

On the Second Anniversary of Russia's Invasion: Stand with Ukraine

February 22, 2024



The short statement below was written for a collection of essays in support of Ukraine on the second anniversary of the Russian invasion in 2022, published by the Syllepse collective in France. The entire collection in French can be found [here](#):

For two long years, Ukraine has fought to defend itself from an all-out Russian invasion. Though facing a much more powerful foe, the spirit and determination of the Ukrainian people have enabled them to blunt the Russian aggression. But Ukraine would have been hard-pressed to survive without weapons supplies from outside. Anyone who believes that smaller nations have the right to defend themselves from their bigger neighbors should support Ukraine's right to acquire arms wherever it can get them, which has meant the United States and NATO members. This is true even though we distrust the Western powers. And while we stand with Ukraine, like the Ukrainian left, we remain critical of Volodymyr Zelensky's government: its neoliberal economic and anti-union policies and its repression of civil liberties.

Many of the countries that have been providing arms to Ukraine - and in particular the United States - are considering cutting back their aid. We believe the decision of whether to continue resisting Russian aggression is for Ukrainians to decide: it is they by far who bear the terrible costs, both the death and destruction of war and the oppression of foreign occupation. Whatever they decide, they should not have their hands forced by a cut-off of weapons.

We appreciate having been part of the consortium of journals and other publications that share these views. In particular we have appreciated developing a closer relationship with the Ukrainian journal *Commons* and with the democratic socialist left organized in *Sotsialnyi rukh* (Social Movement). Through this we have gotten to know and talk with Ukrainian socialists fighting both

Russia and the politicians of the Zelensky government. We are proud to have published their articles and interviews, and written our own articles in support of Ukraine's struggle for independence, democracy, and social justice. We also through this process have gotten to know Russian dissidents, like those involved with the journal *Posle*, who oppose their nation's war on Ukraine and also demand democracy in their homeland. We here in the Ukraine Solidarity Network of the United States have also valued the work of the Ukraine Solidarity Network in Europe (ENSU/RESU).

In recent months, the war in Ukraine has been overshadowed by the horrors in Gaza, where the Israeli military response to Hamas's crimes on October 7 has led to the greatest concentrated slaughter of civilians in this century. Supporting the Palestinian cause, however, should not take away from the need to stand with Ukraine. In both cases, a stronger military power is attempting to occupy and deny self-determination to oppressed people.

We are aware of the challenges facing you, the Ukrainian people, both mobilizing forces and maintaining morale in the face of Russia's barbaric war that has killed thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers, displaced millions, and seen the kidnapping of 20,000 children. We have from the beginning admired your courage. Your steadfastness inspires us and many others throughout the world who see you, as a bulwark against imperialism and authoritarianism. And we stand with you as long as you wish to continue to fight.

*Dan La Botz and Steve Shalom are both members of the editorial board of *New Politics* and of the Ukrainian Solidarity Network of the United States.