

British trade unions call for solidarity with Ukraine

Statement issued by UK trade unions, in association with USC, on 23 February 2026, for the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. All the signatories are General Secretaries signing on behalf of their unions, all of which have policy in support of Ukraine made by their members through their democratic structures. In addition to support from the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the ten unions supporting the statement represent a clear majority of organised workers in the UK.

For more information, interviews, etc, email info@ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org. If your union has not yet signed but wants to do so, please also get in touch.

Joint Statement by UK Trade Unions in Solidarity with Ukraine

On the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, UK trade unions reaffirm our solidarity with Ukraine, its workers and their unions. Ukraine's workers are not only defending their country but are standing up for democratic rights, freedoms and labour standards that underpin our movement. We send our greetings to our sister organisations, the [FPU](#) and [KVPU](#), and commit our continuing support for them.

As Putin's war of aggression enters its fifth year, Ukraine's workers continue to face unrelenting violence. Systematic attacks on the energy system have plunged towns and cities into darkness, shutting schools and hospitals and placing entire communities at risk. Energy workers are restoring power under fire, often at immense personal danger, to keep people safe through severe winter conditions.

Russia's deliberate targeting of civilians and infrastructure is a grave breach of international law and is deepening Ukraine's humanitarian crisis as temperatures fall well below freezing.

Working people always bear the heaviest cost of war. On 1 February, fifteen miners were killed when a Russian drone struck their bus in the Pavlohrad district. In territories under Russia's illegal occupation, reports expose forced labour, the suppression of trade union freedoms and the violent mistreatment of workers, alongside the wider killing and torture of civilians.

Tens of thousands of children have been abducted by Russia and subjected to abuse on an industrial scale. As always, women, oppressed minorities and children also bear the brunt of war.

We stand with Ukrainian unions in their call for the restoration of labour rights and for a socially just reconstruction that embeds collective bargaining and rejects deregulation and privatisation.

We also stand with Ukrainian and other refugees in the UK and insist that their rights and safety are upheld.

The UK trade union movement has a proud history of standing in solidarity with victims of fascism and imperialist aggression.

A victory for Putin's regime would embolden authoritarian and far-right forces globally.

We therefore reaffirm our support for the Ukrainian people's right to determine their own future, call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from all occupied territories, and support Ukrainian trade unions' appeals for the UK to provide the aid necessary to help secure a just and lasting peace.

Paul Nowak, General Secretary, [Trades Union Congress](#)

Andrea Egan, General Secretary, [UNISON](#)

Sharon Graham, General Secretary, [Unite](#)

Gary Smith, General Secretary, [GMB](#)

Daniel Kebede, General Secretary, [NEU](#)

Joanne Thomas, General Secretary, [USDAW](#)

Fran Heathcote, General Secretary, [PCS](#)

Jo Grady, General Secretary, [UCU](#)

Naomi Pohl, General Secretary, [Musicians' Union](#)

Dave Calfe, General Secretary, [ASLEF](#)

Chris Kitchen, General Secretary, [NUM](#)

Reposted from [Anticapitalist Resistance](#)

For information on solidarity with Ukraine in Scotland see [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland](#)

For a May Day of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist resistance

Declaration of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth
International

On 5 April in the United States, 1,300 demonstrations involving 500,000 people expressed broad anger against Trump and his far-right government. These mobilizations, significant but still in their early stages, show that it is possible to respond to the violent attacks carried out around the world against the interests of workers, migrants, victims of racial oppression, women, and the LGBTI community.

In Serbia, Greece, South Korea, Turkey, Britain, Germany, Argentina and India, significant sectors of the population have also mobilized against their governments – putting them in a tight spot, and against the far right. The youth have played a fundamental role in almost all of these resistance movements. The broad movement of solidarity with the people of Gaza against the genocide imposed by the Zionist state, which has mobilized hundreds of thousands of young people, many of them from racialized backgrounds in imperialist countries (including anti-Zionist Jews), shows the way forward in the mobilization against imperialist and extreme right offensives. This movement strengthens solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian invasion, the resistance of the Kanak people against French imperialism, and all other forms of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist solidarity and resistance.

