

Trump's Second Term – Now is the Time for a Global Fightback – Statement from Anti Capitalist Resistance

The following statement on the US Presidential Elections has been issued by the comrades of Anti*Capitalist Resistance and has been reproduced as a contribution to how we should respond to the Trump victory here in Scotland. For further information about Anti*Capitalist Resistance visit their website at <https://anticapitalistresistance.org/>

Donald Trump won a second US presidency on 6 November 2024. The Republican Party is now in almost total control of US establishment politics as they also made gains in the Senate, giving them control of the entire legislature, the presidency and the Supreme Court. It is a victory for the US Plutocrats and Oligarchs, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, the crypto-fanatics and west-coast Tech Bros. Trumpism is part of the global counter-revolutionary wave we see with far-right populists, authoritarians, semi-fascists and libertarians taking power in countries around the world. What we are seeing is a process of a general shift to the far-right caused by neoliberalism and the collapse in the post-war liberal consensus that it has brought about. Trumpism is the same trend that produced Modi in India, Duterte in the Philippines, Meloni in Italy and so on.

But this victory, in particular, is a disaster for billions around the planet. The power of US imperialism to act or not act is still a decisive factor in global politics.

A second Trump presidency will be as chaotic and vile as the

first. Only now his key intellectual backers will be much clearer on what they want to get out of it. Project 2025 is a blueprint for an authoritarian USA; it includes the proposals to sack thousands of government employees and place the rest of the US government bureaucracy under central presidential control. Elimination of the Department of Education to allow state-level control of curricula. It involves Rolling back transgender healthcare and social rights, making trans existence almost untenable in some states. It means the elimination of federal protections for gender equality, sexual orientation and reproductive rights. It will almost certainly prevent abortion pills from being sent through the post, which is the number one way people get abortions in the USA. We will see the mainstreaming of “conversations” about disenfranchising women. It also involves slashing funding for renewable energy research and development, increasing energy production and scrapping targets for carbon reduction.

Whether Trump’s promise to be a dictator on day one and use the military against political opponents was hot air for electioneering or not is unknown. But that he ran such a reactionary campaign and got such a decisive vote reveals something about the growth of far-right populist ideas. We know that both he and his Vice President JD Vance recently endorsed a book called *Unhumans*, [a manifesto for the mass murder of left-wing activists](#) along the lines of Pinochet in Chile. This reveals the fascist kernel of neoliberal politics, which has come full circle.

This defeat largely rests on the wretched politics and failed strategy of the Democrats. It is clear that the Democrats are not even a dented shield against the growth of the far right; they actively feed the problem. They were business as usual in a period of anxiety and division.

They ran a campaign against a populist who was appealing to ‘the common people’ by instead focusing on the virtue of the establishment – constantly repeating that Trump was a felon as

if there are not millions of felons in the USA in a corrupt and unfair judicial system who might see in him a persecuted martyr. The Democrats' fixation on the law courts to undermine him before the election failed utterly and added to his populist credentials. They preferred a campaign from the centre, focusing on celebrity endorsement, winning over middle ground Republicans, and parading with Liz Cheney. They appealed to the belief that the US is a country of equal opportunity and post-racism when it palpably isn't.

Trump and his supporters see through this. They know it is a lie. They prefer bullish, macho posturing, might makes right, freedom from consequence. The Democrats focussed in the last few weeks on labelling Trump a fascist – the response from his supporters was either a shrug or to embrace the fact that he wound up the liberals so much. Trump is a cypher for all the most selfish and reactionary views in US society, but the Democrats were no alternative. His movement crystallised a view of the USA that rejects equality and embraces domination. His movement is not foreign to the US body politics; it is rooted in it.

The global counter-revolutionary wave is largely a reaction to the gains of the post-war era – the advances made by women, Black people, the LGBTQIA+ community and others. Trump appealed especially to white people and young men, to Christian nationalist far right and tech bro supporters of Elon Musk. He also picked up votes from the Arab American community that turned on the Democrats for their funding of Israel's genocide in Gaza (although Trump will pursue the same policy). But he also drew support from a [significant number of Black people](#) (meaning people of colour) and women, those who reject the liberal establishment and want to resolve the contradictions of American society by embracing its supremacist values. Some of the US Black population also backs mass deportations of recently arrived immigrants if it drives down prices and improves wages (as Trump claims). That is the

point of populism; it combines contradictions and appeals to different people in different ways while claiming to provide simple answers to complex questions and denying meaningful change.

There will be considerable contradictions in his populist programme. Trump promised a carbon fossil fuel bonanza to drive down energy bill costs and tackle inflation, but he also wants tariffs on imports to strengthen US industry, which will drive up prices. He seems unlikely to deliver better living standards and more jobs for US citizens, especially with massive public sector cuts. But we also have to be wary of assuming that people primarily vote on economic grounds – the modern political landscape is far more complicated and riven by ideological divisions rather than simple financial calculations.

His indication that he will withdraw support from Ukraine and 'end the war there' almost certainly means that Russia's imperial annexation will be allowed to proceed. What this means for the broader region as Putin continues his expansionist project remains to be seen. Certainly, the emergence of a more multipolar world will propel us closer to a third world war at some stage. For the Palestinians, it also means more slaughter and defeat, Trump has been clear with Netanyahu that the far right leadership of Israel can "do whatever they need to do" to win.

