NWSA Condemns the Attack on the People of Ukraine

Dear NWSA Community,

The National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) takes seriously our charge to never be silent in the face of evil. We understand that we do not have the luxury to sit by while countries are attacked, war is being waged, and women and children are being killed. As Audre Lorde taught us, we know that our silence will not protect us and, as Angela Davis reminds us, if they come for freedom seekers around the world in the morning, they will come for us in the night. Freedom and struggle are international issues, and solidarity is a feminist issue for us. As feminists, activists, teachers, students, and scholars, we will never be silent in the face of violence, terror, destruction, and oppression, which means that we will always speak up against injustice and for freedom, no matter the cost. Herstory has her eye on us and will record and remember where we stood, when we stood and why we stood.

As we are watching what is happening in Ukraine, we are moved to remind the world that we have stood and will continue to stand in solidarity with people worldwide who are fighting for their sovereignty. We stand with the people of Ukraine: the grandmothers who are picking up arms, the grandfathers who are donning their bare thread uniforms, Ukrainians who are either physically or financially unable to flee the country, and the mothers and fathers who are stepping (once again) in front of their children to take the bullet, to bear the weight, and to be a living witness and testimony to the truth. We stand in solidarity with Ukrainian women, feminists, the LGBTQ+ community, and all anti-war activists. We strongly condemn Russia’s military assault on Ukraine. We urge our President and nations worldwide to continue to speak out against President Putin’s attempt to use historical distortions and lies to justify this act of aggression. We support the economic sanctions and urge the surrounding countries to welcome Ukrainian citizens and open their doors to African students fleeing Ukraine in search of safety. In the midst of this international atrocity, it is important to add that Black people in Ukraine face two attacks: from President Putin’s military assault and from white Europeans who are driven by racism and xenophobia. Finally, we must also recognize and speak out against the longstanding rejection of religious minorities in Europe as experienced by Muslim and Jewish communities.

In moments like this, where there is some uncertainty about how you can help, the National Women’s Studies Association believes that the first step is not to look away but to instead lean into this moment and learn—about the history of Ukraine, including the Holodomor and the Domestic Violence (Prevention) Act 2001; about what is currently happening in Ukraine, including both the military attacks and how race
has become a barrier for Black people who are trying to flee the country—and then determine how you can use your time, talents, and treasure to help. This is (another) moment where we must speak out into the wind with a loud collective voice and say that Solidarity and Sovereignty are Feminist Issues. Our voices have power. Our words have power. Our choices have consequences. We support the right of the Ukrainian people to have freedom and peace (not just as the absence of war but as the presence of justice). We must stand together and not be moved. We end by holding fast to and being challenged by the words of Harry Moore, who once said, “No bomb can kill the dreams I hold, for freedom never dies.” For us, we understand that freedom has no boundaries or borders, and therefore until all of us are free, none of us are free.

In solidarity,
National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA)

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