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USA/Ukraine

Ukrainian union leader comments on U.S. left

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At present, Ukraine endures a state of war – where every political statement is tested against the harshest of realities. Observing current events in the United States – the fragmentation of the left, the wavering of the middle class – it becomes increasingly evident that a moment of truth is drawing near. The moment that will either signify a decisive turn toward profound social transformation or mark the final collapse of public faith in democracy as a mechanism of justice. The United States is home to numerous left-wing, progressive, and socialist organizations. Yet they often operate in parallel, disconnected realities. Some focus on union-building, others organize marches, while others draft manifestos. But where is the shared vision? Where is the unified front around a simple and urgent demand: a dignified life for the majority?

From an external vantage point, the United States today appears as a nation with hyper-concentrated capital alongside an expanding social vacuum. It is precisely in such conditions that movements arise – not merely as reactions to injustice, but as visionary ideas of a new nation that unite the scattered, the weary, and the forgotten.

The American middle class increasingly feels betrayed. Millions of people live from paycheck to paycheck, with limited or no access to healthcare, education, or housing. Meanwhile, the political class either caters to capital or is engaged in cultural disputes detached from the everyday realities of the majority. This is a fertile ground for the real left to emerge – but it is not yet happening.

Here in Ukraine, we have witnessed how “leftists” devoid of economic agendas quickly become mere decoration. We understand the cost of disorganized protest.

An immigrant rights protest in Oakland. Religious appeals were everywhere. Class politics was absent.

Therefore, we offer a warning: without roots in labor, in production, in real life, no ideology can survive. Only through specific, material demands – raising minimum and average wages, reducing working hours, defending trade unions’ rights – can both the average worker and the highly skilled specialist be mobilized. It is in the fight for a just share of collective wealth, not in abstract slogans, that a broad left coalition is formed.

In the United States, those who have long remained on the sidelines activists, Marxists, environmentalists, union organizers – now have a historic opportunity. But only if they renounce the role of perpetual oppositionists and assume the mantle of genuine alternative builders. Our war has taught us one essential lesson: no one will save you – unless you save yourself.

What America needs is not just a protest, but a project. A project for a just state. A project for a working society. Perhaps those who are currently considered to be marginal will, with time, become the authors of a new manifesto. Solidarity between peoples begins with an honest look at oneself. And that requires an honest answer to one fundamental question: are you prepared to fight not for symbols, but for essence?

Greetings from the front lines! We are currently paying a very high price. But if you remain silent, you risk losing no less.

Translated by Oksana Skyba

Oaklandsocialist comments: We thank Aleksandr Skyba for this article.

Much of the left here should consider Aleksandr's comments about the need for an economic program. He is right about that. For example, in the protests against Trump's deportation of immigrants, the issue of union rights, minimum wage and other such issues should be raised. Unfortunately, much of protests are aimed at what we call "identity politics" instead of class politics. One problem is that where union leaders speak at these protests they, too, ignore these issues.

Related to this is the fact that much of the left, including the socialist left, feels they must oppose everything the U.S. government does. This has opened them to being influenced by Putin and making excuses for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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Source: [Oakland Socialist](#).

PS:

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