The need for continued resistance goes without question. There will be many people feeling hopeless or full of despair right now, and that is exactly what the far right and fascists want. They take sadistic pleasure in the defeats they inflict on the 'woke' and on the left. But politics is determined by struggles for power and counter-power, building mass coalitions of resistance, identifying the weak points in the enemy's side and mobilising forces to shatter their strength.

ACR is in total solidarity with those in the USA who reject

this authoritarian turn and want to fight for a better world. We know the next few years will be difficult, but our movement has faced difficult times before. We know things will get worse before they get better. But we also know that we can argue for a world beyond capitalism, imperialism, and militarism, based on a society that provides for everyone and is sustainable with the environment. Runaway global warming is already with us, as is the worldwide strengthening of the far right; the two are linked. And politics does not end at the ballot box – that is another lie the Democrats relied on. Power comes from our organisation and resilience. We fight for a revolutionary change. Our role is to be part of the international fightback to change the world, to reclaim the future and build a better society for everyone!

The First US-Israeli Joint War

THE ISRAELI MILITARY forces' war on Gaza, following Hamas's 7 October attack, is the first Israeli war in which Washington is a co-belligerent. The US openly supports the war's proclaimed goal and is blocking calls for a ceasefire at the United Nations – all while providing arms and ammunition to Israel and acting to dissuade other regional actors from intervening in the conflict to help Hamas.

The US did not give Israel military support at its creation: it presented itself at first as an impartial arbiter between Israel and its Arab neighbors, ordering an embargo on arms packages to both that remained in force until the end of Dwight Eisenhower's presidency (1953–61). In the early years, Israel had to rely on West Germany and France for its funding

and arming. The situation changed when John F. Kennedy, faced with radicalized Arab nationalism led by Nasser's Egypt and setbacks to US influence in the Middle East, decided to rely on Israel and began to send it arms.

Since WWII, the US has provided more foreign aid to Israel than to any other country.

Total US foreign assistance by country, adjusted for inflation, 1946-2022



Adjusted for inflation in 2022 dollars. Date range for aid to Israel is 1951-2022. Data for 2020-2022 is partially completed. Source: US Agency for International Development

This was the beginning of a 'special relationship' that would prove very special indeed: between its creation in 1948 and the start of 2023, Israel received more than \$158bn in US aid, including more than \$124bn in military aid, which makes it the largest cumulative recipient of US funding since the second world war.⁽¹⁾ Every year the US provides Israel with military aid to the tune of almost \$4bn.

Yet Washington did not openly support Israel's war against its Arab neighbors in 1967 (it could not endorse the invasion of the West Bank at the expense of Jordan, another ally). During the October 1973 war, the "special relationship" did translate to an airlift of weaponry to Israel – the goal, however, was to help it to contain the offensive launched by Egypt and Syria. Once Israel managed to redress the situation to its advantage, Washington exercised strong pressure on it to end hostilities. The US did not openly support the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and intervened as mediator for the evacuation of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) combatants in Beirut. Nor did it support the war launched by Israel against Lebanon in 2006, or its subsequent successive offensives against Gaza.

This time, though, US support for Israel has been explicit and massive. In the aftermath of 7 October, Washington decided to

send two US carrier battle groups into the eastern Mediterranean, led by the aircraft carriers USS Eisenhower and USS Ford, a marine intervention unit, as well as an amphibian assault group led by the USS Bataan in the Black Sea and the USS Florida nuclear submarine, which carries cruise missiles. At the same time, Washington alerted its air bases in the region and urgently delivered military equipment to Israel, including missiles for the Iron Dome aerial defense system.

Washington thus provided a regional cover to Israel, so that it could devote the bulk of its forces to a war against Gaza whose stated objective, from the outset, has been the eradication of Hamas. The US and other western states have openly supported this goal. The fact is, however, that the eradication of a mass organization that has governed a small, very densely populated territory since 2007 cannot go ahead without a massacre of genocidal proportions. This is especially true since the Israeli army had the clear intention of minimizing losses in its own ranks during the invasion, which called for the intensive use of remote strikes, the flattening of urban areas in order to avoid urban guerrilla warfare and, therefore, the maximization of civilian deaths.

The US's responsibility in this massacre includes providing Israel with a large portion of the means to commit it. As of late November, Washington had sent its ally 57,000 artillery shells and 15,000 bombs, including more than 5,400 BLU-117s and 100 BLU-109 ('bunker buster') bombs, which weigh 2000 pounds (almost a ton) each. [\(2\)](#) The New York Times reported military experts' astonishment at Israel's 'liberal' use of these 2,000-pound bombs, each of which can flatten a tower several stories high, and which contributed to making Israel's war against Gaza a massacre of civilians 'at a historic pace'. [\(3\)](#) By 25 December, the US had provided Israel with 244 arms deliveries by cargo plane, as well as 20 shipments by boat. [\(4\)](#) In addition, the Guardian revealed that Israel had been able to draw on the vast stockpile of US weapons already

'pre-positioned' in the country. [\(5\)](#)

To finance all of this, on 20 October, the Biden administration made an extra-budgetary request of \$105bn to Congress, including 61.4bn for Ukraine (\$46.3bn in military aid), \$14.1bn for Israel (\$13.9bn in military aid) and \$13.6bn for the fight against illegal immigration at the border. The US president believed he could wrangle a green light from the Republican right for Ukraine by tying that aid (a bone of contention) with causes dear to them – yet by the end of 2023, Biden had still not succeeded in having his request approved. The Republican right has used Biden's strategy against him by demanding even more drastic measures at the border, putting him in an uncomfortable position with his own party.

