

# Great Britain: Using Gaza to undermine Ukraine

Wednesday 10 January 2024, by [DENHAM Jim](#) (Date first published: 9 January 2024).

**Israel's war with Hamas has come as a godsend to Vladimir Putin, allowing him to court the Global South with the claim - true as far as it goes - that the West's apparent indifference to Palestinian deaths proves the "rules-based" order is based upon hypocrisy and double standards.**

And, of course, Israel's horrific pulverisation of Gaza provides political cover for Russia's systematic targeting of schools, hospitals and civilian homes in Ukraine.

It would be untrue and unfair to suggest that people like those who run the Morning Star and the Stop the War Coalition take any satisfaction from the devastation of Gaza, but it has certainly allowed them to claim that the call for a ceasefire in both conflicts is essentially the same thing - despite the obvious fact that in Gaza a ceasefire is a precondition for peace and eventual justice, whereas in Ukraine it would mean a victory for Russian imperialism and the likely destruction of Ukraine as an independent nation.

But for those who have never supported Ukraine's right to defend itself, and have sought, ever since February 2022, to justify (or at least "contextualise") Putin's invasion, what's happening in Gaza makes their case, once not very popular on the left and the labour movement, much easier to sell. The Morning Star has been attempting to link calls for a ceasefire in both conflicts ever since Israel's attack on Gaza began - though these calls, often couched in pacifistic terms, sit somewhat uneasily alongside articles like those by Ramsey Baroud (12 October) celebrating the Hamas attack and John Wight (17 October) looking forward to Hezbollah joining the war.

The supposed linkage between Gaza and Ukraine has been made time and again in the pages of the Morning Star.

An editorial (18 October) that correctly denounces Starmer's apparent backing for Israeli collective punishment in Gaza then claims that "of course it aligns with his servile backing for the Tory government over the Ukraine conflict, a posture that has left Labour aligned with the most bellicose forces in the world today" ... which presumably doesn't include Russia.

For Andrew Murray (1 November) it's quite simple: "Ceasefire [is] the word imperialism hates today ... it will escape nobody that the countries pushing for a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine war and those demanding an end to the Israeli assault on Palestine are very much the same" (again, it is unclear whether Russia is included).

An editorial (7 December) implicitly welcomes the far-right US Republicans being "increasingly opposed" to arming Ukraine and calls for a peace deal based upon acceptance of the Russian annexation of Crimea. It concludes: "The continuation of the Ukraine conflict only benefits imperialism in its drive to weaken Russia the better to isolate China ... In Gaza the Nato powers likewise oppose a ceasefire".

But the most shameless attempt to suggest that support for Ukraine is somehow incompatible with support for the Palestinian cause came in an article (23-24 December) by George Galloway's former bag-carrier Kevin Ovenden. It is a piece that has surprisingly little to say about the justice of the Palestinian cause per se, but a lot to say about how pro-Palestinian sentiment is "upending politics across the globe" and is "a refutation of the liberal conceit that the 'populist' demon of the 2010s has been put back in its box." Ovenden goes on: "You could see what ('establishment' politicians) thought would happen in the days after the shock October 7 attacks.

"As with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there would be ironclad consensus at the top of politics and across corporate media. Buildings to be lit up in the colours of an ally's flag ... Nato governments of centre-left and centre-right utilised Ukraine to try to liquidate the radical left in Europe ... They had some success over Ukraine and followed the play-book over Israel. They failed."

What people like Ovenden fail to explain (but simply take as read) is how support for Ukraine's right to self determination is incompatible with being on the "radical left". Or incompatible with solidarity with the Palestinian people.

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