2025 May Day is an opportunity to demonstrate worldwide our international solidarity with the struggles against warmongering policies, the far right, against neoliberal policies, and for the democratic, economic, and social rights of the people. The Palestinian flag will fly as a symbol of resistance all over the world.

The world has become even more unstable, uncertain, and dangerous. We must confront the climate emergency and the economic, social, and political crises engendered by capitalism. The authoritarian and xenophobic-protectionist

policies of Putin and Trump, and the imperialist and commercial wars they are waging are deepening the crisis of this system. Trump's measures worsen the economic crisis and cause more inflation, and layoffs, in addition to reinforcing ecocidal and imperialist extractivism. The authoritarian, imperialist or regional imperialist governments of Trump, Putin, Netanyahu, Meloni, Orbán, Erdogan, Modi, Xi Jinping and Marcos are leading these attacks. Their reactionary conservatism is simultaneously articulated through a multiplication of attacks on social and democratic rights, including women's reproductive rights, LGBTI rights, particularly those of trans people, against freedom of the press and expression, against migrants and all racialized people – who are increasingly subjected to discrimination, illegalization, family separation, imprisonment and deportation.

Faced with this situation, the Fourth International affirms the urgent need to fight for the broadest freedom of movement and settlement, with equal rights regardless of nationality, origin, gender, or sexuality. The Fourth International demands a freeze on prices and an increase in wages, the cancellation of illegitimate debts, and the expropriation of banks and large energy companies.

The response to the warmongering policies of Trump and Putin, which are embodied in the invasion of Ukraine and the genocide in Palestine, as well as in their attempts to reach an agreement to divide up Ukraine's wealth, cannot be militarism. The European Union is trying to organize itself to form a third economic and military pole based on a headlong rush into warmongering and antisocial austerity policies. It uses the pretext of responding to Putin and Trump to increase military budgets. It claims that, to do so, drastic cuts in social spending are necessary – in hospitals, schools, pensions, public jobs, and, of course, aid to countries in the South, as

Trump has done. This policy is fraught with threats to humanity, whether through the threat of war, including nuclear war or through the rise of neo-fascism around the world and their open rejection of the fight against the climate crisis.

The Fourth International calls for a global movement against wars, militarization, and against nuclear weapons. This movement does not clash with but instead strengthens support to the armed and unarmed struggle of the peoples against imperialist wars, particularly in Palestine and Ukraine, but also of all peoples subjected to imperialism and regional powers in the Congo, Sudan, the Sahel, Kurdistan, Armenia, Yemen, Myanmar. Because there can be no peace without justice.

There is an urgent need to build another world based on cooperation rather than violence, on socialization (of natural resources, transport, banks) and not competition, on democratic decisions about what to produce and what goods to circulate, on solidarity instead of the hatred encouraged by the far right. At the forefront of this struggle are these ones who fight against the far right, against liberal governments, against war, for the liberation of Palestine and Ukraine. The Fourth International expresses this in its manifesto for the eco-socialist revolution, adopted at its 18th Congress.

This May Day, we call on workers, peasants, those living in poor neighbourhoods, and all oppressed peoples and sectors to mobilize massively to change the world. In the face of the rise of the far right and the authoritarian policies of all governments, the Fourth International calls for building unified campaigns in response to warmongering imperialism, neo-fascism, and neoliberalism. Let's change the balance of power!

- International solidarity against imperialism and authoritarianism on the 1st of May, historical day of international resistance and solidarity!

- Stop wars and militarization! Free Palestine! Russian troops out of Ukraine!
- Stop the far right all over the world!
- Defence of workers' demands, for an ecosocialist revolution!

28 April 2025

From [Socialist Politics, Sweden](#)

Class War on Workers – Revisiting The Great Miners' Strike 1984-85

40 years on from the most decisive class confrontation in Britain since the Second World War, Duncan Chapel finds much to like in a new retelling of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

For those like me who didn't yet read Richie Venton's new book, *Class War on Workers – The Great Miners' Strike 1984-85 & Its Aftermath*, two recent podcasts with him commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike offer a valuable and accessible path into his insights. Listen to them [here](#) and [here](#)

I listened, and here are a few thoughts I had along the way.

