

International Anti-Fascist United Front – against whom?

Christian Zeller, 22 April 2026

From 26 to 29 March, around 4,000 people gathered in Porto Alegre for a major international conference against the global rise of fascism and against imperialism.¹ Christian Zeller argues that the content and outcomes of this conference are insufficient to build a comprehensive anti-fascist and anti-imperialist front. To this end, it is essential to initiate processes of political clarification.

The opening march attracted around 7,000 people and reminisced about earlier mobilizations of the anti-globalization movement and the World Social Forum. There were 11 thematic panel discussions, a forum with government representatives and parliamentarians, and 150 self-organized activities. Participants and representatives of organizations came together from around 40 countries.

The conference came about through the collaboration of various forces: the Party for Socialism and Freedom (PSOL) in Rio Grande do Sul and the Workers' Party (PT) in Porto Alegre, the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), the NGO Andes, the Lauro Campos and Marielle Franco Foundations, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and the Movement of the Socialist Left (MES, a current within the PSOL and a member of the Fourth International since 2025).² The Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM) established international links.³ A call for building an international anti-fascist front supported the mobilization for the conference.⁴

The conference was attended by key organizations from across Latin America, as well as from many other countries around the world, including the Democratic Socialists of America, France Insoumise (including MPs), NPA-A (New Anti-Capitalist Party), Attac, MPs from the Workers' Party of Turkey; a delegation of almost 200 people from Argentina (mainly from the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores MST), comrades from South Africa, and members of the Socialist Alliance and Green Left from Australia.

This 1st International Anti-Fascist Conference was a significant event.⁵ The organizers aim to counteract the prevailing paralysis within the left. They are encouraging the organization of further anti-fascist conferences, for example in Argentina, Europe and North America. However, reports from participants at this conference, the call for an international anti-fascist front⁶ and the conference's final declaration⁷ reveal that the foundation laid in Porto Alegre is not robust enough to truly strengthen anti-fascist resistance on a global scale and bring people together. The call for action is limited to denouncing the rising authoritarianism and fascism in North and South America and Europe, and

¹ Call for Participation <https://antifas2026.org/en/call/>

² Manuel Rodriguez Banchs, Penelope Duggan, Israel Dutra, Antoine Larrache, João Machado, Reymund de Silva and Eric Toussaint: The Anti-Fascist and Anti-Imperialist Conference in Porto Alegre: Great achievements, challenges and opportunities. 4 April 2026 <https://fourth.international/en/latin-america/760>; Israel Dutra: First International Anti-Fascist Conference: A political victory. *LINKS*, 5 April 2026. <https://links.org.au/first-international-anti-fascist-conference-political-victory>

³ Interview with Eric Toussaint: *Contretemps*, 17 April 2026 <https://www.contretemps.eu/porto-alegre-2026-une-convergence-antifasciste-et-anti-imperialiste-entre-succes-inedit-et-obstacles-majeurs/>

⁴ International call to strengthen anti-fascist and anti-imperialist action. *LINKS*, 21 January 2026. <https://links.org.au/statement-international-call-strengthen-antifascist-and-anti-imperialist-action>

⁵ Declaration of the Fourth International: Against Neo-Fascist Authoritarianism and All Forms of Imperialism. <https://fourth.international/en/755>

⁶ See footnote 4.

⁷ Porto Alegre Declaration: Unity against Fascism and for the sovereignty of peoples. 29 March 2026 <https://antifas2026.org/en/porto-alegre-declaration-unity-against-fascism-and-for-the-sovereignty-of-peoples/>

Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people. The fascist Putin regime,⁸ which not only daily attacks the Ukrainian population but has for many years supported far-right movements in Europe and worldwide and relies on extreme repression and fragmentation of its own population, is not even mentioned. The final declaration reaffirms and reinforces this course despite criticism and controversial discussions. It specifically lists several imperialist wars and acts of aggression yet conspicuously fails to mention either Russia's war or the Ukrainian resistance.

The organizers have deliberately left this gap. Éric Toussaint, the spokesperson for CADTM, explained in a takeaway article: "Had the Russian imperialist aggression against Ukraine been mentioned, it is clear that a large section of the left-wing forces in Latin America and North America, as well as certain left-wing forces in Europe and Asia, would have refused to sign."⁹ The organizers thus deliberately and openly chose to cultivate partnership with reactionary Stalinists and Campists such as Vijay Prashad rather than seek unity with those threatened by Russian or Chinese imperialism or the dictatorship in Iran. While this may be understandable given the experience in Latin America, from a global perspective it is wrong, cynical, and short-sighted.