In order to provide Israeli Merkava tanks with 45,000 artillery shells for \$500m, the Biden administration has bypassed Congress by passing an emergency measure on 9 December, a package of 14,000 shells for \$106.5m. It repeated this man oeuvre on 30 December for \$147.50m, provoking the anger of Democrats calling for more controls on arms packages to Israel. For all this, Biden bears a direct share of responsibility for the massacre perpetrated by Israeli forces in Gaza. His exhortations for Israel to be more 'humanitarian' ring hollow and are easily dismissed by critics as hypocrisy. His disagreement with Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu on the plan for the day after the war does not change the two governments' joint responsibility for the war itself. [\(6\)](#)

Ultimately, Biden – who, during his 2020 presidential campaign, promised to reverse course on his predecessor's markedly pro-Israel politics, notably by reopening the US consulate in East Jerusalem and the PLO office in Washington – did none of this. Instead, he followed in Donald Trump's footsteps, first by focusing on encouraging Saudi Arabia to join the Arab states that had established diplomatic relations with Israel under Trump's aegis, then by giving unconditional

support to Israel in its invasion of Gaza. In so doing, he has managed to anger his own Democratic Party – which is today more sympathetic to the Palestinians than to the Israelis (by 34% to 31%), according to a poll published on 19 December – without satisfying the Republicans either. In the end, 57% of Americans disapprove of Biden’s handling of the conflict, according to the same poll.[\(7\)](#)

Translated by Lucie Elven

Notes

1. Congressional Research Service, U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel, CRS Report, Washington, 1 March 2023.
[back to text](#)
2. Jared Malsin and Nancy A Youssef, [“U.S. Sends Israel 2,000-Pound Bunker Buster Bombs for Gaza War,”](#) *Wall Street Journal*, 1 December 2023.
[back to text](#)
3. Lauren Leatherby, [“Gaza Civilians, Under Israeli Barrage, Are Being Killed at Historic Pace,”](#) *New York Times*, 25 November 2023.
[back to text](#)
4. Harry Davies and Manisha Ganguly, [“244 US cargo planes, 20 ships deliver over 10,000 tons of military equipment to Israel – report,”](#) *Times of Israel*, 25 December 2023.
[back to text](#)
5. [“Gaza war puts US’s extensive weapons stockpile in Israel under scrutiny,”](#) *The Guardian*, 27 December 2023.
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6. Read Gilbert Achcar, [“Israeli far right’s plans for expulsion and expansion,”](#) *Le Monde diplomatique* in English, December 2023.
[back to text](#)
7. Jonathan Weisman, Ruth Igielnik and Alyce McFadden, [“Poll Finds Wide Disapproval of Biden on Gaza, and Little Room to Shift Gears,”](#) *New York Times*, 19

December 2023.

[back to text](#)

[Le Monde diplomatique](#), January 22, 2024

This version and translation is from Solidarity US:
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*Gilbert Achcar, Lebanese-born socialist, is a Professor at SOAS, University of London and a member of [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#) in England & Cymru. His most recent book is [“The New Cold War – The United States, Russia and China from Kosovo to Ukraine”](#) widely available from good bookshops. He will be speaking at an ‘Internationalism Today’ event organised by Anti*Capitalist Resistance in London on 3 February 2024 (also available online via Zoom for those in Scotland – register [here](#)):*

<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/what-internationalism-do-we-need-today/>

Internationalism Today

An Anti*Capitalist Resistance day school • 3 February

Sessions on Imperialism(s) and the New Cold War •

The politics of the new far right •

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Speakers include Gilbert Achcar, Hanna Perekhoda, Derek Wall, Seema Syeda, and Simon Hannah



YMCA Indian Student Hostel, 41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ 10:30am



USA Election 2024: Deform & Dysfunction

The Editors of USA socialist journal 'Against the Current' write on the forthcoming US Presidential election.

IN A POLARIZED, angry, anxiety-and-crisis-ridden United States of America, wide swathes of a fragmented and divided electorate find common ground at least on what they don't want: a 2024 repeat of a presidential election between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Yet eleven months in advance – subject to change, but not easily – that spectacle is just what we'll get.

Such a prospect, along with Trump's criminal trials and Biden's policy stumbles, may help explain a peculiar popular climate of simultaneous political agitation and apathy. Many millions of voters including working-class people (aside from Trump cult loyalists) will find themselves voting for presidential candidates and political parties they despise the least, not for choices they actually like.

