

# Syria And “The Left”: Time To Break The Silence. Misunderstanding of Reality. There is No “Revolution” in Syria...

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*The cold, hard reality of the war in Syria is that the violence, bloodshed, and chaos continues unabated while the Left, such as it is, continues on in a state of schizophrenic madness. Different points of view, conflicting ideological tendencies, and a misunderstanding of the reality of the conflict are all relevant issues to be interrogated, with civility and reasoned debate in short supply. But those issues are not the urgent task of this article; the Left does need to seriously self-reflect though about just how it responds to crises of imperialism and issues of war and peace.*

However, what is urgently needed at this moment is a clear and unequivocal position on the future of this war, and the lives of all Syrians – political allegiances notwithstanding – as the escalation of the war approaches. There is little doubt that Hillary Clinton will win the crown of ringmaster of the political circus that is the US election. And, as she eases her freshly osculated behind into the leather captain’s chair in the Oval Office, it is only a matter of time before she [ratchets up US military involvement](#) in Syria, with a full US war, and attempted regime change, becoming all but a certainty.

And where will the Left be then? This question is not merely rhetorical as the Left has found itself in the usual circular firing squad predicament over the war in Syria. And though the issue continues to be debated, what should be beyond dispute is what the position on intervention into the war should be.

And as I brace for the predictable barrage of hate mail and name-calling from both sides of this debate – I’m mostly inured to that sort of thing after years of it – I want to make one point that should be obvious, and yet has become somehow controversial: opposing the war is the duty of all true anti-war activists.

But what does it mean to oppose the war? Does it mean that we should be opposing just Russian and Syrian bombs being dropped? Does it mean that only US-Saudi-Turkey-Israeli supplied weapons are doing the killing? Sadly, these too are not rhetorical questions as so many on the Left, including many self-described anti-imperialists, have positioned themselves as hawks in a war that has utterly devastated the country. It seems that many, myself included up to a point, have gotten so enveloped in the embrace of partisanship in this war that we have forgotten that our responsibility is to the people of Syria and to peace and justice.

Some on the pro-Assad side of the argument will correctly note that the role of the anti-war

activist in the West is, above all, to oppose the imperialism of the West itself. And indeed, that is a primary responsibility. Others on the Left will argue that the responsibility of activists is to support liberation struggles of fellow revolutionaries. And while the revolutionary content of the rebel side in Syria has been sidelined by a hodgepodge of Saudi and Qatari-financed jihadists – the uprising began as a response to the Syrian government’s neoliberal policies and brutality, among other things – this cannot be taken to mean that countless innocent men, women, and children have not been maimed and killed by Syrian and Russian weapons, jets, and fighters.

Be that as it may, the question now before us is this: where do you stand on direct US intervention?

In the long and convoluted history of this war there have been precious few moments of clear and unmistakable moral judgment. If anything, the portrait of the war in Syria is colored in shades of gray, with little black and white to be found.

If you’re supportive of the anti-Assad forces, then it’s quite likely **you’ve chosen to ignore the [mountains of evidence](#) that there is no “revolution” in Syria but rather a vicious contra-style war being fomented by US-NATO** and its toadies in the Gulf, Turkey, and Israel. If you’re supportive of Assad then it’s a certainty that you’ve chosen to ignore or downplay the horrific violence of the [bombings](#), the brutality of the [torture chambers](#), and other unspeakable atrocities (I admit that I have often strayed too far into the latter) out of a desire to uphold the nominally anti-imperialist position.

And where has this left Syria? Where has it brought the Left? We’re no closer to an end to this horrific war, nor are we any closer to a resolution to the cancerous spread of terrorism in the region. Maybe just a few more US-supplied weapons and US-funded fighters will do the trick? Maybe a few more Russian and Syrian bombs will solve the crisis? Well, if you’ve been paying attention, neither one of those has brought Syria any closer to peace. And isn’t that what we’re allegedly supposed to be upholding?

