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Solidarity with Ukraine

You can't defend peace when there is no peace to defend

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Routes

The Convoy will depart from different cities and follow:

- Southern Route**
Barcelona/Lence - Kyiv
- Central Route**
London/Edinburgh - Kyiv
- Northern Route**
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From Europe to Ukraine



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The Australian Greens' new national leader, David Shoebridge, might think he is taking a principled position on Australian defence policy and peace, but that's far from the case. In an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald, Shoebridge said that Australia should not provide any military support to Ukraine, should wind back US access to bases in Australia and scrap the AUKUS agreement. I'm with him on the latter two, but on Ukraine he is effectively calling for the destruction of Ukraine and the mass murder of its people.

Peace is the fundamental business of the left. But peace does not mean mindless pacifism. When countries come under attack from aggressors, they are entitled to defend themselves. Ukraine is entitled to defend itself. There is no point acknowledging that Russia is an aggressor against Ukraine and calling for the withdrawal of Russian troops, but then objecting to the supply of weapons to Ukraine. Objecting to Ukraine receiving weapons from wherever it can get them is doing Putin's work for him. Putin won't stop if Ukraine is unable to defend itself. The war would certainly end – but only with a subsequent crushing of Ukraine and hundreds of Bucha massacres. And then Putin will set his sights on the next victim – the Baltic states, Finland, Georgia, Sweden? Would Shoebridge object to weapons supplies to those countries?

There is a big difference between stopping weapons supplies to an aggressor or stopping arms going to countries before war has broken out, on the one hand, and stopping supplies of weapons to a country that is under attack, on the other. The former might end a war or stop it breaking out. The latter just guarantees that the victim loses. There is no peace to defend in Ukraine. There is a war and killing to stop. And while the war might end if the victim is unable to defend itself any longer, how is that a just peace? And ending the war on Russia's terms won't end the killing. It will just allow the killing of Ukraine and its people to continue in "peace".

There is no practical or ethical difference between someone who supports Putin's aggression towards Ukraine and someone who claims to oppose it but won't support Ukraine's right to defend itself. It's like seeing an innocent person being beaten up on the street, yelling at the aggressor to stop but grabbing the arms of the victim and holding them behind his back while the thug continues to punch him in the face. This ethical inconsistency completely undermines Shoebridge's objections to Australia's dangerously subservient relationship to the US. Why would anyone trust the Greens' judgement on Australia's own defence policies when Shoebridge shows such poor judgement on Ukraine's right to self-defence?

In November, the International Network of Solidarity with Ukraine is sending a Solidarity Convoy to Ukraine. We'll be taking generators, stoves and other equipment to help Ukrainians get through another harsh winter under Russian bombardment. You can donate here. We won't be taking weapons because we don't have authority or the resources to do so. But we fully support Ukraine's right to obtain arms to defend itself.

I hate hearing about the destruction being wrought in Ukraine, about the hundreds of thousands of soldiers from both sides being killed and wounded on the frontlines, the civilians, including many children, suffering and dying because of Putin's war. But expressions of dismay about war and love of peace are fine for comfortable Greens politicians from inner-city Sydney. They are of no use to people enduring daily drone terror attacks.

Shoebridge claims to oppose Putin's invasion and says the Greens support "basic humanitarian and civil assistance" to Ukraine but not the supply of weapons. This is mealy mouthed cowardice. Should others supply weapons? If they do, are they less principled than the Australian Greens? Are the Greens better than those who advocate for or supply weapons for Ukraine's defence? Or do the Greens hope that others supply weapons while they keep their hands

clean with “humanitarian and civil assistance”? What is the point of such assistance if Ukraine is defeated and occupied by Russia? Or do the Greens think that everyone should be as “principled” as them and that no-one should supply weapons? Again, the result of that, of course, would be Ukraine's defeat by a Russia determined to eradicate it from the map.

It is rather ironic that Shoebridge's call to end weapons supplies to Ukraine replicates similar calls from the Trump regime and all the European far-right parties. What colour do you get when you mix red, brown and green?

Anti-imperialism should be consistent. Aggression by one state against another should be resisted wherever it occurs – Israel's relentless aggression against Palestine and other countries; the US's aggression towards Venezuela, Cuba and numerous other states; Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainians have a right to self-determination and self-defence. No geopolitical alliances, no complaints about NATO, no “western imperialism”, no false narratives about the Ukrainian government's ideology: none of these justify the invasion of one sovereign nation by another and the killing of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians.

Russia is an aggressive petro-state determined to impose its nationalistic, imperialist agenda on neighbouring states. It is, alongside Trump's USA, the centre of the global far-right ecosystem of ethno-nationalism, Christian extremism, anti-LGBTQ prejudice, and anti-democratic politics. Putin's regime is supported by far-right, anti-union parties and individuals all over the world: Farage's Reform UK; Le Pen's Rassemblement National, the Alternative for Germany, members of Pauline Hanson's party, including Malcolm Roberts, the Freedom Party of Austria, Orban's Fidesz in Hungary, the UK's Tommy Robinson, the US's Tucker Carlson, and many more.

Ukrainian unions and leftists are highly critical of their government's policies towards the nation's workers. But they support the war effort. Unionists and leftists are on the front lines. Workers bear the burden on the homefront in hospitals, on the railways, in fire and rescue services. They support their nation's struggle. They can oppose their government's domestic policies in a way that would get them only vicious repression in Russia. They ask only for our solidarity and our support – including the supply of weapons.

Imperialism should be resisted everywhere. Australia's role in it as a satrap of the US needs to be recognised and resisted. We can oppose AUKUS and support Ukraine's right to self-defence. You can show real practical support for Ukraine's workers and unions, and for its struggle for national independence, by supporting the International Network in Solidarity with Ukraine's Solidarity Convoy to Ukraine.

Source: [Radical Civility](#)

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