It is telling of the conference's political narrow-mindedness and one-sidedness that representatives of Ukrainian organizations – the socialist organization Sotsialnyi Ruch, the trade union federation FPU, and the Union of Self-Employed and Migrant Workers – as well as Russian socialists in exile were not allowed to speak at the central plenary sessions. However, the conference organizers invited Hossein Khaliloo from the Iman Al Mahdi Dialogue Centre, an unofficial representative of the Iranian regime in Brazil, to present his justifications at a prominent plenary session with leaders of the PT, PCdoB and PSOL.¹⁰ This is unacceptable.

Thanks to the support of the MES, the Fourth International, the LIS-ISL and the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU/RESU), well-attended, self-organised forum events took place with Ukrainian and Russian comrades. Along with the invitation to the event with the Ukrainian delegation, ENSU/RESU distributed a statement to conference participants explaining why dual solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian occupying forces and the struggles of workers against the neoliberal Zelenskyi government is important.¹¹ Of course, it made sense for the small delegations of Ukrainian and Russian socialists to take part in the conference, to present their concerns to a wide audience and to forge important contacts. Their reports show how important it is to engage in a debate with campist tendencies everywhere and at all times, and to conduct this debate without compromise.¹² Through these interventions, the aforementioned forces demonstrated that comprehensive anti-fascism and anti-imperialism do exist.

⁸ Budraitskis, Ilya (2022): Putinism: A New Form of Fascism. *emanzipation* 6 (2), pp. 73–93. <https://emanzipation.org/2022/11/putinismus-eine-neue-form-von-faschismus/>; Budraitskis, Ilya (2023): This regime cannot be further developed. *emanzipation – Journal for Eco-Socialist Strategy* 17 May 2023. <https://emanzipation.org/2023/05/dieses-regime-laesst-sich-nicht-weiterentwickeln/>.

⁹ Éric Toussaint: Porto Alegre 2026: an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist convergence, between unprecedented success and major obstacles. CADTM, 10 April 2026 <https://www.cadtm.org/Porto-Alegre-2026-an-anti-fascist-and-anti-imperialist-convergence-between-unprecedented-success-and-major-obstacles>; Éric Toussaint: Porto Alegre 2026: an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist convergence, between unprecedented success and major obstacles. CADTM, 8 April 2026; <https://www.cadtm.org/Porto-Alegre-2026-une-convergence-antifasciste-et-anti-imperialiste-entre>

¹⁰ Programme of the 1st International Anti-Fascist Conference for the Sovereignty of Peoples. 26–29 March 2026 – Porto Alegre, Brazil <https://antifas2026.org/en/program/>

¹¹ ENSU/RESU: Antifascism must fight all tyrannies, 28 March 2026.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1swk_obzKysI8_9CmTDaCZoCgEcvmdyUd/view?pli=1

¹² Oleksandr Kyselov: Instagram post. 1 April 2026. https://www.instagram.com/p/DWmUuk_jlaf/?igsh=MXNtdXpzOGQ0ZGJ0OA%3D%3D; Alfons Bech: Notes on the First International Antifascist Conference of Porto Alegre: A Step Forward for Anti-Campist Solidarity with Ukraine. 3 April 2026 <https://europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article78468>

However, the composition and the dominant political basis of the conference show that the critical voices raised in the run-up to the conference were justified. The *Gauche Anticapitaliste* in Belgium outlined the problematic aspects of the conference in a brief statement, with which I agree.¹³ The US organization Solidarity and the French group ‘Arguments pour la lutte sociale’ also voiced criticism. Using arguments similar to those presented here, the Union syndicale Solidaires (Union of Grassroots Trade Unions) in France explained why it did not attend the conference and will not attend conferences of this nature in future either.¹⁴

The conference’s final declaration reveals that this conference aims at a merely selective form of anti-fascism and anti-imperialism, even though it generally emphasizes opposition to all forms of imperialism and demands the right to self-determination for all peoples. On the basis of this final declaration, I raise three key strategic questions which go beyond the immediate outcomes of the conference and are crucial, particularly in Europe and likely also in many parts of Asia, for building a comprehensive continental united front against the rising tide of authoritarianism and fascism in its various manifestations.

1. The final declaration rightly condemns the US and NATO as imperialist and, in the context of numerous wars and conflicts, sides with the oppressed who are resisting. It is, of course, right to build resistance against increasingly authoritarian US imperialism and the hypocritical European governments that collude in the genocide and daily terror perpetrated by the State of Israel against the Palestinian population. However, both the invitation to the conference and the final declaration reinforce a geopolitical approach that divides the world into camps (campism) and focuses one-sidedly on resistance against US imperialism and its allies. They neither address Ukraine’s defensive struggle nor do they oppose Russian imperialism. Neither the call nor the final declaration addresses in any way the fact that the Trump administration is seeking a strategic alliance with the Putin regime, which in turn recognizes Trump as an ideological partner. Russia and Ukraine are deliberately not mentioned in the documents. Following the same logic, the declarations also remain silent on the democratic opposition in Iran.