And how about the refugees? I’ve seen the fascist talking points spouted by many fake “anti-imperialists” who with one breath proclaim their commitment to peace and justice, and with another demonize and scapegoat Syrian refugees whose politics don’t align with the pro-Assad position. Words like “traitors,” “cowards,” and “terrorists,” are shamefully applied to ordinary Syrians fleeing to Europe and elsewhere in hopes of saving their families. Indeed, it is precisely this narrative that is at the core of the white supremacist, fascist ideology that underlies a significant amount of the support base for Assad and his allies (see [David Duke](#), [David Icke](#), [Alexander Dugin](#), [Brother Nathanel](#), [Alex Jones](#), [Mimi al-Laham](#), [Ken O’Keefe](#), and on and on and on). I’m sorry to say it, but it’s true, and too many of the pro-Assad camp have willfully ignored this fundamental point.

On the other side though, the unwillingness of the “Syrian revolution” camp to face up to the fact that they have unwittingly made themselves into the left flank of US interventionism and imperialism is cause for public shaming as well. Were this the 1980s one wonders whether they’d be saying the same things about the “revolutionary” contras in Central America who, like the so-called rebels in Syria, were also backed with US weapons, money, and training. How about the mujahideen in Afghanistan? Has the collective memory of the Left gotten so short? And what about those foreign fighters fleeing Syria? Are they revolutionaries when they go back to Libya and engage in human trafficking for profit? Or to Chechnya to smuggle Afghan heroin? Or to Saudi Arabia or anywhere else?

Undoubtedly there are people on both sides of this debate who, if they're still reading (doubtful), are frothing at the mouth with rage as they prepare to send their hate mail or attack this article and me on social media. All of that is perfectly fine by me as my feelings are of little consequence in this war that has killed hundreds of thousands, and displaced millions.

But the conversation I'm hoping to spur here is not about the past, but about the future.

And so I put out the call, here and now, to all people of the Left and all those who wrap themselves in the shroud of revolution and anti-imperialism: where do you stand on intervention?

To the anti-Assad camp, I ask: What will you be doing when Hillary's fire burns and cauldron bubbles? Will you continue to ignore the material reality of this war in favor of the chimera of a revolution betrayed? Put simply: will you be supporting US imperialism in the name of the "revolution"?

To the pro-Assad Syria fetishists, I ask: Will you continue to pretend that the only crimes and atrocities being committed are those veiled behind Old Glory? Are you comfortable in the knowledge that this war will continue on indefinitely so long as all outside actors continue to use Syria as merely a square on their respective geopolitical chessboards? Will you continue to delude yourselves by refusing to accept the plainly obvious truth that no state or group has the best interests of Syrians at heart? Will you allow yourselves to be the useful idiots of carefully calculated political maneuvering?

I ask these questions as someone who took a firmly pro-Assad position from the very beginning, someone who felt (as I, and many others, still do) that Syria, like Libya, was a victim of US-NATO-GCC-Israel imperialism and that, as such, it should be defended. And while I still uphold that resistance, I also have enough humility to know that, in doing so, I abandoned other core beliefs such as defense of ALL oppressed people, including the ones with politics I reject.

I ask these questions as someone who takes the very notion of anti-imperialism seriously, and who is dismayed by the disgusting cooptation of that word by fascists, chauvinists, white supremacists, and neocolonial degenerates who use it for political expediency. This cannot be allowed to stand.

The direct US war in Syria is coming. Russia's war in Syria is already active. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Israel have been fomenting war in Syria from the beginning, all in support of the Empire's strategic goals. And hundreds of thousands of bodies have been buried in the sand and soil.

How many more bodies are we comfortable burying? How much longer before peace is once again on the table? How many more years before we realize that this war will never end on a battlefield?

Either way, I'll see anyone who wants to join me on the front lines of protest when the Queen of Chaos launches her war. That's where I've been many times before, and will be for years to come.

And that's where the Left ought to be.

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