

Ukraine: UCU conference resolutions

From Patrick Ainley

Readers of *PSE* will be aware that UCU Congress 2023 passed two motions on Ukraine making them both policies of the Union. Motion 6, proposed by the National Executive Committee, 'Solidarity with Ukraine: supporting education and humanitarian work', was passed overwhelmingly by Congress. Motion 5 'Stop the war in Ukraine - peace now' was passed by just nine votes. This means this motion is also the policy of the Union.

The two motions are contradictory. Motion 6 supports Ukraine's right to self-determination and to defend itself against invasion by Russia. Motion 5 takes the apparently even-handed approach of 'a plague on both your houses'. This pacifist position ignores that Russia is the aggressor and Ukraine the victim of aggression. Also, that if there were 'peace now', Russia would remain in occupation of the Ukrainian provinces including Crimea which it has illegally annexed.

To point this out is not to abandon the right to criticise governments and military alliances such as NATO. Nor is it militarist or 'pro-war'. However, it recognises that to call for the disarming of the victims of imperialist aggression fighting for their existence as a people following invasion by another nation's armed forces denies the right of the people of Ukraine to defend themselves against Putin's aggression. True solidarity requires supporting the right of the people of Ukraine to self-determination and acknowledges that any resolution to the war must be acceptable to them.

Many Union members and their students are confused and hurt by the position adopted by Congress, especially those with family and friends affected by the war. Some members have even left the Union, instead of remaining within it to work democratically towards adopting a coherent and just policy in the future, including disaffiliation of the Union from the Stop the War Campaign.

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