# Anti-Imperialism in an Age of Rising Fascism: Solidarity Beyond Competing Powers

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*[ Alternative Viewpoint publishes the speech delivered by Sushovan Dhar, editorial board member of Alternative viewpoint, from India at the 5th Plenary Session of the Anti-Fascist and Anti-Imperialist Conference held in Porto Alegre. The intervention addressed the growing convergence between imperialism and far-right politics, critiqued the limits of emerging multipolarity, and emphasised the need for renewed international solidarity among peoples. ]*

The current global moment is marked by a dangerous convergence of three broad trends: the rise of authoritarian nationalism — at times exclusive ultra-

nationalism — the growth of far-right movements, and renewed imperialist competition between global and regional powers. These developments are not isolated phenomena but deeply interconnected expressions of a broader crisis of global capitalism and political legitimacy.

Historically, fascism has emerged during periods of deep social and economic instability. When inequality intensifies, democratic institutions weaken, and ruling elites face challenges to their authority, authoritarian and reactionary forces often gain ground. In such moments, nationalism, racism, and militarisation become tools to consolidate power and redirect social anger away from structural inequalities.

Today, we are witnessing similar patterns across different regions. Militarisation is expanding. Wars are increasingly justified in the name of security, democracy, or civilisation. Migrants are turned into scapegoats. Minorities are demonised. Democratic institutions are hollowed out, while executive power becomes more centralised. Behind these developments lies a deeper structural reality: imperialism.

Anti-fascism without anti-imperialism remains incomplete. Imperialism normalises hierarchy, domination, and violence at the global level. It creates a world order where powerful states and multinational corporations exercise disproportionate influence over weaker economies and political systems. Through mechanisms such as debt dependency, trade imbalances, resource extraction, and political intervention, imperialism undermines sovereignty and deepens inequality. However, any struggle against imperialism is impossible without a fight against capitalism.

This global order reinforces authoritarian tendencies. When violence is normalised internationally, repression becomes easier domestically. When geopolitical rivalry is framed in civilisational or racial terms, xenophobia grows within societies. When economic domination is accepted globally, inequality intensifies within countries.

The recent military aggression against Iran illustrates the dangerous convergence of imperialism, militarisation, and the growing influence of far-right politics in international relations. The coordinated attacks by the US and Israel on Iranian targets are a clear violation of Iran’s sovereignty and help make unilateral military action seem like a normal way for a country to show its power. Such actions risk further destabilising an already fragile region, increasing the possibility of broader conflict, and deepening geopolitical tensions across Western Asia.

At the same time, opposing this aggression does not mean supporting the Iranian regime. The Iranian state has long been marked by authoritarian rule, repression of democratic movements, and severe restrictions on civil liberties. The repeated uprisings and protest movements in Iran in recent years demonstrate that large sections of Iranian society aspire to political freedom, social justice, and democratic rights. A principled anti-imperialist stance must consequently denounce both external military aggression and internal authoritarian oppression. Solidarity must be directed toward the Iranian people — supporting their right to self-determination, democratic freedoms, and social justice, free from both foreign intervention and a repressive state apparatus.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine exemplifies how great-power politics

continues to influence conflicts, often at the expense of people's rights. This military intervention has violated Ukraine's sovereignty and undermined the Ukrainian people's right to determine their own future. While the role of *NATO* expansion and escalating geopolitical tensions may provide context, these factors do not justify the military invasion, occupation, and the devastation inflicted upon Ukrainian cities and civilian populations.

For us, defending the rights of the Ukrainian people does not equate to endorsing NATO or aligning with Western geopolitical strategies. Furthermore, the war has been exploited by competing global powers to further their own strategic interests, resulting in increased militarisation and an extended confrontation, which has exacerbated the suffering of civilians and hindered efforts for a peaceful resolution. A consistent anti-imperialist stance must, therefore, reject Russian aggression while simultaneously opposing the overarching logic of bloc politics and military escalation. Solidarity should be directed specifically at the Ukrainian people, supporting their right to peace, sovereignty, and democratic self-determination, independent of both Russian aggression and rivalries between great powers.

Today's geopolitical tensions are often presented as a struggle between competing blocs and emerging "multipolarity". Many argue that the rise of new powers and formations such as *BRICS* represents a progressive alternative to Western domination. However, this assumption requires careful scrutiny.
Multipolarity, in itself, does not necessarily mean emancipation. A world with multiple competing powers can still reproduce imperial hierarchies, geopolitical rivalry, militarisation, and economic domination. Multipolarity may reduce the dominance of a single hegemonic power, but it does not

automatically produce a more democratic or just global order.