This malaise, rather than any hopeful excitement, also accounts for why the anti-vax and racist certified crackpot candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. is polling as high as 24% as an independent, or why the rightwing Democratic Senator Joe Manchin might undertake a "No Labels" third-party campaign to "mobilize the middle" that could throw the election any which way.

No one should underestimate what a revived Trump presidency might mean – with his operatives' overt, already promised concentration/deportation camps to be constructed for asylum seekers, forced removals of students for pro-Palestinian activism, targeted attacks on the press, mass firings of government employees to be replaced by regime loyalists,

wholesale pardons for the January 6 aspiring insurrectionists, and who-knows-what chaos in imperialist global management.

The campaign of Trump's emerging leading Republican rival Nikki Haley has been endorsed (purchased) by the Koch Brothers' "Americans for Prosperity" (Plutocracy) outlet. This represents an attempt to consolidate a grossly reactionary, but more establishment neoconservative alternative to the runaway criminality of Trump and his prospective second term. That option would surely have appeal to much of the U.S. capitalist ruling class. (One rightwing commentator, Nolan Finley in the *Detroit News*, urges that Haley become the "No Labels" candidate.)

Activism and Ironies

To avoid a one-sided overly bleak portrayal, we should cite positive cases of social action that have made a difference. First, as we've discussed frequently, is the labor activist revival, culminating in union contracts with big gains for auto workers, at UPS, and steps forward in organizing places like Tesla and Amazon.

Second, at the present critical moment, is the outpouring in the streets demanding a ceasefire in Israel's war against Gaza and Palestine, which we discussed in our previous issue (ATC 227, "Catastrophe in Palestine and Israel: Apartheid on the Road to Genocide") and continue our coverage in the present issue.

Third is the continuing popular revulsion against the cynical and deeply evil anti-abortion extremism of the right wing, which is prepared to sacrifice women's lives to the "pro-life" cause, along with book bans and state-level voter suppression measures.

Such examples show that class and social movements continue – as also shown by myriad state, local and community struggles,

including around abortion, trans and housing justice among other issues. The fact that these are not generating much positive energy at the level of national electoral politics is one indication of a deformed and dysfunctional political system.

In this space we will not attempt to prognosticate, or chew over polling data, or (for the moment) seriously approach the prospects of an independent progressive alternative. The latter, critically important possibility must be a topic for future in-depth discussion. Here we want to explore some of the multiple ironies at the beginning of the electoral season.

If there's one policy arena where Biden-Harris administration should get at least passing marks and maybe some plaudits, it would be the general health of the post-pandemic economy. Yet that is exactly where polls show "greater confidence in the Republicans" – whose policies have been the most blatantly to enrich-the-rich, impoverish-the-poor, and run-up-deficits while pretending to be fiscally responsible.

It's an astonishing public-relations triumph of plutocracy posing as populism. Democratic pundits and operatives are visibly distressed that "Bidenomics" fails to garner the approval it deserves. The reasons for this apparent anomaly go far beyond its mediocre "messaging."

It's true that this administration came in with a Build Back Better program that had some inspiring, even transformative potential (even if much of it came cloaked in nationalist rhetoric about countering the rise of China). As it emerged from the desk of Bernie Sanders and the ambitions of Green New Dealers, the program included some serious federal spending – on infrastructure and energy transition – amounting to something like half the annual military budget.

Thanks to Senator Manchin among others, the best part of the program was trimmed back to what became the Inflation

Reduction Act. For example, pandemic-relief subsidies that cut U.S. childhood poverty in half – a very significant accomplishment in this brutally unequal society! – ran out. Thus in Manchin’s own state – according to official Census Bureau’s estimates, West Virginia’s child poverty rate – the highest in the nation – increased from 20.7% to 25.0% between 2021 and 2022.

Most important, the measurable benefits of the recovery flow overwhelmingly to the high-income layers of the population, who need them the least. Folks at lower-middle income or less levels see very little if any difference in their daily lives.

Inflation levels are well down from their brief eight-percent high point, but that still leaves prices of basic necessities far higher than they were – while the Federal Reserve’s interest-rate hikes that were ostensibly needed to “curb inflation” have themselves exacerbated a housing crisis that especially afflicts young people (and many limited-income senior citizens too).

The cumulative result is that macroeconomic statistics for the moment look reasonably good, but for many tens of millions of people the real-life economy doesn’t feel that way. That hurts the electoral prospects for an incumbent administration, i.e. for Biden in 2024 as it did for Trump in 2020.

Further Irony: Demographics

If there’s one factor that should be pushing the Republican Party toward permanent marginality even as it hurtles toward extreme-right lunacy, it’s that the United States is demographically becoming no longer a “white” country, and that younger generations are each more diverse than the previous one.

It’s precisely young, African American and other nonwhite and immigrant communities, and the LGBT and non-binary population,

who are the front-line targets of white-supremacist, Christian-nationalist and religious-right ideologies that thoroughly dominate today's Republican Party – including of course the Trump cult but not only that sector.

Yet it's precisely those younger, less white and less affluent sectors where the Democrats' presumptively overwhelming majorities are narrowing. Polls are showing nearly a quarter of African Americans preferring Trump over Biden, an astonishing (even if it turns out to be short-lived) index of disillusionment.

What's happened? Mainly, we think it's that the Democrats have overpromised and under-delivered real change – in terms of racial justice, student debt relief, immigration reform, tackling climate change, and more. Partly too, it was only a matter of time until the feeling of relief from the (first) Trump nightmare wore off.

To some extent, also, Biden's age and immovability present a bad look. But on key issues that are really hurting the Democrats' prospects in 2024, it's not Biden that's senile, but *American policy*.

This is particularly illustrated in the present Israeli genocidal war on Gaza. The crucial young sector of the Democrats' voter base is increasingly sympathetic to Palestine, alienated from the party's traditional unquestioning support of Israel, and no longer duped by feeble bleats about a long-dead "two-state solution." The December 1 resumption of the full-scale Israeli offensive, along with escalating murderous military and settler violence, accelerates that deepening and absolutely necessary disgust with Washington's active complicity in the massacre.

As for the Arab American and Palestinian communities, the fury over "Genocide Joe" Biden is difficult to describe if you haven't witnessed it. Leaders in communities like Dearborn,

Michigan, a key to the Democratic success in 2020, are openly vowing “we will never vote for Biden again even if the alternative is worse.” It’s impossible to say right now how this feeling will translate into votes or non-votes next November – keeping in mind the maxim that “all politics are local” – but the Democrats are willfully blind if they underestimate its importance.

Another factor that will require close further attention is the flood of bipartisan money from AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and rightwing sources to defeat progressive, pro-Palestinian congressional representatives like Rashida Tlaib (MI), Cori Bush (MO) and Ilhan Omar (MN) in their primaries. AIPAC has been promising to throw \$20 million toward any candidate who’ll challenge Tlaib. Any Democratic leadership connivance in these efforts could have fatal electoral consequences.

Immigration Crisis

Another issue bedeviling the Biden administration, clearly, is the immigration and asylum crisis. This is a powerful case of imperialism creating a problem it can’t solve. The numbers of desperate refugees and asylum applicants seeking entry at the southern border are overwhelming U.S. and northern Mexican cities, towns and support networks attempting to shelter and feed them.

The refugee crisis is a thoroughly bipartisan product of decades of destructive policies that we’ve discussed in these pages: decades of “free trade” that’s wiped out much of family farming in Mexico, genocidal counterrevolutionary wars in Central America, economic sanctions that greatly contribute to the unraveling of Venezuela as well as Cuba, serial catastrophic interventions in Haiti, and more.

Worst of all, 50 years of an insane U.S. “war on drugs” could not have been more brilliantly designed to turn the drug trade

over to violent criminal cartels while shattering lives and communities in North America. On top of all this, the escalating effects of climate change are wiping out means of subsistence such as, for example, coffee crops in Honduras. We've noted before that desperate immigration journeys and calamities are global in scope, as the miseries in the Mediterranean and cruelties of the Italian, British and other European governments illustrate.

This crisis eats away at domestic confidence in the Biden administration's grip on policy, even though it's not of their making – and even though the “alternative” is the outright sadism of the Republicans.

A freshly passed Texas law enables local police to arrest suspected “illegals” on any or no pretext, and local courts to initiate detentions and deportations. In usurping clear federal jurisdiction over immigration, this law is so blatantly unconstitutional in its application, and so fascistic in its implications, that only the prevailing White Supremacy Court of the United States (WSCOTUS) majority would seem likely to uphold it. (The ACLU is mounting court challenges before the law takes effect in February.)

There remains one area where the right wing and the Republican Party seem determined to self-destruct: their drive to complete the banning and criminalizing of abortion in the United States. In one state after another, where the right to abortion comes to a choice by voters, it wins – decisively. The horrific implications of a Republican sweep of the White House and Congress will keep not only women but a big slice of the entire electorate on side with the Democrats. The Republican determination to continue a losing anti-abortion crusade is rooted in the centrality of that issue to the overall “culture war” assault on gender, racial and social literacy – in libraries, schools, college campuses, and everywhere else.

That specter might, just barely, preserve the Democrats' grip on power after a looming 2024 election choice that hardly anyone outside the Trump cult actually wants. That's a pretty weak reed to grasp, and certainly nothing for a progressive left to bank on. The struggle for an alternative must look elsewhere, beginning with the rising activism we've seen for labor, for Palestine, for immigration and reproductive justice!

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Graphic from Against the Current, title: 'The sequel – not by popular demand'

Building International Solidarity for Ukraine: Three Perspectives

The Russian left wing website [Posle \(После – 'After'\)](#) recently published three perspectives on Building International Solidarity for Ukraine, from the UK state, from Poland and from the USA, that [ecosocialist.scot](#) is republishing below. You can find about Scottish solidarity with Ukraine from the website of the [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland](#).

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine the Western left split into two camps. Yet, attempts to build a broad solidarity movement with Ukraine have been underway since February 24.

International activists talk about their work:

**Simon Pirani [UK], honorary professor,
University of Durham**

**His most recent book on Russia
is [Communist Dissidents in Early Soviet
Russia \(2023\)](#)**

I have always believed that support for people resisting imperialist violence is central to socialism. It was the US war in Vietnam that first moved me to political action, when I was a teenager. Supporting Ukrainian resistance to Russian imperialism is consistent with supporting Vietnamese resistance then, and supporting Palestinian resistance to Israeli apartheid. For me, the difference is that Ukraine is closer, in the sense that I have been travelling there, and to Russia, for the last thirty years. (I worked in both countries as a journalist and doing academic research.)

After the invasion in February last year, the most effective responses from the labour movement and social movements in which I am involved were the direct ones. Some young people from the UK and other European countries travelled to Ukraine to join volunteer units; a much larger number of people organised material aid for front-line areas. Personally I supported those efforts, and played a small part in trying to highlight the situation in the Russian-occupied areas.

In the labour movement, perhaps the clearest voice in support of Ukrainian resistance was that of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). We have no deep mines left in the UK, but the union – which historically was one of the strongest, until its defeat in the big strike over pit closures in 1984-85 – continues to support former miners and their communities. It has a historical connection to Ukraine: [links](#) were established

in 1990 between the miners union in Durham, in north east England, with the Independent Miners Union of Ukraine, in the first place in Pavlograd, in the western Donbass.

Straight after the invasion, the NUM and other unions sent more than £20,000, and supported trade unionists who [drove vehicles](#) full of medical equipment and other supplies to Ukraine, and left them with miners' union activists there. There have been at least seven deliveries of that kind. Along with the NUM and the train drivers union ASLEF, a strong source of support has been a cross-party group, Senedd Cymru [Welsh parliament] Together for Ukraine. The chief legal officer of Wales, Mick Antoniw, is a labour movement activist of Ukrainian family background, and has travelled several times to deliver vehicles, with fellow parliamentarians and trade union representatives.

Other unions have participated in, or at least declared support for, such solidarity actions, including those representing civil servants, teachers, university staff and health workers: efforts to win them over have been coordinated by the [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign](#), which works with the Confederation of Independent Unions of Ukraine (KVPU).

The USC last month also organised a conference, [Another Ukraine is Possible](#), at which labour, feminist and anti-capitalist perspectives on the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine were advanced, in contrast to the neoliberal slant of the government-level talks also held in London. Another initiative, that I have myself been involved in, has been to raise the profile of [Solidarity Zone](#), the group supporting Russians who take [direct action against the war](#), for example by translating and circulating material.

In terms of actual material aid delivered, all these initiatives by labour movement and anti-capitalist movements are smaller than the mountains of support given to Ukrainian people by civil society in a wider sense. Community groups,

churches, voluntary associations, charities, and e.g. Ukrainians living in the UK and their friends have not only raised very large sums of money but also taken vehicles and other aid to Ukraine. On the other hand, the UK's support for Ukrainian refugees, or for Russians fleeing war and repression, has been very limited. While the government, for cynical political reasons, made it easier for Ukrainians to get to the UK than it is for most refugees from other wars, it is still difficult. The number of Ukrainian refugees here is negligible compared to Poland, Germany or other countries in continental Europe.

In my view, in the UK there are two problems that we face, in building a broad Ukraine solidarity campaign. The first is that, for reasons we all understand about inter-imperialist rivalries, the UK government has steadfastly supported Ukraine militarily, e.g. with weapons supplies. This has given the most right-wing UK government in decades the opportunity to pose as lovers of freedom. And this has its effect on society: the media reports Ukraine sympathetically; president Zelensky appears smiling for the cameras with our ministers, who to people here represent austerity and racism. The hypocrisy of the British ruling class, who for so long prevailed over an empire that dripped with blood (and who have spent the last thirty years gearing its financial system to the benefit of Russian kleptocrats), is obvious – especially to migrant communities whose suffering has been shaped by British and other western imperialism.

There is a danger that this hypocrisy can cause resentment and division. People in the UK who face constant pressure from the state for supporting Palestinian rights, or who deal daily with the consequences of the state's racist migration policies, can not fail to be struck by the state's "favouritism" towards Ukrainians, or, for another example, political refugees from Hong Kong. Socialists and labour movement activists who support Ukrainian resistance have

answered this in the best way possible – by seeking to build alliances between Ukraine’s struggle and others resisting other imperialism. This is a work in progress.

The other issue is that, as in other western countries, there are post-Stalinist tendencies that in practice oppose solidarity with Ukraine. A tiny handful of pro-Putin extremists issue soundbites à la Solovyev or Rogozin. But more numerous groups describe themselves as “anti imperialists”, seeing the Kremlin as the lesser evil and Ukraine as a tool of the western powers, or “pacifists” who issue disingenuous calls for peace talks, without e.g. withdrawal of Russian troops, and repeat Kremlin talking points about NATO being to blame for the war. So in the Labour party, the left minority is divided: John McDonnell (effectively deputy Labour leader when Jeremy Corbyn was leader), has [supported](#) “the provision of weapons to Ukrainians to defend themselves”; Corbyn himself is [against](#) that.

Just as the sore of the illegitimate, Russian-supported “republics” festered in the body of Ukrainian society, so reactionary forms of ideology that supported them gnawed away at the labour movement across Europe

Looking back, I think that, collectively, those in the labour movement with connections to Russia and Ukraine did far too little after 2014 to explain our case. This so-called “anti-imperialism” was already vocal, with regard both to [Ukraine](#) and [Syria](#). Like others, I made individual efforts to oppose it (see e.g. here, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) but these efforts were inadequate. Just as the sore of the illegitimate, Russian-supported “republics” festered in the body of Ukrainian society, so reactionary forms of ideology that supported them gnawed away at the labour movement across Europe.

Hopefully the very widespread, and very human, feeling among

ordinary people in the UK, that Ukrainians deserve solidarity against a brutal, violent onslaught, will serve as the background for a new clarification of what socialist anti-imperialism actually means

One good thing that has happened in the last 18 months is that these issues have come out into the open and been discussed more widely. Hopefully the very widespread, and very human, feeling among ordinary people in the UK, that Ukrainians deserve solidarity against a brutal, violent onslaught, will serve as the background for a new clarification of what socialist anti-imperialism actually means.

Zofia Malisz [Poland], Razem International Office

[Razem](#) is [a left party in Poland](#) with six members of parliament and structures at home and abroad. We support the sovereignty of Ukraine as well as the efforts of the Belarusian and Russian people to democratise their countries since our party was formed in 2015 (see "[Polityka wschodnia](#)"). After the Russian invasion we launched and co-organised several campaigns, often in cooperation with [Sotsialnyi Rukh](#), to gain support on the European and global left for sending weapons that the Ukrainian people needed to defend themselves.

We co-founded the [European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine](#) (ENSU), which is so active today. There we worked within the feminist "right to resist" group. Our co-leader Magdalena Biejat and other female left coalition MPs filed a motion in the Sejm to expedite access to abortion for Ukrainian refugees who had been raped. Unfortunately the right-wing parliamentary majority rejected it. Other initiatives of ENSU also include a visit to Lviv in 2022 with various left parliamentarians. Right after the invasion we gathered members of Nordic and Eastern European left parties in Warsaw and [issued a statement](#) in support of Ukraine,

condemning the invasion and appealing for sanctions against Russia. Our [cooperation on a range of issues](#) including [cancelling Ukrainian external debt](#) has made a difference, in the form of several legislative efforts in Europe and the US in favour of supporting the cancellation. This was a result of broad social media campaigns, meetings, press conferences and [articles](#) on the topic that we took direct part in, initiated or co-ordinated.

We took part in countless meetings, live and remote in 2022, with the global left, to challenge Russian propaganda regarding the invasion and Ukrainian statehood. We confronted falsehoods embedded on the left, particularly within the Western “peace” movement. We did our best to explain the complexities of our regional situation that many were disappointingly ignorant about or chose to ignore – despite decades-long relationships. As a consequence of such unwillingness to engage with the challenges facing the Eastern European left and to support Ukrainian sovereignty, we decided [to leave Progressive International and Diem25](#) shortly after the invasion.

We do feel the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian opposition left movements have unique contributions to make to the global left. Our traditions and the challenges we face, be it geopolitical or stemming from the transformation, are different, so are our solutions and ways of communication. Much can be learned from us. One of the hardest challenges is the neoliberal ideologisation in our societies. Due to that we see the great risk that rebuilding Ukraine entails – we believe, together with our partners in Ukraine, that it should be rebuilt for the benefit of the people, not foreign corporations or domestic oligarchs, with great focus on social infrastructure and support for workers, women as well as on nurturing bottom up communal organising that grew strong during the war. Our politicians have been communicating this constantly: there can be no sell-out of Ukraine to

corporations in exchange for weapons. These days we put most of our efforts for Ukraine into campaigning for socially oriented rebuilding.

We do feel the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian opposition left movements have unique contributions to make to the global left

Razem also [wants to offer](#) to millions of Ukrainian refugees in Poland [our vision](#) of a safe, environmentally sustainable welfare state for everyone. A vision that we believe we can realise together both in Poland and in Ukraine. We want to show that Ukraine, in order to rebuild itself, needs its workers to return to stable working conditions with expanded labour rights. It needs its veterans to heal and to receive support from a well funded public services sector. Its children need to be able to grow up with the prospect of a planet that is not only livable, but thriving. We need Ukrainian victory for that, as well as a great deal of left cooperation and campaigning together for social Ukraine. We continue paving the way for that with our partners, both within the Central-Eastern European Green-Left Alliance organisation including Ukrainian partners that we have been building (that is launching at the moment). We also work with partners on the Western left who are willing to engage and to develop concrete proposals of rebuilding plans that challenge the liberal plans (e.g. many activists in the UK and some Labour politicians).

There is broad consensus in Poland, as you know, regarding condemning the invasion as well as political and military help for Ukraine. There are no disagreements on that within the left in Poland. We are a political force though that keeps a watchful eye on the government's attitude and possible emerging far right threats to Ukrainian refugees. We also criticize any attempts to sacrifice human rights, the right to due process etc., regarding whatever issue concerning Russian

citizens on Polish soil.

