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# **Most of the British left ignores the 'Solidarity with Ukraine' protest march in London**

Tuesday 29 March 2022, by [LOTZ Corinna](#), [MARSDEN Rob](#) (Date first published: 27 March 2022).

**Saturday's March for Ukraine in London was one of the largest demonstrations I have been on for quite a while- and one of the strangest as the British left was almost entirely absent!**

Except for the left contingent organised by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign and supported by Another Europe is Possible, Alliance for Workers Liberty and Anti-Capitalist Resistance, not a leaflet or paper seller was to be seen. It was a gazebo-free zone. Nor were Labour party or trade union branches in evidence either.

However, for very many participants it was their first ever political demonstration and they probably didn't even notice this self-defeating absence of the left.

The marchers took our leaflets readily (and I didn't see any later discarded or discreetly binned). The placards produced by Another Europe which said "Russian troops out" "Open the borders for refugees" "Solidarity with Ukraine" flew out of our hands- one man tried to buy one as we had all but run out. And I ran out of the 120 badges I had made very quickly.

The march had been called by Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, and widely promoted on a minimal 'stand with Ukraine' basis. This brought onto the streets hundreds of individuals of all ages, families, groups of friends- self-organised and self-motivated rather than through existing networks.

There were many Ukrainians, of course, and also Kazakhs, Belarusians and some Russians with handwritten placards denouncing Putin's war. A comrade, Pete, pointed out the various national flags he has become accustomed to seeing on protests over the past months.

The sentiment of the demo was overwhelmingly one of humanitarian concern, sympathy for the plight of refugees and people living under bombardment, and rage against a barbaric war of conquest being waged by a great power against its weaker neighbour. The term imperialism was probably not in the vocabulary of most present but they instinctively understood its meaning and were bitterly opposed to it.

The Ukrainian chanting and singing, echoed by the wider crowd, was defiant and proud but there were very few calls for direct NATO intervention or no-fly zones. If there was anti-Russian sentiment it focused on Putin, his regime and his military rather than the ordinary people.

Some of this was echoed in the platform speeches which solidarized with the Russian anti-war movement whilst David Lammy supported the arming of Ukraine to defend itself and also raised the importance of support for refugees with reference to previous waves of people displaced by wars.

All of this underlines the importance of the No War on Ukraine statement calling for the building of the biggest possible anti-war movement around the minimal demands "Russian troops out of

Ukraine”, “no to war” and “refugees welcome here”- a basic framework within which supporting organisations can also raise their own additional ideas and demands.

We should circulate this widely and [individuals should sign it](#).

We should also work to ensure the Labour Movement Demonstration for Ukraine called by the PCS union on April 9<sup>th</sup> is a success.

One final point, it is good that Sadiq Khan called this demonstration rather than let the initiative and leadership of the movement pass to Johnson or more bellicose forces to his right. It is time for the British left to step up and help shape this movement in a progressive direction.

## **Huge London support for Ukraine**

**Over 150,000 people demanded an end to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and denounced Putin’s regime in a powerful and spirited demonstration in London on March 26.**

Russians living in the capital marched under blue and white banners symbolising their flag without red - “without blood” - and appealed to the mothers of conscripts fighting in Ukraine to campaign to bring their boys home.

They joined an extraordinary range of nationalities who filled all of Park Lane and Piccadilly as they streamed to Trafalgar Square, in response to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy and London mayor Sadiq Khan’s call for solidarity with Ukraine. Handmade signs denounced Putin as a war criminal and terrorist. One placard demanded the Orthodox church excommunicate Putin; another an alternative to capitalist globalisation.

British supporters of Ukraine’s self-determination were joined by Ukrainians, Poles, Chechens, Georgians, Belarusians, Kazakhs, Uighurs, Chinese, Hare Krishna devotees (with food), pro-Tibet campaigners - all nations occupied by Russian or Chinese forces over the last decades.

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign’s blue, white, gold and red banner was prominent from the start as members shared a statement with the Ukrainian socialist organisation Sotsialniy Rukh.

Noticeable by their absence were the Stop The War campaign, who have been repeating Putin’s justifications for Russia’s invasion.

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**P.S.**

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