In this sense, multipolarity may offer opportunities for ruling elites and state actors, but it does not necessarily provide an alternative for the peoples of the world. Competition among powers can intensify militarisation, resource conflicts, and geopolitical tensions. Without democratic internationalism and solidarity among peoples, multipolarity risks becoming merely a redistribution of power among competing elites.

India provides an important example of these contradictions. The country is often presented as part of an emerging multipolar world through its membership in BRICS. Yet, at the same time, India has deepened strategic cooperation with Western military and security frameworks aimed at containing China. While not formally part of AUKUS [1], India has strengthened military and strategic alignment with the United States and its allies through arrangements such as the Quad [2], expanding defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and strategic technology partnerships.

This dual positioning illustrates the complexity of contemporary geopolitics. States simultaneously participate in multiple power blocs, pursuing strategic autonomy while reinforcing militarisation and geopolitical rivalry. Such alignments do not necessarily represent an alternative to imperialism but often reflect new configurations within the same global power competition.

At the same time, India also represents one of the most significant contemporary examples of the rise of authoritarian majoritarian nationalism. The current political regime is closely linked to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a nearly hundred-year-old ideological and organisational project

founded in 1925. The RSS drew inspiration in its early years from European fascist movements, particularly Mussolini's Italy, and later from aspects of Nazi Germany's model of cultural nationalism, majoritarian identity, and centralised ideological mobilisation.

Over decades, the RSS has developed an extensive organisational network across Indian society, including political, educational, cultural, and paramilitary structures. Its long-term political project has been the transformation of India from a secular, pluralistic republic into a Hindu majoritarian state, often described as a "Hindu Rashtra".

This ideological project has gained unprecedented state power in recent years. The consequences include increasing attacks on minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, restrictions on civil liberties, pressure on independent media, weakening of democratic institutions, and growing centralisation of power.

At the same time, the Indian government has deepened political and military relations with Israel, which increasingly serves as a model in areas such as security doctrine, surveillance technologies, militarisation, and majoritarian nationalism. Sections of the Indian far-right openly draw parallels between the project of a Hindu majoritarian state and Israel's ethno-national model.

This illustrates a broader global trend: far-right and authoritarian movements increasingly learn from one another. There is a circulation of ideological frameworks, security doctrines, surveillance technologies, and methods of governance across borders. These developments reinforce an important point: contemporary anti-fascism must also be international.

Across countries and continents, working people face increasingly similar challenges. Labour precarity, austerity, privatisation, and rising living costs are widespread. Farmers confront land dispossession and agrarian crises. Indigenous communities resist extractive industries. Migrants face criminalisation and exploitation. Women experience both economic marginalisation and intensified patriarchal violence.

These struggles are interconnected. Yet far-right and authoritarian movements seek to fragment them. Migrants are blamed for unemployment. Minorities are portrayed as threats to national identity. External enemies are invoked to justify domestic repression. These strategies are designed to divide the oppressed and protect entrenched power structures. Solidarity among peoples provides the most effective response. This solidarity cannot remain abstract.

It must be built through concrete forms of cooperation: joint campaigns against debt and austerity, solidarity with migrants and refugees, resistance to militarisation and war, defence of labour rights, and protection of democratic freedoms. Internationalism is therefore not merely an ethical commitment. It is a political necessity.

History offers important lessons. The strongest resistance to fascism has emerged from broad coalitions of social forces: workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, and democratic movements. These struggles often crossed national borders. Anti-colonial movements, anti-apartheid struggles, and international labour solidarity all demonstrated the power of collective action beyond national boundaries. Rebuilding that spirit of solidarity is essential today.

In a world marked by fragmentation and fear, international cooperation among peoples offers an alternative based on equality and justice. Anti-imperialism and anti-fascism are not separate struggles but interconnected dimensions of the same political project.

Strengthening cooperation across movements, deepening international solidarity, and resisting division and authoritarianism are urgent tasks. The future will not be determined solely by powerful states or geopolitical rivalries. It will also be shaped by organised peoples acting collectively across borders.

In confronting rising fascism, anti-imperialism and solidarity among peoples remain central pillars of a democratic and emancipatory alternative.

**Footnotes**

[1] AUKUS: In US strategy, AUKUS (Australia, UK, US) is a crucial trilateral security pact to contain Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific, providing Australia with nuclear-powered submarines, thereby strengthening regional deterrence and integrating Canberra more closely into the US security architecture vis-à-vis Beijing. It is a pillar of US policy aimed at projecting advanced military force in the region.

[2] Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) is an informal cooperation framework with Australia, India and Japan, aimed at promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific space in response to China’s growing influence, with a focus on maritime security, technological cooperation (5G, semiconductors), infrastructure and democracy. It is a key component of the US policy of a ‘free and open Indo-Pacific’, complementing other alliances such as AUKUS.

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