

UKRAINE SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN
COMMENTS ON THE PEACE STATEMENT

June 3, 2024

The Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has read the [statement](#), *A People's Peace not an Imperial Peace*. This statement is in response to the “peace conference” called by the Swiss government regarding Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The fact that the organizers of this conference invited the Russian government to participate is telling, because Putin has made it clear by his words and deeds that the intent of the regime is to occupy and annex as much of Ukraine as it can. What Russia’s army cannot occupy and annex now it will only come back for in the future. As part of their plan, the Putin regime is now sending settlers into the parts of Ukraine that it occupies, including Mariupol. In this context, we have to consider the debate that has been going on in the United States’ foreign policy establishment, including within the Biden administration. One wing of the Biden administration has argued that the invasion must be defeated outright, because if it isn’t then Russia will just come back for more later. The other wing argues that the invasion must be punished but that all efforts be made to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia and therefore the Biden administration should negotiate a “land for peace” deal with Moscow over the heads of the Ukrainian people. It is for this reason that Biden has been so hesitant to grant Ukraine all the weapons it needs with no strings attached. *By inviting Russia to this “peace” conference, the Swiss organizers have made it clear that a “land for peace” deal with Moscow is their purpose.*

- (1) We consider it a mistake for the statement to say “we hope that the peace conference in Switzerland will contribute to the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty.” *This is the precise opposite of the intent of the conference. Expressing “hope” mistakes and creates false illusions about this conference’s purpose. It is entirely up to the Ukrainian people, not the various heads of state, to decide whether a “peace” deal is acceptable at this or any other time.*

(2) We must consider the actual situation within Russia. The statement calls for “trade unions, women’s organisations, environmental initiatives and various civil society organisations from both Ukraine and Russia play[ing] a leading role in the peace talks.” We think this should be reconsidered:

First, these peace talks are being orchestrated by the different capitalist governments. They will inevitably be looking out for their own interests, meaning how best to reap profits now and in the future. Why should workers’ and other popular organizations participate in such talks, as opposed to organizing our own conference around not simply “peace” but *how to defeat the invasion* through building an international working class movement? Participating in the capitalist governments’ “peace talks” will only lead to our being led down their road.

Second, this statement raises the question of the situation inside Russia. Are there *any* popular organizations or unions inside Russia that have not been crushed by the Putin regime? To our knowledge, the answer is “no”. The sentence and the entire paragraph raises the question of working class unity between Ukrainian and Russian workers. Of course we support such unity, but we question whether it is possible at this time (with who?) and outside of a struggle to overthrow the Putin regime itself.

(3) We support the statement’s call for the expropriation of the assets of both the Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs. The Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has been calling for this since our inception. To our knowledge we have been alone in this and we hope this demand receives further publicity since it would have a broad appeal, including here in the U.S.

(4) We welcome the initiative for the various Ukraine support groups to work more closely together.

These are some questions we have on this particular statement.

We would also like to raise whether a shorter and more broad statement would not receive wider support moving forward. Such a statement would include and maybe even only contain the following:

1. An explanation of the purpose of this so-called “peace” conference, which is to trade “land for (a temporary) peace”, as proven by the fact that the Putin regime was even invited in the first place.
2. Opposition to any sort of “land for peace” deal.
Such a deal means putting a section of Ukraine land and Ukrainian people under the Putin dictatorship in exchange for Putin not advancing any further *for the moment*.
3. Instead of “(land for) peace” call for the full military defeat of the invasion. Russia out of all of Ukraine! This includes the expulsion of recent Russian settlers in Russia-occupied Ukraine.
4. A call for Ukraine to be provided with all the arms it seeks and needs, with no strings attached.
5. Expropriate the Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs’ foreign investments to make them pay for the resistance to the invasion.
6. Seizure of Russia’s foreign assets with all of those assets being turned over to Ukraine.
7. Cancellation of Ukraine’s foreign debt.

We welcome further discussion and collaboration.

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Signed:

Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign

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On behalf of Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign