Freedom from occupation and colonialism: why the anti-war left must back Ukraine

***Ukraine Solidarity Campaign* is a left-wing campaign, based in the UK trade union movement, organising solidarity with the Ukrainian struggle against invasion and occupation by Russia and with Ukraine's left-wing social movements. We've put together this leaflet for participants in the International Youth Strike Against War to encourage you to engage more with the Ukrainian people's struggle.**

The call for the strike rightly demands "freedom, justice, and solidarity for all oppressed peoples" and "an end to imperialism, colonialism, occupation, apartheid, and genocide", and makes similar arguments throughout. To be consistent and effective that must include opposition to one of the major wars of conquest and subjugation in the world today, Russia's war in Ukraine, and solidarity with its victims and their resistance.

We need to listen to and learn from the Ukrainian left, from its trade union movement to its student movement, from climate justice, feminist and LGBT+ activists to socialist and anarchist groups – which are simultaneously helping resist Russia's colonial war and opposing the neoliberal policies of the Ukrainian government.

The left should of course be critical of violence and militarism in general. But when an invaded and occupied people suffering horrendous war crimes fights back against the occupying army, that is not militarism in the same sense. And when for instance the UK government sends weapons to the Ukrainian resistance, our response should not be the same as when it allows arms sales to Israel or Saudi Arabia.

These issues have come up many times in anti-war struggles. The Soviet Union and China, themselves imperialist states, aided Vietnamese resistance to the US's war in Vietnam. India aided Bangladesh's liberation struggle against Pakistan. The US aided the Kurdish struggle against ISIS. It was not necessary to stop criticising the militarism of these states to be pleased that (for their own reasons) they aided some genuine struggles against genocide and imperialist slaughter.

Important organisations backing the Youth Strike in the UK (and elsewhere), from the Young Greens to UCU, support Ukraine. That is a better approach than those in the Stop the War Coalition who call Ukraine's resistance a "proxy war" and argue anti-militarism means it should surrender to Russia's genocidal fossil fuel imperialism.

We encourage anti-war activists to engage with Ukrainian activists and organisations (see overleaf) and to learn more about Ukraine's struggle for freedom.

ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org

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Winter aid appeal: bit.ly/uawinteraid

You can also find us on Instagram, Bluesky, X and Facebook



"Resisting on two fronts" – interview with radical Ukrainian student union Pryama Diia (Direct Action)

Read at bit.ly/pryamad

The comrades talk about Ukraine's fight against imperialism, the challenges of radical organising in wartime, their attitude to conscription, horizontal organisation, opposing the Ukrainian far right, students and workers + much more.

YOUNG GREEN SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE

The Young Greens, one of the sponsors of the youth strike, support Ukraine. Read the policy they passed this year at bit.ly/yg-ua

"Russia has kidnapped 20,000 Ukrainian children and put them in re-education camps. It is committing vast ecocide all across Ukraine. If you want to know what Russia means when it says it wants peace, look at it systematically sending missiles into Ukraine, not just at the military – but at schools, nurseries, maternity hospitals, apartment blocks, that apparently deserve to be bombed in the name of Russia's 'peace'."

Valentina Butenko, Young Greens press officer

"Supporting Ukraine is not counterposed to anti-militarism but essential to it. By helping Ukraine protect its people and resist Russia's occupation, we can also prevent escalation into a wider war."

Viktoriya Ball, British Ukrainian youth climate activist and Green Party activist



PALESTINE & UKRAINE: similarities, differences, solidarity

Organised by UCU Members for Ukraine. All welcome

6pm UK time, 15th December

- **Rita Adel**
- **Adeeb Shaheen**
- **Yuliya Kishchuk**
- **Andrii Movchan**

More + register bit.ly/palesua or:

More links + info

Ukrainian socialist organisation Sotsialniy Rukh: ***rev.org.ua***

Solidarity Collectives: ***bit.ly/sc-ua***

Interview with Ukraine's Feminist Workshop: ***bit.ly/fw-ua***

A feminist manifesto: ***bit.ly/ua-rr***

LGBT+ struggles: ***bit.ly/lgbt-ua***

Why UCU, NEU, UNISON and other UK unions support Ukraine: ***bit.ly/tus-sol***

Anti-militarism without pacifism (by UCU activists): ***bit.ly/antimili***

On 'welfare not warfare': ***bit.ly/taxr-ua***