The welcome to one podcast rightly says, "This is our history. I mean, it's 40 years ago. It's recent history. And anybody younger than me and Marlene, there are some of you around. We know you might find this really interesting as well". Richie Venton comments on the "broader context of the miners strike, and also lessons we can learn in the present day about it". He

is aptly described as having “decades of dedicated experience” as a trade unionist and socialist, widely respected for “building support for workers and communities and struggle”.

Venton highlights the fundamental nature of the dispute, stating it “was far more than a strike. It was premeditated class war against the workers. It unleashed the biggest confrontation between classes since the 1926 general strike”. He outlines how the Tories, having been defeated by the miners in 1972 and 1974, “plotted revenge against the miners”, referencing the “1977 infamous Ridley plan” which aimed to “smash the miners amongst others”. The podcasts vividly recount the “biggest police operation ever mounted in peacetime UK” and how “freedom of movement was abandoned. Police stopped 164,000 presumably pickets moving around the country”. The use of police as “armies of occupation in the villages” is also mentioned.

Venton stresses that despite the immense pressure, “we were so close, and sometimes people don’t know how close we are. In October 1984...the Financial Times clearly worried about coal stocks and the supply and demand conundrum as the miners were so close to victory”. He argues that victory was within reach “if only the leaders of the labour and trade union movement had lifted their finger to help us”. He is rightly critical of the role of the right-wing trade union and Labour leadership, stating their role was to “join the ranks of the millionaire press and complain about picket line violence and the lack of a bar”, and that “Norman Willis...and Neil Kinnock...were acting like referees calling for fair play when we were literally getting kicked in the hobs with our hands tied behind our back”. Kinnock’s condemnation of violence “on all sides, was a tragic response from a useless Labour leader”.

Venton in the podcasts focuses on the betrayal of national union leaders. The strike occurred during a period when early neoliberal regimes, like Thatcher’s in the UK, were targeting democratic rights, with trade union rights being a primary

focus. Before the strike, there was a substantial increase and coordination of shop stewards, both within and across different workplaces. However, the strike also coincided with a historic low in the number of working days lost to strikes and a decline in trade union membership, reflecting the impact of Thatcher's first term.

The Tories' aimed to weaken the strength and coordination of grassroots labour organisation, and the historic defeat of the miners' strike had profound and lasting consequences. In particular, the defeat of the miners' strike contributed to a weakening of shop stewards' organisation.

While Venton's comments in the podcasts primarily focus on the domestic aspects and the solidarity received, the international political context of the strike mattered too. Venton mentions the "£60 million...collected for the miners from the wider working class, nationally and internationally", a "phenomenal indication of the support that they gained". The international solidarity mattered. For example, women's delegations toured Ireland, supporting women involved in the miners' dispute and seeking support for British workers.

It is challenging to encompass every facet of such a complex and far-reaching dispute. While Venton powerfully portrays the transformative impact on women in the pit villages who organised soup kitchens and their own picket lines, becoming eloquent speakers for the struggle, a more exhaustive account might explore the specific formations and national coordination of groups like Women Against Pit Closures. Similarly, while the book undoubtedly captures the spirit of solidarity that transcended traditional boundaries, the specific roles and networks of other support groups, such as Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, warrant further exploration.

Despite these necessary limitations of a slim volume, Richie Venton's "Class War on Workers" is a powerful contribution to

British socialist history. It provides a crucial understanding of the fundamental forces at play during the Miners' Strike and its lasting consequences. By grasping the lessons within these pages – the nature of state power, the necessity of working-class solidarity, and the dangers of right-wing opportunism – today's socialists will be better equipped to “fight climate change without sacrificing workings on the altar of green capitalism” and to build the “socialist future” that Venton argues is eminently achievable. This book is not just a history lesson; it is a call to action, urging us to learn from the past to build a stronger socialist movement for the future.

Class War on Workers – The Great Miners' Strike 1984-85 & Its Aftermath is published by the Scottish Socialist Party and is available to buy [here](#).