The final declaration does, at least, oppose ‘all forms of imperialism’, albeit in a non-binding manner. This, in turn, prompted the PC do Brasil – which is opposed only to US imperialism – to issue a critical statement. Even the affirmation of the right to self-determination for all peoples remains an empty shell when, for example, Ukraine and Taiwan are not mentioned, whilst a long list of struggles against US imperialism is cited. An international anti-fascist and anti-imperialist front on this basis is impossible. How can we win over representatives of the societies and nationalities threatened and oppressed by Russia to such a front? How can we win over the people revolting in Iran if they get the impression that large sections of the international Left regard the dictatorship as a legitimate interlocutor? How is it possible to appeal to large sections of the Taiwanese population who wish to preserve their independent state if one fails to name China’s imperialist interests? How can we win over Muslim populations in Central Asia if leftists deny or even justify the Chinese state’s repression of the Uyghur population? Of course, it is right to call for the defeat of the US and Israel in the war against Iran. But it is equally right to campaign for Russia’s defeat in solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance.

2. The final declaration does not express the slightest criticism of the populist, so-called progressive governments in Latin America. For this reason, the militant trade union federation CSP-Conlutas

¹³ What kind of internationalism to fight fascism? 27 March 2026 <https://www.gaucheanticapitaliste.org/dossier-quel-internationalisme-pour-lutter-contre-le-fascisme/>

¹⁴ Ivan Drury Zarin: Three general characteristics of the new era of fascism. *Solidarity*, 28 March 2026.

<https://solidarity-us.org/three-general-characteristics-of-the-new-era-of-fascism/>;

Porto Alegre: on a self-congratulatory assessment and its ‘limitations’ 7 April 2026.

<https://aplutsoc.org/2026/04/07/porto-alegre-sur-un-bilan-dautosatisfaction-et-ses-limites/>; Union syndicale Solidaires (France): The European/International Network of Solidarity with Ukraine and its outreach to Latin America. 20 April 2026.

(Central Sindical e Popular) did not take part in the conference. The Liga Internacional Socialista and the MST Argentina expressed similar criticisms¹⁵. The Lula government has declared its intention to develop Brazil into a global oil superpower. It is resolutely expanding oil exploration and production and systematically drives the plundering of nature. Its strategy is based on an alliance with key sectors of capital at the expense of the rights and participation of workers, the poor and indigenous peoples. Long before the US-led coup against Maduro, Venezuela had already developed into a repressive regime that tramples on the interests of workers and farmers. The former Peronist government in Argentina, with its anti-social policies, paved the way for the victory of the reactionary Milei. A broad and democratic anti-fascist movement can only develop in complete independence from these governments, which are merely seemingly progressive – but linked to key sectors of capital. It must be uncompromisingly grounded in the social, political and ecological class interests of the poor, farmers and workers.

3. It is nothing short of tragic and utterly unforgivable that the final declaration makes no mention of the particular threat posed by global heating and the fossil fuel industry. This is no coincidence. Brazil's PT government is itself closely linked to the fossil capital of the Petrobras corporation and is pushing ahead with the fossil fuel development path with great determination.¹⁶ The Venezuelan government was only able to stay in power through the control and distribution of oil rents. The final declaration speaks in general and non-binding terms of ecocide, without calling for a shift away from fossil fuels. A phase-out of fossil fuels would completely make impossible the capitalist development prospects of so-called progressive governments and could not be initiated without disempowering capital. Nor does the final declaration say a word about the fact that repressive strategies of unequal, selective adaptation to global heating are a central feature of the new fascism.¹⁷ The denial of the consequences of global heating is a central feature of the new authoritarianism and fascism. From an ecological perspective, the final declaration is no better than the non-binding declarations of the COP climate conferences, which merely orchestrate the fossil fuel backlash. This is extremely meagre and reveals that the fossil fuel backlash is also eating away through the left. The term 'eco-socialist' used in the declaration degenerates into an empty platitude.

It is clear that the political conditions in Latin America differ from those in North America, Europe, Asia and elsewhere. Given the historical and everyday experience of US imperialism and its decades-long support for reactionary dictatorships, it stands to reason that not only left-wing organizations but broad sections of the population in Latin America see the US as their main enemy. But it is equally obvious that large sections of the populations in Eastern Europe and in some parts of Central Asia perceive Russia as a long-standing threat. The Uyghur people in Xinjiang are oppressed by the Chinese state, and the people of Taiwan live under the threat that the People's Republic intends to annex their island and society.

