud to be a part of this tradition.

As working people, we know which side we are on. We are on the side of the workers of all countries, no matter the flag flown by their government. Workers in Ukraine, like workers in Russia, like workers in Yemen, will be the ones paying the price for the grand schemes of oligarchs. The only way forward is the route of peace, and the removal of power from the class of people who benefit from bloodshed.

AUPE's executive committee calls on the federal government to engage in diplomatic talks to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine and bring lasting peace to the region—a peace that is only achievable through justice. We call on the government to take seriously their engagements toward building peace in the world—a task which is only possible through mutual de-escalation.

We also call on the Canadian government to open its borders to refugees fleeing the violence of war—which applies as much to the war in Ukraine as it does to the war in Yemen, in Syria, in Ethiopia, and beyond. According to international law, we have a responsibility to protect those fleeing war and persecution. We must act now to show we take those responsibilities seriously.

Finally, we reiterate our call, adopted in our 2021 Convention, for a Green New Deal. Russia's global power is based in its capacity to supply much of the world with fossil fuels—as is Saudi Arabia, a country engaged in a brutal war against Yemeni civilians. The transition to renewable energy, already an urgent task, means pulling the rug out from under the some of the world's most violent regimes.

Organized workers have the power to end wars. Strikes and labour revolts in Europe put an end to the slaughter in the trenches of the First World War. American soldiers in Vietnam organized mass desertions, accelerating the end of the war. Dockworkers refused to load weapons and ammunition bound for apartheid South Africa's war against its Indigenous Black population. Organized labour condemned the American invasion of Iraq, and some workers refused to transport weapons for the war.

Among working people, there are no winners in war. We are sent to the front lines to die in the wars of the rich. The oligarchs who launch wars never have to live with their consequences. We stand in solidarity with all those, regardless of country, who struggle to end the bloodshed.