[John Reimann](#) and Cheryl Zuur [USA],

co-chairs Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign

Supporting Ukraine is the concrete expression of the number one responsibility for any socialist. That responsibility is international working class solidarity. But that is not just some moral responsibility; it is directly connected to the class struggle at home.

We see Putin's invasion of Ukraine as a decisive step in the general world process of the rise of extreme right wing nationalism, bigotry and counterrevolution. The more Putin succeeds, the more that process advances. We saw that with the Assad/Putin led counterrevolution in Syria which played a big role in the setback of the whole Arab Spring. And the Arab Spring did, in fact, inspire workers and young people around the world. The result of its defeat (for now) has been, among other things, the increase of religious reaction – Islamic fundamentalism in this case.

Here in the United States, Trump used Islamic fundamentalism and Islamophobia as a major tool to get elected in 2016. Once in office, his first major initiative was to, in effect, bar Muslim people from entering the United States. This is an example of how the Putin-led counterrevolution had an effect on politics here in the United States.

Trump supports Putin not only because he [served as a money launderer](#) for the Russian oligarchy for many years. His support is also because of political affinity. That is also why extreme right wing politicians, even outright racists and fascists like [America First](#) and individuals like [Matt Heimbach](#), support Putin. If Putin's imperialist invasion

succeeds even in part, it will strengthen these forces and further drive forward global reactionary movements.

Finally, if we as socialists and as working class activists ignore this massive attack on the Ukrainian people, what are we saying to US workers? We would be telling workers “think only of yourselves in the most immediate sense. Think only of your own paycheck. Don’t think about the wider issues that directly affect our lives.” It would be no different from saying that oppression of women, or people of color or LGBTQ people is not a matter for all workers to oppose. It would be impossible to help strengthen the working class with that attitude, never mind to build a truly working class socialist movement.

As a result of this, a small group of us founded the Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign shortly after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine started. (In reality, Putin’s military invasion of Ukraine started in 2014!). We base ourselves on [several points of unity](#), including the demand that in order to fight the invaders Ukraine should receive all the weapons it needs and with no strings attached. That means we criticize Biden not because he is sending arms to Ukraine but, on the contrary, because he is too hesitant and putting too many handcuffs on Ukraine, on how it may use these arms. That is an unusual position for socialists to take, but it is not unprecedented. During the Spanish Civil War, US socialists called on the US to send arms to the Spanish republicans who were fighting fascism, and during WWII no socialist in the U.S. would have opposed the US’s sending arms to the Soviet Union to fight the Nazis.

The Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has a lively presence on social media, including a [Facebook group](#) with over 630 members and almost 2,000 followers on [Twitter](#). Both of these present news and analyses related to the war in Ukraine. We have a [linktree](#) with quite a few public resources. We also have regular public Zoom forums on topics such as the

environmental aspects of the war in Ukraine, the Iranian revolution, whether Russia is fascist (with Ilya Budraitskis), the present political situation in Ukraine, and coming up a [presentation on the Holodomor](#). Recordings of those forums are available on our [youtube channel](#).

One of the most important discussions we had was a two part series on “fascist ideas on the left”. That was a discussion on how and why the ideas of the far right, including even fascist ideas, have come to permeate the socialist movement. This is vitally important because – we have to admit it – the majority of the socialist movement and the “left” in general supports or at least apologizes and makes excuses for Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. We explicitly decided to include “Socialist” in our name because we believe it is vital to reclaim socialism from this betrayal.

This betrayal is not accidental. It relates to the generally low political level of the US working class, a working class that has never had its own political party and that has been under attack, both ideologically and practically, for many decades. This ideological attack has been carried out not only by the capitalist class, but also from our very own leaders – every wing of the union leadership – who have also collaborated in helping the capitalists drive down the living conditions of US workers.

So, while the majority of US workers support Ukraine, they do so passively. “It’s not for me (us) to play an active, independent role in politics,” is the attitude.

In addition to our regular forums, the Ukraine Socialist Solidarity Campaign has mobilized in the streets where and when we can. We have participated in wider street mobilizations in support of Ukraine, for example a unity march organized by Iranian Americans in San Francisco. We have also mobilized to counter the pro-Putin propaganda of the “left”, such as Code Pink and various “socialists.” We also have done

some fundraising for Ukraine, including selling t-shirts we designed, and a member of ours actually carried medical supplies to Ukraine last year. We are currently encouraging unions to pass [a resolution](#) we produced calling for full support – including arms – for Ukraine and we also have [a petition](#) calling for the IAEA to take over operation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (you can sign it [here](#)).

We are still a very small group of activists and, can hardly have a major effect on objective events. What is needed is a renewed uprising of the working class in the United States and globally. We hope to help prepare the way by trying to clarify some of the most vital political issues of the day, many of which revolve around the fascistic imperialist invasion of Ukraine. That and building support for Ukraine to the maximum degree we can.

It is an honor and a privilege to work with and be associated with those brave Ukrainian and Russian comrades (as well as others) who are fighting against the Putin-led counterrevolution. We think that, together with a renewed worker uprising, this sort of collaboration in both the ideological and the practical realms will be the basis for the rebirth of a new, healthy, working class oriented socialist movement.

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