

ANTI-IMPERIALISM & THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR

Facts about Medea Benjamin

- Medea Benjamin is probably the most prominent **apologist for Vladimir Putin and Russian imperialism** on the U.S. Left. In this she joins Tucker Carlson and many other prominent voices on the U.S. Right.
- She speaks of seeking “**peace**” in Ukraine, but **her goal is to pressure the U.S.** to cut off aid to Ukraine and **force Ukrainians to make huge concessions to Russian occupiers**, including land and veto power over Ukrainian society and politics.
- **Benjamin repeats Putinist claims** about the Ukrainian people: that they are fascists, that they are puppets of US imperialism, that they provoked this war, that the 2014 Maidan revolution was a “neo-fascist coup,” etc. Any reasonable scan of scholarship on these topics shows that **none of these things are true. All are claims originating in the Russian state mediasphere.**
- **Benjamin actually knows very little about Ukraine**, has never listened to Ukrainian social movements, Ukrainian trade unions, Ukrainian feminists, the Ukrainian LGBTQ movement, the Ukrainian student movement, the Ukrainian anti-fascist movement, Ukrainian national minorities (such as the Crimean Tatars who never feature in her talk about Crimea, yet who are the Indigenous people of that peninsula), Ukrainian Jews, Ukrainian Roma/Travellers -- **all of whom** are overwhelmingly, nearly universally, supporting and participating in the **resistance** to the Russian invasion.
- **Putin has openly justified his bloody invasion on racist and genocidal rhetoric** – that the Ukrainian people are not a real “people,” that their nation is “fake,” etc. This is **identical** rhetoric that the **Israeli** occupation uses against Palestinians, the **Turkish** regime has used against Kurds, et al.
- **Putin uses straight-up misogynist and homophobic justifications** – that a free Ukraine is an attack on the traditional family and will result in the erosion of gender roles and male power, etc. This is consistent with his influence on a **growing global movement of far-right political parties and groups**, which includes the U.S. Republican Party, Viktor Orbán’s Fidesz in Hungary, Marine Le Pen’s National Rally in France, the global networks of Steve Bannon and Guo Wengui, and many, many others.
- **Benjamin poses as an anti-imperialist, but actually supports empire.** She lobbies US imperialism to allow Russian imperialism to achieve its goals over Ukraine’s rebellious people (as Obama and Trump did, as Biden was prepared to do until the Ukrainian people forced the issue with their heroic resistance).
- **Russia today is a fossil fuel empire:** 2/3 of its revenues come from the sale of oil and gas (which was mostly to Europe but is now mostly to India, China, Iran, and the Global South). It denies climate change and denies its own people the right to organize (except in Putin-supporting Russo-fascist groups). Its natural allies are Trumpists, Bolsonarists, and other climate-denying neo-fascists.
- **Calling on Ukraine to concede is not a “peace” demand** any more than calling on **Palestinians**, or **Kurds**, or **victims of rape and genocide**, to stop resisting. **It is victim-blaming.**
- All of this is consistent with Medea Benjamin’s positions on **Syria, Iran, China** (in its treatment of the Uyghurs), and other places where she **takes the side of empire against the people** it is oppressing. The **ONLY** empire she recognizes is the U.S. In that, she takes the side of **other imperialists.**
- Anti-imperialist leftists consider her part of the **Tankie Propaganda Machine**, where “tankie” is a reference to those leftists who supported and justified Soviet tanks quashing people’s movements in Hungary in 1956, Prague in 1968, and who today justify Russian tanks in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities.
- **Anti-imperialism, to be true to its name, is anti-ALL-imperialisms.** Supporting one empire over another has **nothing** to do with peace, human rights, women’s rights, the labor movement, or Left-Green politics. It contributes to the morass of imperial fascisms at large and festering in the world. **Building a global movement against fossil fascism** – which Putin is as much a representative of as the Koch Brothers or any U.S. militarists – requires building a movement against **ALL imperialists and ALL imperialisms.** And it requires **supporting people’s right to defend themselves** against imperialist invasions.

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