The conference's final declaration thus deliberately obscures the challenges. I am not arguing that it was wrong to take part in this conference. However, it would have been thinkable to sharpen the international debate on the challenges ahead through an alternative final declaration – even if this had remained a minority view. This would also have laid the groundwork for future events and

¹⁵ International Socialist League: Porto Alegre Antifascist Conference. Conclusions and perspective. 6 April 2026 <https://lis-isl.org/en/2026/04/porto-alegre-antifascist-conference-conclusions-and-perspective/>

¹⁶ Stott, Michael; Pooler, Michael and Daniels, Joe (2025): Why Latin America can't quit oil. Financial Times, 6 November. <https://www.ft.com/content/f85a5c80-6a06-4883-b784-223af5467f36>; Mooney, Attracta; Mychasuk, Emiliya and Pooler, Michael (2025): Brazil's UN climate summit chief defends Petrobras oil expansion. Financial Times, 4 July. <https://www.ft.com/content/4b8caca7-265d-4f34-ab6b-3a391520e6a2>; Pooler, Michael: Petrobras aims to transform Brazil into a global energy power. South American nation set to join the world's top crude producers by the end of the decade. Financial Times Weekend, 19 November 2023. <https://www.ft.com/content/76a1ccb0-8534-4513-8fb5-5eb5e07773bd>

¹⁷ Zeller, Christian (2026): Zur Barbarei? Klima, Krieg und ökosozialistische Dilemmata der Sicherheit. *emanzipation - Zeitschrift für ökosozialistische Strategie* 10 (1), S. 129-160.

collaboration that would bring together those forces seeking to build a comprehensive anti-fascist and anti-imperialist movement.

As long as the Left is unable to proceed, as a matter of principle, from the interests of the oppressed and exploited – irrespective of geopolitical bloc formation and shifting constellations – it will not be able to build an internationally viable alternative to the rising authoritarianism and fascism.

How is one to build a broad anti-fascist united front when it is not even clear against whom this front is directed? Who are the enemies? Should the broad anti-fascist front to be built be directed exclusively against authoritarian developments and fascist forces in North and South America, in Europe, as well as against US imperialism, Israel and their imperialist European and Oceanic allies, or equally against fascist Russia, which for many years has been supporting reactionary movements in Europe and elsewhere?

An international anti-fascist united front is impossible unless it is clear who it is intended to fight against. On a more fundamental level, however, the question arises as to whether it makes strategic and tactical sense to seek cooperation with forces that clearly hold a completely different view of allies and opponents, as well as a fundamentally different conception of the desired social organization. Of course, it may be appropriate at certain moments to enter into tactical alliances with very different forces such as social democrats, Greens, liberals and conservatives, or indeed ‘campist’ leftists; yet the establishment of a strategic united front presupposes agreement on a number of central issues – first and foremost, naturally, on who the opponents and partners actually are. A strategic alliance with Stalinists and Campists is impossible. On the contrary, it is important to build an alternative force that breaks with these reactionary elements within the increasingly disintegrating Left.

I expressly welcome the plan to organize regional or continental anti-fascist conferences. These would help to counteract the tendency present in many countries to underestimate fascistisation as a national phenomenon. In Europe, such a conference would need to proactively put the vision of a social and ecological continent on the agenda, both beyond and in opposition to the EU and against national imperialisms.¹⁸ Only if we succeed in combining comprehensive social, ecological and military security through global solidarity in practical struggles will we have a chance to counter fascistization as well as internal and external fascist threats with an alternative of the ‘good life’.¹⁹

However, these conferences should be driven by forces that, *first*, wish to resist all forms of imperialism and fascism; *second*, organize themselves completely independently of populist and nationalist governments (which are sometimes called progressive) and bourgeois forces; and *third*, make resistance to fossil capital and global heating, as well as the unequal, selective adaptation to global heating and its catastrophes driven by governments, a central focus of their activity. On this basis, we should strive to build the broadest possible unity, one that also includes forces that have not yet been reached.

¹⁸ Zeller, Christian (2024): Eine kontinentale Gegenmacht gegen das fossile Kapital aufbauen. *emanzipation - Zeitschrift für ökosozialistische Strategie* 8 (2) 9. Oktober 2024, S. 197-226; Samary, Catherine und Zeller, Christian (2025): Europäische Strategien: von den konkreten Erfahrungen ausgehen. *emanzipation - Zeitschrift für ökosozialistische Strategie* 8 (2), S. 227–246.

¹⁹ Zeller, Christian (2026): Ökosozialistische Strategie der sozialen, ökologischen und militärischen Sicherheit. *emanzipation – Zeitschrift für ökosozialistische Strategie* 10 (1), S. 190–203.